

**Being Neither and Both:
The Liminal Nationality of Four Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Irish Women Writers,
A Study of Genre, Gender, and Nation**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the work of four Anglo-Irish women writers who published in the long eighteenth century, an integral voice in the development of Anglo-Irish nationality. These voices present a counter-perspective that breaks down the ideology of Nation-building and reveal the relationship between gender and Nation and how that relationship functions to silence marginal voices. I employ the concept of liminality as a guiding paradigm. This study illustrates the liminality of being Anglo-Irish in the eighteenth-century and the effects of the liminal phase on a developing national consciousness, specifically how the doubly-liminal role of woman writer disrupts the construction of a metanarrative of Nation. Working from travel narratives in early, post-Glorious Revolution England to autobiography in the Jacobite era to the sentimental novel and constitutional debates of the 1770s and concluding with sonnets and the Act of Union in 1800, I explore generic and gender conventions deployed and challenged as each woman attempts to construct herself as an Anglo-Irish citizen and the reception that such constructions receive. There is a noticeable shift in descriptions of Nation from Mary Davys's *The Fugitive*, published in 1705, to Mary Tighe's sonnets, written in Age of Revolution, from loyal English citizen to patriotic Irish anti-unionist. The work of these four women and this analysis suggests that the idea of Nation in the Anglo-Irish mind was a mutable concept, at once dominant and vulnerable. This dissertation also shows that debate over identification, kingdom or colony, reached far into the minds of writers, especially those for whom oppression was concrete rather than abstract.

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Introduction:

A Historical Perspective of Nationness, Genre, and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Irish Women Writers

This project is more than a recovery project of four women writers whom most have labeled “minor” wherein I would seek to educate the reader about the work of a heretofore unknown writer in order to incorporate marginalized writers and their texts into the tradition of literature usually dominated by male writers. It is more than a generic analysis which seeks to explore the politicization of literature wherein I would explore the boundaries of generic conventions as each author employed or crossed them. It is also more than a materialist feminist project which seeks to illustrate the subordination of these women writers by culture, whether political, literary, or social. Though this project has elements of all of these types of projects, it crosses the boundaries of each of them in order to study the ideology of Nation, specifically what *Anglo-Irish Nation* meant in eighteenth-century Great Britain, as it was imagined from a marginal perspective. I am seeking to understand how nationality is constructed from the doubly-liminal space that is an Anglo-Irish woman writer.

I began this project by investigating the history of Ireland in the eighteenth century. My studies took me beyond the more recognized events such as the Battle of the Boyne, Wood’s halfpence controversy, Jacobite rebellions, or the United Irishmen’s Rebellion of 1798. I realized that the voices that have most influenced the scholarly conception of Ireland in the eighteenth century were surprisingly narrow. Swift, Berkley, Grattan, and Tone, among others, have shaped

our understanding of the national experience in that era of tumultuous politics. Yet, these men were only one part of the collective experience and provided only a part of the lived reality of the Anglo-Irish culture. This project also developed out of another area of research that I was exploring, eighteenth-century dramatists, where I researched an obscure comedy of manners, *The Northern Heiress*, written by an equally obscure writer, Mary Davys. From this venture, I moved to researching other writers that shared a similar position as Davys—an Anglo-Irish woman writer with an active, public voice.

But it was my study of history that directed me toward a perspective for understanding the texts by these women. Founding my analysis on the concept of a political unconscious, the sub-narrative of a text that illustrates the political influences on the writer, I returned to Davys to work out how she experienced the history of Ireland, to include its relationship to England, at the turn of the century. And from this inquiry, I worked to understand how these women saw themselves as part of the nation. My most important conclusion was that Nation in a hyphenated identity was contradictory and elusive. It is a paradox of being a part of both cultures while at the same time accepted in neither. The in-between, or liminal, status of a hyphenated nationality is also nuanced with gender ideologies. Gender is inextricably tied to the paradox that is a hyphenated identity, and this study shows the doubly-liminal space that these writers wrote from.

Ideas of Nation

The concept of Nation is, at its most basic, a way of identifying and organizing a group of people based on some commonality, which has historically been race. But, in modernity, language, geography, ethnicity, and/or political ideology have been used to identify and organize a community, especially when “race” is not easily differentiated. The concept of Nation did not come into regular use until the late eighteenth century replacing earlier uses of the terms

kingdom or country.¹ Appropriately, it is not until the last two authors in this project, writing in the 1770s and the 1790s, that any level of cohesion comes into the concept of an Anglo-Irish Nation, where a drift toward Irishness begins to appear. There is a long history of scholarship on what the concept of Nation encompasses, but in this project, I began in the Anthropology section of the library. It is cultural anthropology that I found most interesting through the works of Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner. This perspective focuses on the culture of people's daily lives and their individual experiences. It explores their communities—through events sometimes mundane, sometimes grandly symbolic—and the way in which they conceptualize themselves as part of a collective experience, or as a Nation.

In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Geertz interrogates development of Nation.² He identifies four phases of nationalism in which a culture develops a national identity. His stages are articulated as thus:

[T]hat in which the nationalist movements are formed and crystallized; that in which they triumphed; that in which they organized themselves into states, and that...in which, organized into states, they find themselves obliged to define and stabilize their relationships both to other states and to the irregular societies out of which they arose.³

These stages are not necessarily linear, and often elements of the fourth, I find, occur during the first stage. Indeed, Geertz claims that the second and the third stage receive the most attention, in theoretical as well as journalistic circles, but “the bulk of far-reaching changes, those altering the

¹ Raymond Williams, “Nationalism” in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000) , 213-214.

² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

³ Ibid 238.

general shape and direction of social evolution...[occur] in the less spectacular first and fourth.”⁴ More importantly, the attempts to define and stabilize that occur in the fourth phase have already begun in the first and were in fact integral to the crystallization. In regards to an Anglo-Irish Nation, the definition by difference, which is identifying themselves out of the “irregular societies,” is essential to understanding the complexities of a hyphenated identity and how a loyal English citizen such as Mary Davys, the first author in this project, might become a Romantic nationalist like Mary Tighe, the final author.

But attempts to define Nation or any of its variants, like nationalism, face two possible results—relativism, which renders the analysis ineffectual, or positivism, which renders the analysis essentialist. Geertz argues that the way around this theoretical bind is to realize that “peoples of new states are simultaneously animated by two powerful, thoroughly interdependent, yet distinct and often actually opposed motives”—to matter and to govern. Understanding these motives works in both the experiential and the abstract concepts of Nation. A national conscious must be recognized by other nations as significant, “agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions” have meaning. A Nation must “matter” to other nations, meaning be considered of some consequence. In effect, the people of a coalescing nation must be recognized as separate from other nations, including the one out of which they are coming. And in the history of Anglo-Irish politics, especially the constitutional debates of the 1760s and 1770s, this desire to be recognized as independent of Great Britain fuels speeches, pamphlets, and even popular literature, such as Elizabeth Griffith’s *The History of Lady Barton*. But to gain such recognition required a consensus, however loose it might be, about who was a part of the coalescing nation. The initial stage of Nation-building attempted to define these parameters. But, as I discuss below, the Anglo-Irish Nation was far from homogenous, so these parameters were difficult to

⁴ Ibid 238.

define, and these negotiations were fraught with contradiction. Further complicating the negotiations were voices from the margin. There is an assumption here, that Nation is a construct of men. Rarely does Geertz incorporate the perspective of women in his analysis. However, the works of post-colonial feminists like Trinh T. Min-ha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak⁵ address the marginalized voice of women in the hyphenated Nation. This project seeks to establish that, acknowledged or not, these Anglo-Irish women writers of the eighteenth century did have ideas of Nation and considered themselves active members of it.

Perhaps most useful in Geertz's anthropological theory is "The Politics of Meaning" where his review of *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* teases out the tension between circumstantial evidence and abstract theory. He argues that his purpose "is an understanding of how it is that every people get the politics it imagines" by "penetrate(ing) deeply enough into detail to discover something more than detail."⁶ The cultural anthropologist works uses the study of an individual to extrapolate how the imagined Nation was constructed. And for my purposes, I chose to focus on "every people" because a Nation is comprised of all the voices it attempts to govern, both the politician and the whore, since both have the ability to take up the pen.

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson makes the bold statement that "nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time."⁷ Three centuries earlier, in the burgeoning imperialistic policies of "Western" powers, nationness was equally "universally legitimate" as kingdoms changed into nations and territories became colonies. What Anderson offers is an answer to the question posed by Geertz: how is it that people imagine Nation. He

⁵ Trinh T. Min-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, (New York: Routledge, 1988).

⁶ Ibid 313.

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 3.

suggests that “it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”⁸ With these parameters, limited and sovereign, Anderson explores how people *think* Nation.⁹ During the eighteenth century, when concepts of Nation began to take shape actively, communities required new modes of thinking about how they are formed, or more specifically, what joins them together and makes them a community. As religious ideology waned in influence and revolutionary politics began triumphing over God/King/Subject hierarchies, it became necessary to create new ways of thinking, of imagining, political relationships between and among people. But being limited and sovereign in a hyphenated culture created numerous complexities. To be limited required finite boundaries, but such boundaries, even mutable ones, were almost impossible to delineate in an Anglo-Irish nation in eighteenth-century England and Ireland. Much of that century was spent negotiating those boundaries. To be sovereign, the desire for self-rule and the freedoms it afforded, was equally elusive although this was similar to other kingdom-colony relationships that Great Britain had. For example, the American colonies could approach revolution from the concrete perspective of colony, a political territory under the authority of a greater political entity, in this case Great Britain. There was never a Kingdom of American and Great Britain. And even if independence was not a universally sought outcome in these colonies, questions of sovereignty were predicated on such labels. Yet, Ireland was not definitively a colony. Prior to the Act of Union in 1707, which created the political entity of Great Britain, Ireland had shared the title of Kingdom with England and Scotland, employing familial metaphors like “sister kingdom.” But in the 1707 Act, only England and Scotland were identified as kingdoms. Ireland had become subordinate. Paradoxically, the Irish parliament remained in power so the idea of self-governance continued.

⁸ Ibid 6.

⁹ Ibid 22.

Thus, in the era of burgeoning nationalism, the English in Ireland found themselves in-between imagined political communities, marginalized by this ambiguity. With one of his more provocative statements, that “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation...the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship,” Anderson articulates one of the most difficult boundaries that the English in Ireland struggled to define: did they share a horizontal comradeship with England, which would make them English, or with the English in Ireland, which would include the Old Catholic English?¹⁰ Such matters were not easily resolved. Although a community was clearly imagined, the negotiations of limits and sovereignty kept that community in a space of becoming rather than crystallizing.

The relationship between Nation and the function of printed word to the process of crystallization has been ably discussed, but it bears further consideration in the concept of Anderson’s imagined community. The imagined community exists, as Anderson articulates, on a national level, as a collective experience. What I hope to convey is how the individual experience of Nation shapes and is shaped by the collective experience. Instead of a metanarrative of Nation, I look at the individual voices of Nation. And these voices speak from marginalized positions, which are usually considered as part of the imagined community, but as silent partners. Nation is assigned to them. But the public sphere of printed texts allows such voices to influence the collective experience and rupture the limitations of the imagined community. In Anderson’s conceptualization, it is important to recognize that the origins of national consciousness begin in the printed word, specifically capitalizing on the printed word as a means of disseminating ideas of national consciousness, helping to define its boundaries. In that way, print can be an agent of the burgeoning state, but it can also be an agent of a subaltern public sphere in which the voices from the margin participate in the collective experience and

¹⁰ Ibid 7.

reveal the tension that is at the core of a hyphenated nationality as it attempts to be both sovereign and limited. How the dominant political voice constructs the marginalized subject, how the polity constructs women, can show the uncertainty bound up in the imagined community as it seeks to establish itself as a nation. And the marginalized voice of a hyphenated culture is doubly conflicted as she must negotiate not only the paradox of being both and neither of the pair of Nations, but she must also contend with the limitations that the burgeoning imagined community must place on her in order to control the boundaries of Nation.

The Insufficiency of Labels

To approach a term such as Anglo-Irish is to immerse oneself into an endless circular of ideas, definitions, and assertions that fail to identify adequately who might be considered Anglo-Irish and what such a designation could mean. In regarding the eighteenth century, the term is anachronistic since most people of that century who might be identified today as “Anglo-Irish” would have then referred to themselves in reference to arrival time, i.e. New English or Old English, the English in Ireland, or more simply, “English.” Furthermore, scholars such as Nicholas Canny, Thomas Bartlett, Toby Barnard, and S. J. Connolly have illustrated the decided unwieldiness of such a broad term since it attempts to encompass a vast number of identities that have very disparate histories such as the Ascendancy class (Anglican), the Old English (Catholic), and the *other* New English (Methodists, Dissenters, etc. who don’t identify with the Anglican Church). Canny’s work explores the conflict between the old and new, the Anglo-Norman and the later English settlers of Ireland. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth century, these two groups, both of which could be described as the English in Ireland, struggled for control of the island. It was not simply the parliament at Dublin Castle, but the land beyond the Pale. In fact, it was outside the seat of government where these struggles were most vigorous.

The core of the debate was the process of the subordination, couched in terms of “civilizing.” The New English saw the failure of this process as a result of improper policies, like allowing intermarriage. Later, the Old English would apply that same charge to the failures of the new settlers to subdue effectively the majority of the inhabitants of Ireland. Thus, these two groups, both of which have been described as Anglo-Irish, were far from a singular cultural or national identity. Yet, they shared one perspective. Canny asserts that after the Glorious Revolution, the Protestant population was “more conscious of themselves as an Irish community because, thereafter, they could justly claim to be the only group in Ireland who should enjoy full political rights.”¹¹ And they shared another identifier, as he points out, that this perception of “full political rights” was “a point...that was never conceded by the British government.” As Canny describes the political minds of the English in Ireland, he details not only the differences between them, but the similarities in the way they were identified by Great Britain. Importantly, Canny does not use the term Anglo-Irish until he speaks of the eighteenth century, wherein he argues that a national identity began to coalesce.

Bartlett’s makes the same claim in his 1990 article, “‘A People made Rather for Copies than Originals’: the Anglo-Irish, 1760-1800.”¹² His guiding inquiry is the political status of Ireland in the kingdom of Great Britain: was she a colony or a sister kingdom? Drawing distinctions between Ireland and other British colonies, Bartlett illustrates some of the contradictions of being Anglo-Irish in such an ambiguous state. While “other colonies argued over the degree, if any, of dependence involved in their colonial relationship with England,” the

¹¹ Nicholas Canny, “Identity Formation in Ireland: The Emergence of the Anglo-Irish,” in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 204.

¹² Thomas Bartlett, “‘A People Made Rather for Copies than Originals’: The Anglo-Irish, 1760-1800,” *International History Review* 12, no. 1 (February 1990): 11-25.

governing body of Ireland “denied that it had one.”¹³ And for Bartlett, the governing body was Anglo-Irish. He makes some distinctions between the various groups of Irish Protestants, but he treats them collectively as means of drawing out the complexities of Ireland’s political status. The Catholic question—the pervasive tension between the majority Catholic population of Ireland and its role in/threat to the governing minority Protestant population—is at the center of Bartlett’s descriptions of late-century Irish Protestants. A growing national consciousness among the Anglo-Irish eventually broke apart because the limitations imposed excluded the majority of the population, and this majority was far from compliant.

Barnard’s *A New Anatomy of Ireland* journeys through the Irish Protestant identity, a phrase which distinguishes itself from the broader Anglo-Irish.¹⁴ His analysis addresses the different aspects of identity within this group, including peerage, soldiers, and bureaucrats. In some ways, his analysis echoes the work of Linda Colley’s *Britons*. He makes some important distinctions between the various components of this group who share a broad religious ideology. For example, it was not only the peasant, Gaelic-speaking Catholics that experienced poverty with its associated invisibility. Though Protestant, even those who were Anglican, shared a religious ideology with the ruling class, “The majority of poor Protestants found there was no room in the churches for them if they could not afford either seats or decent clothes. Left to drift outside the net of officialdom, they were hard to distinguish from the shoals of Catholics.”¹⁵ What Barnard alludes to is an association between undesirability and Irishness, meaning that even if one was an Irish Protestant, poverty made one “merely Irish.”¹⁶ It is associations like

¹³ Ibid 14.

¹⁴ Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Ibid, 330.

¹⁶ The term “merely Irish” was used throughout the eighteenth century as a way of designating a person as separate from any connection with England and to highlight the subordinate status of the Native Irish.

these that worked to marginalize the writers in this project. He concludes his exploration by reforming the disparate groups back into the Irish Protestants. Barnard claims that “as yet, how they (the Irish Protestants in the eighteenth century) made sense of their situation, at once precarious and precious, has not been addressed explicitly” because, and this is his most potent claim, “nimble craft have busily explored Irish waters, their able pilots returning with authoritative charts. Too often, it seems they neither disembarked to tread the terrain nor quizzed the inhabitants.”¹⁷ Barnard’s metaphor echoes the beginning of Elizabeth Griffith’s novel *The History of Lady Barton* when the heroine is shipwrecked onto a remote part of the island and is confronted with this alien culture. This is her first encounter with the “mere Irish.”

In *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760*, Connolly makes similar distinctions, but discusses the shifts in constructions of national identity within the cultural groups in Ireland. Designations like the English in Ireland fell away. Conflations of religion and nationality, meaning that English stood in for Protestant and Irish for Catholic despite actual national origin, were replaced by religious designations alone, meaning that one was Protestant or Catholic regardless of ancestry. The ramification was that the cultural groups of the Old English and the native Gaelic-speaking Irish were now collapsed into one group. Subsequently, as Barnard argues as well, the Irish Protestant, as they chose to define themselves, became a political consciousness.

Though identifying as Irish, in the early eighteenth century, Irish Protestants still laid claim to an English ancestry, when needed, and were loyal to the English crown. However, as the century progressed, such associations would change dramatically in some, and “for a variety of reasons, Protestants (in Ireland)...were both pushed and attracted by a stronger sense of

¹⁷ Ibid, 331.

themselves as Irish.”¹⁸ But this was not identification with Irish Catholics though a minority of revolutionaries did embrace that approach in the later years. In fact, the exclusion of Irish Catholics was a significant marker of Anglo-Irish nation forming, and historians often suggest that the threat of a Catholic rebellion was at least as significant as the threat of subordination to the English crown. However, Connolly’s text argues that “above all...it is important not to seek significance, or even coherence, where none existed,” and the urge to find a singular narrative in the Anglo-Irish is impossible.¹⁹ Political tension between all cultural groups persisted through the eighteenth century. And the ambiguous status of being neither colony nor kingdom, in addition to English stereotypes of the Irish, meant that these identities were under negotiation both in and out of Ireland. Connolly’s purpose is to begin to consider alternative organizations through which to understand the diverse peoples of Ireland. His analysis navigates the maze of associations through which people tried to understand their position in the society of Ireland.

All four of the historians discussed above agree that the term Anglo-Irish is an insufficient expression to describe the English-descendant population in Ireland. However, they also agree that the English crown considered them, diverse as they were, as subordinate. And, by implication and public policy, it appeared that the English government considered them to be unequivocally Irish. This perspective frequently identified the English in Ireland, both Catholic and Protestant, with stereotypes that portrayed them as fervently nationalistic and occasionally barbaric. Thus, a nationality is created that is neither English nor Irish, but somehow a part of both.

David Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury expand on this work and this paradoxical nationality by moving beyond religious and political influences which are based on historical

¹⁸ S. J. Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760*, (1992; reprint Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 124.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 123.

events. Their analysis uses “the multitude of ways in which individuals and blocs of select individuals aligned with or opposed themselves to other groups in the face of changing social, political, and cultural conditions.”²⁰ This approach builds on the work of Bartlett and Connolly, specifically discussions of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century conflicts between the Old English and the New English and the changing nature of Irish Protestant identity in the eighteenth century, and serves to demonstrate not only how the status of political relationships with England, later Great Britain, developed and influenced Anglo-Irish identities, but also how genres of literature, conventions of gender, and constructions of subjectivity function in understanding the complexities of being Anglo-Irish. Literary expressions of nationality interpret historical events through the individual perspective. Thus, they demonstrate how an author can manipulate identity based on association with different, even competing ideologies of Nation, something that the women of this project practiced well.

But, the term Anglo-Irish is not useless even in its broadness. The complexities that are caught up in this term, even its problematic nature, show a space of contradiction in the identities intertwined within this identification. It is, perhaps, a more culturally appropriate term than the English in Ireland. And it is in the hyphen where this is most telling. Although it is intended to show union, the hyphen is a bearer of incongruity, of ambiguity, especially in designating nationality. This hyphenated nationality, Anglo-Irish, illustrates the paradox of being English in Ireland, even when one was not in Ireland. Being Anglo-Irish meant that one was not English, not Irish, but both and neither. Thus, I employ this term purposefully, including in it all the omissions and connotations. This project explores how the hyphen functions in nationality, even

²⁰ David Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury, introduction to *Anglo-Irish Identities, 1571-1845*, ed. David Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury, (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2008) 13.

though hyphenating Anglo-Irish was not a contemporary usage. The hyphen, in this project, is the symbolic representation of liminality, of being in between cultures.

The history of the Anglo-Irish in Ireland is not one of kingdom or of colony. Rather, it occupies a space between those imperialist concepts even as it is a part of both of them.²¹ Any colonialist reading of Anglo-Irish culture in the eighteenth century inevitably folds in on itself. It was both a nation of oppressed and oppressors, sometimes in the same person. And it was far from a linear organization, meaning the oppression didn't trickle down from Crown to beggar, but rather took a circuitous path among the different subcultures of those who identified themselves as the English in Ireland or the Irish loyal to England or the Irish Protestant who is not Catholic. This analytical predicament is what became lost in revisionist Irish historical and literary scholarship.

Liminal Nationality

Eighteenth-century Ireland was a troublesome concept for the Kingdom of England/Great Britain. This was not necessarily in terms of rebellions or revolutions. It was a comparatively peaceful century in the history of the two islands. Yet, the uncertain status in relationship to Great Britain made the kingdom/subordinate/colony construction rather a vague thorn in the side of the British nation. With a world to conquer, the Parliament in London had little time to consider the status of the land across the Irish Sea. Without clear domestic/foreign political policy (indeed, one could not definitively say that policy concerning Ireland was either domestic or foreign), the inhabitants of eighteenth-century Ireland were left to sort out their national identity. This would, eventually, be incredibly problematic for the British government in the

²¹ For a discussion of this paradox, see Jane Ohlmeyer, ed. *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Martyn Powell, *Britain and Ireland in the Eighteenth-Century Crisis of Empire*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), and S.J. Connolly, *Kingdoms United? Great Britain and Ireland since 1500: Integration and Diversity*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999).

following two centuries. But during the eighteenth-century, the question of Nation was problematic for the Anglo-Irish, in all senses of that identity.

Victor Turner's concept of threshold people, the liminal community, illustrates the ambiguity of the unique situation of Ireland in the eighteenth century. In this liminal space, these people "elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space."²² Hence, attempts to delineate the people living in Ireland who identified themselves as Protestant are futile as traditional approaches to cultural study are ineffective since the liminal persona is "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between." Liminality is the second stage of the ritual process and is rich in symbolic meaning. This symbolism explores the process through which a culture confers identity on its people. They are symbols of people who are outside the constructs of society, and the symbols of liminality exist in each text discussed in this project.

Davy's is a wanderer and homeless. Pilkington is divorced and disgraced. Griffith's Lady Barton is disgraced, dying. Tighe's Ireland is disappearing. These symbols of being on the threshold and in the margin bring together an idea of the hyphenated culture as it exists in the political consciousness of these women. Thus, by exploring how the Anglo-Irish experienced their liminality, and the symbols they used, one lays bare the process in which nationality is constructed in absence of identifiable markers of Nation. For example, Ireland had no independent government though it was allowed some autonomy. Foreign relations were negotiated through England, so official relationships with other Nations were unavailable. These parameters limited the Anglo-Irish from creating a firm sense of an Anglo-Irish nation as they did not allow for significant differentiation from England, much less from other European

²² Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 1969, (Reprint, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 95.

countries. These boundaries inhibited the expression of the Irish Protestant citizen, as late-century patriotic discourse illustrated. These boundaries were doubly limiting when surrounding marginal voices such as a woman writer. Not only did Davys, Pilkington, Griffith, and Tighe live as subjects in a liminal culture in the circumstances described above, but also as marginalized voices in a public sphere that demanded virtue and domesticity and met independence with skepticism. Yet, these women chose to write. And their texts explored, even scrutinize, the ideologies that place them in alternate public spheres in addition to scrutinizing “the central values and axioms of culture” in which this liminal phase occurs.²³

Building on the concept of national liminality, *The Location of Culture* explores cultural hybridity in a post-colonial construction. Scrutinizing the concept of nation as narrative, Bhabha challenges horizontal constructions of Nation, instead proposing a frame of splitting, one that interrogates the pedagogical narratives of the horizontal nation with the performative realities of the individual subject.²⁴ Liminality, for him, is the state of the modern nation. Fictions of stability fall apart as the marginalized subjects of nation disrupt the flow of history and attempts to codify Nation as a production of events and ideas. These marginalized subjects, those voices that challenge the boundaries used to establish sovereignty, breakdown traditional narratives of nation (indeed all narratives of nation) into the “patches and rags” of the modern nation.²⁵

There is an important critique of Bhabha’s design. One might wonder if he wanders too far into abstraction at the expense of necessary detail. As Marjorie Perloff argues, he is so intent on arguing his manifesto—of articulating his theory—that he forgets to read the book.²⁶ Thus,

²³ Ibid 167.

²⁴ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (1994, Reprint New York: Routledge, 2006).

²⁵ Ibid 211. Bhabha is quoting Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

²⁶ Marjorie Perloff, “Cultural Liminality/Aesthetic Closure?: The ‘Interstitial Perspective’ of Homi Bhabha” in *Electronic Poetry Center* [online journal], (Buffalo, N.Y., 1998 [cited April 15, 2010]). Article available at <<http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/perloff/bhabha.html>>

his readings of cultural hybridity, in literature or in art, sometimes hide the very *un*-horizontal constructions of Nation that he seeks to demonstrate. However, I would also argue that his theoretical structure, the basic premise of his argument, is still relevant to a study of liminality in the development of the modern n/Nation. More importantly, while much of his argument centers on third-world post-colonial nations of the twentieth century, it is his abstraction that allows for a broader application. His methodology provides an avenue into understanding a culture that is not so clearly colonial, that lacks the benefit, as it were, of being definitively a colony. Cultural hybridity, after all, has some constants; it is both and neither a part of a dominant and subjected culture. The English in Ireland/Irish Protestant/Anglo-Irish led far different lives from the subjects of Bhabha's analysis, but they did share the same ambiguity of identification. Being hyphenated, or hybrid in Bhabha's terms, whether in an industrialized or third-world nation, leads to the same goal—the desire to establish a stable idea of Nation. And what this analysis of Nation, genre, and gender illustrates is that, regardless of geographic location or modernity, such stability frequently remains elusive.

The Anglo-Irish represent this liminal phase that is the narrative of Nation. Having left England, this group entered the preliminary stage, but remaining in Ireland prevents them from moving on to the post-liminary stage. Yet, in the politics of the period, we can see them struggling with the liminality and attempting to create an Irish society into which they can enter and thus, finish the rite of passage. With the Act of Union, the Anglo-Irish symbolically rejoined English society and complete the rite of passage.

Women Writing Nation

This project takes a chronological approach to the liminality nationality in Anglo-Irish women writers, but it is not a chronological construction of Nation in eighteenth-century Irish

Protestants. I begin in the post-Glorious Revolution Kingdom of Ireland and Kingdom of Britain, which became the Kingdom of Great Britain and Scotland in 1707. This act politically subordinated Ireland to Great Britain, evidenced by the naming as well as public policy. It was, as I have stated above, a period of uncertainty in the Anglo-Irish nation. Though scholars disagree about the depth or prevalence of insecurity felt by those who could identify as Anglo-Irish, the presence of apprehension is undeniable. Jacobite rebellions in 1716 and 1745 were tangible reminders of the deep divide between the small, governing population of the island and the very large governed population comprised mostly of Gaelic-speaking Catholics. Growing sympathy in Great Britain for the Irish Catholic exacerbated such tension. While some historical scholars are careful not to overstate the influence of such currents, the Penal Laws and the Declaratory Act suggest that the tension was significant.

In Chapter One, I begin by analyzing an author who writes at the politically turbulent turn of the century. Mary Davys wrote in the waning years of the seventeenth century and published until 1732, the year of her death. What is believed to be her first publication, *The Amours of Alcippus and Lucippe*, later revised as *The Lady's Tale*, was published in 1704 followed by *The Fugitive; Or a Country Ramble* in 1705, the travel narrative discussed in first chapter. She is known primarily as a novelist, especially *The Reform'd Coquette*, though she wrote two plays, one of which was performed at Lincoln's Inn Field in 1716. Much of her work is didactic, and she is credited with developing the archetype of the coquette and as an influence on Samuel Richardson, especially his work in *Clarissa*. Her novelistic output has been thoroughly and ably approached in the last few decades; however, I chose to analyze *The Fugitive*, one of her earliest documented works. Approached as either fiction or autobiography, *The Fugitive* has been primarily an aside rather than a focus for literary scholars. To read this text as a travel narrative

is a challenge because of these previous labels. But, at the core of this text is a journey, and at the core of a journey is Nation. All travel narratives are constructs of the author, and this one is no different. What is most intriguing in this choice of text is the ideological journey it portrays—an author who is traveling through a land, both foreign and domestic to her, as she argues for inclusion in that Nation, but is irrevocably tied to that whence she came.

Mary Davys wrote primarily in England, and her travel narrative is a journey through England. Thus, the focus of the first chapter is an Anglo-Irish experience in England. I feel this is an important perspective to take. In considering the assertion of many scholars, that the English in Ireland or the Irish Protestant identified themselves as English, Davys's work is a litmus test for such a claim. It tests that identification with complicated results. In this chapter, I argue that the ambiguity in Davys's nationality demonstrates how an Anglo-Irish author struggles to identify as English while not participating in institutionalized critiques of the Irish national character, critiques that associate all inhabitants of Ireland with barbarism and extremism.

In the second chapter, I consider the genre of autobiography and the era of Jacobitism. Though the bloody English civil wars were half a century past, this conflict between supporters of the Stuart house—called the Jacobites—and supporters of the Hanoverian succession established at the death of Queen Anne in 1714, continued to influence the negotiation of Nation in the Kingdom of Great Britain. *The Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, published in 1748, demonstrates this tension in both her reception by society and her response to that reception. This tension dictated which community Pilkington could imagine herself as did her gender and the importance of Virtue to that construction, for Pilkington had been labeled a whore before she wrote the first line of her memoirs. After a poorly planned book exchange in her bedroom late at night while she was still married, an exchange which Pilkington vehemently claimed was

nothing more, the ensuing scandal colored not only the texts she wrote, but the life she was able to lead, and since she was labeled an “Irish whore,” the ideology of Nation breaks through revealing the very present connection between Nation and Virtue that is implied in Davys’s travel narrative. This connection, or barrier, illustrates how the collective experience of Nation, the imagined community of the Anglo-Irish, worked to limit the boundaries of who might participate in the negotiations of the boundaries of nationhood. While Davys was also in a position wherein she needed to establish her virtuous reputation, the ambiguity with which she wrote provided some measure of protection. If there were any compromising situations in her past, they would have been left in obscurity once she left Ireland because she does not identify any specific details of her past. That Pilkington’s indiscretion was documented and very public superseded the literary promise she showed as a young poet which illustrates those at the center of the negotiations of Nation sought to silence the margins and the threat they posed to establishing a cohesive construct.

I argue that autobiography, gender, and Nation meet—even collide—in Pilkington’s *Memoirs* and show how the interstices of these ideologies construct this author’s idea of a national consciousness. Pilkington’s claims of a prestigious ancestry, which are more ambiguous than she acknowledges as they alternately align her with both sides of the hyphen even as they contradict each other, provide a construct of an individual experience of Nation as it exists outside of the center. The individual experience, which is the basis of an autobiography, ruptures the metanarratives of Nation and depicts the paradox of this hyphenated culture.

In Chapter Three, I analyze the fictional constructs of Nation in Elizabeth Griffith’s most popular and most criticized novel, *The History of Lady Barton*, published in 1771. Griffith published as a playwright and a novelist more frequently and widely than any of the other writers

discussed in this project. Like Davys and Pilkington, though, she wrote for profit to support her family. Unlike Davys and Pilkington, Griffith was married, to an Irish farmer, and this provided her with a more stable cultural position than a widow traveling alone or a disgraced, divorced scribbler. This difference is reflected in her text as she interrogates the construction of Virtue rather than work to establish its presence. *Lady Barton* is Griffith's only novel set in Ireland and presents a microcosm of Anglo-Irish society including transplanted Englishmen, English landlords born in Ireland with vast estates, and, occasionally, glimpses of the Native Irish. And her title character represents the cultural conflict of the hyphenated Anglo-Irish as she is an English-born gentlewoman living in Ireland and married to an Anglo-Irish landlord.

Griffith's novel is published during the decades when the government of Ireland, still subject to the English Parliament, is debating the constitutional position of Ireland within Great Britain. It is in this period that some of the most recognizable voices of Anglo-Irish politics arise including Henry Grattan and Edmund Burke. The core of these debates rested on the nebulous position of Ireland since the country could not definitively be called colony or Kingdom. And in these debates, one sees the stages of Geertz, especially the desire to stabilize and crystallize the boundaries of a Nation of Ireland. Griffith's novel reflects the tensions inherent in a hyphenated culture and the fragility of such constructions of Nation.

Rising alongside these politically charged negotiations is the literary construct of sensibility. Sensibility is an inherently contradictory concept in which the subject experiences spontaneous, intense delicate feelings—feelings which cannot be experienced by rougher, less refined subjects—but must also experience these feelings in socially acceptable ways so as not to descend into the extremes of emotion. Thus, the delicacy of feeling must be individually, but appropriately experienced. Bound by constructs of gender, the line between appropriate and

scandalous could be crossed easily by a gentlewoman, as Lady Barton's character illustrates. In fact, it was the mere questioning of virtue that ultimately destroys her despite her relative innocence (her infidelity was in thought rather than action). And the men she is caught between, the Irish Lord Lucan and the English Col. Walters, are unable to stop her destruction by their competing ideologies. I argue that the death of Lady Barton demonstrates that the urge to limit and crystallize a construct of an Anglo-Irish nation works to silence or excise those voices that disrupt the construct.

In the final chapter, I consider the work of Mary Tighe and analyze her sonnets, which create an evanescent image of Ireland in the late eighteenth century. Tighe published less than the other three writers, but enjoyed more critical acclaim in what might be described as rarified literary circles. Perhaps most important about her work is that she was participating in a unique literary movement of this period, unique in that it was driven predominantly by women writers—the Sonnet Revival. Tighe is best known for her verse retelling of the legend of Cupid and Psyche, *Psyche; or, the Legend of Love*. But in a study of nationality, I feel her most potent work is in her lyrical representations of Nation that are found in the sonnets of Ireland.

Tighe's work was composed during the tumultuous final years of the eighteenth century and what would be the final years of a separate Irish Parliament. The Act of Union in 1800 dismantled the Irish government and effectively subordinated the country to the Kingdom of Great Britain. The 1798 rebellion of the United Irishmen brought the tensions of the previous decades into sharp focus for the English government, and a definitive answer to the "Irish question" was needed. As Anglo-Irish Ireland disappeared into the folds of a British government, Tighe depicts a poignant picture of Ireland as fading away, sometimes quietly and sometimes angrily, but disappearing nonetheless.

Like the other texts in this project, this analysis examines the individual experience of Nation. The sonnet, with its problem-solving function, works to reconcile the competing ideologies that exist in a hyphenated culture. However, it also offers a form in which the author can construct an individual lyrical subjectivity in which to explore the contradictions inherent in hyphenation. In a turbulent political period, Tighe assumes the mantle that Shakespeare and Milton had done centuries earlier and creates brief moments that illustrate how Nation crystallizes in her construction. Unlike Davys, Pilkington, or Griffith, I argue that Tighe constructs an idea of Nation that is truly individual, working not to incorporate itself into a dominant collective experience, but to create an individual experience of Nation that is private, yet revealing.

The four writers represent a trend in the evolving national consciousness of the Anglo-Irish through the course of the eighteenth century. This evolution occurs as part of a larger, global shift in defining nationality as the age of Empire rises and the religious-political state disappears. Nation becomes a construct of conqueror and conquered. But the uncertain status, the lack of a definitive label as colony or kingdom, plagued not only Great Britain, but the Anglo-Irish ideology of Nation as well. These authors illustrate a shift from the loyal English citizen—who just happens to live/come from Ireland—to a nostalgic Irish sonneteer. But these are representations of Nation from the margins; thus they are not recognized as part of the collective experience of Nation, but are still active in negotiating this. It is most revealing to consider how the margin speaks in the stabilization and crystallization of Nation as it reveals how a culture works to reconcile a hyphen that is, in itself, a contradiction.

The Inspiration

In 1982, D. George Boyce sought to redirect political scholarship on Ireland not only away from revisionist mythologies of Irish nationalism, but also away from narrow representations of the political voice of Irish politics.²⁷ This project expands on Boyce's critical endeavor by listening to voices from the margin, often far out of the public sphere of popular politics. I agree that there is more to eighteenth-century Ireland than Swift, Burke, Grattan, or Tone. Ideas of Nation did not only concern great men with grand visions. Mary Davys, Laetitia Pilkington, Elizabeth Griffith, and Mary Tighe considered themselves, and indeed were a part of the collective experience of nationness that evolved during the eighteenth century.

In 2002, Cork University Press published two additional volumes to the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature*.²⁸ The original project, the first three volumes, was a comprehensive project itself compiling a history of Irish literature and a suggestion of Irish identity, occurring during the final years of The Troubles. Initially, the project was criticized for its political bias, but that was followed by an equally passionate response to the choice of authors. The first three volumes revealed a gap in the traditional canon of Irish literature, the experience of women in Irish society. Building on that original project, the editors of Volumes IV and V created an exhaustively comprehensive history of Irish women's writing.²⁹ The *Field Day* anthologies helped create a concept of Irish literature as a living tradition grounded in a long national history, even in the periods where Nation was only imagined. The volumes on Irish women's writing, rising out of the growing feminist scholarship in academics, added voices to that imagined.

²⁷ D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1995).

²⁸ Seamus Deane, ed., *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (Derry: Field Day Theater Co., 1990).

²⁹ Angela Bourke, et al., ed., *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing: Irish Women's Writing and Traditions*, Vol. 4 and 5, (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

Chapter One

The Discourse of the Travel Narrative in Mary Davys' *The Fugitive; or, A Country Ramble*:

Creating and Negotiating Anglo-Irish Identity in the Kingdom of Great Britain

The literary history of the travel narrative ranges from methodically scientific studies of the physical world to modern travel guides offering tips on dining and shopping. One can begin with Herodotus' tour of Greece and end up with Eyewitness Travel Guides. The travel narrative has provided a means for its readers to understand cultures outside of their daily lives. But the travel narrative of Mary Davys attempts, at the same time, to understand a culture within the daily life of the author.

It is the title that first invites an interesting comparison. A fugitive can be a tale of "passing interest" or someone in "the act of running away."³⁰ Both represent generally accepted concepts in eighteenth-century writing. But the word is a paradox, and it permeates the personal narrative of Mary Davys's *The Fugitive; or, A Country Ramble*.³¹ A fugitive exists in a state of constant fluctuation with no recognizable home. The word connotes running away or escaping, but the term undeniably implies leaving an undesirable place. It is a state of fleeting identity and an identity in transition. And this fugitive, Mary Davys, is leaving Ireland.

³⁰ Oxford English Dictionary Online. Entry "fugitive, A5." Accessed July 3, 2008. Both of these definitions have usage around the year *The Fugitive* was published.

³¹ Mary Davys, *The fugitive. Containing, several very pleasant passages, and surprizing adventures, observ'd by a lady in her country ramble; being both useful and diverting for persons of all ranks. Now first published from her own manuscript*, London, 1705, Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue, Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale Group.

Conversely, a ramble describes an entirely different experience, one closer to the secondary concept of “fugitive” as it is articulated in eighteenth-century literature—the tale of passing interest. A ramble is an aimless journey, one of exploration and pleasurable experience. As a description of a writer, a fugitive who rambles presents a quaint framework for a simple tale of a casual journey that doesn’t seek purpose but experience. But the word fugitive is also the antithesis of ramble. Both are negotiating a relationship with the land/country/nation, but the Rambler does so with the security of self whereas the fugitive is searching desperately for such security. A Rambler exists within a community, the fugitive without. It is this paradox in Mary Davys’s *The Fugitive; or, A Country Ramble* that I will explore in the following chapter. The incongruence of rambling and fleeing or of belonging and/or being outside reveals the complex socio-political construction of an Anglo-Irish identity in Ireland and England during the post-Restoration era of the early eighteenth century.

The late seventeenth century was a turbulent period in Irish history. Cromwell, in the 1649 massacres at Drogheda and Wexford, and William III, in the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, ravaged the Irish land and people in battles for control of the English government. English wars fought on Irish soil paid for with Irish lives. It is against this historical backdrop that *The Fugitive* is unconsciously cast. Davys’s tale relates an objective, and, in her words, “almost exactly true”³² representation of the English in England. While the story appears innocuous—she offers it as a means of entertainment for a discerning audience; the text is laced, both implicitly and explicitly, with the ideological struggle between the competing nationalities that simultaneously exist in a writer who is neither Irish, nor English, but both. Moreover, the palimpsest in this text does not only conceal the anxiety over national identity, but an anxiety over, and defiance of, gender identity. Davys is equally bound by the social standards of

³² Ibid., dedication, 6.

womanhood, which she has compromised by the mere act of picking up the pen. Thus, this narrative reveals not only the nationalistic ideologies that occupy the political arena at this time, but also the ideology of gender as it is dictated in the genre conventions of a travel narrative since the narrator of the journey must assume an authority over that which is being described, an authority traditionally not afforded to women writers. Deploying the cultural capital of the travel narrative, Mary Davys's *The Fugitive* illustrates a pivotal moment in the histories of both England and Ireland as one culture struggles for dominance and one for recognition.

The travel narrative provided a means by which the reader could experience a foreign culture, but these texts also worked to reaffirm the preeminence of the traveler/writer's own culture. Mary Louise Pratt first explores this transculturation construction in her 1992 book, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. She argues that while the travel narrative is an active construction of the foreign destination that is being described/proscribed, it is equally constructing the domestic identity of the traveler/author. Pratt contends that "travel books by Europeans about non-European parts of the world went (and go) about creating the 'domestic subject' of Euroimperialism."³³ The reciprocity that Pratt describes materializes in gender palimpsests as well. In presenting herself as a woman writer, Davys expands the concepts of both woman and writer by constructing an authorial voice that challenges the concept that only men can experience travel, and that traveler equals man.

Ambiguity in a Hyphenated Culture

In the first few pages of Davys's travel journal relating her first adult excursion into England, she presents a carefully worded account of her nationality and, thus, her ideological position. Describing her years in Ireland, she writes, "Fortune...had toss'd me out of one hand into the other, for the space of Eighteen or Twenty Years, and had all that time made me her

³³ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (New York: Routledge, 1992) 4.

sport.”³⁴ The instability she describes casts her not as a content rambler, but as a fugitive from the capricious nature of Ireland. However, in the opening pages of the narrative where she begins describing her journey, she acknowledges a different, more diplomatic tone towards Ireland. She writes, “When I was in the sixth year of my Age I began my Ramble...carried by my Mother into *Ireland*.”³⁵ In contrast to the chaotic description she provides in the Preface, the second page of the narrative expresses a different attitude. Ireland is a “a place very much despis’d by those who know it not, and valued by them that do...such as have gone there without prejudice, and have given their opinions without partiality.”³⁶ This contrast suggests to the reader the conflict, and ultimately the paradox, of her ideological position as a local and an outsider. While none of these allusions to her origins assert that she was either English- or Irish-born, they do emphasize the paradox that Ireland is both capricious and valued. The ambiguity created by the absence of a claim to a birth place (and no birth certificate exists to establish this) typifies her conflicting approach to nationality. The concept of a hybrid nationality is present, diplomatically arranged by Davys to take advantage of and avoid the dangers of the issue of national origin in an era in which this identity, that of being “Anglo-Irish”, is only the beginning stages of development.³⁷

This ambiguity, however, has troubled scholars who try to place Davys within a tradition of Irish or English literature. There seems to be a need to identify her with one or the other country. The way scholars categorize Davys’s nationality ranges from a positive claim that she was born in Dublin in 1674 to carefully worded descriptions that avoid making any positive claim to the birthplace of the author. But accepting the ambiguity of her birth and ethnicity

³⁴ Davys, Preface, 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2. Author’s italics.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷ “Anglo-Irish” is an anachronistic term when used to describe the English in Ireland in the eighteenth century. And it in no way encompasses the variety of cultures that it seems to label. However, this broad term is useful in distinguishing the English in Ireland from the native Irish population, as the issues of a hybrid culture exist in all varieties of the Anglo-Irish. See my introduction for more information.

allows for a more socially and politically aware reading of her texts. This need, or even imperative, to categorize her based on national origins should illustrate the necessity of understanding how her nationality and her gender impacted not only how she constructed her textual self, but also how that construction was dictated by her readers. Falsely asserting a certainty about her origins obscures the value in ambiguity. In order to appreciate fully the cultural value of Mary Davys as a writer in the tradition of Irish literature, a fairly new supposition and my approach in this chapter, one has to consider how both she and her critics have categorized her nationality given that how a person identifies national loyalty in the eighteenth century had serious ramifications both socially and politically.

Eighteenth-century biographies, like the *Biographia Dramatica* in 1782, claimed that Davys was born in Ireland.³⁸ There is little mention of her beyond this brief entry until the twentieth century. Most contemporary scholars have taken the assumptions of this encyclopedia as fact and incorporated this birthplace, asserting she was Irish-born, into their biographical analysis. For instance, Frans De Bruyn's entry in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* unequivocally states that Davys was born in Dublin, as does Roger Lonsdale's pivotal anthology, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*.³⁹ Even the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* claims that she was "almost certainly born in Ireland."⁴⁰ These sources, however, can provide no support for those claims because no archival evidence exists.

Some older entries, like Myra Reynolds's 1920 *Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760*, refer to Davys's husband and his profession as an Anglican clergyman at St. Patrick's in order to

³⁸David Erskine Baker, "Mary Davys" in *Biographia dramatica, or, a companion to the playhouse: ... By David Erskine Baker, Esq. A new edition: carefully corrected and continued from 1764 to 1782*, vol. 1 of 2, (London, 1782) 118-119.

³⁹Frans De Bruyn, "Mary Davys" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: British Novelists, 1660-180*, Part 1: A-L, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1985) 132. Roger Lonsdale, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 102-103.

⁴⁰Paula R. Backscheider, 'Davys, Mary (1674-1732)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7327>>, accessed 22 Oct 2007.

imply the Irish connection without the fact of her birthplace.⁴¹ Reynolds's implication that Davys is of Irish origin is problematic. Seventeenth-century European nationalism was closely associated with religion, and the Irish nobility reflected this by their embrace of Roman Catholicism. Thus, singling out her marriage to an Anglican clergyman even if he was Irish-born, would suggest a closer connection with England rather than with Ireland. In 1972, Alison Adburgham described Davys as "the wife of an Irishman", which again uses Peter Davys as the means of identifying her origin.⁴² However, she characterizes Davys's *Familiar Letters* as having an "atmosphere of British middle-class realism", which likely stemmed from her time in England where she wrote the novel. Adburgham also describes an epistolary relationship between Swift and Davys. While there is some contradiction here, these claims still appear to highlight a firm association with Ireland, but avoid the necessity of further factual support beyond the existing marriage license. In 1990, *The Biographical Dictionary of English Women Writers* lists the geographical locations where Davys is known to have lived—Dublin, York, and Cambridge—but gives no birthplace or descriptions like "Irish-born" or "wife of an Irishman." She is simply, "Mary Davys...widowed in 1698."⁴³

Recognizing this attempt to connect Davys with Ireland, or the opposite attempt to avoid connecting her with either England or Ireland, establishes that such critical assumptions of an Irish identity reveal a tendency to overlook the complex nature of an *Anglo*-Irish identity as it was experienced at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, to make such connections assumes that Davys has been considered a part of an Irish literary tradition when, in practice, she has not. Davys does not appear in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* or in the

⁴¹ Myra Reynolds, *The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1920) 231.

⁴² Alison Adburgham, *Women in Print: Writing Women and women's Magazines From the Restoration to the Accession of Victoria*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972) 71-72.

⁴³ Maureen Bell, et al., *A Biographical Dictionary of English Women Writers 1580-1720* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1990) 63-64.

Oxford Encyclopedia of Irish Literature, as the writers in later chapters due.⁴⁴ There could be a number of reasons for these omissions, not the least of which is Davys's relative obscurity in both her century and today. The lack of factual information regarding her origins has only complicated that obscurity. However, in 2002, she was included in the landmark addition to the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing—Irish Women's Writing and Traditions*.⁴⁵ The editors excerpted not only her novel *Familiar Letters, Betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady* and her never-performed comedy, *The Self Rival*, but also the rarely discussed text of *The Fugitive*. Her inclusion in this anthology works to incorporate Davys into the tradition of Irish literature written in English and identifies her as an Irish writer by acknowledging the connection with Ireland that is present in her texts rather than external evidence from her public life. Siobhan Kilfeather, in her introduction to Davys's work, briefly addresses the political difficulty of an author who is Anglo-Irish and a woman: "Davys is aware of the prejudices which accompany representations of Ireland in English writing, but as a woman she is situated in a different mythologizing strain than are the men of her culture and class."⁴⁶ This interpretation of Davys's nationality is supported by the author's words in opening pages of the *Fugitive*, as quoted above. However, this interpretation has been obscured by the aforementioned desire to identify Davys as Irish through external evidence rather than looking to the intratextual narrative of nationality embedded in *The Fugitive*. Kilfeather's conclusions illustrate the multiple prejudices that a writer in Davys' cultural position, an Anglo-Irish woman with vague beginnings, would confront. This reading of Davys highlights the necessity that she be aware of the prevailing social and political

⁴⁴ Henry Boylan, ed., *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1998). *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Robert Welch, (Oxford University Press, 2000) *Oxford Reference Online*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press) accessed October 22, 2007

<http://www.oxfordreference.com.spot.lib.auburn.edu/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t55>

⁴⁵ Angela Bourke, et al, *Irish Women's Writing and Traditions*, vol. IV of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 777.

attitudes she would have to negotiate by publishing her journey through England. However, Kilfeather claims that because Davys was a woman “situated in a different mythologizing strain” than writers such as Wycherley or Congreve, she must confront limitations on a woman’s public space in addition to the English perceptions of Irish writers. The political unconscious that permeates *The Fugitive* grows out of this double-bind of Davys’s cultural position. Thus, exploring the political aspects of her texts provides a methodology that incorporates the author into not only a tradition of the travel narrative, but into the political sphere as well.

A review of the literary scholarship that moves beyond strictly anthological or encyclopedic considerations shows a focus in early to late twentieth-century scholarship on Davys’ contribution to the development of the novel. This scholarship seeks to incorporate her novels into the history of that genre, which had been dominated by canonical writers such as Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding. This scholarship is founded in the criticism of Ian Watt’s *Rise of the Novel*⁴⁷ for not including women novelists, especially those who seem to have influenced later male novelists. Since she preceded Watt’s male triumvirate, Davys’s novels have been cast as foundational rather than marginal. Her published work is considered a decisive body of texts, primarily *The Reform’d Coquette; Or, Memoirs of Amoranda*, because of her development of archetype of the coquette. One example of this direction is William H. McBurney’s 1959 article, “Mrs. Mary Davys: Forerunner of Fielding.”⁴⁸ This analysis of Davys’s work provided the first comprehensive consideration of her as a major contributor to the novel form. McBurney’s article is also the one most often cited as proof of Davys’s ‘Irishness.’ Since he unequivocally claims that she was “born in Dublin,” later researchers have taken this assumption and employed it as factual evidence, despite the lack of actual fact. He makes other claims such as describing her as

⁴⁷ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

⁴⁸ William H. McBurney, “Mrs. Mary Davys: Forerunner of Fielding,” *PMLA*, 74 (1959): 348-55.

“happily married” though, again, he provides no evidence to support that. In his later 1963 book, *Four Before Richardson: Selected English Novels, 1720-1727*, McBurney repeats the same misstatements about her past.⁴⁹ The continual references in later twentieth-century scholarship to McBurney’s work reveal an approach to Davys’s work that obscures the complexity of a travel narrative like *The Fugitive*. The unquestioned reproduction of assumptions to the point that they become fact cloaks valuable information that allows for more culturally accurate interpretations.

Following the themes in McBurney’s work, Margaret Doody’s 1974 *Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* explores Davys’ novels *The Reform’d Coquette* and *Familiar Letters* as precursors to Richardson’s novels—*Pamela*, *Clarissa*, etc. Here, Doody categorizes Davys as an English author grouping here with Penelope Aubin, Jane Barker, and Eliza Haywood.⁵⁰ Then, in 1988, her essay, “Swift Among the Women,” she changes this to “Irish women writers” and includes Laetitia Pilkington and Mary Barber.⁵¹ Doody claims that it is the association with Swift that characterizes Davys as Irish whereas her earlier work had claimed that the association with, and influence on, Richardson constituted Englishness. In a later essay, “Swift and Women”, Doody takes Davys’s *Irishness* further by asserting that Davys “identified...as Irish” and “felt a certain kind of Irish patriotism.” This was possible because “patriot women in times of crisis get more license to speak out.”⁵² I would argue that in 1705, Davys did not have such license; hence, one reads a number of conflicting statements about nationality in *The Fugitive*, which suggests that Davys intentionally did *not* identify herself as exclusively Irish. The progression in these three works, from English author to Irish patriot,

⁴⁹William H. McBurney, ed., *Four Before Richardson: Selected English Novels, 1720-1727*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963).

⁵⁰ Margaret Doody, *Natural Passions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974) 18.

⁵¹ Ibid., “Swift Among the Women,” in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 18 (1988) 68-92.

⁵² Ibid., “Swift and Women,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*, edited by Christopher Fox, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 108.

illustrates how ambiguous Davys's own representations of her nationality were. She has been included in a multitude of literary traditions depending on which particular text or vignette is most relevant to that tradition. Doody's textual evidence is also telling. In *Natural Passions*, she explores the didacticism and form in Davys's novels. However, her two later essays use the 1725 *The Merry Wanderer*, a revision of *The Fugitive*, to illustrate an Irish loyalism. Thus, Davys's novels are English, but her personal narrative is Irish. Such claims cannot be positive, and they illustrate the necessity of understanding how Davys positions herself through the entirety of her text rather than a line here or there.

In 1983, Jean Kern provided the first wholly feminist approach to Davys and begins by crediting McBurney as "the first to assess all her fiction."⁵³ She then establishes a literary relationship between Davys and other Anglo-Irish restoration dramatists such as Wycherley and Congreve. Criticizing McBurney's description of Davys's "'masculine temperament,'" Kern values Davys "because she wrote as a woman...who uses her inner experience as a basis for claiming the attention of the outer world."⁵⁴ Kern almost entirely separates Davys from her national background and focuses instead on the internal rhetoric of the texts. The merit of Kern's approach is that she takes the critiques of Watt's omissions to another level by providing a feminist framework through which to read Davys, but avoids the tangle of politics that accompanies her national identity.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, Davys's work experienced a relatively energetic rejuvenation. Linda Riley and Natasha Saje focused on the gender palimpsests imbedded in the novels *Familiar Letters* and *The Reform'd Coquette* respectively.⁵⁵ Riley uses

⁵³ Jean B. Kern, "Davys as a Novelist of Manners," *Essays in Literature* 10, no. 1 (spring 1983): 29-38.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁵ Linda Riley, "Mary Davys's Satiric Novel *Familiar Letters*: Refusing Patriarchal Inscription of Women," in *Cutting Edges: Postmodern Critical Essays on Eighteenth-Century Satire* ed. James E. Gill (Knoxville: University

McBurney's assertions of an Irish birth as a means of introducing Davys's position as a subversive author using satire to critique gender stratification. She briefly addresses the political overtones in *Familiar Letters*, which is established by the discussion over Tory/Whig politics between Berina and Artander, the correspondents of the novel.⁵⁶ Though this element of Davys's text, a political discussion stemming from current public debates and negotiations, seems appropriate for an examination of Riley's claims about nationality, the author instead employs it to illustrate the rational versus irrational aspects of gender identification. While the anxiety over gender constraints permeates *The Fugitive*, to hail the author as "Irish" overlooks an equally constraining anxiety over nationality. Saje's article, like Kern, McBurney, etc. looks at *The Reform'd Coquette* as it functions in the evolution of the novel genre. Using the archetype of the coquette, she uncovers the feminist palimpsest in the moral education of Amoranda. Saje, like Kern, avoids any designation of nationality choosing instead to provide a textual analysis focused on the cultural position of a woman writer.

Virginia Duff's 2001 contribution to the critical collection *The Eighteenth-Century Novel*, "I should not care to mix my breed: Gender, Race, Class, and Genre in Mary Davys's *The Accomplished Rake, or Modern Fine Gentleman*", introduces the concept of miscegenation into the criticism on Davys.⁵⁷ For Duff, the miscegenie is "the result of mixing of concepts of genders or races or classes."⁵⁸ In terms of race and class, she positions Davys as a miscegenie due to the author's identification with both Ireland and England. Devoting the first third of her article to the regional origins of Davys, Duff relies heavily on the work of Martha Bowden (discussed below)

of Tennessee Press, 1995) 206-221. Natasha Saje, "'The Assurance to Write, The Vanity of Expecting to be Read': Deception and Reform in Mary Davys's *The Reform'd Coquette*," *Essays in Literature* 23, no. 2 (Fall 1996) 165-177.

⁵⁶ Kern points out this discussion, but does not provide any context for it.

⁵⁷ Virginia Duff, "I should not care to mix my breed': Gender, Race, Class, and Genre in Mary Davys's *The Accomplished Rake, or Modern Fine Gentleman*," in *The Eighteenth-Century Novel* Vol. 1, ed. Susan Spencer (New York: Alms Press, Inc., 2001).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 311.

to establish the hierarchical organization of gender, nationality, and social class in *The Accomplished Rake*. The concept of the miscegene is an important contribution to the scholarship on Davys work, but also to the cultural significance of the ambiguity of nationality. The idea of a mixed identity provides a useful representation of the political ramifications of Davys's hyphenated nationality, which according to Duff, is a "term that indicates a miscegene person."⁵⁹ Duff's assertion that the term "Anglo-Irish" is a modern concept is helpful, but her claim that Davys was "a woman who was considered and considered herself Irish" echoes Doody's claim and, again, is not supported by Davys's texts. Eventually, Duff shifts the miscegene concept of Anglo-Irish nationality to a fact of being Irish, referring to Davys as "the Irishwoman" and "our Irish author."⁶⁰ The miscegene, however, should not be discarded. As a representation of a mixing of nationalities, this figure embodies the ambiguity inherent in *The Fugitive*. The conflicting statements in *The Fugitive* represent a miscegene more than an Irish author.

Most important to this reexamination of Mary Davys is the work of Martha Bowden.⁶¹ Beginning in 1996 with her article, "Mary Davys: self-presentation and the woman writer's reputation in the eighteenth century", her archival explorations of the author's life and work provided the first comprehensive consideration of Davys' Irish background, and she was the first scholar to positively assert the *ambivalence* of her nationality, which *Irish Women's Writing* would later echo. Bowden combines archival evidence—and the absence of such—with textual analysis in order to bring to the surface the discrepancies in how Davys has been characterized by literary scholars with the words that Davys uses to characterize herself. Countering the claims

⁵⁹ Ibid., 314.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 315, 317.

⁶¹ Martha Bowden, "Mary Davys: self-presentation and the woman writer's reputation in the eighteenth century," *Women's Writing* Vol. 3, no. 1 (1996): 17-33. --, introduction to *The Reform'd Coquette; Familiar Letters Betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady; and The Accomplished Rake* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999). --, "Silences, Contradictions, and the Urge to Fiction: Reflections on Writing About Mary Davys," *Studies in Literary Imagination* Vol. 36, no. 2 (fall 2003): 127-147.

of Doody, Duff, etc., Bowden makes no assertion that Davys considered herself Irish, but illustrates how the author worked to manipulate her national associations to suit her audience by looking at the self-presentation of Davys in *The Fugitive* and its later reincarnation, *The Merry Wanderer*.

In searching for details about the life of Mary Davys...one meets with multiple uncertainties—the contradictory information she gives about her life in her writing is matched with an obvious desire to make herself appear at once a marketable writer, a respectable woman, and a loyal citizen of Great Britain.⁶²

The “obvious desires” illustrate the interstices of identity that Davys had to negotiate in her texts. Bowden addresses the difficulty of establishing the author’s connections to Ireland and the manner in which Davys, in her literary personae, tries to address the prejudice that dictated her representation. She also considers the constraints placed on a professional woman writer—to be successful *and* respectable. While Bowden’s analyses offer the most comprehensive perspective of the work of Davys, critical work on the author has yet to address specific issues of nationality, which is surprising given the importance of such category. Likewise, studies of eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish nationality have rarely discussed female authors. Thus, this analysis of Davys’s travel narrative with its accompanying ambiguity demonstrates how she participates in the active constructions of nationness.

The following analysis is a historical contextualization of the significance of that ambiguity along with the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining it. In considering the political and social history of Ireland and England in the last decades of the seventeenth century and the first decades of the eighteenth century, the ambiguity presented in Davys’s national identity reveals the complicated political and social boundaries that illustrate the liminality, or

⁶² Bowden, “Mary Davys”, 17.

becoming, of what we now term the Anglo-Irish in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha claims that “it is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*...are negotiated.”⁶³ These domains of difference are the paradox of being a fugitive and a rambler. They are the construction of Englishness in the concept of *not Irish* and the construction of woman as *not man*. Where Ireland and England overlap, most literally in the figure of the Englishman in Ireland, the intersubjective and collective experiences had to be negotiated. Likewise, as a woman, the concept of writer had to be negotiated at the intersections of gender conventions. One could imagine this as cross-hatching out of which a liminal identity, one existing in the in-between, emerges just as questions of empire and colony grew increasingly important to both Irish and English governments. As a fugitive from Ireland and a rambler through England, Davys challenges the typical approaches to herself and her text, and out of this challenge, a historically framed analysis, one which applies social, political, and generic conventions at the turn of the eighteenth century, reads *The Fugitive* as a cultural artifact of a liminal culture.⁶⁴

Tradition, Travel, and Gender

The travel narrative is, as Mary Louise Pratt argues, a process of creating nationness, as Bhabha articulates that concept. The imperial eye of the English travel writer negotiates nationness through the collective experience of the traveler and the Other. However, the imperialistic tendencies of the travel writer are often blind to the influence of those outside the domains of power. Pratt argues:

⁶³ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge Classics, 2006) 2.

⁶⁴ I use the term liminality in its anthropological sense, using the work of Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep.

(The empire) habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis—beginning, perhaps, with the latter’s obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself.⁶⁵

Yet, when the traveler is only marginally a part of a dominant culture, in this case England, the eye of the traveler creates an even more complex identity, one that is situated in a doubly liminal space—a space in which she is becoming a part of something that is becoming. In such an ambiguous space, the use of tradition can work to confer subjectivity to one who lacks the inherent foundation to acquire it. Tradition, in this case a literary one, allows “the periphery of authorized power” to present “other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition.”⁶⁶ When voices from the margin write, tradition is irrevocably changed and seemingly stable ideas of nationness are ruptured in the presence of a periphery that is and is not a part of the Nation. Davys’s text offers a voice from the periphery that works to affirm and challenge how Ireland and England view nationality and how the British Empire constructs its margins in terms of a British national identity. Texts like Davys’s uncover the veil of empire and present the margin to the center by conforming to and rupturing the “obsessive need” of the imperial eye to construct the object as Other. Davys will construct even as she is being constructed.

As Bhabha argues, “the recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification” which can then, through its presentation of “other”, change tradition.⁶⁷ The periphery can change the past. Writing a travel narrative, like all forms of writing, is an act of claiming subjectivity that invokes the cultural capital of literary tradition. Since *The Fugitive* invokes the tradition of the travel narrative, Davys assumes a partial identification of the Nation

⁶⁵ Pratt, 6.

⁶⁶ Bhabha, 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

that tradition imparts. It is within the first pages of *The Fugitive* that she employs the language of the travel narrative. In her dedication to Esther Johnson, where she has drawn a “short sketch” of Johnson’s “perfection”, Davys follows this description, which is itself of means of partial identification, with a short explanation of her text. It is a “Trifle”, or, “a plain Relation of the variety of Accidents and Passages which usually happen to those whose Stars have ordain’d them to wander...they are not barely probable only, but almost exactly true...real Events, just as they happen’d, without running into Romance.”⁶⁸ She follows this description with a similar claim at the end of the preface: “I will not say that every Circumstance of the book is true to a tittle, but the Ground and Foundation of almost every Story is a matter of Fact, and what I have not taken upon Credit from any Body, but have been a witness to the greatest part myself.”⁶⁹ These are the claims of truth directed at the reader. It is an important, if obvious, move to distinguish *The Fugitive* from fictional genres in general, and romance in particular. She offers this text as a record of her observations, a “plain Relation.” This text is firmly outside of the realm of imaginary literature, which allows for the tradition of the travel narrative to emerge as a governing convention.

Charles Batten, in 1978’s *Pleasurable Instruction*, provided the first extensive and comparative study of travel narratives of this period, specifically seeking to compile a list of conventions for such writing. He claims that the travel narrative had a “firmly defined tradition” by the eighteenth century and that tradition, as it developed over the century, “elevated the genre to the rank of poesy” and aligned it with more established genres of literature.⁷⁰ This “firmly defined tradition” offered a path by which one could create subjectivity, especially to writers

⁶⁸ Davys, Dedication, 6.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Preface, 3.

⁷⁰ Charles Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) 3, 25.

who had no inherent claim to it, those writers on the periphery of the public sphere. However, while tradition presented the opportunity to such writers to “restage the past”, as Bhabha argues, the writer must first conform to the demands of genre.⁷¹ Thus, in her country ramble described in *The Fugitive*, Davys must first invoke this tradition even as she breaks with it.

Like other travel writers, Davys attempted to elevate her prose, but she does this indirectly. She admits in the preface that her text “wants three or four of the Modern Traces and Embellishments”, which she lists “as Prophaneness, Baudy, Faction, and a general contempt of Religion.”⁷² Though the language of her admission takes the form of an apology that her text is wanting, her implicit criticism of “Modern” literature serves to place her narrative above that which she characterizes so harshly, elevating it herself to the level of poesy. A position like this confirms Batten’s claim that travel writers considered themselves above writers of fiction, or at least that authors and readers alike considered travel writing to be more “serious” than other genres like the novel. She asks, in a decidedly sarcastic tone, that “if the Reader can pass by those *faults* (my italics)” and “meet with something that will please”, then she has accomplished her goal. And the goal for an eighteenth-century travel narrative, according to Batten, is to provide pleasurable instruction to the reader. Since traveling beyond the borders of Britain was a privilege for few, the travel narrative provided a mode for the reader to experience the traveler’s encounters and to learn from them. Thus, a travel narrative served to provide both enjoyment and enlightenment for the reading public: “[T]he travel account directed at the general reader, the one in search of something more than assistance in preparing for his own travels, always aimed at blending pleasure with instruction in order to achieve an artistically pleasing literary

⁷¹ Bhabha, 31.

⁷² Davys, Preface, 2.

experience.”⁷³ And Davys illustrates this by describing her text as a “variety of Accidents and Passages” that avoids “Prophaneness, Baudy, Faction”, among other literary transgressions and gives her readers with “something that may please.” To please, however, was a complicated objective in *The Fugitive*. Words like “prophaneness” and “baudy,” even “faction,” were all associated with Irish culture as well as literary genres, and Davys needed to please an English audience, giving this statement more depth than previously considered. In her attempts to pleasing instruct, Davys was also negotiating her reception by the English reader. It appears that in order for her text to please, she must distance herself from Ireland.

In addition to the pleasing nature of the instruction, as Batten articulates, the text needed to provide a picture with “descriptions that are novel in content and clear in the manner in which they portray the country”⁷⁴ because this instruction, as Batten claims, was “not about the traveler, but about the countries he visited.”⁷⁵ Thus, tradition dictated that the center of the narrative was place, as opposed to person. Davys accomplishes this with brief descriptions of her physical environment: [T]he Gardens, which were very fine...the Trees were dress’d in all their Gaiety, and the little Birds were in the height of all their Mirth, the Beautiful Flowers gave the greatest content to the Eye and Smell, and the little Fishes in the Ponds, peept out to see the Rising Sun.⁷⁶ Such description seek to inspire “in their readers an emotional response to the beauties of a particular geographic location” which makes the author subservient to the place.⁷⁷ By placing England at the center of the narrative, and providing a description of a typical English garden in such glowing discourse, Davys has again invoked tradition in order to connect with her English readers.

⁷³ Batten, 25.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 119.

⁷⁶ Davys, 14.

⁷⁷ Batten, 29.

Arrangement is equally important to generic convention in this genre. The travel narrative is, by nature, autobiographical. The journey, related in first person, is a story of the traveler's experience. However, Batten argues that it would be imprudent to read such narratives as "unrestrained autobiography", what Batten claims is the most significant mistake that nineteenth and twentieth-century scholars have done in treating such texts.⁷⁸ Yet, reading as an unrestrained biography is primarily how most scholars have approached not only the *Fugitive*, but her other works as well. Misunderstanding the expectations of the eighteenth-century reader in terms of the travel narrative and the impact of those expectations on the construction of the text has led to skewed evaluations, if not a total disregard, of the textual significance of the author's representations, especially in terms of nationality.

But autobiographical elements should not be discarded. This tradition of the travel narrative developed in conjunction with an increasing awareness of the subjectivity of the individual that characterized Enlightenment philosophy. The travel narrative became an active site for exploring that subjectivity because the writer is always at the center of the text, either explicitly or implicitly. Casey Blanton suggests in *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* that "the entanglement between self and world was one of the central concerns of travel writers" in the eighteenth century.⁷⁹ The narrative, then, becomes a place in which the author works to create a subjective position within the world as an individual. But it also impels the author and the reader to situate themselves in the larger world in the terms of their nationality.

In addition to privileging place over author, as tradition dictated, a woman writing a travel narrative had an equally important responsibility. As Kristi Siegel explains in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*, "the tension between the constraints of travel

⁷⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁹ Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (London: Twayne Publishers, 1997) 11.

writing posed and the benefits that it promised surface as one of the genre's distinguishing characteristics" in narratives written by women.⁸⁰ The constraints were manifested in those demand of womanhood—virtue, domesticity, etc.—while the benefits included a public voice in the construction of nationality, of being included in the negotiation of the “intersubjective and collective experience of *nationness*.” Siegel characterizes these constraints in suggesting that “to get an audience, a woman needed to provide material that was reasonable exciting; to keep an audience, she needed to remain a lady.”⁸¹ For example, Siegel notes that Lady Montague, in her *Turkish Letters*, limited the comparison between herself and her exotic companions. By limiting this comparison, Montague was able to maintain a safe distance from less than ideal representations of women since her Turkish counterparts were decidedly Other. Furthermore, in deference to gender, “most early travel writing (by women) began with an apology” that in some way acknowledged the inappropriateness of writing and traveling as a woman. However, Davys does not offer any real apology for daring to travel and write. The only transgression that she admits to is the possibility that her account might be boring. Remaining a lady is an implicit rather than explicit act in this text. She accomplishes this through her pleasurable instruction which describes not only England, but the virtuous woman as well.

Davys provides several vignettes that invoke a comparison between different women with the aim of establishing the appropriate behavior of a lady. One tale describes a young woman, with the highest sense of morality, who is placed in an unfortunate situation in which it is her virtue that wins her the ultimate reward. The woman had “wound herself into the favor of the best Families hereabouts” by her “Air and Mein” in addition to the “sharpness of her Wit.”⁸²

⁸⁰ Kristi Siegel, “Intersections: Women’s Travel and Theory” in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, edited by Kristi Siegel, (New York: Peter Lange Publishing, Inc., 2004) 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸² Davys, 90.

After agreeing to marry the son of the family, the woman travels to London with a cousin, who is meant to be her chaperone, but must lodge at an inn halfway there. During the night, her “true Love” of music draws her out of her room.⁸³ Returning, the woman enters the wrong bedroom and is forced to invite the man, who threatens to rape her, to the wedding as a means of preserving her secret and her virtue as she claims that “she would purchase her Freedom at any Rate, which did not touch her Honor.”⁸⁴ A day before the wedding, the stranger arrives and falsely accuses this woman of infidelity in front of her husband-to-be. The groom unquestioningly accepts the stranger’s account and “without staying for her Answer, flung out of the House like a fury, and bid Defiance to all in it, for he was resolved to see them no more.”⁸⁵ The stranger then admits to the woman, “the same Measures I took with you, would have been sufficient to have made the severest Vertues⁸⁶ among them totter.” As she demonstrated her strict devotion to honor, she is rewarded with marriage to this stranger, who will now trust her implicitly given the outcome of the situation.⁸⁷ Davys is then a guest at the house of this couple and relates that “our Entertainment was such as we might have expected from one of her Fortune and Character.”⁸⁸ This story helps to establish Davys’s knowledge and approval of the requirement to “remain a lady.” However, it also illustrates the difficulty of doing so in a world dominated by men, symbolically representing her struggles with the demands of genre and gender.

Davys also provides examples of women who fall short of idealized constructions of womanhood. In describing the marriage of a male friend, she paints the wife as “the most

⁸³ Ibid., 92.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 95.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁸⁶ This is an early to mid-seventeenth century spelling of ‘virtue’ as used by Dryden and Milton, a small but significant choice.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 110.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 111.

Perverse, Bawling, Scolding, Revengeful, Ill-nature'd Brute in the Universe.”⁸⁹ Illustrating sympathy with the husband, Davys declares if “thou wert mine, I would send thee for a venture to the Great Mogul.” She distances herself from this woman, not only by describing her so undesirable, but by offering compassion to the husband: “Truly, said I, your condition calls for the greatest Pity, and I wish my Abilities were as good as my Will is, towards redressing your Grievances.”⁹⁰ Thus, her sympathy for this troubled husband works to distance her from the deplorable character of this ill-tempered wife. These short sketches of her encounters give Davys the opportunity to situate herself firmly within the constraints of gender; however, they also reveal the anxiety of a woman not only traveling alone, but a writing woman as well.

Batten’s generic conventions, Blanton’s tangle of self and world, and Siegel’s constraints on the woman travel writer all help to frame *The Fugitive* as something more than unrestrained autobiography and more than the ramble that Davys claims in the title. Siegel claims that in women’s travel writing “travel writers, to some degree, construct their own persona” through the use of genre conventions, but “the process of travel constructs them in return.”⁹¹ The travel narrative is a powerful medium through which a burgeoning writing of a burgeoning nation (both England and Ireland), constructs an idea of Anglo-Irish woman writer. Against the backdrop of the English countryside, which is itself transitioning to the Kingdom of Great Britain,⁹² Davys reverses the construction of a travel narrative by seeking actively to incorporate herself into the nation by simultaneously adhering to and challenging how a travel narrative can create an identity.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁹¹ Siegel, 7.

⁹² The Act of Union in 1707 created the Kingdom of Great Britain. Previously, there had been three separate sister kingdoms of Ireland, England, and Scotland. The Act of Union of 1707 brought England and Scotland under the domain of Great Britain. The kingdom of Ireland, however, remained subordinate to Great Britain.

Creating Nation Out of the Narrative

As Mary Louise Pratt argues in *Imperial Eyes*, a journey that wanders through a foreign county creates a “domestic subject” as much as it constructs the destination. However, when a writer embarks on a journey through her own country, the typical ideological path of the travel narrative is ruptured. For instance, when writers like Lady Montague set out to explore the world, they did so with a solid sense of their nationality; they knew from whence they came. They were, unquestionably, English. However, *The Fugitive* has no such definitive identification with either England or Ireland. Therefore, it seems plausible that, when the nationality of the author has no certainty, the journey becomes a path to creating a subject position within that nation traveled in addition to the nation she is fleeing from, England and Ireland respectively.

While Pratt’s work focuses on the European/Non-European relationship of empire building, her methodology is equally applicable to the *intranational* relationship at the center of *The Fugitive*. By applying her methodology to Davys’s text, one can position the writer as a marginalized subject of a dominant culture, someone outside of the center of power or traditional concepts of Anglo-centric subjectivity, a modification of Pratt’s Euro-centric subjectivity. Thus, Davys’s narrative works to construct her as a domestic subject within a culture that does not recognize her as such. She employs the travel narrative, and its function of establishing the domesticity of the subject, to incorporate her into the center of power while it functions at the same time to challenge and rupture that center. The result of such negotiations is the ambiguity that permeates her *Fugitive*.

It is important to remember that, in writing this narrative, Davys is presenting England to the English, following the generic convention of making place the center of the text. Paradoxically, by placing England at the center of her narrative, she casts herself as a foreigner

while at the same time working to identify herself as a domestic subject. The duality of being observer and being observed takes on a new significance when one considers Davys's *The Fugitive* as a travel narrative with England at its center. Instead of a domestic subject developing out of the discourse of an experience in a foreign location, the authorial identity is created in the domestic location. Pratt uses the term "contact zone" to describe the ideological territory of the travel narrative, "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations."⁹³ However, she argues that this space is less about "separateness and apartheid" and more about "copresence, interaction", but it is "within radically asymmetrical relations of power."⁹⁴ But in *The Fugitive*, the territory moves from international to *intranational* because Ireland and England are not unfamiliar cultures, nor do they share a typical relationship of colony and empire. Thus the contact zone of *Fugitive* illustrates how a subject of two nationalities that exist in one nation, or more specifically in one individual that has at least some claim to both nations, negotiates the duality inherent in such hybrid designations. Writing in the contact zone allows a mutability of identity that grants the writer freedom to explore the contradictions of being in between. But it requires the author to confront the obstacles of being on the periphery. Pratt reiterates several times that travel narratives represent the "highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" that come with the socio-political relationship between colony and empire.⁹⁵ While mutability offered freedom, the ambiguous relationship between Ireland and England before and after the Act of Union in 1707 made this negation of a hybrid nationality treacherous.

⁹³ Pratt, 6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁵ This statement is not intended to reinscribe old narratives of colonial domination of Ireland by England. Recent scholarship works to move away from such nationalistic metanarratives. However, I argue the construction of colony and empire is a significant consideration in this period. The Act of Union of 1707, which created the Kingdom of Great Britain, did not include Ireland as a part of the empire.

Davy's journey leads her through England, and she initiates the discourse of nationality almost immediately by presenting a comparison between herself and the English reader. The comparison compels the reader to acknowledge the duality of her nationality, which invites the reader to imagine Davy as a fellow countrywoman, but also, unintentionally, as Other. Her primary audience is the English reader: she refers to Ireland as "*our* Neighboring Nation (my italics)."⁹⁶ She also opens with a dedication to Esther Johnson. There are multiple reasons why Davy may have chosen Johnson aside from the latter's connection to Swift, not the least of which is the idealized character of Johnson that she presents in the dedication. Johnson is "an accomplish'd Person of our Sex" and "a Blessing we cannot easily want."⁹⁷ She displays "all the Decencies of Behavior and Conversation that I could conceive in my Mind, much Knowledge, true Judgment, lively inoffensive Wit, Modesty without constraint, and perfect good Humour, and all without the least Inclination to Censure."⁹⁸ And, in a humble tone, she gently claims that Johnson might be "one to whom I am, perhaps, not altogether unknown."⁹⁹ Thus, the dedication to *The Fugitive* works to associate Davy with an idealized embodiment of English female virtue, Esther Johnson. These appear as deliberate attempts to identify the author as an English rambler rather than a fugitive from Ireland. This type of identification would offer her stability like that in unquestionably English travel writers.

While these statements assert an English nationality, she complicates such a designation by acknowledging and challenging prevailing prejudice toward the Irish. As I described above, Davy characterizes Ireland as "a place very much despis'd by those that know it not, and valued by them that do." While she does not directly identify herself as one or the other, by revealing

⁹⁶ Davy, 2.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Dedication, 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Dedication, 4.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Dedication, 5.

the fact that she had spent many years in that country suggests that she resides in the company of those who do value that place because she knows it. Davys recognizes that “some Peoples Aversion to (Ireland is) so great, that three lines more in its defence, would give them disrelish of the whole Book.” And the ambiguity here—is she or is she not Irish?—is useful.

“That Ireland was figured as England’s Other”, claims Deana Rankin, “has now become a critical commonplace” in studies of Anglo-Irish literature of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰ This construction represented “the anxiety (over being Other) of the English author between two countries and cultures.” In *Between Spenser and Swift*, Rankin asserts that writers in this liminal state would not have “necessarily considered themselves ‘Irish.’” In fact, she argues, “some perceived ‘Irishness’ as a birthright, others as an accident of birth, others still as a condition of temporary exile (like Davys and Swift), or even as an insult, a tarnish on their deeply felt Englishness.”¹⁰¹ That one would assume Davys to be Irish neglects these anxieties in favor of the “theorized Anglo-Irish” myth that in some ways has become standard in the field of Anglo-Irish studies. However, that anxiety—of being cast as Other, but desiring to demonstrate loyalty to England—illustrates the very ambiguity of *The Fugitive*.

One of Davys’s initial encounters illustrates the conflict in the author. At an inn, she meets a “Man... who had heard that some of the wild Irish were here.”¹⁰² In jest, she agrees to meet with the fellow and decides to encourage his assumptions about the Irish. The wild Irish, he describes, are “‘Foke we long Tails, that have no Cloaths on, but are cover’d laik my brown Caw a whome, with their own Hair.’”¹⁰³ Astounded by her seemingly ordinary appearance, his description demonstrates residual ideas about the Irish. Comparing them to cows, suggesting not

¹⁰⁰ Deana Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift: English Writing in Seventeenth-Century Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰² Davys, 3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4.

only a simple intellect but herd mentality as well, allows Davys to lay bare the asymmetrical power relationships that frame the contact zone when empire meets colony. The simian representation of the Irish invites a comparison to mythical concepts of English character. Linda Colley, in her 1992 *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, argues that the British national identity was often formed in the negative and refers to descriptions of the Irish as jovial in comparison to the mannerly, reserved, and morally superior Briton. Such a contrast worked to uncivilize the Irish, which casts them as a threat to the civilized Englishman. Davys encourages these ideas of the Irish by relating to this man a story of her fictional capture, at three years old, by the English who immediately “cut off my Tail, and scalded off my Hair.”¹⁰⁴ Her captors taught her to speak, walk upright, and civilized her so that she might leave the primitive life of the “waild Irish.” This is the anecdote that most scholars use to verify Davys’s Irish origins.¹⁰⁵ However, she refers to this man as one of her “own Country-men.” Such contradictions demonstrate the variable nature of Davys’s national identification, and by extension, the variable nature of being Anglo-Irish.

However, some of her statements do seem to endorse the prejudice that this story conveys. In reference to this man’s character, she claims that she thought she had “left all the Fools behind” upon leaving Ireland.¹⁰⁶ This commentary reflects the imperialistic tone of the typical English travel narrative. And while Siegel suggests that “some women managed to elude the imperialist tone”, Davys employs it to strengthen her own Englishness.¹⁰⁷

Again, this encounter illustrates Davys justifying her identification as English. Her typically satirical tone diffuses the question of what national ideology she adheres to. Her

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁵ For example, see Duff.

¹⁰⁶ Davys, 2-3.

¹⁰⁷ Siegel, 5.

prejudicial statement, that she “left all the Fools behind her”, also works to illustrate a “deeply felt Englishness”, in Rankin’s terms. At the same time, however, she abuses the character’s, and by implication English society’s, misconceptions of Irish society. The man’s ignorance provides not only amusement and instruction, but also an implied critique of prevailing prejudices that influence how the English interpret the Irish. By presenting and critiquing this stereotype, Davys identifies with the Irish side of her identity.

This encounter also illustrates the duality of the Anglo-Irish identity that Davys must contend with in post-Restoration England. While this implied critique of Irish stereotypes suggests an Irish pride, she is also defending her Englishness to a distrusting domestic subject and to her readership who might question the loyalty of anyone from the island. And mocking this man’s characterization of the Irish also serves to distance her from the Irish stereotype. Then, one must consider how this man functions in the narrative. In a strict construction of a travel narrative, he would be a native, the Other of the author. However, in Davys’s reverse construction, he is also a countryman, a representation of Englishness. The mocking comments and absence of explicit refutation of his misconception creates a distance that allows her the opportunity to identify more closely to her English traveling companions because her comments and association with Ireland would, in many respect, cast her as Other, rather than this foolish man.

But this ambiguity comes at a cost. This question of loyalties has its foundations in the political environment of Anglo-Irish relations around 1700. The late 1690s provided ample reason for a person with such a close association to Ireland to consider the kingdom of England as a chaotic place to be. The newly won throne of England by William III had been attained through a hard fight. The wars had compromised much of the social, political, and economic

systems that would have worked to stabilize Ireland and subsequently make it less of a threat to the English governance on the island. However, the issue of national loyalty and the relationship between the English, the Irish, and the Anglo-Irish is complicated. Davys is writing from a position of a Protestant in Ireland. Generally, English prejudice towards the Irish was directly connected to Catholicism, not as a religion, but as a social class and political entity. Catholicism meant a connection with continental Europe, specifically France. Davys's Protestantism, which would be affirmed by her marriage to an Anglican clergyman, would have worked to dissociate her from such ideas, yet her initial reception is characterized by this fear. It is here where Davys illustrates the price of being ambiguous. While she can connect herself to the Church of Ireland through her dead husband that is the only familial connection she uses to establish herself as Protestant. She mentions a brother, but offers no description other than "he was a Man of very good Circumstances."¹⁰⁸ However, Davys would have spoken with an accent that was distinguishable from an Englishman/woman. It may not have been the brogue of the stage Irishman, like Shakespeare's Captain Macmorris in *Henry V*, but it would have likely been noticeable.¹⁰⁹ As Davys presents herself, in the text and to the "natives", she must negotiate this vague territory of Anglo-Irish because she is, unquestionably, "-Irish."

Her accounts of her initial experience in England echo the contradiction of her preface. Davys's journey into England following her escape from Ireland has a rocky start that exposes the uncertainty and instability of her position in this domestic/foreign nation. The paradox of the rambling fugitive helps to establish the ambiguity of the author. As she negotiates the interstices that defined and undefined nationness, her narrative puzzles as much as it pleases.

¹⁰⁸ Davys, 133.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Welch and Bruce Stewart, "Stage Irish" in *Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 534.

Her next encounter is as unsettling as her first, and she continues to describe an environment that, while it is not explicitly hostile, provides little security or comfort to her. Leaving the inn and the fool, Davys moves to friend's house to find an even less hospitable atmosphere. She characterizes this experience in terms of being degraded. Upon arriving, Davys portrays the undesirable atmosphere: "Whether welcome or no, I knew not; but she took the greatest care by her Words and Actions to keep me from believing I was."¹¹⁰ She is treated as unworthy of the most basic expectations of hospitality. Given the importance of hospitality and its function of conferring status and worth to a household, the treatment Davys receives is quite shocking. Davys's very basic needs are poorly provided for leaving her dissatisfied and extremely uncomfortable.

She provides a detailed description of her first meal at this questionable home. The detailed account of the experience of dinner works to highlight not only the meager portions, but the inedibility of them: "a half boyl'd Leg of Beef, next with a Grace, enter'd two ribs of a Breast of Mutton, with the Neck and Head of a cold Rabbit, and to compleat the Feast, we had in its turn a Plate of hard Boyl'd Eggs attended by a Modicum of Whey Butter."¹¹¹ These remains, which turn out to have been a previous feast, provided no sustenance for the weary traveler.

Next, the sleeping arrangements cause further discomfort. She "was laid Linnen of at least a Months standing, with the Lady herself, on one side of me, and a Neice[sic] she had on the other, to keep me from falling out of Bed; I cannot say, when I wak'd in the Morning, because I had not been asleep all Night."¹¹² Without adequate food or sleep, Davys's journey is far from the country ramble of the title. While she approaches all of these situations with characteristic humor, she nonetheless describes a disquieting environment. Davys has been

¹¹⁰ Davys, 7.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 9-10.

¹¹² Ibid., 14.

forced into a place where her needs are not provided for, and she has no opportunity to provide them for herself. This encounter, when coupled with the chance meeting of the ignorant fool at the inn, reveals the hostile environment of traveling in England and again stimulates a comparison between Davys and England. Having only recently left Ireland, she is subjected to degrading stereotypes followed by equally degrading treatment. These initial experiences suggest that the “-Irish” of Davys’s identity is not only suspect, but unsavory. She meets discrimination as opposed to acceptance. This situation seems to affirm Rankin’s claim that associations with Ireland could hamper rather than help the traveling writer.

The distrust and uncertainty that are displayed illustrate an uneasy environment where neither Davys nor the native/citizen can adequately account for how they should relate to each other. This uncertainty informs the conduct of each encounter as each character negotiates an ideological position. Davys seems to be living the life of a fugitive, with no home, no provisions, and no support. This atmosphere mirrors that of English attitudes towards Ireland as the discourses of colony and empire continued to plague Anglo-Irish policy. In fact, in his historical analysis *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760* S. Connolly asserts that this was a period “in which politics did in fact revolve around serious conflicts of political and religious principle.”¹¹³ Connolly’s text illustrates the seventeenth century in Ireland as a place of changeable loyalties and confused religio-political policy. Thus, at the turn of the eighteenth century, the reception that Davys receives illustrates how useful an ambiguous nationality could be when the traveler is so closely linked with Ireland and/or England where loyalties are changeable. These literary experiences of Davys’s journey echo the political environment in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century between the English and the

¹¹³ S. J. Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 74.

Irish, and the intersection of Anglo-Irish cultures. Her initial comments on her own nationality and the contradiction within those comments followed by the harsh treatment by the fool and the country woman suggest that ambiguity serves as a safer identifier. By maintaining some ambiguity about her nationality, Davys can possibly negotiate her reception depending on the situations that she meets.

These two experiences, since they are placed at the very beginning of her narrative, create an environment of instability which exposes the uncertain nature of her journey. As a fugitive from chaos, she seems to have landed right back in it. Though the second encounter does not deal explicitly with issues of nationality, it does serve to jeopardize further her reception as an Englishwoman. Beginning with the wild Irish and following with the poor hostess, Davys illustrates a journey that is far from idyllic and does indeed seem to characterize her as a fugitive rather than a Rambler. Not only do these experiences illustrate a mixed reception that leads to an ambiguous situation, paradoxically, they suggest that ambiguity might provide a more secure identifier.

In the latter half of the story, Davys relates the story of a loyal English soldier: loyal to his country and to his lover. However, his ultimate disappointment and dismissal suggests, again, how uncertain *her* position is. The rise and fall of the English soldier illustrates an important political moment in this text. The gentleman came from a comfortable home and his father bought him a commission into the Army. He reveals that he had “been fond of a Sword, and could never be brought to Study any thing, but *English* Military Discipline, in which I always very much delighted.”¹¹⁴ As a soldier, the unnamed man represents the pride of England and devoted Whig sentiment through his support of William III and Queen Anne. John Brewer, in his study of the rise of England’s imperialistic power, describes the characteristics of English

¹¹⁴ Davys, 150.

soldiers as “saturnine...doggedness, tight-lipped determination...imagination and energy.”¹¹⁵ They saw themselves as “valiant and brave.” The patriotism of the soldier is hyperbolically described as he explains his reasons for pursuing a career in the military contrasted against the career of seducing a woman. He distinguishes himself by questioning “how so many young Men could lie at home wrapt up in Ease and Luxury, while their King and Country, nay, and their own safety, wanted their help abroad.”¹¹⁶ In describing William III, the “late excellent Prince”, he characterizes him as “he who was all Justice, Goodness and Gratitude, never fail’d to reward great Actions, because they were the Delight of his noble Soul.” He would “rather have chosen to die under that belov’d Monarch’s Command, than to have lived under any other Prince in *Christiendom*.”¹¹⁷ By depicting this soldier as embodying the superior qualities of an ideal English soldier, it would be easy to interpret this description as indicative of Davys’s inclinations toward an English nationality, or at least the Whig party. However, the soldier’s devotion to his country is replaced later by devotion toward a fickle lover who leaves him, ultimately, broken-hearted. Such a conclusion suggests that such blind devotion leads to disappointment. While this episode certainly does not promote a pro-Tory position, it does echo her early distaste for factionism that she displayed in her Preface. She has again reinstated the impression of ambiguity while also positioning herself outside of such political conflicts.

After reading through this travel narrative, one comes to the conclusion that Davys is hard to classify. She could think of herself as English. She might consider herself an Irish patriot. There are moments in this narrative, as she travels through England that could attest to either one of those statements. What is certain about this journey is that Davys is constantly negotiating her

¹¹⁵ John Brewer, *Sinews of Power: War, Money, and The English State, 1688-1783* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), xiv.

¹¹⁶ Davys, 151.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

ideological position as a hybrid nationality. As she crosses the English countryside, providing a proper, didactic travel narrative, one watches the concept of nationness construct Davys as much as she constructs it.

Letting *The Fugitive Ramble*

Approaching the *Fugitive* as a travel narrative recasts the text in terms of the ambiguity of an Anglo-Irish nationality symbolized by the paradox of a fugitive Rambler. In a few cases, Davys directly addresses the concept of nationality and the conflicts inherent in her own, but, in a more indirect way, it is the world of this travel narrative that is most telling. Meeting with distrust, uncertainty, and occasionally, blatant fear, the political and social environment of her “country ramble” is fraught with instability. She was “toss’d” out of Ireland by Fortune only to find herself in an equally unstable position.

As I suggested above, making England the subject of her text constructs Davys as an outsider. This is important in order to understand how she sees herself in English society, for that is primarily, I would argue, what she hopes to do with this narrative. Davys is working to incorporate herself into an English national identity, both explicitly and implicitly. However, underneath this desire to identify herself as English is the undeniable connection to Ireland, if there is even a desire for the opportunity to deny it. The travel narrative is of a palimpsest of identity. Using the genre conventions of the travel narrative, Davys establishes herself as a credible recorder of travel experience while simultaneously remaining a virtuous woman. The author is situated in a liminal space between England and Ireland, just as she is between woman and travel writer. Embedded in these progressively unconscious rhetorics is the language of self-identity. Davys employs this text to establish a connection with an English readership, but at the same time struggles with a connection to Irish society, all the while arguing for her right to write

this picture of the English nation. She is negotiating a position for herself within a community—of the English, of the Anglo-Irish, of writers.

Considering the political unconscious of the text, the ambiguity of the author's nationality characterizes the uncertain nature of Anglo-Irish politics in the early eighteenth century. The negotiation of identity requires a writer to ideologically map the territory of nation. When such a task is performed in the liminal space of a hybrid nationality, the upheavals of politics are reflected in the upheavals of self. Siegel writes, "Travel writing elicits a similar identity upheaval. Arguably, whether travel writers record the collisions of their identity with a new culture or not, travel necessarily brings about change. Travelers might lose their sense of identity altogether or, conversely, find their sense of self sharpened by the journey."¹¹⁸ This claim identifies the process of writing a travel narrative as a process of writing a self. The risk inherent in the process is losing one's sense of self. However, though Davys's nationality never sharpens, what is elucidated is the liminal space of the hybrid nationality. This representation offers a counter perspective to texts that claim any level of certainty of nationality within any of the different groups that make up the conglomeration of Anglo-Irish identity. *The Fugitive* presents an ambiguous author negotiating the blurred lines of nationality that plague both her literary scholars and Irish historical scholarship without ever seeking to resolve the contradiction or ambiguity, but instead to lay them out as indicative of her temporal space.

¹¹⁸ Siegel, 7.

Chapter Two

Finding Nation in “the minute details of daily life” by Reading the Discourse of Virtue in

The Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington ¹¹⁹

As I wrote these Memoirs in *England*, describing particular Places or Customs peculiar to *Ireland*, in order to make the Work intelligible to the *English* Readers, will, I hope, be excused.¹²⁰ (7)

I propose myself, not as an Example, but a Warning...that by my Fall, (the reader) may stand the more secure.¹²¹

[T]o my no small Surprize, (sic) entered a Couple of ill-favoured Fellows, the Sight of whom struck Terror to m Soul; I demanded their Business, one of them answered, ‘Get up, you *Irish* Papist Bitch, and come along with us.’ The other, who had employed himself in looking over my Papers, cried, ‘Ay, the *Irish* whore, here is something about some *Roman* Father, that’s the Pope, and be damn’d to you, is it?’¹²²

There are two important ideas in *The Memoirs of Mrs. Laetitia Pilkington* that lay bare the liminal characteristics of the Anglo-Irish: the tangle of Virtue and Nation and the historical in/accuracy of autobiography. First, in this autobiography nationality and gender are not separate concepts, but rather inextricably linked and governed by the concept of Virtue. In Pilkington’s case, it is the absence of virtue that dictates her nationality, as she implies in the second excerpt. She has to serve as a “Warning” not an “Example.” In Mary Davys’s travel narrative, the status of virtue as it affects nationality is implied, but it is central for Pilkington. Yet, she actively

¹¹⁹ Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, no. 60 quoted in A.C. Elias Jr., introduction to *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, xix.

¹²⁰ Laetitia Pilkington, *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, ed. A.C. Elias Jr. 2 vols. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1997). Vol. 1, 7.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1:9.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1: 202.

struggles against interpellations that reduce her complex identity to something simpler—an *Irish* whore. She worked tirelessly, and some suggest hopelessly, asserting not only her innocence but her *Anglo*-Irish identity as well. She is, after all, labeled an *Irish* whore, not a British or English one. Even a letter by Jonathan Swift similarly labels her “the most profligate whore in either Kingdom” and implies that she was unfit in both England and Ireland.¹²³ She was disowned from being either English or Irish, leaving her in a transitional, unidentified state.

Second, I am arguing against claims that Pilkington does not situate this autobiography within her historical moment. Carolyn A. Barros and Johanna M. Smith counter such claims and argue that “autobiographical discourse” works “as the textual account of an actual someone in an actual time and place persuading some situated others of one’s view of what happened.”¹²⁴ In considering the category of the scandalous memoir, one of four categories that they designate and the natural progression of the spiritual autobiography of the seventeenth century, they address contemporary criticism which has argued that as *memoires scandaleuses* frequently followed conventions of the novel “such as seduction and betrayal” then these texts are “suspect.” However, Barros and Smith argue that “if the scandalous memoirist’s choices of narrative patterns and conventions are read as negotiations with her assumed audience, then her text can be read as the author’s effort to maneuver within her status as ‘public woman.’ In this way the memoirs become historically specific ‘sites of converging and competing discourses that display ideologies of gendered character’”¹²⁵ using Felicity Nussbaum’s description of autobiography.

¹²³ Quoted in Elias, xvi.

¹²⁴ Carolyn A. Barros and Johanna M. Smith, introduction to *Life Writings by British Women, 1660-1815*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000) 20-21.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 11-12. Quoting Felicity Nussbaum’s *The Autobiographical Subject*.

I argue that ideologies of nationality are equally prevalent in the genre because life writings are “historically specific.” Each convergence/competition is unique to its temporal moment. Barros and Smith suggest that a scandalous memoir “may point to the parliamentary reform movement of the 1770s and 1780s and to the revolutionary politics of the 1790s” even if the text does not explicitly address that political atmosphere.¹²⁶ They argue that the “class and political scandals in these texts’ portraits of ruling-class men at least as engaged by gambling, fornicating, and frolicking as by governing” suggests that these courtesans “may point to parliamentary reform movements.” It is, I would argue, a representation of at least a political unconscious and perhaps something more active. For Pilkington, there was no other 1748 Dublin and London in which her *Memoirs* were published. In fact, this text is imbued with the tension surrounding the political and social relationship between Ireland and England in the middle of the eighteenth century. She establishes this tension in preface of her *Memoirs* in the first excerpt above; she must translate Irish culture for the English reader, but must also apologize for the act of translating. It is a curious statement to make and demands a greater inquiry. The Forgotten Famine of 1740-41 and the ’45 Jacobite rebellion created perhaps not an explicitly hostile environment for the Anglo-Irish, but certainly an uncertain and potentially unstable one. These events would seem to separate the Protestant Anglo-Irish from the Catholic Irish, giving more credence to the idea that being ‘Irish’ was “an insult, a tarnish on their deeply felt Englishness.”¹²⁷ The *Memoirs* represent a persistent and arduous struggle to reconcile a position of marginality with an imagined subjectivity. But the figure of Pilkington is mirrored in the developing imagined community of the Anglo-Irish. She was undeniably Protestant, but

¹²⁶ Ibid., 12-13.

¹²⁷ Deana Rankin, *Between Spencer and Swift: English Writing in Seventeenth-Century Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 16.

unequivocally labeled Irish. And this oversimplified and un-interrogated pairing extended beyond her lifetime as scholars have used it as well.

Barros and Smith claim that “eighteenth-century British (and I argue, Anglo-Irish) women were entangled in a number of conflicts that, though they often affected women more severely than men, were disputes over which they had little, if any, control: “European wars, battles with colonies, religious suppression, economic disasters, marriage and property laws.”¹²⁸ And in such circumstances, the autobiography illustrated “ways that creative women have responded to larger struggles that affected them profoundly but precluded their direct participation and could readily have consigned them to utterly passive roles” like that of a fallen woman.¹²⁹ But, as Barros and Smith assert, “scandalous life-writings reveal” that “‘scandalous women’ had courageous voices and would be heard.”¹³⁰ Miriam Fuchs suggests that “such writing is especially compelling to persons who are, or believe themselves to be, susceptible to events beyond their own determining.”¹³¹ The autobiography provided Pilkington with a measure of control in which to negotiate not only her reception as a whore, but also as Irish because she clearly identifies herself as Anglo-Irish as I describe below.

In exploring the *Memoirs* in particular and women’s autobiography in general, there has been one ideology that has largely been overlooked in favor of gender and that is the political narrative embedded in her life story. Foregrounding the political unconscious links the text and the author to her temporal moment in Anglo-Irish history and situates her as a cultural artifact as equally valuable as a compendium of law or a political pamphlet. In mid-eighteenth-century Great Britain, nationality is an important component of identity, and Pilkington is not just a

¹²⁸ Barros and Smith, 24.

¹²⁹ Miriam Fuchs, *The Text is Myself: Women’s Life Writing and Catastrophe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) 4.

¹³⁰ Barros and Smith, 29.

¹³¹ Fuchs, 4.

woman or just a writer. She is also Anglo-Irish because in the aggregation of identity, nationality is as present as gender and profession. Spacks writes that “the heroes and heroines of autobiography achieve identity as objects of their own imagination.”¹³² They achieve that subjectivity in the act of writing. It is a similar act to Anderson’s imagined community wherein the goal is to imagine the hybrid culture as both limited and sovereign. Pilkington imagines her identity as an Anglo-Irish writer and as a thinking, politically aware woman. She attempts to limit and create sovereignty within a public sphere that seeks to marginalize her on the precepts of Virtue. Fuchs suggests that life writing is “especially compelling to persons who are, or believe themselves to be, susceptible to events beyond their own determining.”¹³³ Pilkington must create a boundary around her nationality, one that includes a very specific Irish association but excludes stereotypes that would characterize her as unsavory. Britons, as a culture, did not differentiate between native and colonial inhabitants of Ireland; in his study of the traces of *Irishness* of Jonathan Swift, Andrew Carpenter claims that living in Ireland meant being Irish.¹³⁴ Though there were many significant differences between the native Irish and the Anglo-Irish, this distinction was not always recognized by the English. Hence, making statements like “describing particular Places or Customs peculiar to *Ireland*, in order to make the Work intelligible to the *English* Readers, will, I hope, be excused” was, in many ways, required. However, this is not a statement which entirely dismisses “Place or Customs peculiar to *Ireland*,” but acknowledges distinction. The value in liminality, as Bhabha argues, is that “the liminal figure of the nation-space would ensure that no political ideologies could claim transcendence or

¹³² Patricia Meyers Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976) 21.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³⁴ Andrew Carpenter, *The Irish Perspective of Jonathan Swift*, (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag GmbH, 1979), 16.

metaphysical authority for themselves.”¹³⁵ As a liminal figure, Pilkington could attempt to manipulate the boundaries of Nation. She could also challenge the boundaries of gender and Virtue though she had little success in doing so.

An autobiography functions as a cultural artifact as much as it does an experiment in self creation. How an autobiographer sees herself reflects prevailing attitudes about gender, as feminist critics have argued. Yet, in the eighteenth-century crisis of empire, an autobiographer also reflects the liminality that is the hybrid Nation. In that respect, there is one concept of female autobiography that symbolizes the negotiation of nationness and re/presenting an Anglo-Irish identity in a memoir at mid-eighteenth-century Great Britain—the *métissage*.¹³⁶ Françoise Lionnet calls for a ‘thick description’ of texts like *Memoirs* in order to understand the “traditions and vernacular cultures (or dialects)” that create “intertextual weaving or *me-tessage* of styles.” She sees this as “a fundamentally emancipatory metaphor for the inevitable relational and interdependent nature of peoples, nations, and countries.”¹³⁷ Thus, the *métissage* represents the blurring and blending of mixed cultures and shows “the relationship between historical context and individual circumstances.”¹³⁸ Shari Benstock expands on this concept of ‘woven things’ to illuminate how the “heavy mantle of academic citizenship” has worked to obscure the “individual strains and colors within the larger pattern” that form the ambiguous group, one like the Anglo-Irish in Ireland.¹³⁹ The historical threads that intertwine in Pilkington and in her text do not form a tightly knit garment that can be worn to signal affiliation. Rather, the hybridity

¹³⁵ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1994 (Reprint New York: Routledge, 2006) 212.

¹³⁶ *Métissage*, as a construct in autobiography, was developed by Françoise Lionnet, *Autobiographical Voices; Race, Gender, Self Portraiture*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). “Woven Things” was developed by Shari Benstock, “The Female Self Engendered: Autobiographical Writing and Theories of Selfhood” in *Women and Autobiography*, ed. Martine Watson Brownley and Allison B. Kimmich, 3-13 (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1999). Formerly published “The Female Self Engendered: Autobiographical Writing and Theories of Selfhood,” *Women’s Studies* 20 (1991): 5-14.

¹³⁷ Lionnet, 29.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³⁹ Benstock, 5.

illustrates that the weave is loose and blurred, that one part cannot be privileged over another and that this nationality is in constant flux. Though the métissage was imagined to illustrate the relationship between gender and autobiography, it is equally useful as a metaphor to elucidate the relationship between culture and nationality in the autobiography.

The Power of Interpellation and Mrs. Pilkington's Big Mistake

Unlike Mary Davys, Laetitia Pilkington's life can be documented fairly comprehensively, primarily due to the evidence she provides in her memoirs and the public nature of her life. Typically, infamy results in more journalistic and civic documentation than virtuous behavior does in addition to being a much better read. Davys presented an ambiguous nationality which privileged in turn either the Irish or the English elements, but never definitively one or the other. She was able, with relative success, to remain indefinable by not becoming one or the other, which had its advantages. An integral part of such ambiguity was, I suggest, that Davys was able to create and maintain a virtuous reputation. Though she was also interpellated, such attempts were usually implied. When they were direct, those who sought to subordinate her as merely Irish were cast as fools. Pilkington had no such ambiguity. Not only were her parentage, marriage, and career publicly well-documented, her autobiography provided the necessary detail to construct her position on Nation. Her cultural position as an Anglo-Irish writer has been verified by archival research and in her own words.¹⁴⁰ But what that identity means is complicated, and those complications have been largely ignored.

In the first pages of *Memoirs*, she immediately identifies herself as belonging to the culture of Ireland, invoking a distinguished ancestry of Irish nobility. On her maternal side, she claims to be the great granddaughter of the Earl of Kilmallock, "an antient, and honourable

¹⁴⁰ See Diana Relke, "In Search of Mrs. Pilkington" in *Gender at Work: Four Women Writers of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Ann Messenger (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990) 114-149. A. C. Elias Jr., introduction to *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*.

Family, who were frequently inter-married with the Nobility.”¹⁴¹ This identification has been employed to classify her as an Irish writer by most scholars who read Pilkington’s *Memoirs*. And, like Davys, these assertions have rarely been interrogated. No one has moved beyond that declaration to explore the significance of this obviously pointed claim to a matrilineal connection to Irish nobility. However, if one employs a Geertzian description, this claim is much richer than has been supposed and alludes to something far more complicated than being “Irish.”¹⁴² Invoking the name of the Earl of Kilmallock was an important and underestimated rhetorical move on Pilkington’s part because the conflicts of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries illustrate a complex history of affiliation between Ireland and England that should not be overlooked. Kilmallock is a small town in Co. Limerick that flourished in medieval Ireland, but then waned in its influence in the Irish political sphere.¹⁴³ In fact, there was no position “Earl of Kilmallock” documented in historical records, but this small village was the home of the Earl of Desmond. Mainchín Seoighe, a scholar of Kilmallock history, describes James, the 12th Earl of Desmond as being “fearful” after the “Silken Thomas,” a neighboring Earl, led a rebellion in 1537 against Henry VIII, who was then both Lord of Ireland and King of England. Desmond writes to the king “stressing the faithfulness of his (Desmond’s) family, and offering, with 300 men, to reduce all Munster to obedience to the English Crown.”¹⁴⁴ Therefore, in naming Desmond, through the misnomer “Earl of Killmallock,” Pilkington is in fact describing a loyal English citizen devoted to protecting the crown against native usurpers.

¹⁴¹ Pilkington, 10.

¹⁴² Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, rev. ed., Clifford Geertz, ed., (New York; Basic Books, 2000) 3-30.

¹⁴³ Mainchín Seoighe, *The Story of Kilmallock*, Kilmallock Historical Society, 1987.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

Seoighe is also able to trace another surname that Pilkington identifies—Meade. The family has been documented in that town from the thirteenth century.¹⁴⁵ Colonel Meade, as Pilkington writes, married her grandmother, the daughter of this earl. The Meade family was “closely associated with Kilmallock for many centuries” and was “a merchant family of Norman descent.”¹⁴⁶ The Norman invasion is considered the beginning of the English presence in Ireland. So, by calling upon the name of Meade, Pilkington places herself in a line of English settlers of Ireland, those who are frequently grouped as the Old English.¹⁴⁷ Pilkington appears to be recalling a noble pedigree with which to establish validity to her story and the validity of her own character, a necessary rhetorical move as she had admitted that she should serve as “a Warning” rather than “an Example.” However, a surprising number of people, both in her time and today, employ these words to infer her affiliation with an Irish consciousness, a loyal Irish nationality, which obscures the complexity of her statement because it erases the distinctions that were socially, economically, and politically important in mid-century Anglo-Irish identity. It is likely that Pilkington intended to employ this ancestry not as proof of her Irish loyalties, but as proof of her “*Reputation*” because, as she quoted *Othello*, “the loss of it/ Will make them poor indeed!”¹⁴⁸ In fact, it is this relationship between reputation and nationality that is most illuminating in Mrs. Pilkington’s *Memoirs*.

There are many instances in Pilkington’s life which damaged her reputation, but the most significant and most discussed is the late-night book exchange that led to her divorce. Prior to this event, she argued that her husband had initiated a campaign to discredit her and thus give him sufficient reason to separate from her. Yet, she admits to being “very indiscreet in permitting

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 42, 115.

¹⁴⁷ See S.J. Connolly’s *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹⁴⁸ Pilkington, 9.

a Man to be at an unseasonable Hour in my Bed-Chamber; but Lovers of Learning will, I am sure, pardon me, as I solemnly declare, it was the attractive Charms of a new Book, which the Gentleman would not lend me, but consented to stay till I read it through, that was the sole Motive of my detaining him.”¹⁴⁹ However, while she acknowledges her liability in this decision, she clearly does not accept it all. Not only is the man¹⁵⁰, liable because he would not consent to lend the book, Pilkington also accuses her husband of manipulating the situation; She was caught in the act by “Mr. *Pilkington*’s Machinations.” Pilkington would claim that this debacle was the catalyst for her downfall and indeed it is the impetus for Swift’s description of her character quoted above. Never able to overcome fully the social and financial devastation of her divorce, Pilkington would spend the rest of her life being both socially and economically marginalized, as both adulteress and as Irish, but steadfastly resisting the marginalization that extended from those labels. She was proud; she was clever, and she had a pen.

When considering the scandalous reputation that characterized Pilkington’s experience in both Dublin and London, it seems appropriate to consider how women embodied the nation in the eighteenth century. Kathleen Wilson, in her study of provincial English politics, discusses the ramifications of “virtue” as a bearer of patriotic sentiment.¹⁵¹ Though men were *the* English citizens, Wilson argues that women also “contributed to subscriptions or were activists in the political public sphere of propaganda and debate.”¹⁵² However, their contributions were strictly defined, both by men and by themselves. Linda Colley describes these boundaries in her analysis of Mary Wollstonecraft’s activism. “Female reformers” would work “to present themselves as embodiments of virtue and high morality” in order to “reconcile what was undoubtedly a

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 88.

¹⁵⁰ Elias identifies him as Robin Adair.

¹⁵¹ Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁵² Ibid., 226.

departure from orthodox female behavior...with what was expected of their sex.”¹⁵³ To bear Nation required Virtue in order to challenge the concept that citizen equaled man. Wilson echoes this necessity by claiming that “the status of women as even ‘auxiliary’ political subjects depended in part upon their conformity to a gender-specific model of sexual virtue; as symbolic or biological mothers of citizens, their private lives had to adhere to the exacting and ultimately hypocritical standards of maternity and domesticity.”¹⁵⁴ It stands to reason that any nation, in defining itself as such, benefited from the idealized concept of the virtuous woman since both metaphorically and biologically she was the future of the nation. Scandal-ridden as Pilkington was, she would have made a poor standard-bearer for English nationality. It would have been easier to disown her as Irish. She could not represent England as a prostitute, and such a designation was a convenient reason to interpellate her as Irish, though she had as much of a claim to being *Anglo*-Irish as Jonathan Swift. Yet, she would also be a liability to the Anglo-Irish nation because of her compromised virtue and her self-imposed exile from the country, a feeling that is echoed in Swift’s condemnation of her character.

Caught in this tangle of Virtue and Nation, Pilkington demonstrates a liminal figure. Herein is where one finds the unexplored reverberations of being neither Irish nor English while simultaneously being both. I argue that this autobiography is a necessary site for an analysis of national identity in that it establishes the connection and the dissonance between hegemonic histories of politics and the real individual experience of those ideologies. The autobiography disrupts those horizontal constructs of narratives of nation. Reading how an author writes herself into the nation, especially in eighteenth-century Great Britain and especially from a marginalized position, illustrates the complexities in which people experience nationality in a hybrid culture.

¹⁵³ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 277.

¹⁵⁴ Wilson, 226.

And reading how the nation writes her illustrates the answering negotiations of nationness. In considering how Pilkington constructs herself as Anglo-Irish, even as those constructions contradict each other, the crisis of identity in the Anglo-Irish that grew over the course of the eighteenth century is laid bare. Mary Davys's *Fugitive* illustrated a muted conflict of loyalties, but Pilkington's conflict is considerably more apparent.

Reputation is Everything

Sometimes an author and a text become emblematic of a critical intersection of culture and genre, and so it has become with feminist studies, autobiography, and Pilkington's *Memoirs*. This text is frequently featured in studies of women's life-writing, a growing body of scholarship that is working to redefine not only what constitutes an autobiography but also how one reads these texts that tell the story of a life. The literary scholarship on Pilkington follows the evolution of the scholarship on autobiography as a literary genre, as it shifts from a focus on factual accuracy to an analysis of a cultural artifact. There are attendant valuations that go along with these frameworks, which worked first to diminish the usefulness of women's autobiography due to a perceived absence of historical context. Pilkington has long suffered from marginalization by critics because of a lack of factual evidence with which to show a distinct time and place. But a shift toward the concept of autobiography as cultural artifact, searching not for facts but for nuance, allows for reading Pilkington as a representation of her cultural moment instead of merely a scribbler of anecdotes about great men. More specifically, by conceiving of the *Memoirs* as an artifact of mid-century Anglo-Irish nationality, Pilkington offers a perspective similar to that of Davys, a vulnerable identity sensitive to the political environment that attempts to construct a picture of cohesiveness that, in reality, is not there. Pilkington shows the precarious position of being a hybrid nationality in mid-century Dublin and London when the

ideologies of those two nations were growing steadily apart. The sharp, witty writer captures the reader's attention, willing or not, and invites one to question those assumptions that inform the connection between Virtue and Nation.

There is an interesting trend in the critical scholarship on Pilkington. Most readers have interpellated her as both Irish and indecent, echoing the very labels she was given in her life. Additionally, it is not until Walter and Clare Jerrold's *Five Queer Women* that Pilkington receives any substantial acclaim as an author.¹⁵⁵ For example, in Virginia Woolf's *The Common Reader*, Pilkington is found under "The Lives of the Obscure" with another Anglo-Irish writer, Maria Edgeworth. Woolf both admires and satirizes Pilkington, but claims that Pilkington's obscurity is due to gender. However, since she is grouped with another Anglo-Irish writer, there is an implication that this marginalization is equally true of a hybrid nationality. Woolf portrays Pilkington as "an extraordinary cross between Moll Flanders and Lady Ritchie."¹⁵⁶ The contradiction in that description informs much of Woolf's analysis as she admires the characteristics of the writer that defy gender expectations while subtly satirizing those that do not. For example, while she admires Pilkington because despite her "hard life" she remained "young and attractive and gay, with an inordinate passion for scribbling verses and an incredible hunger for reading books," Woolf mocks that spirit by declaring, "Who should know better than the Earl of Killmallock's great-granddaughter that it is the part of a lady to hide her sufferings?"¹⁵⁷ Knowledge of Pilkington's lineage is of little concern to Woolf beyond the social confines of gender. Though Woolf has privileged gender over nationality, she has also illustrated how Pilkington's identity is difficult to confine into a tidy label.

¹⁵⁵ Walter and Clare Jerrold, *Five Queer Women* (New York: Brentano's Ltd., 1929).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 108.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 109.

Renewed interest in autobiography in general and Pilkington's work in specific brought about a reprint in 1928 of *Memoirs* with an introduction by Iris Barry. She calls the writer "a random little hack," but grants that her work "is *true*" (author's italics).¹⁵⁸ Barry is primarily dismissive with occasional moments of sympathy. Pilkington's writing is "prolix and jerky," and she is "a silly little thing to protest so much and fight so ardently to keep up appearances." This dismissive tone casts Pilkington as a marginal writer of little interest save "for short vivacious sketches of some of her patrons" who included Swift and Richardson in addition to a number of notable socially and politically significant men of the time.¹⁵⁹ Yet, Barry adds that the author "in a queer, outlandish way...preserved the honour of womanhood." Barry's analysis of the *Memoirs* tells the story of a sad and defeated woman who had occasional moments of bravery, but was, for the most part, pitiable. In describing the author's time in London, Barry argues that "Mrs. Pilkington was in an even more vulnerable position. A divorced, penniless, unprotected young Irish scribbler, living alone in St. James's, was obviously the easiest of game."¹⁶⁰ It is important to note that, like Woolf, Barry has reduced Pilkington's nationality to simply "Irish." There is an implication here that there exists a connection between her Irish birth and her vulnerability. Pilkington demonstrated this same connection when she was taken into custody for nonpayment of her debt. The men charged with arresting her shouted "*Irish* Papist Bitch" and "the *Irish* whore."¹⁶¹ This experience is degrading and demoralizing to the point where she attempts suicide by starvation. These descriptions illustrate the depth of truth in Barry's statement to a degree that

¹⁵⁸ Iris Barry, introduction to *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, ed. J. Isaacs (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1928) 22.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶¹ Pilkington, 202. Note that the word "Irish" is often italicized in her text. This is a common device that she uses throughout her story and is generally employed when another person is describing her.

the biographer did not realize. The “young Irish scribbler” was vulnerable, not only because she was divorced, but also because she was “*Irish*.”

With a similar theme as Barry’s introduction, Lord Ponsonby’s analysis of the *Memoirs* labels Pilkington a mere “curiosity.”¹⁶² He asserts that her work is of no “literary consequence.”¹⁶³ Like Barry, Ponsonby feels that the value of Pilkington’s work is “the glimpse of patron’s and admirers” whom she lauds and critiques, a sentiment which echoes Barry’s assertion about “vivacious sketches.”¹⁶⁴ His patronizing tone trivializes the text by commenting on the “indecent” style and substance of her narrative.¹⁶⁵ He establishes her as an Irish writer by detailing her birth and her father’s reputation as a Dutch-born male midwife. He also mentions her claim of kinship to Kilmallock, but of her mother, her real connection to Ireland, he says only that Pilkington “detested her.”¹⁶⁶ Similarly, Mallie Murphy, in a short analysis of Samuel Johnson’s *The Rambler*, No. 191, made decency claims about the *Memoirs*, arguing that Johnson’s moral standards had fallen in the last edition because of his coverage of Pilkington’s memoirs with which he “temporarily lowered his standards in a bid for increased circulation.”¹⁶⁷

The claim of indecency must be read in connection with her Irishness because this claim would have been a prominent part of her identity and the reception of her work. Writing on the Irish quality of the works of Jonathan Swift, Andrew Carpenter links *Gulliver’s Travel* with native Irish folk tales, specifically in reference to the “ribald” nature of the stories.¹⁶⁸ The presence of “sexual grossness...and the vulgarity” found in his stories was “very common in Irish literature.” It appears that indecency was linked to “Irish” in the eighteenth century in much

¹⁶² Lord Ponsonby, “Laetitia Pilkington (1712-1750)—A Curiosity of Literature,” *English: The Magazine of the English Association* 1, no. 4 (1937): 297-306.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 297.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 303.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 297.

¹⁶⁷ Mallie Murphy, “*The Rambler*, No. 191,” *PMLA* 50, no. 3 (Sep., 1935): 926-928.

¹⁶⁸ Carpenter, 16.

the same way that Ponsonby and Murphy link it to Pilkington. In arguments such as these, the axes of gender and nationality are inextricable. The author is marginalized because of her gender and because of her nationality, but it is difficult to say whether she is “ribald” because she is Irish or because she is a “profligate whore” as Swift calls her.¹⁶⁹ Or it could be that those two interpellations, Irish and whore, work continually to reaffirm each other.

These early readings of Pilkington are important because they illustrate a continuation of assumptions, even prejudices, about nationality that Pilkington received while she lived. The connection between Nation and Virtue was intact even into the twentieth century. She was still an *Irish* whore with the added slight that she did not write particularly well.

Walter Jerrold departs from these dismissive evaluations in that he finds much to be admired in Pilkington’s *Memoirs*.¹⁷⁰ Jerrold assumes the role of a biographer using the memoirs as his source to retell Pilkington’s life story. In his analysis, he finds Pilkington to be queer because “what she was, or was reputed to be, has been allowed to obscure more or less completely, what she achieved.” Jerrold argues that the reputation of women like Pilkington eclipsed the extraordinary achievements of their texts. His approach moved beyond the scandal that wrecked the author’s life and sought to understand the autobiography in its temporal moment, reading it as a mid-eighteenth-century text. In fact, Jerrold claims that the subjects of her memoirs were “paralleled in the writings of...male contemporaries” suggesting that claims of indecency or exaggeration stem from the stereotypes of her gender and/or her nationality rather than the content of her text. Jerrold identifies the *Memoirs* as the first “frank and intimate autobiography” written by a woman.¹⁷¹ By acknowledging Pilkington’s text as parallel with

¹⁶⁹ *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. F. Elrington Ball, 6 vols. (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1910-14), 6: 68-69.

¹⁷⁰ Jerrold, xi.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, xi, xii.

“male contemporaries,” he provides a perspective that could enrich the analysis of *Memoirs* with a historical context though he does not take that direction. Jerrold was the first scholar to provide a counter argument to Barry’s claim that Pilkington provided no historical context for her *Memoirs*.¹⁷²

It is important to note that these earlier analyses demonstrate the reduction of Anglo-Irish to Irish, typical of the nationalistic ideology of early twentieth-century Ireland. However, it is equally important to recognize that marking Pilkington as solely Irish continued throughout the century. In 1994, Bernard Tucker reexamined Pilkington’s work as it referenced Swift.¹⁷³ He frames her as an Irish poet, grouped with Mary Barber and Constantia Grierson, claiming that “there are no doubts about their being Irish.”¹⁷⁴ Yet, Tucker does not explain what “being Irish” is. Tucker’s analysis is a critique of Patrick Fagan’s *A Georgian Celebration, Irish Poets of the Eighteenth Century* published in 1989, and his primary point of contention is Fagan’s omission of female poets from that collection. His argument is similar to Jerrold’s—that Pilkington has been unjustly overlooked, but Tucker argues that this is due to economic status because she was not a “blue-stocking separated from society in wealthy homes with wealthy husbands.”¹⁷⁵ As an Irish poet, Pilkington helps “give us a more rounded picture of eighteenth-century life” in Ireland since anthologies of Irish poetry had practiced “a kind of exclusion (whether deliberate or accidental)” that worked “against Irish women poets of the eighteenth century.”¹⁷⁶ The association of Nation and Virtue is continued un-interrogated. Though the discourse of Virtue has been discussed and ostensibly disentangled, the effect of the entanglement of the two

¹⁷² Barry, 17.

¹⁷³ Bernard Tucker, “Swift’s Female Senate?” *Irish Studies Review* No. 7 (Summer 1994): 7-10.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

concepts has continued to inform interpretations. She was and is still Irish, but no one has asked why.

Virtue in an Autobiographical Nation

The core of life writing is the writing subject, and in the story there is a conscious re/presentation of an idealized subject couched in the discourse of “truth.” It is an assertion of being which transcends the limitations of a living reality. “The autobiographer,” Patricia Meyers Spacks explains, is “attesting (to) his existence by the fact of his writing...through his explanations, tacit or explicit, of how he came to be the person he is.”¹⁷⁷ And the story, as Barros and Smith defined it, is “the textual account of an actual someone in an actual time and place persuading some situated others of one’s view of what happened.”¹⁷⁸ Taking up the pen with the intention of telling one’s story is a purposeful act, which seeks to establish the intellectual *being* of the author and a request—maybe even a demand—that she be recognized as such. Superficially, the memoirist might seek the immortality of the written life. The purpose might also be a defense, a pointed and biting one, which seeks to rewrite public opinion. It is this purpose that is most often interpreted in Pilkington’s text. Spacks claims that Pilkington and other women autobiographers “need simply to authenticate their lives by setting them down.”¹⁷⁹ She casts memoirs like Pilkington’s as extended defenses for the lives of the authors, or “The female apology, heavily tinged with resentment” which seeks “to resolve” the conflict between the need “to assert the reality of the protagonist and her mental life” with the desire “to declare that she is nonetheless a good and valuable woman.”¹⁸⁰ The dissonance here is between the intellectual desire for the subjectivity that is conferred in writing an autobiography and the

¹⁷⁷ Spacks, 1.

¹⁷⁸ Barros and Smith, 20-21.

¹⁷⁹ Spacks, 78.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

requirements of Virtue such as domesticity and maternity. I believe that a writing woman was in a liminal state. By choosing to write, she removed herself from the only sphere in which she was allowed, the private sphere. Leaving that meant leaving her socially and politically dictated space. Yet, she searched for aggregation, the reformation of identity, by imagining a self within autobiography. Ironically, aggregation requires conformity to social standards. A woman needed to imagine a self that fit into the conventions of gender. Virtue and writing were not completely exclusive, but the parameters were certainly narrow. And given Pilkington's reputation, such aggregation was impossible. However, from this philosophical failure, the weight of Virtue upon Nation is laid bare.

The scandalous memoirist presented a complex literary figure. Though widely read, she was nonetheless widely disparaged. The typical writer/character was a "courtesan in debt," but Pilkington's text is read into this category even though she never had the privilege of a consistent benefactor.¹⁸¹ Fallen women's life writing was an attempt in which "they were defining themselves as subjects rather than objects and pointing to conditions in their cultures that contributed to their situations."¹⁸² Lynda Thompson explores such endeavors in her comparison of the texts of Pilkington and Constantia Grierson, which is an interesting choice of authors since Pilkington repudiated any connection with Grierson after the latter published her own scandalous memoir.¹⁸³ The conclusion that Thompson reaches is that the *memoires scandaleuses* represented a rupture in the patriarchal ideology that governed sexuality. They served as a foundation for "question(ing) the sexual politics which blamed the weaknesses of woman's nature for all

¹⁸¹ Barros and Smith, 19-20.

¹⁸² Ibid., 28.

¹⁸³ Lynda M. Thompson, *The 'Scandalous Memoirists': Constantia Phillips, Laetitia Pilkington, and the shame of 'public fame'*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). Kathryn King, in a review of Thompson's text, points out this contradiction. "Writing the Lives of Women: Recent Biographies of Eighteenth-Century Women Writers" in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 5; 1 (Spring-Summer 2005) 99-111.

licentiousness, and the laws which restricted women's opportunities to work and earn money...the memoirist exploited these contradictions and found a public keen to read their vision of events...they proved that writing 'scandalous memoirs' was one way of earning that independence."¹⁸⁴ Susan Goulding, in a similarly focused analysis, describes Pilkington's text as an attempt to combat contemporary definitions of Virtue. She claims that "while Swift might strike back as an Irishman...Pilkington strikes back for being excluded from consideration as a serious writer...because she could be called 'the most profligate whore in either kingdom.'"¹⁸⁵ Yet, in *Memoirs*, Pilkington not only criticizes the double standards of sexuality and gender, but also provides an implicit critique of how Virtue bears on nationality.

Pilkington is also trapped in the liminal space of the hybridity that characterized the Anglo-Irish. In Ireland, she cannot be a symbol or a patriot of the Nation, and in England, she is marked as Irish. But it would be incorrect to surmise that Pilkington is defending herself because she was Irish, or was perceived as Irish. While she would certainly have been considered Irish by the English, Pilkington constructed herself as *Anglo-Irish*. For example, in describing London during her first trip, she writes that the city "has very attractive Charms for most People, as our *Irish* Nobility and Gentry sufficiently evidenced, by spending the greatest Part of their Time and Fortune there."¹⁸⁶ Though Pilkington italicizes *Irish*, it would be more telling to italicize *Nobility*. One can surmise that nobility refers to her earlier comments on being a descendant of the Earl of Desmond. She associates with the English settlers of Ireland rather than a native Irish culture. Furthermore, it would be only *Anglo-Irish* nobility that would travel to London as they would possess the necessary money and status to travel. It is here that one can see the "liminal

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁸⁵ Susan Goulding, "Claiming the 'Sacred Mantle': The *Memoirs* of Laetitia Pilkington" in *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Katharine Kittredge, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), 54.

¹⁸⁶ Pilkington, 63.

figure where no political ideology could claim transcendence or metaphysical authority.”¹⁸⁷ She is caught in between and consider outside. As a liminal figure, she is outside the confines of culture and outside the boundaries of identity.

Looking at both marginality and gender-influenced discourse, Diana Relke wrote “In Search of Mrs. Pilkington.”¹⁸⁸ Relke’s analysis was the first comprehensive look at the intra-textual persona of Laetitia Pilkington, and she considers the memoirs a “legitimate literary self-portraiture” in contrast to what was the prevailing opinion of women’s autobiography as “not serious.”¹⁸⁹ In Relke’s analysis, the characters of Pilkington’s story mirror the “process of self-creation” that follows “a pattern of disintegration rather than integration.”¹⁹⁰ The traditional view of autobiography was “the story of a personality unfolding and developing over time. This implies a one-directional, forward movement through life that begins with a set of aspirations and ends with their fulfillment.”¹⁹¹ Such a concept assumes that an integration of one’s life experience into “an organic whole” is something that is possible and to which one aspired.¹⁹² However, such a goal is not possible for Pilkington, and I would argue for the Anglo-Irish in Ireland. Pilkington’s harrowing experiences in Dublin not only reflect the prevailing attitudes toward a woman in her position, but also reflect prevailing attitudes toward the Anglo-Irish. Relke believes that the experiences illustrate a disintegration of a cohesive identity as opposed to a construction of one. The “literary self-portraiture” that Pilkington creates not only reveals her struggles with gender, but also the representation of Ireland at mid-century. Disintegration is progressing and becomes more apparent over the next fifty years.

¹⁸⁷ Homi Bhabha, “Dissemination: Time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation” in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Classic, 2004) 212.

¹⁸⁸ Relke, 114-149.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 115.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 123.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 122.

¹⁹² Ibid., 123. Author’s quotations.

Relke's method of treating the people that Pilkington meets throughout all three volumes as doubles of Pilkington herself provides a framework for understanding how she produces a political text. Usually, her doubles are victims, like the "Mrs. Mead" she finds in the Marshalsea prison.¹⁹³ Because the two share important past experiences, "betrayed" husbands" and "exposition" of those men, the woman becomes a minor character who helps develop the heroine of sorts. But Mrs. Mead dies while Pilkington survives. The "facts" of the story are less telling than the psychological truth of the story, which is that feelings of entrapment were a very real experience for women in general, but especially for a young, disgraced Irish writer looking to profit from her pen. It is a matter of factual record that Pilkington was imprisoned for failure to pay her rent. But the lived "reality" of the experience is not fully expressed by simply stating the dates and reasons for the imprisonment. The story of Mrs. Mead creates a larger context through which to read this experience. She represents lived experience of that situation, the desperateness of it, but doesn't taint the strength of Pilkington in the telling because, again, while Mrs. Mead dies, Pilkington survives. In rethinking such vignettes, Relke reveals Pilkington as a proud, ironic, savvy writer with a modest fear of public ridicule, but equally bound by public expectations of women. The facts are not as relevant as the truth, "for in order to tell the truth Mrs. Pilkington must lie" or at least enhance her memories with imagination.¹⁹⁴

While Mrs. Mead offers a double for Pilkington's experience of the constraints of gender, we could also look at the character of Jonathan Swift as a double of Pilkington's political experience. I do not intend to examine Pilkington's work in terms of the anecdotal artifacts of Swift that she provides, but instead consider the relevance of his appearance and its ramifications on the discourse of Nation. Swift was a dominant figure in Irish politics in the first half of the

¹⁹³ Ibid., 144.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 115.

eighteenth century, and his presence in *Memoirs* reflects trends in Anglo-Irish identity. At the time of his acquaintance with the Pilkingtons, he had been socially and politically exiled to Dublin after a lustrous career in the Georgian court. He had begun publishing several political satires criticizing English policy toward Ireland and was a leading opponent in the controversy over Wood's halfpence. He was an active and critical political figure. Pilkington gives an intimate portrait of Swift which suggested a close relationship between them. She portrays that relationship as a mentor/mentee, and in doing so, she works to elevate her literary value, which would also provide a stanchion for her reputation. Of her knowledge of Swift, Pilkington writes that "tho' his Works are universally known, and as universally esteemed; yet few Persons now living, have had so many Opportunities of seeing him in private Life, as my being a Person *sans* Consequence afforded me."¹⁹⁵ Pilkington demurs, but it is not sincere. To be in Swift's circle had merit. She considers herself equally talented as a writer. Yet, she was still relegated to the realms of women who know famous men. It is interesting that Pilkington appears as equally dismissive of her "Consequence" as so many of her editors were, but claims an eminent place as the only truly capable biographer of her mentor and Anglo-Irish iconoclast.

With that established, the character of Swift is created as a double of Pilkington's that symbolizes the political environment in which she is writing, or more importantly her individual experience of that environment. She describes him in terms that illustrate the same contradictions that she lays bare in her opening:

yet as the *Irish* are the eternal Ridicule of the *English* for their Ignorance, I am proud *Hibernia* had the Happiness of producing this brilliant Wit, to redeem the Credit of the Country, and to convince the World, a Man may draw his first

¹⁹⁵ Pilkington, 24.

Breath there, and yet be learned, wise, generous, religious, witty, social and polite.¹⁹⁶

Here, she employs Swift to “redeem” the reputation of Ireland, which simultaneously uncovers the dissonance of being Anglo-Irish. However, the doubling has a cost. A. C. Elias Jr. considers the reception of *Memoirs* in Ireland and distinguishes the Irish reader specifically. He claims that Pilkington’s portrait of “their great and beloved Hibernian Patriot” would have distressed the Irish reader as she reveals that he “had begun to show signs of lunacy many years before his mind failed.”¹⁹⁷

The tangle of Virtue and Nation is also present in the doubling with Swift. By redeeming Ireland, Pilkington is seeking to redeem herself. Facing interpolations such as “Irish whore,” a character such as Swift could recast the image of “Irish” as something respectable rather than disreputable. An intimate relationship with Swift, one that afforded her information that only she could know, might mitigate the scandalous reputation that preceded her. It did not, but the motivation is there. Employing Mrs. Mead and Jonathan Swift attempted to imagine a different frame of identity for Pilkington. She is imagining herself in an aggregated space which conformed to the social expectations of her culture. As a double for gender, Mrs. Mead lays bare the limitations placed on women. As a double for political experience, Swift reinforces Pilkington’s liminality. She has blurred the lines of nationality even as she tried to focus them.

The Political Unconscious

Deciding what does or does not constitute autobiography has dominated the discourse on this genre. Historically, scholars have looked for direct reference to contemporary social,

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁹⁷ A. C. Elias Jr. “Laetitia Pilkington on Swift: How Reliable is She?” in *Walking Naboth’s Vineyard: New Studies of Swift* ed. Christopher Fox and Brenda Tooley, 127-142, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

economical, and/or political events within the text in order to validate the truth in a memoir. If an author can establish that he/she was present during a significant historical event such as a political debate by providing not only details but analysis, then one can trust that all other claims in the life history are true. If such concrete historical references are absent, then a text is non-verifiable. With Pilkington's memoirs in particular, the debate over authenticity is especially heated. Early readers of Pilkington such as Barry and Ponsonby sought to establish what was and was not verifiable in her life story. Barry and Ponsonby, and to some extent Woolf, find Pilkington to be more of a "curiosity" than a serious author, leaving the majority of information in her texts untouched by analysis.¹⁹⁸ Then, biographers of Swift and Richardson have mined her text for anecdotal evidence on these men while simultaneously devaluing it for its obvious fictionality, an interesting paradox. Her work was considered valuable for the "mine of biographical information and salty citations" but was "too windy and unreliable—since life stories 'stretch' the truth—to be worthy of critical investigation."¹⁹⁹ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson challenge this perspective. In the history of autobiographical criticism, a memoir such as Pilkington's was "seldom taken seriously" because it was "deemed not appropriately 'complex' for academic dissertation, criticism, or the literary canon."²⁰⁰ They counter such exacting parameters by contextualizing "truth" with the realities of women's lives, especially the woman who takes up a pen. "Truth" in Pilkington's work is relative, as Relke argues. In searching for the psychological truth of this narrative, Relke confronts the expectation of direct historical fact in a "serious" memoir. But she claims that the lack of direct reference to historical fact contributes to the "timelessness" of *Memoirs*. I would agree, but I would not so quickly dismiss the possibility

¹⁹⁸ Quoted from Ponsonby.

¹⁹⁹ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, introduction to *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 4-5.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

that Pilkington's text does reflect the social, economic, and political environment in which she wrote. While some scholars of autobiography might look for specific factual commentary of contemporary events, i.e. where one was when such and such took place, or focus on the formation of a gendered identity, it is also possible to find the *effects* of the temporal moment, the traces of a political unconscious, in which Pilkington is writing. To expect a journalistic account of mid-century Great Britain and Ireland is misleading. But the history is there.

Elias would claim that "any Dubliner would have recognized" the abbreviated names of key characters in the text.²⁰¹ In the introduction to the 1997 edition of *Memoirs*, Elias helps to reject the notion that Pilkington's text is apolitical. She introduces Robert Walpole into her narrative, but she had also actively campaigned against the unpopular statesman with several satirical pamphlets. Because of these pamphlets, she gains the attentions of another character in her story, a Mr. Rooke, who regales her with gossipy stories of the people involved in government deigning to speak with her for the sole reason that he liked her pamphlets.²⁰² While these connections with contemporary political thought are important, they do not investigate the complexity of nationality. Indeed, Elias and Tucker illustrate that Pilkington had become recognized as an Irish writer without distinguishing what that means.

That distinction is important. By hailing Kilmallock, Pilkington makes a conspicuous claim to English politics. Many scholars have considered Pilkington's story of her great uncle, Sir John Meade in addition to statements about her noble heritage, but again this story deserves more attention because it offers an interesting metaphor for Anglo-Irish relations prior to mid-century.

²⁰¹ A. C. Elias Jr. "Editing Minor Writers: The Case of Laetitia Pilkington and Mary Barber" in *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, Vol. 3 ed. Kevin L. Cope and Laura Morrow, 129-147, (New York: AMS Press, 1997), 129-147.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 168-173.

The complexity of hybridity allows for the claim of kinship to Kilmallock to speak to both an Irish and English identification. It provides a framework for understanding that Sir Meade and Sir Seymor will take part in a cultural one-upmanship while sharing philosophy at a gentlemen's club. The historical context is found in the crisis of empire that gripped Great Britain at mid-century; the individual circumstances are Pilkington's experience in the coach on her way to London.

At the beginning of her second volume, Pilkington has begun her journey to London, having left Ireland in disgrace and out of necessity. At this point, she is destitute and entirely dependent upon her survival skills and the charity of others. She is in a vulnerable place entering into uncertain circumstances. She has become the "young Irish scribbler" that Barry labels her. She enters a coach bound for London with three men: "a Member of Parliament and two Gentlemen of the Law."²⁰³ She is immediately abused for being "born in *Ireland*" and later in the same vignette labeled "that little *Hibernian* Nymph."²⁰⁴ In these two instances, Pilkington is marked as Irish, one actively hostile and one as a veiled insult. The use of Hibernia would seem to be affirming because it was a reference to an esteemed Gaelic concept of ancient Ireland; however, the gentleman who uses it, Mr. Middleton, reveals himself to be "unworthy" of his title due to his pomposity. It is the reduction to an Irish identity that is most important here. The contrast between how the men perceive her and how she perceives them illustrates not only knowledge of contemporary politics, but a purposeful interpolation on her part.

She describes the three men in the coach as "Walpolians," supporters of Robert Walpole, a dominant and controversial political figure in mid-century England. The men take "it for granted [Pilkington] was a Fool" and proceed to discuss the Machiavellian machinations of

²⁰³ Pilkington, 129.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

Walpole in gaining his position as the first prime minister in England.²⁰⁵ However, Pilkington illustrates her political awareness in that she satirizes the men by answering the inquiry as to why she is going to London that she “hopes *Sir Robert* would marry [her].” As they laughed at her naiveté, she laughs at their ignorance. These comments illustrate the “ruthless and ironic” character that R. F. Foster uses to describe the Anglo-Irish of the eighteenth century.

The state of Anglo-Irish identity which Pilkington describes in her text is one, primarily, of confusion and contradiction. While Davys portrayed an uneasy balance of the two disparate cultures intended to appeal to an English audience while maintaining a simple, but definitive affiliation with Ireland, Pilkington’s allusions to nationality are fraught with contradiction. She is proud and defensive of both her claim to being Irish-born and her claim to being an active political voice in England. She is insulted that the men in the carriage label her Irish, but equally insulted that they do not consider her intellectually capable of understanding current political thought. Such contradiction is present in her uncle’s story as well.

The story of Sir John Meade that Pilkington relates would have happened between 1703 and 1707 when James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.²⁰⁶ It is this Duke of Ormonde that knighted Meade at the wishes of her great grandfather, Colonel Meade. Ormonde was a commander at the Battle of the Boyne and fought valiantly for William III. This would suggest a familial fidelity with Whig party policies. However, when Pilkington was in the process of writing her memoirs, Ormonde had been exiled to France for his participation in the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, a decidedly anti-Whig behavior. It is clear that she hails him in order to employ him as a means of elevating the status of Colonel Meade. Ormonde, born in Dublin, presented a valued commodity to the Anglo-Irish community as both a loyalist

²⁰⁵ This title is given to him by later historians as the office of Prime Minister had not been created yet. It is the measure of his influence that earns him this title.

²⁰⁶ Also known as the viceroy.

and a rebel. Yet, the meaning of the affiliation becomes blurred as the Duke's own nationality was. The métissage blends the Ormonde of the Glorious Revolution with the Ormonde of rebellion.

In a further study of character, Pilkington describes Meade, a practicing lawyer, as possessing “all those Advantages of Nature, Education and Fortune” so that he received “universal Respect and Esteem.”²⁰⁷ In typical eighteenth-century hyperbolic terms, Meade is an ideal gentleman, in both English and Irish culture. Sir Edward Seymor was the client looking for quick access to an inheritance that he had been left by an acquaintance in Ireland (it is unclear how the deceased is related to Seymor). Of Seymor, Pilkington reveals that he had a “natural Contempt for the whole Country (Ireland), which those of the *English*, who have not been resident amongst them, are but too apt to express.”²⁰⁸ This sentiment was also present in Davys's work discussed in the preceding chapter which illustrates continuity in political thought.²⁰⁹ Then, Pilkington describes Seymor as “accounted to be the proudest Man in *England*” while Meade “was as remarkable for the same Fault” in Ireland. Pilkington has juxtaposed two men to represent their respective countries, both certain of their own worth and skeptical of the other. Yet, Seymor is placed in a position where he needs Meade in order to be financially successful.

Seymor seeks out Meade because the latter was so highly regarded as a lawyer. Yet, when he condescends to meet the lawyer in person, Seymor is humiliated because of his underestimation of Meade's character. The Englishman is left waiting in a parlor, summarily dismissed after a few minutes, and finally intimidated during the trial as Meade remains silent throughout the proceedings. Such a display disrupts the balance of power in favor of the proud

²⁰⁷ Pilkington, 10.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁰⁹ Mary Davys describes Ireland as “very much despis'd by those who not it not, and valued by them that do.” See Chapter One.

Irishman while leaving Seymour desperate and humiliated. However, Meade ultimately wins the trial with his “powerful Eloquence.”²¹⁰ Seymour reacts with enthusiasm calling him “*An Angel! by Heaven, an Angel!*” The two men retired to a club, discussed philosophy, and “contracted a Friendship, which did not terminate, but with their Lives.”²¹¹

The story of Meade and Seymour, as they exemplify their respective countries, shows both an idealized vision of an Anglo-Irish relationship and the obstacles to this relationship. Seymour’s contempt and his eventual humiliation illustrates that prevailing English attitudes toward the Irish are incompatible with productive economic relationships. That Meade and Seymour are dealing with an issue around money and jurisdictions is clearly representative of the controversies over trade and governance during this period. Such a condition echoes the import/export debates over trade in Ireland during the century and the economy of Great Britain after the South Sea Bubble in 1720. Incidents like the Wood’s halfpence scandal demonstrated that Anglo-Irish trade relations were a contentious subject at mid-century, but Foster argues that Ireland was generally well off during this period, in regards to the Anglo-Irish population. Though crop failures caused great famine earning 1740-41 the moniker “Year of the Slaughter,” these disasters devastated the Irish peasantry rather than the merchant and upper class. A healthy, if contentious import/export relationship put Ireland in a relatively good economic position, if one was not native Irish. However, the South Sea Bubble was a disaster for England’s economy, and it took many years to recover. This historical context enriches the story of Meade and Seymour by locating it in the political and economic environment of the time.

The Métissage Writes Nation

²¹⁰ Pilkington, 11.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

The result of the trial and the mutual esteem that it engenders in the two men does suggest an idea of a working relationship. One might say that if Sir John and Sir Edward could live ‘happily ever after,’ then there existed the possibility that an Anglo-Irish relationship can be productive for both parties. However, the path to that harmonious relationship was through the perceived misconceptions of Sir Edward, suggesting that prevailing attitudes of the English toward the Irish, both native and immigrant, would have to change. Ultimately, though, one is left to wonder what exactly Pilkington intended to represent with this anecdote. There is certainly a critique of English behavior toward Ireland in the character of Seymor, but Meade is equally proud and inflexible. And the relationship is established only after Meade delivers his responsibility to acquire wealth for Seymor. While the idealized relationship is admirable, it is the contradictions that dominate the interpretation. It is during this halfway point that emergent ideas of nationality continued to grow and cohere. When high profile figures like Swift wrote pieces about Ireland’s enslavement to the English crown, they were representing a burgeoning national consciousness, a nascent identification by the Anglo-Irish with Ireland as a nation. The perception by Anglo-Irish people of English affiliation was hampered by prevailing attitudes toward the native Irish in England.

Spacks interrogates the relationship between memory and imagination and their function in autobiography because “to read an autobiography is to encounter a self as an imaginative being.”²¹² The question she explores is whether or not memory is reliable because it can be influenced by imagination. Autobiographers, she claims,

“affirm the significance of the identity of imagination as well as that of memory; they demonstrate that a sense of identity can be put into words, that the mysteries of personality can be expressed, through the operations of memory and imagination, in

²¹² Ibid., 19.

objectified form, that identity, in short, can be made substantial and communicated as substantive fact.”²¹³

Such a claim subordinates a search for physically verifiable facts to the fact of imagination’s role in the construction of selfhood. Imagination works in tandem with memory to create the “I” of the autobiography.

For understanding the complexity of the contradiction, the presumptions of Seymour are important. His approach to Ireland is not unique. As I stated above, Andrew Carpenter claims that the English, as a culture, did not differentiate between native and colonial inhabitants of Ireland; they were all Irish. For example, Pilkington had a verifiable claim to an Anglo-Irish identity through both her family and her husband. However, in London, she is received in a similar manner to the native immigrants who flooded the streets of London after the famine. The autobiography allows for these types of representations even though they are laden with contradiction. By discarding a traditional notion of truth—using the individual experience of her temporal moment rather than a political analysis—the *Memoirs* can illustrate not only the contradiction that is inherent in crisis, but also the lived reality of that contradiction. Pilkington’s experiences help recreate an environment that reveals the paradox of the idea of “Anglo-Irish” as it was experienced in mid-century Great Britain.

And imagination is a component of community, the imagined community of Benedict Anderson, who argues that nationalism is an invention.²¹⁴ Nationalism is invented as a means for connecting and sustaining relationships, especially in times of crisis. Love for one’s country, one way of defining nationalism, is found in “the cultural products of nationalism—poetry, prose,

²¹³ Ibid., 23.

²¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

fiction...”²¹⁵ Since these products are predicated on the use of language, language becomes a primary instrument for inventing, or imagining, community.

“Something of the nature of this love can be deciphered from the ways in which languages describe its object: either in the vocabulary of kinship...or that of home...Both idioms denote something to which one is naturally tied...all those things one cannot help.”²¹⁶

Pilkington employs both kinship and home in her descriptions, but it is perhaps her initial pronouncements of kinship that are most compelling and most illustrative of the contradiction present in the Anglo-Irish national community. Though Pilkington’s text might not directly, or factually, address the immediate political concerns of mid-century Anglo-Irish politics, those issues are a part of her imagined self and her imagined community. It is not necessary, indeed impossible, for her to identify concretely who are the Anglo-Irish in Ireland. It is sufficient that she imagines herself as part of that nebulous community.

The move toward aggregation is a natural and necessary direction that the liminal figure must pursue. With a disintegrating subjectivity, however, Pilkington’s liminality becomes even more pronounced. The autobiography, as a medium for reconstructing and stabilizing an author’s identity, can also show the impossibility of that cohesion. The imagined self can be woven, blurred, and blended, but not homogenized. Because of her lack of virtue, she is disconnected from being either Irish or English. Denied culturally accepted identities—virtuous woman and Anglo-Irish—she is thrust into a liminal stage. Yet aggregation is not possible as it requires conforming to social norms which she is prevented from doing. Thus she cannot become an Anglo-Irish woman. But the thrust of the subject is equally strong. She imagines herself as

²¹⁵ Ibid., 141.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 143.

part of the Anglo-Irish community even if that community does not recognize her. She attempts sovereignty by writing and publishing and the poetic bearing of Nation. Indeed, her memoirs echo Roy Foster's words: "Marginalized if not isolated, the Anglo-Irish developed a ruthless but ironic pursuit of style."²¹⁷

²¹⁷ R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1989) 170.

Chapter Three:

Sensibility, Nationalism, and Survival:

Using Sentimental Discourse to Negotiate an Anglo-Irish Identity

“In the eighteenth century ideals and ideas such as these—notions of man’s innate benevolence, of his ‘humanity, of his capacity to sympathize, of his ability and his right to exercise his own judgment, to formulate alone and unaided his own moral sentiments—functioned not only as powerful fantasies but also as complex and sometimes precisely defined concepts which were developed and investigated in the work of the philosophers, scientists and imaginative writers... a terminology and a set of concepts evolved which enabled people to explore in new and significant ways the whole question of what it means to be a human being living in the society of his fellows.”²¹⁸

“The novel must represent all the social and ideological voices of its era, that is, all the era’s languages that have any claim to being significant; the novel must be a microcosm of heteroglossia.”²¹⁹

It might seem that understanding *The History of Lady Barton (LB)* in the terms of novelistic discourse and the discourse of sensibility is a futile endeavor.²²⁰ Bakhtin has elucidated the very complicated nature of defining the novel as a genre, arguing that the multiplicity of discourses that exist within novels prohibits generating any definable set of characteristics. And the concept of sensibility, especially in the novel, is no less ambiguous. It was as nebulous to contemporary eighteenth-century readers and critics as it is to twenty-first century scholars. Such permeable and mutable borders would seem to sink me before I even leave the harbor. However, it would seem appropriate to exercise some of the adventurous, if

²¹⁸ R. F. Brissendem, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1974) 34.

²¹⁹ M. M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, edited by Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 411.

²²⁰ Elizabeth Griffith, “*The history of Lady Barton, a novel, in letters, by Mrs. Griffith. In three volumes...*” (London, 1771). *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. Auburn University. 3 Feb. 2009.

perilous, attitude that Captain Cook displayed with his maritime journeys during this same time period in order to understand how sensibility and nationality are linked. Unlike the travel narrative and the memoir, the novel is the first and only wholly fictional genre that I have considered in this study. Though *The Fugitive* and *The Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington* have some fictional constructions, *LB* is a sentimental novel written and published with the express intention to instruct and entertain through an *imaginative* story. Similarly, communities, like fiction, are imagined. Thus, the imaginative story is a reflection of the imagined community out of which that story is written, and the cultural imagination of the Anglo-Irish community is one in flux during mid-century. Griffith's novel imagines a tragedy wherein idealized possibility is overcome by cultural reality. And just as the story of Lady Barton exists as an imaginative construct, the community of the Anglo-Irish exists as an imagined community that constructs relationships and identities based on a mythic past and a troubled future.²²¹ As imagined, Griffith's novel is a multi-layered text imbued with the controversy and tension that characterized being Anglo-Irish in the 1760s and 70s. At first thought, any link between a melodramatic story of love and loss and a historical period of constitutional debates and imperial crises would appear contrived and tenuous at best. But a sentimental novel is as concerned with nationality as any political treatise of that period. Indeed, it cannot help but be so.

Real Literature or Popular Fiction

This particular novel of Griffith's has, almost universally, been judged to be "a poor novel indeed"²²² by literary scholars of the last century. Described as unrealistic, overly melodramatic, and disjointed, *LB* represented to scholars of the sentimental novel all that belittled the beautiful sophistication found in writers such as Richardson or Burney. Yet, such a

²²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

²²² B. G. MacCarthy, *The Female Pen: Women Writers and Novelists: 1621-1818*, 2 vols. 1946, Reprint, (2 vols in 1), (New York: New York University Press, 1994) 320.

label is unfair. First, *LB* was Griffith's most commercially successful novel. While popularity does not necessarily equate to quality, it certainly suggests a cultural resonance with a great number reading public; readers found something in *LB* with which they could identify, an echo of their lived world that interested and intrigued them. Undeniably, this novel was a sensationalist text employing the stock conventions of sensibility to gratify a reading public's desire for provocation to intense emotional reaction, but it was also emulating paradigmatic works like *Clarissa*. However, its wide appeal should not be overlooked. I argue that this popularity was influenced by the historical period in which it was written and read. *LB* is also an artifact of Anglo-Irish identity during the decades leading up to the turbulent 1790s. Though critics have largely disregarded the concept of nationality, in the years preceding the Age of Revolution it seems imperative to read the negotiations of nationness as they are articulated from a marginalized position. Griffith was an Anglo-Irish woman who was writing from England about an English heroine living in Ireland and existing in-between two cultures. Lady Barton is a symbol of liminality, and like Pilkington, she is prevented from aggregating. The significance of these details deserves to be explored, not dismissed as irrelevant, because they challenge a label such as "poor novel" and might even suggest one such as "dynamic."

To address the concept of nationality and understand the dynamic aspects of *LB*, one must begin with a survey of the various nationalities that have been assigned to the writer. Like Davys, Griffith's place of birth is uncertain, but it was likely Wales or Dublin, Ireland. Her biographer, D. H. Eshleman, believes that it was probable that she was born in Ireland,²²³ a claim that Susan Staves repeats in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 89*²²⁴ and Elizabeth

²²³ D. H. Eshleman, *Elizabeth Griffith, a biographical and critical study*, (Ann Arbor: Edwards Bros., 1949).

²²⁴ Susan Staves, "Elizabeth Griffith", *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Dramatists: Third Series*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider. *Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 89*. (Detroit; Gale Research, 1989), *Literature Resource Centre*, Gale. AUBURN UNIV. 9 June 2009.

Napier in 1985.²²⁵ The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, in 2004, claims that Griffith was born in Glamorgan, Wales, but it is unclear from where this archival evidence came. This ambiguity is less important with Griffith than it was with Davys because the former's early life is well-documented. Regardless of her place of birth, Griffith was raised in Dublin. Her father was a prominent manager-actor in the Smock Alley Theater, and her mother came from Queens County in the northern part of Ireland.²²⁶ Griffith grew up immersed in the Anglo-Irish culture of Dublin from 1727 until 1764 when she left in order to live in London. In 1751, after many years of exchanged letters that would later be published,²²⁷ Griffith married Richard Griffith, a Kilkenny farmer of no relation to her. Most biographical accounts claim that they had a happy marriage, but it was fraught with difficulty due mainly to economics. Their nuptials had to be kept secret from Richard's father for a number of years in order for the young man to earn his fortune, and then claim an inheritance. During that time, and through much of the rest of their working life, it was Griffith's pen that put money into their hands and bread on their table. There is little evidence that Richard was ever very successful in his financial endeavors. However, Griffith was able to procure a position in the East India Company for their eldest son, and his financial success allowed him to take care of them in their later years when they moved back to Ireland.²²⁸

It bears noting that the three women discussed thus far have followed a similar path. Spending their youth in Ireland, usually Dublin, and then immigrating to England, usually London, where they found publishing opportunities. However, Griffith was far more socially and

²²⁵ Napier, Elizabeth R. "Elizabeth Griffith", *British Novelists, 1660-1800*, ed. Martin C. Battestin. *Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 39*, (Detroit; Gale Research, 1985), *Literature Resource Center*, Gale. AUBURN UNIV. 9 June 2009.

²²⁶ Elizabeth Eger, 'Griffith, Elizabeth (1727-1793)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11596>, accessed 8 March 2007].

²²⁷ *A Series of Genuine Letters between Henry and Frances*, published in 1757 in Dublin and London.

²²⁸ This information found in Melinda C. Finberg, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Women Dramatist*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

financially successful than either Davys or Pilkington. Though she received a fair amount of criticism about her initial publications, largely questioning the moral value of her work, she adapted her themes to be more socially suitable and enjoyed popular and critical acclaim thereafter. Aside from *LB*, most readers considered the novelistic work of Griffith, especially *A Series of Letters* and *The Delicate Distress*, to be exemplary in its expression of mid-eighteenth-century concepts of sensibility. In these novels, the function of sensibility was to instruct and to caution young women about the moral and social imperatives of preserving a woman's virtue. The primary aim of such work was didactic, to educate young women in not only the value, but also the fragility of their virtue—a theme, Griffith employed and for which she was noted in critical responses to her work. But in order to be a commercially successful novel, it must also entertain, and Griffith needed to generate income from her writing as she was supporting her family. One had to balance quality with popularity. She had significant literary success in her lifetime, and her work has received critical attention fairly regularly thereafter. Griffith practiced and published in many genres, including a number of successful dramas, but it is her work in the sentimental novel that has received the most attention from scholars.

In reviewing the literary scholarship on Griffith, many of the names that have appeared in earlier chapters such as B.G. MacCarthy and Janet Todd, appear again, especially with Davys since both women are considered innovators in the development of the novel. And also like Davys, it is the didacticism of Griffith's work that has received the most attention. In 1946, B. G. MacCarthy praised Griffith's *Delicate Distress* as a "graceful" work in which the author values "gentleness and magnanimity," qualities which "enable one to bear all trials and vexations with self-respecting dignity."²²⁹ This discourse of sensibility informs much of her analysis, including her claim that the genre lacked sufficient talent, leaning more toward hack work than literature.

²²⁹ MacCarthy, 319.

Griffith's *Delicate Distress* and *LB* represent the best and the worst, respectively, of this type of novel. MacCarthy reads an occasional "feminine point of view"²³⁰ which situates Griffith into the sea of minor writers who were recovered in the first wave of feminism. However, the "masculine notion of womanhood" that she interprets in *LB functions* as the chief detractor in the novel. This dichotomy of masculine and feminine characteristics of sensibility is revelatory of the limitation in which the author and her characters must live. And while those limitations are dictated by gender and class, I believe they are also dictated by nationality, which she does not discuss apart from labeling Griffith "Irish."²³¹ Like Davys and Pilkington, what "Irish" meant was left unexplored.

Katharine Rogers discusses Griffith's novels as representations of both the ideal and the tragic opportunities in marriage for women in the eighteenth century.²³² She claims that novels of sensibility "repeatedly disprove the comfortable assumption that woman ought to be able to adjust happily to an uncongenial marriage."²³³ In Rogers's estimation, Griffith and her husband shared a "mutually rewarding" relationship. For her, *A Series of Genuine Letters* illustrates an open dialogue that interrogates the roles of each partner in a marriage relationship and by implication that Griffith's marriage must have mirrored that. However, in contrast to such a sympathetic view through that novel, *LB* shows a far more tragic picture of marriage. Where Henry and Frances lived in "perfect congeniality," Sir William and Louisa Barton experience only sorrow and guilt.²³⁴ Rogers' characterization of an idyllic marriage between Griffith and her husband is questionable, but her analysis of the tragic marriage in *LB* highlights a vulnerability in the heroine that bears a more descriptive analysis. While it is demonstrative of the position of a

²³⁰ Ibid., 322.

²³¹ Ibid., 318.

²³² Katharine Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982) 15.

²³³ Ibid., 149.

²³⁴ Ibid., 164.

middle-class woman who is the focus of Rogers's study, I believe that vulnerability is equally present in the traces of nationality. Rogers's claim that "these novels express women's wish-fulfillment fantasies" echoes the equally wishful political relationships that subconsciously develop in *LB*. If there is an incompatibility between self-fulfillment and marriage, there is also an incompatibility between the dual nationalities of Lady Barton.

In 1986, Jane Spencer argued that this novel was "an attack on fashionable and mercenary marriage customs" which employed what she calls the "cult of the pure heroine" in order to advance "a feminist consciousness...evident in her sympathetic portrayal of the heroines dilemma (that she is in love with a man other than her husband)." ²³⁵ The pure heroine is the woman of sensibility, meaning capable of refined and delicate feeling, who is able to keep her virtue in the face of adversity. Of Lady Barton, Spencer writes that "for all her mistakes, [she] is a pure heroine. She remains faithful to her husband." ²³⁶ Fidelity, if purely physical, is what spiritually saves Lady Barton. She still dies in the end, but her fidelity casts her as a martyr instead of a fallen wretch. ²³⁷ Spencer shows the heroine at her most vulnerable and illustrates the impossibility of an assured and/or rewarding future for a woman in marriage. But within the tragic vulnerability, Spencer argues that a resistance fomented. She describes Lady Barton as a "rebellious heroine chaffing under the yoke of marriage to a misogynist" and one who exercises an "angry resistance" to the limitations inhibiting her spirit. ²³⁸ In Spencer's analysis, Lady Barton has agency—the ability to think, to act, and to resist—however fruitless that resistance proves to be. Indeed, that such agency leads to inevitable death is what proves so illuminating in

²³⁵ Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*, (New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1986) 124-127.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

²³⁷ Marie, one of the interpolated tales, provides the 'fallen wretch' archetype since she submits to the physical affections of her lover.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

the story. Virtue and agency oppose each other because the concept of submission is so thoroughly intertwined into Virtue. And because they cannot be reconciled, the heroine must submit. But Spencer's concept of the rebellious heroine illustrates how a woman negotiated what she wants to be against what she can be. Conceptualizing marriage as an unequal partnership, one in which one party must submit to the other, is a typical approach to describing eighteenth-century relationships between England and Ireland, especially as the Age of Revolution dawned. In the way that Agency and Virtue cannot be reconciled, the status of Ireland within Great Britain was also irreconcilable. Lady Barton exists in the liminal space in-between subjectivity and social expectations while the Anglo-Irish are equally liminal in the place between kingdom and colony.

Marla Harris again considers *LB* more consciously structured than previous readers had allowed for. Her short article challenges the prevailing opinion of this book as nothing more than formulaic decorative fluff employed to flesh out a pocketbook as much as a library. Similar to the concept of doubling that Diana Relke employed in reading *The Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, Harris finds intentional critical structure in the form and content of the novel, specifically in the three interpolated tales that Lady Barton relates. She claims that these tales, so often dismissed as digressions, are not formulaic characters and stories that have been inserted arbitrarily, but instead serve to illustrate the palimpsest of the text: "The women in the novel subvert this imprisoning male authority and exert power over their own lives and plots, redefining themselves as controlling subjects, instead of controlled objects, as heroines rather than victims."²³⁹ Harris argues that Griffith uses these women to double for Lady Barton. For example, Olivia, the imprisoned wife of Colonel Walters contacts Lady Barton by sending

²³⁹ Marla Harris, "How Nicely Circumspect Must Your Conduct Be" Double Standards in Elizabeth Griffith's *The History of Lady Barton*" in *Eighteenth-Century Women and the Arts* ed., Frederick M. Keener and Susan Lorsch, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988) 282.

messages through her young daughter. Lady Barton facilitates Olivia's escape and refuge in England. With this subplot, Griffith has invested both Lady Barton and Olivia (and Barton's sister, Frances, to a certain extent) with "female power", the ability to *act* (not just be acted on) within socially acceptable parameters.²⁴⁰ Lady Barton is fulfilling her role as the sentimental heroine by rescuing the less fortunate Olivia. Olivia has suffered at the hands of her malevolent husband, but she is saved by her unassailable character. Harris also notes the vulnerability that women faced, but she interprets resistance and cleverness. Griffith, she claims, employs the doubling to not only reveal the "socio-sexual" limitations of women, but to satirize the comic disparity of those standards. The palimpsest, so often overlooked, proves to be a prolific source for understanding the unconscious text, both social and political.

In *The Sign of the Angelica*, Janet Todd only mentions this writer a handful of times and mainly in passing. However, the few comments that she does make illustrate the evolution of the reception of characters like Lady Barton and writers like Griffith. The "lively, resourceful" Griffith "saw that the needed money was in morality."²⁴¹ Todd constructs Griffith as an intentionally socially aware writer as opposed to a simple parody of Richardson's masterpiece, *Clarissa*. Lady Barton is still cast as a tragic heroine, but Todd reads this as a purposeful, even economic decision, rather than an inability to write. Women writers understood the capital of virtue and employed it accordingly.

In Gillian Skinner's 1995 article, "'Above œconomy': Elizabeth Griffith's *The History of Lady Barton* and Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*", she makes an argument in which she links scholarly readings of the function of gender and class in the sentimental novel, specifically

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 279.

²⁴¹ Janet Todd, *The Sign of the Angelica: Women Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) 127.

the decision to privilege one over the other.²⁴² Instead, she argues, “a novel by a woman writer translates class, or ‘political,’ differences into those of gender.”²⁴³ Thus, the concepts are not separate, but exist as mirrors of each other. She claims that “in the body of the novel...focusing on gender conflict becomes a strategy which addresses first the issue most immediately vital to women (feminine purity) and then inevitably goes on to address issues of class politics—a strategy of engagement, rather than of avoidance.”²⁴⁴ By prefacing gender conflict, a woman writer can address not only disparities between the sexes, but also between the classes, and in doing so they engage in active discussions of subjectivity rather than quietly retiring into a ‘feminine’ realm. This position challenges John Mullan’s argument that the sentimental novel was a terminal genre and irrelevant to the practical concerns the reader, as he articulates in *Sentiment and Sociability*.²⁴⁵ She specifically criticizes Mullan’s generalizations since they do not account for “the contexts from which other (i.e. not Scottish writers) examples come.”²⁴⁶ Since much of Mullan’s argument is founded on Henry Mackenzie, David Hume, and Samuel Richardson, there is a noticeable absence of serious attention to the social and political depth of women sentimental writers. There is also a notable lack of diversity in terms of nationality. Skinner recognizes that *LB* has a “female Anglo-Irish author” and therefore speaks from a different position than that of Henry Mackenzie in *The Man of Feeling*, which was published the same year.

Skinner’s argument is a culturally economic one. She argues that characters like Lady Barton lives in a world that is typically above the common economic concerns of the average

²⁴² Gillian Skinner, “‘Above œconomy’: Elizabeth Griffith’s *The History of Lady Barton* and Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling*” in *Eighteenth-Century Life* 19, no. 1 (Feb. 1995): 1-17.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁴⁵ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

²⁴⁶ Skinner, 14.

reader. This is evidenced by the lack of reference to such concerns within the novel. Ostensibly, Lady Barton is granted freedom from these concerns because of rank. However, “a novel by a woman writer translates class, or ‘political,’ differences into those of gender.”²⁴⁷ So, Lady Barton is, paradoxically, both above and trapped in the moral economy that a sentimental *hero* can transcend at will. She is free from worrying about money, but not from worrying about virtue, something the sentimental hero has little concern for because his value is not derived from sexual purity. So, Skinner argues that an informed critic must “read for class and gender simultaneously” because “*LB* links gender and class to challenge the contemporary organization of society.”²⁴⁸

In the opening pages of *LB*, the initial encounter with native Irish cottagers brings this to the forefront. Lady Barton’s harrowing journey over the Irish Sea ends in a near shipwreck as the vessel was “driven upon the northern coast of Ireland.”²⁴⁹ Her first impression of the land is “a desert island... uninhabited by everything but a few goats, and some fishermen, who are almost as wild as they.” It was “a dismal place... for darkness, rain, and wind, I never saw.” The tone is set for an adversarial encounter with native Islanders, but such a situation is also created to illustrate the depth of the character. The Irish countryside is forbidding, inspiring fear even as it is a refuge from the perilous sea. However, the contact zone in which Lady Barton and the Irish fishermen²⁵⁰ meet establishes an amicable if patronizing relationship between the two cultures. Thus, this initial encounter serves as a metaphor describing the complicated relationship between English and Irish governments.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 11.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 15.

²⁴⁹ Griffith, 1:13.

²⁵⁰ It’s difficult to say whether these fishermen are Gaelic-speaking native Irish. There is no mention of a language barrier; however, the references to wildness and the association of the fishermen to their sheep—implying the animalistic perception that Davys employs in her travel narrative—suggests that they could be.

The bedraggled passengers are received in “huts” by “hospitable cottagers.” But, she interpolates them as recognizant of their inferior status: the cottagers “received us with that sort of surprize, [sic] which I imagine we should feel, if an order of higher beings were to descend by miracle to visit us.” Their primitiveness is further reinforced by the wooden cups in which they serve tea to the shipwrecked aristocracy. Here, Griffith makes precise distinctions between classes. The cottagers, in their wild and animal nature, are set in stark contrast to the civilized and refined Barton. In fact, the distinctions are so sharp as to suggest that one culture is alien to the other.

This initial encounter presents a complicated socio-political situation. According to Skinner, “the passage neatly encapsulates an attitude typical in the period—that the poor are in a wholly different category from their social superiors and, furthermore, they are lucky to be so.”²⁵¹ But, the inferiority of the cottagers only serves to delineate Lady Barton’s own limitations. While the cottagers are socially inferior, they are also untroubled or limited by the constraints of polite, i.e. aristocratic society. Lady Barton, however, is bound by the dictates of gender though she is above the concerns of fiscal responsibility. In fact, she is even forbidden from access to money. After arriving at the estate that will become her home, Lady Barton attempts to give one of Sir William’s—her husband—tenants a small gift of money because they “had lost their intire [sic] substance by fire.” Sir William quickly steps in to prevent her act of generosity, stating that she was “too young” to understand economic concerns.²⁵² Her encounter with the native Irish illustrates her class superiority, but Sir William is quick to illustrate her gender inferiority. Indeed, Skinner also reads the interpolated tales as demonstrative of this paradox as well. The heroines of the three tales are destroyed or nearly so by the financial

²⁵¹ Skinner, 7.

²⁵² Griffith 1:68.

punishments of their husbands/protectors. Lady Barton, however, is well provided for, but equally trapped. In these sub-narratives, “The suppression of Louisa’s feminine moral economy by an unsympathetic husband becomes the economic oppression of powerless women by powerful men in the interpolated narratives, thus helping to undermine the gender conflict of the main story by rendering it in more explicit terms.”²⁵³ Here, Skinner connects the sentimental trials of Lady Barton to the economic trials of her interpolated counterparts, which also reinterprets the encounter with the cottagers. The connection between gender and economics that Skinner tries to illuminate illustrates the political unconscious in this text. Repeatedly, Griffith presents encounters which display unequal power relationships, and each time she presents a critique of the social and political values that create these relationships. And in doing so, she shaped a text, fraught as it is with contradiction and paradox, which reflects the troubled relationship between England and Ireland during mid-century: the Anglo-Irish considered themselves “Irishmen with English civil liberties,” but the English government was not so clear.²⁵⁴

After relating the tragedy of Olivia, Lady Barton imagines a scenario that echoes this paradox. In writing to Frances about the plight of Olivia, specifically the fact that society has no place for a refugee such as her, Louisa imagines a place that provides protection for “unhappy object, forsaken, and ill treated wives, to betake themselves to.”²⁵⁵ However, this asylum would not be a “retreat...from the world, but from the misfortunes, or slander of it”, and would provide them a place where they “might enjoy all the pleasures of the world and advantage of living still in the world, have their conduct vouched by one another, and be screened from those artful and insidious essays, which young or pretty women, when once become helpless adjectives of

²⁵³ Skinner, 11.

²⁵⁴ R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, (London: Penguin Books, 1989) 248.

²⁵⁵ Griffith, 2:56.

society, are generally liable to.”²⁵⁶ Though her concept is based on the private and limited convent, she clearly believes that women in such a community would continue to engage in the secular world of society while escaping the limitations of comparisons with “artful and insidious” women. This asylum must provide a place for women to retire from *and* engage with society—in essence, to act freely within the public sphere without needing to conform to the bounds of gender which restrict social and political engagement.

(The convent) seen as the necessary display of virtuous femininity, such presence in the world can be justified. But such an argument also allows the women that Louisa wishes to protect to gain ‘pleasures and advantages’ from the world. Where the idea of virtuous displays seems to imply a one-way process in which the world is gratified by the confirmation of approved femininity in its women, the women of this asylum are apparently to enjoy a two-way traffic, and gain from the world at the same time as ‘displaying’ to it.²⁵⁷

This construction of being at once both a part of and separate from a larger unit and the ability to move fluidly between them also applies to the political traces in the novel. It reflects the constitutional debates going on between Irish parliament and the English government. Skinner continues to speculate that if such a subjective place could potentially be differentiated “from the amorphous mass...., an ideology of bourgeois individualism,” then such a political distinction was also possible.²⁵⁸ Thus *LB*, specifically this imagined Protestant Convent, could potentially demonstrate a political relationship in which Ireland could be both in a kingdom and also act as an independent nation. Ultimately, though, Lady Barton and Griffith are unable to reconcile these contradictions.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:57.

²⁵⁷ Skinner, 12.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

Spencer, Harris, and Skinner created a very different image of *LB* than earlier critics had done. The sentimental heroine is vulnerable, as a model sentimental heroine should be, but Lady Barton is also rebellious, angry, intelligent, and, more importantly, *aware*, and the text develops a palimpsest that challenges any claim that might seek to dismiss this novel as pulp fiction. These readings of Griffith's novel, which delve into the complicated palimpsest of the axes of gender, class, and genre, proposed new ways of reading a novel that has essentially been dismissed as popular literature.

One element that has been overlooked is the geographical setting of the novel—Ireland. Lady Barton was born in England, but marries an Irishman and moves to his estate. It is in Ireland where the tragedy of Lady Barton's life plays out. This structure suggests that the incompatibility of virtue and rebellion displayed in Lady Barton might also suggest an incompatibility between England and Ireland, neither of which can suffer silently or submissively. But Louisa Barton makes attempts within the limited space that she is allowed to assert her right to construct herself as she desires instead of what she is supposed to be. In doing so, she suggests that those two constructions might not be mutually exclusive. The novel works to tease out the contradictions inherent in these troubled relationships, but it does not seek to provide a reasonable solution. Rather, *LB* seems to foreshadow the turbulent future of Irish politics. The tragedy of sensibility is also the tragedy of hybrid nationalities.

Reconciling Reason and Passion: The Sentimental Novel and Nationality

In her preface, Griffith establishes *LB* as a sentimental novel by providing the necessary claims required by her readers. She appeals to arbiters of taste and morality by explaining “such sort of writings (sentimental novels) may be rendered, by good and ingenious authors, extremely serviceable to morals, and other useful purposes of life...depend(ing) upon the choice that

parents and preceptors make of such compositions.”²⁵⁹ This claim establishes that her text is one of good taste, and distinguishing it from more base forms of literature. She characterizes herself as “good and ingenious,” but also morally inspired. She even goes so far as to assert that a writer “stationed below the familiar converse of polite life” could not have penned this novel and thus stations herself above the professional hack.²⁶⁰ She further acknowledges the preeminence of parental consent in the selection of literature. This is important for her because traditional practices in marriage negotiations, though challenged, were still firmly entrenched. She acknowledges the expectation for entertainment as well. Griffith recognized that “Works of this kind are in general of so captivating a nature to young readers, that let them run through but a few pages of almost any Novel, and they will feel their affections or curiosity so interested...that it is with difficulty they can be diverted.”²⁶¹ By 1771, the year this novel was published, Griffith had already experienced a fair amount of success, in both fiction and drama. She acknowledges that she was “fortunate” to have had success with “former work of the same kind” as *LB*.²⁶² While this claim has a transparent self-aggrandizement, it also identifies her novel with the popular sentimental literature movement and the cultural capital that went along with that. By invoking “works of this kind,” she claims two important qualities, didactic and “captivating,” giving her readers a reason to pick up her book and not be “diverted” until the end. The reality of the market place demanded entertainment in addition to moral didacticism. The preface provides the necessary framework for the reader to categorize her novel at the same time she is consciously constructing her right to present the text.

²⁵⁹ Griffith, 1:vi-vii.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, viii.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, v.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, ix-x.

Sensibility is broadly understood to represent the ability to feel in a refined and delicate manner, to be susceptible to acute emotions (usually painful, but sometimes ecstasy), and to embody the benevolent nature of man (though some scholars argue that malevolence is also a characteristic of sensibility). The stress is on feeling as opposed to thinking. It represents an epistemology that stems from experience rather than thought, as articulated by philosophers such as John Locke.²⁶³ Experiential knowledge was not exclusive to the philosophy of sensibility, but this type of knowledge was at the center of this philosophy. The moral sense was, in essence, a sixth sense as argued by Locke. This construction of sensibility claimed that rather than being innate, this moral sense was developed out of experience but was founded on the innate benevolence of human beings. If the source of all knowledge was sensory experience, then such experience must be used to construct the ways in which human beings related to each other, their sociability. The knowledge gained from experience, specifically the experience of feelings, should guide man inexorably to the proper and correct establishment of social relationships. This progress, nevertheless, is an idealized vision rather than a practical application. Reconciling reason and passion proved to be an impossible paradox. However, within the realm of the imagination, it did seem possible to turn experiential knowledge into an imagined community. Yet, the most intriguing stories often illustrated the irreconcilability of sensibility rather than a complementary relationship between reason and passion.

To understand the function of sensibility within an imagined community, especially in the eighteenth century, one must almost certainly first turn to the novel. As a product and generator of cultural discourse, the novel with its attendant heteroglossia invites an exploration of the relationship between sensibility and nationality because it “must represent all the social and ideological voices of its era, that is, all the era’s languages that have any claim to being

²⁶³ Geraint Parry, *John Locke*, (Boston: G. Allen and Unwin, 1978).

significant.”²⁶⁴ And every language within the novel must be a “concrete, socially-embodied point of view, not an abstract purely semantic position.”²⁶⁵ In the terms of a paradigm, the culture of sensibility provided a structure through which to mediate the social and political ideologies that constructed the epistemology of mid-eighteenth-century Ireland, and the sentimental novel provided a tablet on which those ideologies could be written. The nature of the sentimental novel reflects the conflicting and contradictory state of national identity as it existed in the imagination of the Anglo-Irish population in the 1760s and 70s and even into the twenty-first century.

During the imperial crisis, the ideological debates over the status of Ireland within or without Great Britain became more prominent. My purpose here is to look at the parallels between these debates and the concept of sensibility as it was deployed in the novel. Within both of these movements, there existed a tension between passion and reason, between cultural myth and political reality. The tension arose from a seeming incompatibility between the refined feelings that identified the sentimental aristocrat, which was an individual experience, with the sociability of moral sense, an organizing value of society. Similarly, there was a tension between College Green, which was the seat of the Irish Parliament, and Dublin Castle, which was the seat of the Lord Lieutenant, the King’s representative in Ireland. The political status of Ireland within Great Britain, a question that was centuries old, was becoming increasingly important to the Irish government from the 1750s onward as the imperial crisis began consuming British political thought. The constitutional debates spurred on by Anglo-Irish politicians and events in the American colonies revived and pushed to the forefront the ideological debate over the question of Ireland as a nation or colony, and if nation, in what way. This question is best represented by

²⁶⁴ Bakhtin, 411.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 412.

the tension between individuality and community, which is inherent in the ideology of sensibility and by the manifestation of that tension in political thought. Governmental policy had to negotiate the conflict between individuality, Ireland as a separate nation, and public good, what serves the empire.

In 1974, R. F. Brissendem surveyed the concept of the sentimental novel through the work of Samuel Richardson and the Marquis de Sade.²⁶⁶ Beginning with an etymological approach to understanding the roots of the word sensibility and its “unusually high degree of connotative valence” in the eighteenth century, Brissendem explores how the power within the concept of sensibility shaped the discourse of British philosophers and, subsequently, the discourse of the sentimental novel. The concept of sensibility was “charged with great and often vague emotive power—moral, sexual, political,” and thus its capacity to insert itself into the languages of culture—I would argue that it even constructs the form of those languages—vaulted it from a mere literary form to the status of a cultural paradigm.²⁶⁷ Beyond its literary significance, sensibility represented a paradigm for society in constructing feeling that was in opposition of and adjacent to reason. What mattered was how reason was supposed to function in the sentimental man or woman, the social model. Brissendem stresses that while reason and feeling were considered to be dichotomous, “ideally the man or woman of sentiment as present in the fiction of the age was seen as someone in whom the claims of reason and feeling were properly balanced.”²⁶⁸ But such an idea was at once both a “pragmatic approach to life” and a “powerful fantasy.”²⁶⁹ The incompatibility of these two functions and the equally powerful urge

²⁶⁶ Brissendem, 20.

²⁶⁷ Brissendem uses Thomas S. Kuhn’s explanation of the paradigm in his book. See pg. 37.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 55, 33.

to integrate them led to the demise of the sentimental novel in the following decades, Brissendem argues.

As a paradigm, sensibility also informed political thought, and the political echoes in this concept have the same inherent contradictions found in the debates over its social function—policy that serves English interests and policy that recognizes the Anglo-Irish as a nation of equals. In Brissendem’s words, the idea of man’s “ability and his right to exercise his own judgment, to formulate alone and unaided his own moral sentiments” highlights the difficulties in reconciling the tension between reason and feeling. Man deserved the freedom to explore his individual experience and construct his understanding of the world through that experience. However, these conclusions must be applicable to all sentimental participants in the nation. Society must *individually* arrive at the *same* conclusions because, in order to not be irrelevant, sensibility had to function as a unifying force within society, a universal response to experience which served the public good. The universality was important in that it could be repeatable, thus creating a shared response which would in turn create a standard by which social action could be judged. Yet, the experience of sensibility was, by nature, both individual and spontaneous. The philosophy out of which it is generated is predicated on the idea “that the source of all knowledge and all values is the individual human experience.”²⁷⁰ In political terms, tension arises from the very different individual experiences of the Anglo-Irish and the English.²⁷¹ So the tension between reason and feeling is reproduced in a tension between individual experience generated through feeling and a collective social response predicated on rationality. And Brissendem argues that “the notion of a necessarily reasonable feeling is both extraordinarily

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 22.

²⁷¹ This is a general statement. I am not arguing that there was any one universal experience in either of those cultural groups. However, I am using the arguments presented in works such as Linda Colley’s *Britons* and R.F. Foster’s *Modern Ireland*, which deconstruct the imagined communities of these cultures.

attractive and profoundly ambiguous.”²⁷² If one extends this contradiction to politics, such tensions were manifested through debates on nationality. The Anglo-Irish, by individual and collective experience, considered themselves Irish with English civil rights. But translating such experience into policy proved as “extraordinarily attractive and profoundly ambiguous” as a reasonable feeling.

Ireland was undoubtedly and inextricably part of Great Britain. Though the parliament at College Green represented an *Irish* government, laws such as the Poynings Law and the Declaratory Act²⁷³ illustrated the very real control of the English Crown over Irish government, and from the 1760s onward, the resident Lord Lieutenant provided a tangible Crown presence. Martyn Powell argues that the “Bute and Grenville ministries, with half an eye on similar administrative problems in America, resolved to reform the Irish system of government,” and this position was intended to help “control the Irish Parliament.”²⁷⁴

The influence of the American Revolution on Irish political ideology in the 1760s and 70s is important, but can be overstated. Neil Longley York argues that “with the deepening crisis in the 1760s, the Irish followed American affairs closely, looking for signs of what lay ahead for themselves.”²⁷⁵ Unlike the Jacobite rebellions of 1716 and 1745, which sought to restore the Stuarts to the throne of England, the American Revolution engendered forward-looking aspirations though based on ancient ideals of self-government. Longley identifies a group of constitutional reformers as the Anglo-Irish Patriots, who “were obliged to carve an identity for

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁷³ Poynings Law, passed in 1494, required that Irish parliamentary meetings be approved by the King’s representative in Ireland and the King. The Declaratory Act, passed in 1720, asserted the right of the British parliament to legislate for Ireland. See R.F. Foster.

²⁷⁴ Martyn Powell, “Ireland: Radicalism, Rebellion, and Union” in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. H. T. Dickinson, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 415.

²⁷⁵ Neil Longley York, *Neither Kingdom Nor Nation; The Irish Quest for Constitutional Rights, 1698-1800*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994) 3.

themselves as the rightful leaders of Irish society and as equal partners in the British Empire.”²⁷⁶ These leaders “hoped to secure rights *within* the empire (my italics).”²⁷⁷ Unlike the goals of the Americans in their Declaration of Independence, which sought a clear political break from Great Britain, these Anglo-Irish patriots still saw themselves as part of Great Britain and were “dedicated to preserving what they thought was the spirit of the British constitution as well as their liberties under a reified Irish constitution.”²⁷⁸ The emphasis here is that independence from the English crown was not a majority opinion. In this era of debate over constitutional reform, the polity of Anglo-Irish still considered themselves inextricably linked to the British Empire, but not as a colony. This was not the only philosophical approach to reconciling the position of Ireland within Great Britain. These patriots faced opposition from “separatists wanting to leave the empire altogether and reformers advocating a democratic political leavening.”²⁷⁹ These divisions amongst the Anglo-Irish were not new to mid-century politics, but they were developing into something more tangible, and the concept of sensibility helped to demarcate the political motivations behind these positions.

The paradigm of sensibility is founded on a conviction that there exists an innate benevolence within human beings: this benevolence “helped to provide the basis for a liberal and a revolutionary political ideology—humanist, anti-authoritarian, and compassionate.”²⁸⁰ This ideal of government, in the midst of the imperial crisis, provided a powerful cultural narrative for the Anglo-Irish people. It fueled ideas that a kingdom of Ireland was possible within the realm of Great Britain. However, the ambiguity of sensibility rather than offering a paradigm of

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 4. In this context, Longley uses “Anglo-Irish” to refer to the Protestant Ascendancy, the elite class of Anglican politicians.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 5.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 5.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 55.

government laid bare the glaring incompatibility of the goals of the Anglo-Irish Patriots and the English Crown.

The idea of the innate benevolence of human beings proved one of the more difficult characteristics to deal with in deploying sensibility as a socio-political model. According to Brissendem, such an assumption followed that “if man had a natural right to be happy he also had a natural capacity to act virtuously, i.e. benevolently.” Conversely, someone unable or unwilling “to act benevolently, was thought to be less than human.”²⁸¹ In *LB*, Griffith illustrates such malevolence with the character of Colonel Walters, who is most certainly “less than human.” In describing Colonel Walters, who is on his way to “take possession of his estate, and a seat in parliament for a borough he never saw,”²⁸² Lady Barton comments that “I am no politician, or should animadvert a little upon this subject.” This is a carefully worded statement that at once denies any public voice—she is “no politician”—while at the same time offering a decidedly political statement—that she would criticize the practice of granting office to an Englishman, who has never resided in Ireland. In these two short lines, we can see a representation of the changing political environment. Absentee landlords were a staple in the first part of the century, but growing political unrest required England to provide a more tangible presence in Ireland; thus, Walters would physically have to move and reside in Ireland.

But Lady Barton’s comments suggest some resentment regarding his placement. She questions his right to not only hold property, but also a seat in the parliament because he has no claim to an Irish identity. Further characterizations of Walters only further emphasize his undesirability. Not only is he morally bankrupt, his actions serve to destabilize the lives of Sir William and Lady Barton, eventually destroying any chance of a mutually rewarding relationship

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁸² Griffith, 1:10.

between them. The intrusion of Colonel Walters and his malevolent machinations lead to the death of Lady Barton and emotional pain for Sir William. He and what he represents of the English attitude toward Ireland are detrimental to good society. He is a thoroughgoing villain, possessed of what later scholars would call the bad or negative sensibility, employing no constraints on his most base desires, illustrating that while the sentimental man or woman could act benevolently, it was just as likely that he or she could act malevolently. Considering all of this in light of Louisa Barton's initial description of his character, Walters appears as the antithesis of a productive relationship—The Englishman who would serve only his own desires and uses Ireland as a raw material rather than a partner, much as he does Olivia. This character is Col. Walters's first wife, whom he left in France almost immediately after marrying her and getting her pregnant. When she is finally able to reunite with him, he takes her to his estate in Ireland and forces her to live in the attic concealing her existence in his life. In this case, the unrestrained feeling, ambition that was not tempered sufficiently by reason, destroys and destabilizes society rather than creating a community of refined citizens. A character such as Colonel Walters makes an argument against sensibility as a controlling paradigm for a socio-political system and characterizes Englishmen as self-serving rather than humanist. Interestingly, Lady Barton's brother, Sir George, who remains in England, is a model of sentimental benevolence.

Stephen Cox considers such arguments about this concept and claims that “the salient characteristics of sensibility employed as argument” were particularly effective as “political argument.”²⁸³ Building on the concepts of Jean Hagstrum and Brissendem, he probes more deeply into the ideological functioning of sensibility “as a tool of intellectual mastery and

²⁸³ Stephen Cox, “Sensibility as Argument” in *Sensibility in Transformation: Creative Resistance to Sentiment from the Augustans to the Romantics: Essays in Honor of Jean H. Hagstrum* ed. By Syndy McMillen Conger (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1990) 63.

manipulation”: He expands on their definitions and claims that “the argument of sensibility might be very loosely defined as persuasive discourse that tends to equate intellectual authority with the power to display or elicit emotional susceptibility.” Such a definition begins to uncover the political ramifications that are inherent in the use of sensibility as a controlling paradigm. In his construction, power is determined by a subject’s ability to present feeling to the public. Power structures, then, are created and maintained through regulative forces that encourage the “correct” feeling and discourage those feelings that disrupt those power structures. The regulative force most prominently displayed in the sentimental novel is the power of virtue. And this is where some of the most strenuous arguments against sensibility arise. Cox begins his analysis with Mary Wollstonecraft’s critique of sensibility—that it was a hegemonic tool employed to secure “traditional social structures.” Sensibility, characterized by the refined and delicate feeling of the aristocrat, perpetuated a feudal-like society based on moral sense. The argument of sensibility, the socio-political imperative to achieve this ideal sentimentality, was “an artificial rhetoric” that reinscribed the status quo of gender conventions. This critique, especially when it was leveled at women writers, challenged any proto-feminist interpretations of the sentimental novel and was critiqued itself by twentieth-century feminist scholars. As an idealized representation of woman, the sentimental heroine was either rewarded for her blind devotion to the preservation of her virtue or tragically punished for her sacrifice of that virtue. Thus, Wollstonecraft’s critique is that sensibility confirmed rather than challenged the conventions of gender.

But it is in this argument against sensibility that Cox finds a “contrary thesis,” one that uncovers the ambiguity and paradox of reasonable feelings. “Writers who try to argue against sensibility,” he writes, “find the charms of their adversary impossible to withstand, but writers

who wish to exploit sensibility, find themselves struggling to master the oddly recalcitrant concept.” The charm of sensibility was its adaptability “to many kinds of arguments,” but it was also “deviously resistant to argument.”²⁸⁴ The ambiguity of the individual experience and its translation into social conformity was “capable of revealing the inadequacies of the rhetorical formulations that were based on it.”²⁸⁵ In essence, sensibility was both a producer of conformities and a disrupting force of those conformities. As a disruptive force, sensibility relegated reason to a subservient position and feeling became the master producer of knowledge. But, as Virtue was the controlling measure of a woman’s reputation, it left little room for a public voice. However, in an argument against the preeminence of virtue as the measure of a woman, the importance of virtue remains apparent; having it ensures a public voice. A virtuous woman can bear Nation. Cox describes a concept which cannot be mastered at the same time that it promises mastery. But its promise of intellectual authority based on individual experience is alluring for those who wish to disrupt traditional power structures founded on the certainty of reason. A parliament searching for an identity that balances individuality with kingdom wishes to disrupt the traditional power structures while preserving the very liberties those structures ensure.

Like Brissendem, Cox must confront what he calls the “doubleness in political rhetoric.”²⁸⁶ As a persuasive discourse, sensibility had two functions: “to provide education in the type of consciousness that is, or should be, socially ‘required’ and to encourage the development of an ideally individual self-consciousness.” In the second function, sensibility is an individual experience that arose from spontaneous self-consciousness. The sentimental individual developed a more sensitive subjectivity through which to experience the world,

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 63.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 64.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 69.

consequently making the community a more humane society. However, there is the possibility that unrestrained feeling could lead to lawlessness such as the deviousness of Colonel Walters. This posed a threat to sensibility's other function, to form the *right* self-consciousness "among all possible varieties of consciousness."²⁸⁷ It is the same contradiction that Brissendem hints at—what must be at once unique and common. Cox argues that sensibility, while it was "tragically and comically flawed" as a moral and political argument, it was "a source of education...imputing value and interest to the individual selves that participate in moral and political systems." As formal political policy, the argument of sensibility could be both powerful and futile. But, as a way of thinking, it provided the individual a framework for understanding how a part can fit (or not fit) into a whole.

Cox's definition makes a more explicit connection between power and feeling than scholars like Brissendem. Specifically in this association, power is assumed with the *appearance* of sensibility and that is what confers subjectivity. Sir William is denied intellectual authority because he cannot display the appropriate emotional susceptibility. Griffith describes him as having a "roughness in his manner" with "contempt for the understandings of women" which is "proof of [his] superiority."²⁸⁸ In contrast, Lord Lucan is "elegant", and capable of emotional susceptibility as evidenced by his suffering for his love for Lady Barton. Sir William is left with no heir and no wife, and thus no future. As a land-holding aristocrat of Irish birth, he represents the failure of reason without passion. Without the individual self-awareness that the experience of sensibility imparts, his status becomes defunct.

Like the political 'doubleness' that Cox finds in the argument of sensibility, Patricia Meyer Spacks analyzes a similar idea in a socio-literary context, and she too links intellectual

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 72,

²⁸⁸ Griffith, 1:33-34.

authority to the *appearance* of sensibility. The doubleness she discusses is “the problem of concealment versus display and the related matter of isolation versus community.” Since sensibility is a “peculiarly audience-oriented” practice, its performance is “an aspect of private life presented for public consumption.”²⁸⁹ It is “the fundamental paradox of human openness” because its claim to transparency is mitigated by its ability to conceal through performance. While emotional susceptibility seems to present sincere, uncontrived emotion, that performance could also work to conceal much stronger and potentially more dangerous feelings, like substituting the pain of a loss for the guilt of a deed. Sensibility is, above all, an “ambiguous practice.” Spacks illustrates how “the novel of sensibility lends itself particularly well to the evocation of uneasiness and anxiety.” Because of the appeal of the display, readers are pulled in by the vicarious experience. But even in the watching, readers are moved to anxiety as the fictional situations unconsciously connect with their lives. Therefore, readers must be constantly vigilant about exercising restraint lest they lose control like the characters; this is the didactic force of sensibility. However, the experience of this anxiety is also telling. As Griffith narrates the decline of Lady Barton, the reader is forced to follow her tragic story to its inevitable end—for she has to die in order to prove her virtue—and feel the uneasiness of the experience, what Wollstonecraft would call reconfirming traditional practices. Lady Barton can never be fully honest with Sir William or with Lord Lucan because, as Spacks argues, “a woman demonstrates her virtuous femininity partly by her possession of delicate sensibility, yet the same system of conventions that dictates tender feelings demand also their judicious concealment.”²⁹⁰ Thus, Lady Barton as a sentimental woman must display and hide feeling in a complex dance that

²⁸⁹ Patricia Meyer Spacks, “Ambiguous Practices” in *Eighteenth-Century Genre and Culture: Serious Reflections on Occasional Forms: Essays in Honor of J. Paul Hunter* ed. Dennis Todd and Cynthia Wall, (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2001), 151, 163.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 157

negotiates appearance and expectation. But the ability to conceal is also what makes her so dangerous.

Within Spacks' methodology, one that concerns the literary value of the ambiguity of sensibility, it is also possible to construct an equally political argument. For example, consider the setting of Griffith's novel—Ireland. Serving as a backdrop to the melodramatic events of *LB*, it is both knowable and unknowable for both the English and the Anglo-Irish. It is known because the two cultures had been linked since the twelfth-century Norman Conquest, and the Anglo-Irish had identified more closely with English culture than with the native Irish through much of that time. But Ireland is equally unknowable partly because the vast majority of the Irish were Gaelic-speaking Catholics and partly because the Anglo-Irish were beginning to delve into the history of these people, attempting to make it knowable. The ambiguity of sensibility, as Spacks articulates, is its "uncontrollability" and the cause of anxiety. The hiding is necessary in order to maintain order. It was required to downplay differences between cultures. However, there is a paradox here in that the attempt to claim a loyal English ideology was at odds with this attempt to revise history. But sanctioning concealment means ceding control of that which is concealed, thus creating a constant source of anxiety. Consequently, political arguments that are founded on a concept as unknowable as a hybrid culture are profoundly more dangerous than those founded on reason because in its expression as spontaneous and individual, feeling is fundamentally uncontrollable.

Truth and Invented Truth

The anxiety over the uncontrollability is what places Lady Barton in a liminal space, one in which she is barred from aggregation because she cannot prove her conformity, or more accurately, is not *allowed* to prove her innocence. Lady Barton represents a truly liminal figure,

one that resonates with the conflict within sensibility and within a hybrid nation. She is the most authentic character because she is the most vulnerable. The tragedy of her life lays bare the concealment that negotiations of nationness attempt to protect. Lady Barton is the truth of the story.

Griffith makes a claim to authenticity much like Mary Davys and Laetitia Pilkington. In her preface, she claims to “have had a good deal of acquaintance with the world, and have known many private memoirs, and particular circumstances in life, which has afforded me an opportunity of supplying both my characters and situations from the living drama, instead of borrowing them from the mimic scene.”²⁹¹ By claiming an authentic source for her story through an “acquaintance with the world” and differentiating her text “from the mimic scene,” she places and validates herself and her text, literally and authentically, *in* the socio-political environment out of which her text comes. Thus, though her story is fictional, it is also true. Thus Griffith demonstrates that her novel is an indispensable artifact of her culture and that its value is in the truth of the story rather than the entertaining character.

While Griffith claims authenticity for her text, the authenticity of the Anglo-Irish is in question. Specifically, one must consider the need for a linear history in the imagined community of hybrid Nation. As the constitutional debates grew more contentious, it became necessary to rediscover a past in an effort to create a limited and sovereign place for Nation. Lesa Ní Mhunghaile, in her study of Anglo-Irish antiquarianism in Ireland in the eighteenth century, discusses the fascination on the part of the Anglo-Irish elite to recover/appropriate an Ancient Gaelic past. From 1760 onward, there was “a widening interest in Ireland’s past.”²⁹² While the

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, x.

²⁹² Lesa Ní Mhunghaile, “Anglo-Irish Antiquarianism and The Transformation of Irish Identity, 1750-1800” in *Anglo-Irish Identities, 1571-1845*, ed. David A. Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2008) 182.

constitutional debates over the status—colony or kingdom—of Ireland in the Kingdom of Great Britain were taking place in Dublin Castle, the library had a coexistent movement that sought to connect/reconnect the Anglo-Irish with a history before the Norman conquest. Such movements moved the question of an Anglo-Irish identity beyond Parliament and popular protest and into a cultural context that linked the law with literature and myth. As these Antiquarians conceptualized themselves connected to a noble Gaelic past—for it was always a noble one disconnected from what might be termed the “poor Irish”—they employed significant literary license. It was, in Ní Mhunghaile words, an “invented tradition” built upon the work of scholars like Seathrún Céitinn—Geoffrey Keating to the English.²⁹³ During this period, antiquarians looked to Gaelic scribes and scholars for content and context in writing their history. This movement worked alongside the parliament at College Green to legitimize a separate identity that existed within a cohesive nation. The antiquarian movement illustrates the profoundly conflicted nature of *being* Anglo-Irish. Groups like the Anglo-Irish patriots in Longley’s argument worked diligently to maintain a close relationship with the English government, to carve out an identity within the British identity, while at the same time scholars were reinventing a past that included a protracted Irish-English conflict or even a pre-English-settlement Ireland. What was true was in negotiation.

But Griffith had a perspective on this *truth*. She writes of this movement as her heroine experiences it in her trip to Dublin. Lady Barton relates to her sister in Letter VII her portrayal of the “better sort of men and women” that she meets in the city. In her opinion, these Anglo-Irish have much in common with the French, but she recounts their prevailing self-conceptualization as descendant from “Milesius, a Spaniard, who brought over a colony of his countrymen to

²⁹³ Ibid., 184.

people the island.”²⁹⁴ The Milesian myth, as C itinn argued, held that the “ancient Gaelic civilization had been highly sophisticated and at the forefront in Europe in scholarship and the arts, but was destroyed by the Norman invasion.”²⁹⁵ A cultural model such as this worked to counter what was becoming a detrimental stereotype. N  Mhunghaile writes that

As the Anglo-Irish community became increasingly aware that the term ‘barbarous Irish,’ once reserved for the Gaelic Irish only, now also referred to them, it became imperative to challenge this slur. Strategies employed by writers to contest this negative image included constructing an alternative identity by rewriting their history and subverting the identity imposed by England.²⁹⁶

In the display of Gaelic culture, it was as necessary to hide or obscure any connection to the ‘barbarous Irish’ as it was to portray similarities with the English. But Griffith’s *Lady Barton* challenges these attempts at concealment by providing a carefully worded description of the perceptions that worked to create a *truth*: “But I should think, from their manners, as I hinted at before, that they were originally derived rather from the French...they seem not to have any of the Spanish character among them.”²⁹⁷ By denying the Milesian myth, she questions the authenticity of the appropriation of a Gaelic past, echoing her earlier critique of Colonel Walters and his claim to a position within the Irish government. She substitutes a potentially damaging comparison to French culture, especially in the wake of the Seven Years War. *Lady Barton*’s critique of the antiquarian movement challenges the *truth* of the reinvented past and in doing so, Griffith exposes the concealment that is in many ways necessary to imagining an Anglo-Irish nation. She offers her truth as an alternative, one that illustrates how the liminal figure disrupts

²⁹⁴ Griffith, 1:54

²⁹⁵ Mhunghaile., 182.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 184.

²⁹⁷ Griffith, 1:54.

the construction of Nation and how Nation addresses that disruption. If Lady Barton is destroyed by the conflict inherent in sensibility, then Griffith argues that the Anglo-Irish are equally vulnerable.

Heteroglossic Sensibility

The History of Lady Barton is a microcosm of Anglo-Irish culture in mid-eighteenth-century Great Britain. Griffith explores the ideological voice of the “precisely defined concepts” that worked to understand “the whole question of what it meant to be a human being living in the society of his fellows.” The epigrams to this chapter illustrate the function of the sentimental novel, to explore the profound contradictions between individual and social experience. The Anglo-Irish experience during this turbulent period of growing unrest within the Irish parliament throws such contradictions into relief. As Lady Barton, Sir William, Colonel Walters, and even Ireland function in this sentimental novel, Elizabeth Griffith queries the relationship between England and Ireland. She illustrates a profoundly complicated relationship as she seems to identify with and feel distanced from Ireland. The demise of the heroine suggests the incompatibility between the individual consciousness and the social necessity of sensibility. As Lady Barton becomes more aware of her place, as the wife of Sir William and as a resident of Ireland, she becomes more conflicted. And Colonel Walters, as a privileged English man, functions as the figure of exploitation while Sir George, who remains in England, functions as a figure of benevolent human compassion. Such irreconcilabilities create a dynamic novel imbued with the heteroglossic discourse of Nation and a dialogue that works toward understanding how a nation can be a nation within another nation—how nationalities can be both a part of while at the same time independent from each other. More importantly, *LB* shows an imagined community that is disrupted by its liminality, working toward aggregation but barred from it by internal and

external forces. The deduction, then, is that if Lady Barton is defeated through her liminality, what future lay ahead for the Anglo-Irish.

Chapter Four:

Staying the “rude axe”: Mary Tighe’s Romantic Nationalism and the Anglo-Irish Sonnet

It was possible to believe, just for a brief period, that improvement, both on the physical and spiritual planes could be made real, and that humanity was about to be transformed.²⁹⁸

The sonnet is, of course, one of the four major forms at the end of the century to which women made major contributions, especially as they became distinctively *English*.²⁹⁹

Though lost to me, here still may Taste delight
To dwell, nor the rude axe the trembling Dryads fright!
“On Leaving Killarney. August 5, 1800”³⁰⁰

Duncan Wu’s description of the romantic spirit embodies the hopefulness that fueled the ideologies of revolution in the late eighteenth century. The emancipatory function of romantic nationalism and the Sonnet Revival brings the liminality of gender and Nation into sharp focus. Though Victor Turner’s explanation of the ritual process ends with aggregation, the sonnets of Mary Tighe illustrate how the Anglo-Irish Nation sought to move out of the liminal stage, bolstered by the hope of romanticism, but were not able effectively to construct an identity within the British Empire. There was, ultimately, no space for aggregation.

²⁹⁸ Duncan Wu, introduction to *Romanticism: an anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2000) xxxv.

²⁹⁹ Paula Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

³⁰⁰ Mary Tighe, *The Collected Poems and Journals of Mary Tighe*, ed Harriet Kramer Linkin, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005) 46.

The three previous chapters have explored how the writers both conformed to and disrupted the function of tradition. During the late-eighteenth-century Sonnet Revival, women emancipated themselves from the traditions of poetic composition just as the Society of United Irishmen sought to emancipate themselves from the ambiguous space that the Anglo-Irish Nation had dwelt in, between kingdom and colony. It seems natural that I should end this study considering the very *English* sonnet as it develops through the pen of an Anglo-Irish woman writer in the Age of Revolution. There is, ironically, no more appropriate way to study the monumental paradigm shifts of eighteenth-century Great Britain and Europe and the shift from Enlightenment to Romantic philosophy than the singular, short, interior sonnet. Writing a sonnet is a socially symbolic act that is imbued with centuries of literary tradition, Englishness, and authenticity. To compose a sonnet invokes some of the great fathers of English literature such as Shakespeare and Milton. The Sonnet Revival of the late eighteenth century redefined this form and negotiated its use in ways that not only elevated the traditional conventions, but also challenged those same conventions with experimentation. The sonnet provided a medium through which women poets could gain “canonical inclusion by deferment to those established literary giants.”³⁰¹ But, in Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*, he claims that “the recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification” while at the same time “restaging the past” in order to present “other, incommensurable cultural temporalities in the invention of tradition.”³⁰² The sonnet, then, was a medium to both reaffirm and disrupt not only the ideology of literary conventions, but ideas of Nation as well. No choice is ever free from social, political, or economic considerations, but Mary Tighe’s choice of the sonnet seems particularly pointed and appropriate given the instability of the political relationship between

³⁰¹ Daniel Robinson, “Reviving the Sonnet: Women Romantic Poets and the Sonnet Claim” *European Romantic Review* 6, no. 1 (1995): 98-127. 110.

³⁰² Homi Bhabha, introduction to *The Location of Culture*. 1994,(reprint, New York: Routledge, 2006) 3.

Ireland and England, and the in-between space of the Anglo-Irish during the Age of Revolution. The definitions of liberty, democracy, rights, and responsibilities were being renegotiated frequently. This moment of instability, however, was important because it opened up the opportunity for female poets to renegotiate the ideologies of gender and authorship and for an Anglo-Irish writer to renegotiate the ideologies of nationality.

The sonnet is, by design, an intimate monologue representing the interior feeling of the speaker, and in Tighe's compositions, she often takes the role of speaker. They are tableau moments, a singular view of the world framed in a lyrical rhythm that blends Nature, feeling, and oftentimes, Ireland. The final couplet of "On Leaving Killarney, August 5, 1800" presents such a moment; it is the author's last look at the "sweet scenes" that "wrapped my charmed soul in peace profound!"³⁰³ Tighe characterizes Killarney as endowed with "Taste," which is a more politically-influenced comment if one considers David Hume's "Of the Standard of Taste" published in 1757, as the genre of sensibility was emerging. He concludes that unanimity is improbable in developing a catalogue of Taste, yet Hume asserts that "though men of delicate taste be rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society, by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind."³⁰⁴ This claim that "Taste" resides in Killarney, and by extension Ireland, places her in the rarefied group of Hume's. To claim that this faculty will "delight" suggests there is some characteristic to this countryside that encourages the understanding and superiority that Hume describes. Tighe is likely traveling back to Dublin, and this journey endows the final line with a political palimpsest that is, I argue, only thinly veiled. The violence of the "rude axe" against the "trembling Dryads" echoes quite closely the rural rebellions that stemmed from the United Irish movement. Thus, the

³⁰³ Tighe, 46.

³⁰⁴ David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" in *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 1995) 328.

understanding and superiority that endows “men of delicate taste” are threatened by the patriotic fervor that drives such rebellions. This sonnet was composed four days after the Act of Union was passed in the Irish parliament. This act disbanded the Irish parliament and stipulated that only Anglicans could vote in this new union, effectively placing control of the country with the Protestant Ascendancy and excluding both Catholics and Dissenters. Ireland was subsumed into Great Britain, but what would become the Home Rule movement of the nineteenth century was beginning. Tighe envisions a nation of refined sensibility being ruptured by violence, and consequently disappearing. The political unconscious of Tighe’s sonnet mourns the passing.

Nation as a concept had evolved tremendously over the course of the eighteenth century. When Mary Davys was traveling across southern Great Britain, Nation was still dictated by religion. Nearly one hundred years later, cultural nationalism had subsumed religion, and romantic nationalist movements incited the revolutions of the later decades. The romantic Nation was based on a coherent, definable culture through which the boundaries of sovereignty could be established. The romantic’s relationship with Nation was much like the speaker of the sonnet to the love object, inspiring “profoundly self-sacrificing love.”³⁰⁵ And this love was displayed through the “cultural products of nationalism—poetry, prose, fiction, music, plastic arts.” Since it was through culture instead of political sovereignty that Nation was defined, romantic nationalism was “the nationalism of people who do not enjoy independence.”³⁰⁶ The imagined community is based on the shared culture of its “citizens” and in this way the idea of Nation is sharpened. As one of the salient characteristics of this phase of nationalism was the break from traditions, the inherent danger to the liminal nation was a permanent transitional state. Such

³⁰⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 141.

³⁰⁶ Thomas Nipperdey, “In Search of Identity: Romantic Nationalism, Its Intellectual, Political, and Social Background” in *Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, ed. J.C. Eade, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1983), 5.

emancipation from the power of tradition created “the uncertainty and homelessness of the individual, disintegration and an accompanying need for new integration.”³⁰⁷ The Society of the United Irishmen initially sought this new integration into the British Empire, but as the radical elements of the reformers became revolutionaries, integration became impossible. The solution for the British Parliament was subordination.

Given the influence of the Society of United Irishmen on contemporary political propaganda, it is surprising that no scholar has explored Tighe’s sonnets in the context of this defining period in the history of Ireland and England. The political unconscious that lives in lyrical compositions like “On Leaving Killarney, August 5, 1800” is, I argue, greatly influenced by the turbulent 1790s and the republican philosophy and practice of the Society of United Irishmen. Nancy J. Curtin examined the political history of this chaotic period as it developed in Ulster and Dublin and illuminated the complex political and social climate that led to the uprising of 1798 and the subsequent defeat of the United Irishmen’s rebellion in 1803 with the failure of Emmett’s Rebellion.³⁰⁸ The focus of Curtin’s historical study is the philosophy of the Society of the United Irishmen, the founding ideology of which represented exactly what its title implied—a unification of the men of Ireland, spanning multiple political, social, religious, and economic backgrounds. In contrast to “the socio-political basis of the ascendancy’s dominance” which was founded on “the exclusion of Catholics and, to a lesser extent, Presbyterians” and “defined by religion and property,” the United Irish practiced “a politics of inclusion.”³⁰⁹ It is in this philosophy, I argue, that the divisions in the term Anglo-Irish become clearer, and, more importantly, demonstrate the evolving ideas of Nation in Ireland. An *Irish* nation was developing

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 6.

³⁰⁸ Nancy J. Curtin, *The United Irishmen: Popular Politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791-1798*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 6-7.

out of the Anglo-Irish culture by delineating its imagined community, which included Catholics, from the Protestant ascendancy. Anglo-Ireland was becoming Ireland. The philosophy sought to limit itself by this delineation while also establishing sovereignty from Great Britain. Yet, the Society of United Irishmen was not homogenous. According to Curtin, “the union of Catholic and Dissenter which gave rise to the United Irish movement in the 1790s was based on a common hatred of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy.”³¹⁰ Yet, the motivations for this feeling were very different: “The Catholic peasant felt such dominance most immediately through the landlord whom he regarded as a member of an alien and conquering race. The middle-class Dissenter resented the institutions which upheld a landed elite.”³¹¹ As Curtin describes:

To the middle-class radical, the ascendancy represented illiberal government, the exercise of unmerited privileges, and a collection of renegade Irishmen, but Irishmen nevertheless, who subordinated the interests of their country to the rewards offered by them to English ministers. To the rural Catholic poor and especially to the secret societies known as the Defenders, the ascendancy simply represented the descendants of conquerors and confiscators.³¹²

Both cultural groups considered themselves unjustly subordinated to the British government, and both saw the ascendancy as tools of that government. Yet, the disparate histories of those communities, each imagined differently, would inevitably prohibit a genuine and productive collaboration. They were fighting for different reasons and from different cultural positions. Though the 1798 rebellion did not bring about independence from Great Britain, the event provided later Irish nationalists with a mythic moment of Irish history, one that would inspire radicals for more than a century.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 284.

³¹¹ Ibid., 284.

³¹² Ibid., 10.

The popular politicization that characterized this society made it possible to extend the imagined community beyond the Pale, the center of politics and culture in Ireland. Curtin argues that “popular politicization of the late eighteenth century was precisely about citizenship.”³¹³ And *citizenship* to the United Irish was not dictated by property, but by shared culture—a romantic nationalism. And this communal movement found its strength in “literary and symbolic expressions.”³¹⁴

(The United Irishmen) possessed a genius for propaganda evidenced not only in their wide-ranging literary productions, but also...the calculated use of the symbols and rituals of their mobilization...The United Irishmen served to define an alternative political culture designed to supplant traditional mentalities. It is an exercise in political self-definition rather than as a reflection of political culture.³¹⁵

Employing the written word, the primary means of defining Nation according to Benedict Anderson, meant that this self-definition was made available to a much greater community than previously considered. The policy of inclusion which “reached across class barriers” would also have resonated with another historically excluded group, the women of Anglo-Ireland, an idea evidenced by Tighe’s poetry.³¹⁶

Upon this terrain of national conflict, Tighe also had to negotiate the limits of gender and authorship that dictated her social environment. While women were participating in unprecedented numbers in the literary market, they were subject to different standards than their male counterparts; however, “the sonnet was the ground on which male and female Romantic

³¹³ Ibid., 6.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 7-8.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 7.

poets met at the turn of the eighteenth century.”³¹⁷ To take on the mantle of writer, especially of sonnets, Tighe claimed an identity at odds with the expectations of both her gender and her class.

The Sonnet Revival, however, challenged such ideologies:

This correlation between the revival of the sonnet and the increased participation of women in the literary world also suggests that the sonnet is a form that women writers deliberately claimed in order to legitimize themselves as poets. The sonnet offered them a means of expressing themselves within an established literary tradition that had largely been defined by men.³¹⁸

They were, in fact, rewriting literary tradition.

Tighe’s sonnets represent in particular the larger ideological shifts in the literary, social, and political environment during the 1790s as they unfolded between Ireland and Great Britain. The subsequent devaluation of her work in the next century illustrates how the negotiations of nationness often functioned to exclude the marginalized voices in attempts to create the imagined community. By exploring Tighe’s poetry in its historical moment, one can understand how the Anglo-Irish nation, the imagined community, was evolving into an *Irish* imagined community. Ultimately, the literature of Mary Tighe is a contact zone between literature and nationalism, gender and writing, Anglo and Irish wherein we can unpack the history of her poetry, but also the history of Anglo-Irish writing.

Lived Experience in a Liminal Space

Mary Tighe was born into a wealthy Anglo-Irish family in Dublin on October 9, 1772. Her father, Reverend William Blachford, was both a clergyman and a librarian for the prestigious Marsh’s Library in St. Patrick’s Cathedral, one of the first public libraries in Ireland. Theodosia

³¹⁷ Robinson, 99.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 99.

Tighe, her mother, was an activist in the Methodist movement in Dublin and an ardent believer in a liberal education for her daughter. Since her father died in her first year, the young Mary was raised only by her mother, who never remarried. Theodosia Blachford provided an impressive study rotation for her daughter that included foreign languages, literature, and even the composition of her original poetry. Thus, the young poet's first role model was a single woman who offered a nurturing and supportive home that encouraged education and writing. In the first publication of Tighe's *Psyche*, she prefaces the text with a sonnet, "Addressed to My Mother," wherein she describes the supportive environment that encouraged her "first wild song."³¹⁹ It was her mother's "tender smile," "prompt attention," and "eloquence of tenderness" that provided Tighe with the grace that she hopes the epic possesses. The sonnet itself is an Italian composition beginning with two quartets, *abbaabba* and ending with two tercets; however, each tercet has its own rhyme scheme, following a *cde efe* pattern. She establishes her knowledge of, but independence from the conventions of the sonnet form. More significantly, Tighe takes the traditional role of the speaker, the adoring lover. She appends six lines from Ludovico Ariosto, a late fifteenth-century writer, which describes a man who seeks to please the unattainable object of his affection, and if he succeeds, it will make him "the sole ruler in this state."³²⁰ This construction suggests that Tighe's mother has granted her an independent subjectivity with which to compose her poetry. Theodosia Blachford is not only a muse, but also a liberator. The uncommon experience of her childhood allowed the opportunity for Tighe to explore alternative modes of self-awareness than those traditionally available to women in her position. Chastity and devotion were important for a woman active in a religious movement as Tighe's mother was and could in many ways help excuse her ambition and a need to live outside

³¹⁹ Tighe, 55.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

the bounds of traditional female roles. Mrs. Blachford seemed to value all of those things in the young Tighe and encouraged her bright daughter to continue her poetic aspirations.

Tighe had begun formally composing poetry by 1789 and would continue writing until 1809, less than a year before her death, which likely resulted from an extended battle with tuberculosis. She received considerable acclaim for her work during these years and for the posthumous publication of *Psyche*. However, the tragic image of a poetess passing away at the pinnacle of her poetic achievement dominated representations of Tighe and her work for more than a century. Yet, there is much more to her life than the manner of her death. This writer's lived experience is a study in the intersection of gender and authorship at a time when such contact zones were undergoing extensive refashioning, and it is first necessary to understand where she came from, how she wrote and published, and what scholars have chosen to include and exclude from her lived experience to understand how the complexities of nationality at the end of the eighteenth century have been simplified to "Irish" or ignored altogether.

After John Keats published "To Some Ladies" in 1815, in which he praised the work of Tighe, interpretations of her poetry had been consistently associated with his work, usually to her disadvantage. As Laetitia Pilkington's text served as the primary source for biographical information on Jonathan Swift rather than its own achievement, Tighe has been evaluated in reference to Keats and his varying opinion of her work; she was only one component of the poetic imagination of Keats. This association has resulted in two significant exclusions from the lived experience of Tighe. First, her own work was devalued through the comparison to Keats until the latter half of the twentieth century. For example, Earle Vonard Weller claims that "the Irish poetess taught him the Celtic felicity of phrase but she was also responsible to a great extent

for the languor and sentimentalism that mar his finest work.”³²¹ And his description of Tighe illustrates yet another exclusion from her life. The uninterrogated comparison with Keats omits a very important difference between them; Keats was English, and Tighe was Anglo-Irish. Weller managed to reduce Tighe to a singular nationality with an innocuous “Irish” though such a label was in fact exceedingly complex. It is likely that he could have used works like Elizabeth Blackburne’s 1877 *Illustrious Irishwomen* as evidence of this; however, Tighe appears far more frequently in nineteenth-century anthologies of *British* writing such as George Bethune’s 1848 *British Female Poets* and Jane Williams’s 1861 *Literary Women of England*.³²² Even in the feminist recovery movement of the late twentieth century, this distinction was still overlooked. From that period, however, the first exclusion of Tighe—as a muse for Keats—was addressed in works such as Marlon Ross’s *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women’s Poetry* and Greg Kucich’s “Gender Crossings: Keats and Tighe.”³²³ Ross explores the limitations placed on Tighe by the expectations of gender and authorship, but uses Tighe’s poetic achievements as a way of illustrating Keats’s struggle with “the discovery of poetry as a fit medium for giving voice to (making public, communal, socially valued) the normally private ephemeral experience of women.”³²⁴ Kucich takes a similar approach that considers the ambiguity of gender in Keats’s work as evidence by his use/exploitation of *Psyche*. Certainly, works such as these give cultural value to Tighe’s work, but she is still inextricably tied to Keats

³²¹ Earle Vonard Weller, introduction to *Keats and Mary Tighe: The Poems of Mary Tighe with Parallel Passage from the Work of John Keats*, 1928, (reprint, New York: Kraus, 1966) xvi.

³²² Elizabeth Owens Blackburne, *Illustrious Irishwomen. Being Memoirs of Some of the Most Noted Irishwomen from the Earliest Ages to the Present Century*. 2 vols. (London: Tinsley, 1877). George W. Bethune, *The British Female Poets: with Biographical and Critical Notices*, (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1848). Jane Williams, *The Literary Women of England*, (London: Saunders, 1861).

³²³ Marlon B. Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women’s Poetry*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Greg Kucich, “Gender Crossings: Keats and Tighe,” *Keats-Shelley Journal* 44 (1995): 25-39.

³²⁴ Ross, 157.

in these analyses and excluded from her own historical moment with the exception of gender transgressing.

It was not until the end of the twentieth century that critical works on Tighe constructed her as an innovative figure of early Romanticism. Studies in women poets and romanticism such as *The Contours of Masculine Desire* and the anthology *A Century of Sonnets* generated a 2005 edition of her collected works that was edited by Harriet Kramer Linkin.³²⁵ My analysis builds on this recent work and explores a selection of sonnets from the collected works in a national context and not in relationship to male authors, but in relationship to Anglo-Irish culture as it shifted into the patriotism like that found in the Home Rule movement of the nineteenth century. Mary Tighe was Anglo-Irish, not Irish, but this perspective has yet to be addressed in terms of her work. These analyses do not incorporate the complexities of the hybrid nationality that characterized the Anglo-Irish over the course of the eighteenth century. The Sonnet Revival was a period wherein women writers were claiming a culturally significant identity and thus, this poetic form offered them an avenue out of the liminal identity between gender and author and into aggregation where they conformed to the standards of social behavior after having significantly disrupted and reformed them. But the liminality of the Anglo-Irish encountered a quite different experience. The socio-political clashes of ideologies worked, in fact, to prevent an aggregation of identity within the imagined community. It is this current that makes Tighe's poetry so significant in understanding how, at the end of the eighteenth century, an Anglo-Irish woman writer experiences her nationality in the Age of Revolution. Looking at the disintegration of the United Irishmen's movement and Tighe's sonnets shows the liminal nation that attempts the final stages of the negotiations of nationness, but fails. However, from this failure would

³²⁵ Paula Feldman and Daniel Robinson eds., *A Century of Sonnets: The Romantic Era Revival 1750-1850*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

come the nationalistic fervor of nineteenth-century Ireland and ultimately independence from Great Britain. The ideology that fueled the negotiations of the eighteenth century helped establish the imagined community of Ireland.

The Lyrical Political Consciousness

The ideology of Nation emerges out of Tighe's poetry in a lyrical representation of Ireland. The island where "Taste delight[s]/To dwell" is characterized as fading, as passing. But the politics of her poetry is often more pronounced than that of "On Leaving Killarney, August 5, 1800." As the Anglo-Irish proceed through the stages of nation-making, becoming limited and sovereign, Tighe takes a far more explicit political position in some of her poetry than any of the other authors that I have discussed thus far. Because of this engagement, the political unconscious in Tighe's poems illustrates a liminal culture attempting to progress into aggregation, to realize the imagination. By the time of the publication of *Psyche*, she had developed a firm sense of identity as evidenced by the sonnet "Addressed to My Mother" where she co-opted the male role of adoring lover and transformed it into an empowering subjectivity engendered by the maternal ideal. Clearly, Tighe had a defined sense of self and imagines her self as a part of the cultural community.

My analysis focuses primarily on the sonnets that Tighe wrote over the course of her twenty-year writing life. However, there are two longer poems that deserve critical attention not only because they are composed of lyrical, well-crafted verse, but also because they establish Tighe's literary participation in the conflicted space of Anglo-Irish politics at the end of the eighteenth century. They illustrate that she did, in fact, see herself as part of the imagined community of the Anglo-Irish Nation. As an Anglo-Irish writer, Tighe's impressions of the politics of late-century Ireland and the 1798 United Irishmen rebellion can be construed as an

openly political argument. These following two poems illustrate a confident and politically-engaged poet whose insights help reveal and record the very complicated temporal moment that was the turn of the eighteenth century in the counties of Dublin and Wicklow.

The first of these poems is a beautiful ballad which records the hostile and unstable environment of Wicklow and Dublin in the midst of the rebellion of the United Irishmen, “Bryan Byrne of Glenmalure.” The subject of this poem is based on a little known, but culturally significant figure of the rural rebellions of the late eighteenth century. Billy Byrne was a yeoman farmer in the Wicklow Yeoman Cavalry and allegedly served as a delegate for the United Irishmen in country Kildare.³²⁶ His trial and subsequent execution became mythologized in the nineteenth century with the popular patriotic ballad, “Billy Byrne of Ballymanus.” The ballad tells a tale of betrayal at trial by informers to the Crown and of the heroism of “all such men as he,/ That stand upright for Ireland’s cause, and die for liberty.”³²⁷ Additionally, in Linkin’s edition of the collected works, she references the figures of Thomas, Joseph, and James Bryan, three yeoman farmers killed at Ballyknockan estate by rebel insurgents who contribute to the figure of Bryan Byrne.³²⁸

This poem uses the ballad form like the more familiar Irish ballads of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Tighe’s composition uses the typical themes of love and war, but her politics are dictated by the socio-political climate she lived and wrote in. Hence, the nationalistic fervor found in later Irish ballads is not yet present in all Irish minds, but it is here.³²⁹ The setting of the story is on Carrickmor in Wicklow after two fierce and deadly battles of the 1798

³²⁶ *Trial of Billy Byrne of Ballymanus*, Arklow, (Ireland: Dee-Jay Publications, 1996). Foreword by Jim Rees, 1996.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, vi-vii.

³²⁸ Tighe, 286.

³²⁹ See Samuel Lover, *The Lyrics of Ireland*, as an anthology of Irish ballads. The section of Patriotic and Military Ballads illustrates the nationalistic theme that dominated Irish ballads.

rebellion.³³⁰ As a young widow and her orphan son flee the violence, a soldier pursues them to inquire why they are leaving. The story of Bryan Byrne is then told in a dialogue between the widow's elderly father, who flees with them, and the soldier. The ideological positions of these two voices along with their interactions illustrate the complex and murky political climate that characterized 1798 in Ireland. The hero, Bryan Byrne, had fallen victim to the clashes between rebels and loyalists. However, as the young widow's father establishes, Bryan Byrne was not representative of either side.

Attempting to understand the fear and hatred he meets from the orphaned boy, the soldier assumes that Byrne was connected to the United Irishmen: "Too well," said he, "I guess the truth;/ His father, sure, was doomed to die,/ Some poor deluded rebel youth." With this comment, Tighe fashions the soldier as a representation of the English government with the attendant disinterestedness and presumption that characterized English attitudes towards the Irish. Although the soldier initially shows concerns for the welfare of the young boy, who is Bryan Byrne's orphaned son, his assumption that the boy's father was a rebel illustrates one of the dominant historical trends in English policy toward the Irish—that at some point all Irishmen will rebel if not properly subdued.

Byrne's elderly father-in-law, however, does not present the rebel counterargument. Rather, he passionately defends his son-in-law as a loyalist, a supporter of the English government: "He did not fall in Tarah's fight,/ No blood of his the Curragh stain." Referencing another two bloody battles of the rebellion³³¹, Tighe positions her hero away from the nationalist agenda of the United Irishmen, claiming instead that

³³⁰ This is a part of the Wicklow Mountain Range, in the town of Glenealy.

³³¹ Tighe is referring to the Gibbet Rath Massacre, 29 May, 1798, in Curragh, Co. Kildare and the Battle of Tara Hill, 26 May 1798 in Co. Meath. Thomas Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty: The Story of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1969). 159, 161-163.

“He triumphed not that fatal day,
When every loyal cheek looked pale,
But heard, like us, with sad dismay,
Of fallen chiefs in Clough’s dark vale.

The hero lamented the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Walpole at Clough,³³² establishing his loyalty to the English governance of Ireland. Tighe however, complicates these divisions through the father’s commentary about the massacres at Tarah and Curragh, wherein he laments “many a ghost that moans by night/ Of foully broken faith complains.” The father’s commentary provides a means of complicating the socio-political situation to portray accurately the course of violence as it spread through Ireland. Bryan Byrne was not present at the rebel uprisings, nor did he champion the United Irishmen’s cause. Yet, the father’s words illustrate sympathy with the grievances of the rebels, the “foully broken faith” that dominated criticism by Anglo-Irish patriots towards the English government for centuries.

The marriage of Ellen, the young widow, and Bryan was literally a marriage of the Anglo and the Irish. Ellen was “sprung from British race,” and Bryan was “Erin’s early pride.” Their marriage was above “party rage.” Then Tighe reveals that Bryan was not allowed into the Yeoman organization, but he supported their cause. Here, Byrne’s murderers, a mob of Anglo-Irish yeomen avenging the death of three farmers who were cousins of Byrne earlier in the dawn hours, are used as representations of the ideology of the rural rebellion. The avenging mob came into town chanting “Revenge! revenge!...Let not one escape who owns/The faith of Rome.” Assuming that the three farmers’ murderers are Catholic peasants, the mob rampages and kills Bryan because of his socio-political status as a native Irishman.

³³² The Battle of Clough near Ballymore, 4 June 1798. See Pakenham, 181-182.

The poem ends with the father cautioning the soldier to “remember still...the murdered youth of Glenmalure...though vengeance urge to waste, destroy.” With this parting moral, Tighe uses the ballad as a means to comment on the double-sided nature of vengeance and to reveal the prejudice that characterized the violence of the rural rebellion. For Tighe, the responsibility lies with the politicians and ideologues that generate instability by playing on the prejudices of the people. Vengeance always ends in tragedy. But instead of the classical tradition of the vengeful hero dying because he seeks revenge, Bryan Byrne becomes the unwitting Irish victim of Anglo-Irish vengeance on the English. The victim, ultimately, is Ireland.

Written the following year, “There was a Young Lordling” shifts from the sorrowful tone of the ballad to an acerbically witty rhyme, but with the same political aims of calling to attention the exceptionally complicated nature of Anglo-Irish politics. This time she addresses the Act of Union proposed in 1799. In a letter to her cousin Sarah Tighe, the poet claims to be “too ignorant of the proposed Act of Union to take a stand,” but her lively little rhyme suggests that she had sympathies for anti-unionists.³³³ The specificity of name and character that Tighe employs throughout much of the poem suggests that she was far from ignorant of the situation. Rather, she displays a comprehensive knowledge of the Irish parliament, the political positions of the individual members, and an invested concern in the outcome of the controversy. As the young lord proceeds through the house with his broom, he attempts to sweep aside the anti-unionists represented by Sir John Parnell and James Fitzgerald. They are replaced by Isaac Cory and Geory Daly, in parliament and in the poem, because they supported William Pitt, who proposed the Act of Union to the British parliament.

Finally, after the lordling has wrecked the house with his cries of “union! a union!,” Hibernia is “at last arous’d by the noise” and demands that “the young fool who destroys my

³³³ Tighe, 290.

estate” be forced out of her realm. She directs Caulfeild, a staunch anti-unionist, to free her estate of the foolish young man and takes back control of her country. While Hibernia’s appearance is brief, it is significant. Only she wields enough power and influence to control the childish yet powerful whims of the young lordling. Caulfeild ends the poem by vowing support from her “favorite youths” to oust the unionist who would destroy Hibernia. Similar to the ballad of Bryan Byrne, Tighe ends the poem by personifying Ireland and poetically recreating the political situation that threatens her country. Far from ignorance, Tighe’s poem suggests not only knowledge of the situation, but an investment in the outcome of the controversy.

These two poems illustrate a conscious and engaged poet as she reflects on the politics of a changing Ireland. Her loyalties are not clear, nor are her views of the future. Rather, these two poems exist in the temporal moment of conflict that defined the Age of Revolution, unresolved and unexplained. In them, one can also read a poet unsure of her own future, unresolved and unexplained. In representing the events of the 1798 Rebellion and the debate over the Act of Union, Tighe offers an allegory of her development as a writer at the intersection of ideologies that complicated her cultural moment—a longing for the way things were, a dissatisfaction with the way things are, and apprehension about the future.

This connection between Ireland and the poet becomes more intimate, more introspective, and more tangible in the sonnets that Tighe composes after these two poems. The overtly political motives give way to more personal explorations of her individual connection to her native land. Shifting from the communal voice of the ballad and the satiric rhyme, Tighe moved to the individual voice required for the sonnet as a means of expressing a more intimate picture of Ireland.

The Sonnets of Ireland

Paul Allen Miller explores the relationship between instability and poetic identity by considering the Elizabethan poet Philip Sidney and his famous sonnet sequence, *Astrophil and Stella*.³³⁴ Contrasting Sidney's sonnets with medieval lyrical poetry, Miller argues that the Renaissance sonnet sequences "offered occasion for the creation of a more complex and highly self-reflexive lyric subjectivity" specifically because "the status of the subject was open to change."³³⁵ The Renaissance subject, the focus of Miller's study, had been defined by "actions and attributes, not by a mere accident of birth or the immutable will of God," an important paradigm shift that evolves further in the eighteenth century.³³⁶ These changes stemmed from "a series of discreet historical conflicts" characterized by a move from a feudal society to a capitalist culture. The economic and social instability that followed such a transition proved useful, since, as Miller argues, the sonnet was characterized by an "idiosyncratic and highly interiorized lyric subjectivity" and required a "virtually autonomous ego."³³⁷ Thus, the instability of the cultural moment provides the necessary rupture in the "status of the subject", which can then be renegotiated through the composition of a sonnet, or a sequence of sonnets, as in the case of Sidney and to some extent, Tighe. The sonnet becomes a liminal space wherein dominant ideologies can be renegotiated in terms of emergent ideologies—a "new ideological space for poetic and personal ego." However, as Miller points out, it is "a contested space" because the dominant cultural modes of identification never give easily to emergent ideas that threaten to unseat those historically granted power and control over the dissemination of identity.³³⁸

³³⁴ Paul Allen Miller, "Sidney, Petrarch, and Ovid, or Imitation as Subversion" *ELH* 58 (1991): 499-522.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 499.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 500.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 499.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 500.

How the sonnet can perform such a tremendous task as fashioning an identity in the midst of conflict concerns Miller primarily in the Renaissance, yet the interpretations and conclusions he draws about the Renaissance sonnet sequences of Sidney could ably be used to interpret and analyze Tighe's sonnets over two hundred years later. Since Tighe was also writing in a period of historical conflict and in an equally uncertain position as Sydney, the claims that Miller makes about the latter are often true of the former. Tighe's choice of the sonnet appears as a socially symbolic act that is reflective of the uncertainty of her temporal moment.

Imitation of form is a significant factor for Miller and the manner in which Sydney creates his new identity. He claims that "Sydney often uses imitation as a means of imparting a certain stability to an ego otherwise in danger either of being absorbed into one of the period's competing discourses, or of simply being torn asunder." Imitation, then, provided the mold for the burgeoning poetic ego in a time and place that threatened to annihilate fragile subject positions. Imitation further provided Sydney with a "sanction of legitimacy" and "a way of mediating between contradictory historical and ideological tendencies, while nonetheless preserving the apparent coherence of his poetic ego."³³⁹ Repeatedly, Miller refers to the conflicting and contradictory ideologies of the Renaissance as proof that the social fabric woven to keep that culture tightly together was rapidly unraveling. The sonnet provided a way to knit a subjectivity, yet this new identity was "not immediately assimilable" either to existing social norms, but created "a complex and multilayered lyric subjectivity ultimately alien to the Elizabethan social order."³⁴⁰ Thus, the autonomous egos that came out of the sonnet were new identities, influenced by but distinct from what had been earlier. While Sydney used imitation to

³³⁹ Ibid., 503.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 504, 508.

create his poetic ego, Tighe transformed hers by beginning with imitation and moving to invention.

Peggy Thompson also explores the question of ideology in verse forms, specifically the eighteenth-century heroic couplet, in the work of Stephen Duck and Mary Collier.³⁴¹ Using J. Paul Hunter's work on poetic form, she finds her argument in his assertion that "if we are to think about the ideology of form, it must be 'in particular historic moments and for particular groups of authors and readers.'" ³⁴² For Hunter and Thompson, there is no essential ideology connected to a specific verse form. Rather, the specific ideologies that do influence a particular verse form, the couplet or the sonnet, would be temporally and socially defined. That definition, then, would be subject to change given specific historical events and/or specific authors and readers. What Thompson finds in her analysis of the heroic couplets of Pope's contemporaries is that:

"When, atypically, Duck and Collier write angrily about thresher's and woman's labor as inadequately recognized and unfairly compensated, they foreground rather than suppress the differences that so clearly distinguish them from other poets. But they do so in the dominant verse form of those other poets."³⁴³

That their subject matter differed so radically from Pope proves for Thompson that the belief that "the heroic couplet is ideologically limited in the kinds of values and ideas it can convey" is definitely false. In fact, Collier's poetry and skill proves that this particular verse form possesses a flexibility that allows all manner of subjects and subject-positions may emerge from within its

³⁴¹ Peggy Thompson, "Duck, Collier, and the Ideology of Verse Form," *SEL* 44, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 502-523.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 505.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 510.

venerated conventions and “the meanings of a verse form must be derived from actual practice” instead of an archaic, essentialist position which assumes a static ideology of a verse form.³⁴⁴

The Sonnet Revival of the late eighteenth century took what had been a highly contested poetic form in the Renaissance and continued, even refined, the debate over what was the legitimate sonnet form—the Italian or Petrarchan form favored by Milton, an octave followed by a sestet, or the Shakespearean or English form, three quatrains followed by a couplet. It is important to note that it was not rhyme scheme or word choice that was disputed, but the generic form of sonnets—that is, the construction of the verse paragraph as it relates to groupings of lines, such as the octet, sestet, quatrain, couplet, etc. The rhyme scheme was often the most varied and experimental part of the sonnet. What was deemed a legitimate sonnet, like a child, depended on who the father was—for some Milton, for others Shakespeare. Yet, not all sonneteers adhered to these narrow parameters for legitimacy. In fact, the sonnet forms of this revival were far more likely to be experimental than to follow a standard set of generic conventions. During this period, there were a brave few poets who marshaled forward without the benefit of paternity such as Tighe and expanded the sonnet form to broaden generic conventions.

The Sonnet Revival was significantly different from past debates on legitimacy, since it was largely women poets who pioneered and directed this revival for most of the final decades of the eighteenth century and into the next. Stuart Curran investigates “this most exacting small form of the British tradition” and details how it “was bent, stretched, reshaped, rethought” during the latter years of the eighteenth century, calling attention to the formality and discipline that characterized sonnet writing. Curran’s argument briefly considers that the “rebirth (of the sonnet) coincides with the rise of a definable woman’s literary movement” beginning with the

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 519.

1784 publication of Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*.³⁴⁵ This association between the Sonnet Revival and a "definable woman's literary movement" became the focus of later studies of women sonneteers, but Curran's study only briefly discusses Smith along with a handful of other women writers. Daniel Robinson refined and expanded Curran's argument in his article, "Reviving the Sonnet: Women Romantic Poets and the Sonnet Claim." He recounts and explores the sonnet claims of Anna Seward, Helen Maria Williams, and Charlotte Smith. Robinson's definition of sonnet claim comes from Seward's "To Mr. Henry Cary, on the Publication of his Sonnets" and refers to the claim Seward makes of the "literary preeminence" of the sonnet. Robinson notes that "this correlation between the revival of the sonnet and the increased participation of women in the literary world suggests that the sonnet is a form that women writers deliberately claimed in order to legitimize themselves as poets."³⁴⁶ The sonnet claims asserted a paternity for the form or challenged the need for paternity. Taking Curran's association further, Robinson argues that women poets actively chose the sonnet as a vehicle for creating a viable literary public sphere in which to participate. The sonnet, according to Robinson, "is a multi-faceted, self-reflexive prism through which her poetic identity is refracted," and these female sonneteers made active sonnet claims in order to gain "canonical inclusion by deferment to those established literary giants."³⁴⁷ By associating themselves with a literary father, as Robinson argues, these sonneteers could claim legitimacy as poets. Yet, not all sonneteers took Seward's claim as their own. His article discusses how Seward and Smith took up the century-old debate over what constitutes a legitimate sonnet. Seward adhered strictly to the Miltonic tradition, which opposed the use of the ending couplet that Shakespeare made

³⁴⁵ Stuart Curran, "The Sonnet" in *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 30.

³⁴⁶ Robinson, 110.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 104, 110.

famous, and used the octave and sestet that Petrarch had employed. In contrast, Smith was freer with her compositions and more personal in her subject matter. She wrote “a new kind of poem with only the superficial identifier of fourteen lines,” and Robinson calls them “‘bastardized’ because she opts to give them her own name without identifying a father.”³⁴⁸ The concept of the fatherless sonnet form is an “act of literary rebellion” that openly challenges the legitimacy of prescribed sonnet conventions and was characteristic not only of Smith, but of Tighe as well. All female sonneteers, however, contended with the ghost of the great father of English literature in the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson, who died the same year Smith first published her *Elegiac Sonnets*.

Robinson uses this debate between Smith and Seward to illustrate the way these two very different female poets took “a ‘manly’ form” and employed it to establish their own legitimacy as British poets.³⁴⁹ In an earlier analysis, Anne Mellor discusses such choices of form in her study *Romanticism and Gender* in which she argues that Romantic women poets’ choice of “poetic genres...function to create and sustain community.” Thus, though fraught with anxiety, the flurry of sonnet-claiming that these women participated in served to create an active literary and very public community---one that privileged growth over solidarity. Yet, this practice was not without its risks. Mellor points out that the “choice of genre...exists in contestation both with the eighteenth-century ordering of the arts and the masculinist poetics this hierarchy reflects.”³⁵⁰ That these women made active sonnet claims was a social rebellion against the dominant prescriptions of femininity, and the fatherless sonnet is a decidedly daring attempt that risked reputation and livelihood. Mellor’s discussion of the gendered nature of poetics refines Robinson’s argument and establishes that women sonneteers participated in a public space that

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 110-111.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 103.

³⁵⁰ Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, (New York: Routledge, 1993), 11.

was gendered, and not in their favor. Thus the gendered-identity of female sonneteers was a significant factor in their reception, and their choice of form would have necessitated and encouraged the formation of a community through which they could gain protection and support from each other, even in the midst of serious debates over the legitimacy of form. This sonnet revival, then, became a subaltern public sphere for women poets where they could voice their experiences and desires in a form already endowed with legitimacy from previous poets.³⁵¹ However, this form needed adjustment and refinement since the legitimacy with which it was endowed came from a sex/gender system which placed women primarily outside of the public sphere of the literati. Thus, though the debates over legitimacy continued to return to Milton, Petrarch, and Shakespeare, these women poets were using tradition to restage the past and to fashion a feminine-centric community that negotiated dominant ideologies by including their “other, incommensurable cultural temporalities.” Paula Feldman and Robinson published an anthology of the Revival, *A Century of Sonnets*, which put into print not only the works of previously published sonneteers, but the works of other poets who had not previously been associated or discussed in relation to this significant literary movement, including Mary Tighe.³⁵² Using the sonnet as a means of establishing an autonomous identity, Tighe wrote a series of them highlighting her impressions of Ireland. Tighe composed five, beautifully turned sonnets that evoke an image of Ireland as she experienced it, often away from the confines of a social or public world, the type of symbolism usually associated with liminality. In the Romantic tradition of natural spirituality, Tighe constructs Ireland as a fertile land which gave life to her images and sustained her in moments of conflict or pain. In fact, Ireland and Tighe seem inextricably bound together and sometimes lost to a world that does not seem to notice their passing. “Written at

³⁵¹ Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy” in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Simon During, 518-536, (London: Routledge, 1993).

³⁵² Feldman and Robinson.

Rossana” describes a retreat from society into nature in order to escape the harsh sights and sounds of the day.³⁵³ The structure of this sonnet demonstrates the experimentation that characterized the literary period. It is composed of two quatrains with an *abbaabba* scheme—a nod to Petrarch—but is followed by an interesting pattern, *cdcdcc*, a couplet and a quatrain joined by rhyme. The turn of the sonnet, which begins in the last line of the second quatrain, shifts the poetic gaze outward from the “dear chestnut bower” where the poet has escaped to a summer party, the “yon throng” with its “prospects gay.” She describes her retreat as dark, quiet, and “calm.” The bower in this text is a shelter of vines or main tree branches, but it was also a lady’s compartment in a medieval castle, a private room for her alone. As Tighe illustrates her creative space, she invokes a historically protected place of women, where she is allowed the freedom that privacy grants. The image of the chestnut bower and the protection it provides also reveals a connection between the poet and her land. On the grounds of Rossana, in county Wicklow, she finds a “calm retreat” from the pressure of society with its expectations of superficial gaiety illustrated by the throng who “weave the dance, and swell the choral song.” She does not, however, position herself as a misanthropic observer of the party she observes. The couplet which turns the sonnet sees this party “Dispersing fear. Their sunny bank more bright,/ And on their circled green more sweets abound,”. The poet enjoys the scene, but has no wish to participate. In styling herself as a sympathetic outsider, Tighe constructs herself as an artist, observing life from outside the boundaries of social discourse. This construction employs the symbols of liminality, which highlights the doubly removed space of an Anglo-Irish woman writer. This artist, however, enrobes her psyche in the safety of her bower, firmly grounded in her native country, Ireland. However, the final lines of the poem have a tone similar to “Written at Killarney, August 5, 1800”: “And though no lively pleasures here are found,/ Yet no sudden

³⁵³ Tighe, 44.

storms my calm retreat affright.” Probably written a year after the 1798 rebellion, it is important to note that General Joseph Holt’s rebel militia held on past the summer defeats making this part of Ireland an unstable and conflicted space only months before Tighe composed these lyrics.³⁵⁴ The retreat from both pleasure and danger casts Rossana as a haven from the violence of the revolution. However, unlike the two poems discussed above, the speaker experiences the conflict; it has become internal. It is a retreat into liminality that provides safety.

“Written at Rossana. November 18, 1799” illustrates a consciousness of her actions and the mixed reviews that she faces from writing.³⁵⁵ There is an intimate and sometimes violent relationship between Tighe’s writing hand and the nature that surrounds her. The poet’s concern in these fourteen lines is the effect her “rash hand” has on “the last poor flower.” Sympathetic to the position of the flower, the poet regrets her decision to pick it. Her act of possession has “destroyed...the pride of summer” that had been spared from the harshness of the advancing winter season. She grants her hand “desolating power.” The connection in this sonnet is between the poet and nature, physically between the hand of the poet and the fruit of nature. Tighe styles this relationship violently, again, acknowledging the power of the written word and its effect on the natural world. But, if we consider her earlier juxtapositions in “Written at Rossana” then this sonnet has a double entendre. While she destroys the flower, she is also the flower that is being destroyed, the flower that needs protection. Again, in this sense, Tighe demonstrates a frustration with her position as a female writer and seeks protection, not from a patron, but from the natural world. In form, Tighe divides the sonnet by styling the destruction of the flower in two quatrains, and then idealizing the flower in two concluding tercets. It is in these tercets that she implies the same juxtaposition that she had in the previous sonnet. Though

³⁵⁴Joseph Holt, *Rebellion in Wicklow: General Joseph’s Personal Account of 1798*, ed. Peter O’Shaughnessy, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998).

³⁵⁵Tighe, 44.

didactic in tone, the lines direct the flower to “Cherish what yet in faded life can bloom” and if lucky, “domestic love” will protect her “treasure” from “the spoiler’s touch.” Like her earlier political poetry, the contradictions in this poem—the poet as spoiler and spoiled—illustrate the conflicted position of Mary Tighe. First, she assumes the right to speak for her country, Ireland. Next, she acts as the destroyer. Finally, she receives the criticism that she puts out. Ultimately, the sonnet reveals her uncertainty regarding her ability to write about a land that is contested.

The next two sonnets in this series take the subjects of the previous two and put them into practice. “Written at the Eagle’s Nest, Killarney. July 26, 1800” and “Written at Killarney. July 29, 1800” provided a carefully constructed image of Ireland as an idyllic scene, made for poetic inspiration.³⁵⁶ She continues to develop her connection between the scene of Ireland and her writing. She leaves the destructive tone behind and revels in the nature surrounding her in Killarney. Tighe is inspired by a still moment in the middle of summer. Sitting on the bank of a lake that is surrounded by mountains, Tighe describes the scenery as idyllic with “meridian” skies, a “glorious” sun, “the cloudless sky” and a lake of “liquid glass.” She sees “arbutus”, called the strawberry tree and found in southwest Ireland, and “fragrant wild shrubs” along the mountains that ring the lake. The second quatrain illustrates an eagle, “The bird of Jove”, flying to “the lofty brow” of a distant shore. The ground is “soft turf” and “magic sounds” as “Melody from yon steep wood rebounds.” The concluding couplet detours from descriptions of natural scenery, and Tighe accepts a responsibility to remember this scene “with pencil soft.” Like the previous sonnet, the poet is compelled by a need to represent the cultural space that inspires her poetic creation, but with a gentle hand. The July 29 sonnet moves into evening time to describe a moment of silence in the middle of the lake depicted in the previous sonnet. With a beautiful illustration of the surrounding banks, Tighe’s lyricism reaches new heights with this sonnet. Like

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 45.

the day sonnet, this one imbues the land with magical power that leaves an indelible mark on the poet. In the serene moment when day turns into night, all sound ceases as the poet revels in the sight and feel of the warmth of the air and the light of the moon. As the musical strain begins anew, she is left with another poetic impression of Ireland to inspire her poetic construction. These two sonnets leave the violence of two years previous behind. The speaker turns her attention to Nature with the tone of the adoring lover. Ireland, or Killarney specifically, is a paradise inspiring her with happiness and rapture.

Less than a month later, Tighe would pen the sonnet that I discussed earlier. It recounts the author's feelings of "fond regret" and "vain reluctance" as she considers her imminent departure from the town echoing the feelings of the two previous sonnets. She further enmeshes herself with the landscape because she has been "Borne with the struggling bark against the wind," metaphorically describing not only her own struggle with writing and the resistance that it meets in her culture, but the larger political climate as well. The third quatrain, employing a different rhyme, moves from describing the struggle to illustrating what inspired her while she lived there, the sounds: "voice of pleasure," "soft flutes warbling," and "Aërial music." However, the final revisits the violence of 1798. It is the "rude axe" that must be stayed lest it destroy the "charmed soul in peace profound!"

Tighe's five sonnets of Ireland describe both a protected place of poetic inspiration that allowed her to experience the range of emotions that composing poetry brought about, but also threatened the peace necessary to exercise the inspiration. Ireland was the muse, but the politics a "rude axe." Each sonnet describes a singular moment for the poet, but together they illustrate a connection between Ireland and Mary Tighe and demonstrate a political engagement experienced from the margin.

After the 1805 edition of *Psyche*, Tighe revisits the political themes of her earlier poems, but in the refined genre of the sonnet. Reflecting the atmosphere of Irish society, Tighe dedicates two of her six dedicatory sonnets to William Parnell. Parnell, the great-grandfather of Charles Stewart Parnell, had literary aspirations and relationships with other literary figures besides Tighe, notably Thomas Moore. Politically, Parnell opposed the Act of the Union and supported Catholic emancipation. Unlike Tighe, Parnell was a member of the ascendancy class and enjoyed the benefits that come with such a title. But as an outspoken critic and pamphleteer, Parnell distanced himself from the political views of the ascendancy. In 1804, he published *An Inquiry into the Causes of Popular Discontents in Ireland* that articulated his political grievances and two years later published a further response to the controversy it generated. Throughout his public life, Parnell would continue to defend and agitate for Catholic rights in Ireland. Given his very public opposition to the political platform of his social class, Tighe's two dedicatory sonnets should be read as politically and socially symbolic acts, especially since they echo her earlier politically-charged poems like "There was a Young Lordling."

"To W.P. Esq. Avondale" describes Parnell as a "dear friend" for whom they (the narrator is a plural we) wish a quieter life. The gentle, natural scenery is compared to "the busy world" and makes "thy home more dear." The poet wishes for W.P. to return to nature—the "woods of beauty" and the "loveliest landscape"—to soothe the heart and with the "muses' gentler influence" make it "uninjured." Tighe imagines Parnell as a dedicated statesman fighting a difficult political program. Her sonnet provides a lyrical image of Ireland, ostensibly to encourage him in his path. Following this poem, "Written in a Copy of *Psyche*" speaks more directly of Parnell, calling him "The patriot" with "strength of mind and energy of thought." She references his "eye of Taste" in both poems to suggest his literary ambitions and also his superior

state of mind, but in the latter sonnet, she characterizes him as “lov(ing) the critic’s gentlest part.” Mixing politics with literature, a common strategy in the United Irishmen’s movement during these years, Tighe unifies their cause in a common love for the country, Ireland.

Conclusion

Ireland, for Tighe, is the origin of her poetic inspiration. In “Bryan Byrne,” Ireland figured as the title character sacrificed by a bloody war. In “The Young Lordling,” Hibernia acts as protector of the people and their sovereignty from the British government. In her sonnets on Ireland, the country became the fertile mother of poetry, protecting her from the chaos of society. The two poems and the series of sonnets of Ireland, when considered as a group, illustrate an image of Ireland as intimately connected with the creativity of the poet, but constantly threatened with violence. By looking at these works as a series, a picture of Ireland and Anglo-Irish culture at the turn of the century appears as the poet experienced it and frames her literary productions in terms of how she perceived her nationality. The political unconscious of the text is ambiguous. Though the tone of “The Young Lordling” is clearly anti-unionist, the fear of violence repeatedly addressed in her sonnets suggests her disaffection with the United Irishmen’s ideologies and the rural rebellions that it inspired. Finally, her dedicatory sonnets to William Parnell, a contradiction himself, suggest return to her anti-unionists sympathies, but with a much less explicitly political tone. The ambiguity present in these varying positions differs greatly from the ambiguity of Mary Davys described in Chapter One. Davys, I argue, purposefully constructed her identity to manipulate her reception as either Irish or English. Conversely, Tighe presents an identity that appears genuinely conflicted about her nationality. The crisis of the 1790s appears to have affected her significantly, and that her images often represent pictures of liminality is important in interpreting the conflict.

Beyond *Psyche*, Tighe recorded a vision of Ireland different from what the Nationalist movement popularized after the Union. As an Anglo-Irish woman writer, Mary Tighe is a cultural artifact of Ireland at the turn of the century. Her poetry describes not only how she negotiated the ideologies of nationality, but also her marginal perspective on the larger, communal negotiations of nationness that were being contested around her. The liminal space in which the Anglo-Irish Nation had existed was changing. It was on the threshold of becoming something more or something different, reflecting the hope of romantic nationalism and the age of revolution. Tighe's poetry symbolizes and employs the ideological ruptures that were necessary in order for a voice from the margin to take an active role in the creation of Nation. The ambiguity that she represents illustrates the profound power of the margin to reconstruct the boundaries of Nation.

Conclusion:

Of Miscegenes, Métissages, Sentimentalists, and Sonneteers

[In eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland] intense struggles occurred at political, social, and cultural levels as different groups sought to define their place in a rapidly changing power structure. In Ireland, the process was complicated by the existence of the Anglo-Irish, a large population who viewed themselves as primarily as English, but wrestled with its legal, economic, and social subordination to England.³⁵⁷

In this project, I have explored this conflict that Anglo-Irish writers struggled with—viewing themselves as English, but viewed as subordinate to England. Resistance to this subordination permeates the texts of Davys and Pilkington. Both writers struggle to identify themselves as faithful English citizens, confronting established presumptions of both their nation and their gender which sought to label them “Irish.” It is in these texts, with their professions of Englishness, that one can see Victor Turner’s state of liminality and the subordination to “tribal elders” that served to direct the identity of the writers.³⁵⁸ They are necessarily ambiguous, labeled by culture, but unable to label themselves. Davys and Pilkington seek to submit themselves to England in order to gain the benefits of such an identity. However, both writers resist that subordination as well. Later in the eighteenth century, both Griffith and Tighe described an incompatibility that arises with such a resistance to subordination. In their texts, these two authors present metaphorical Anglo-Irish relationships, which initially seek to understand the possibility of productive connections, but ultimately illustrate the resonance of

³⁵⁷ Jill Marie Bradbury and David A. Valone, introduction in *Anglo-Irish Identities 1571-1845* (Lewisburg: University Press, 2008) 11.

³⁵⁸ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969) 96.

the conflict of the Anglo-Irish and the inevitable breakdown of the hyphenated culture. Griffith's characterization of Irish natives suggests that she, like Davys, identifies her main character as English. The native Irish are unquestionably inferior to the Anglo-Irish landlords, characterized as wild or childlike. But through a complicated tangle of relationships, the connection between the English Lady Barton and the Anglo-Irish Sir William is broken. Then, Tighe's nostalgic representations of Ireland and anti-unionist themes depart from the three earlier authors in that she appears to embrace Ireland, not seeking to distance herself from the "–Irish," but her representation of Ireland complicates that. For her, that nation is evanescent—beautiful, but dying. The subordination of Ireland preoccupies the texts of these four authors, but from a very different perspective than is usually addressed. Rather than propagating a nationalist, pre-colonial patriotism, these texts illustrate conflicting and destabilizing ideas of an Anglo-Irish nation in the equally destabilized concept of woman writer.

These four women represent an evolution of Anglo-Irish identity from post-Restoration politics to the 1800 Act of Union. Perhaps most significant about this development of Anglo-Irish nationness is that it illustrates the shift from a loyal English sentiment to a nostalgic Irish nationalism (not patriotism)³⁵⁹, a feeling that would dominate the Celtic Revival of early twentieth-century Irish literature. This shift in the ideology that informs the collective experiences of Anglo-Irish minds lays bare the complicated existence of being a bridge or an island between two distinct cultures with a shared history so similar that it could be indistinguishable and at the same time so incompatible that it sparked centuries of conflict. The four authors presented in this study represent a public voice that is not often considered in the struggle that Bradbury and Valone discuss in *Anglo-Irish Identities 1571-1845*. Though as much

³⁵⁹ I read patriotism as the political movement to establish a separate Irish nation completely divorced from the English government such as the United Irishmen. Nationalism, however, is an identification with a culture. Though these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, I consider them to have separate connotations.

a part of the “large population” of the English in Ireland as Swift, Burke, Grattan, or Tone, the voices represented here offer a broader perspective of national identity that developed over the course of the eighteenth century; they speak from the margin of a hyphenated culture, doubly removed from a public voice. The choice of these four authors is not intended to represent the entirety of the Anglo-Irish experience in the eighteenth century, nor a complete picture of the experience of women who lived this. These women do, however, illustrate that nationness is negotiated as much by gender as it is by one’s political affiliations. In fact, in this study of genre and nation, gender arises as a pivotal function in negotiating nationness in a hyphenated culture. Being woman and being Anglo-Irish dealt not only with the subordination of Ireland to England, but subordination to man as the standard of Nation. Each genre provides a different path to subjectivity and a unique construction of the individual within her historical moment. These genres—travel narratives, autobiographies, sentimental novels, and sonnets—are uniquely suited to negotiating nationness in the historical moment of each author. The progression from the travelling self to the autonomous ego demonstrates the evolution of Anglo-Irish identity, a specifically female one, from 1705-1805, and lays bare the liminality, the becoming, of a national identity struggling with the undefined status of being both kingdom and colony, the ambiguity of liminality.

The Travel Narrative

I began with the travel narrative because it most openly allows for an exploration of Nation, as that is its core subject. Yet, being Anglo-Irish immediately complicates the construction of this text. The miscegene is a person living in a hyphenated culture. As an individual of mixed origins, the miscegene is inherently ambiguous because a specific, culturally codified origin cannot be identified. She is part of both, but a whole of neither. And since culture

is the core of the travel narrative, the mixed origin of a miscegene ruptures the perceived wholeness of the narrating subject. This ambiguity allows for alternative constructions of nationhood that reflect the contradictions of hyphenated cultures and even the contradictions within the concept of Nation in general. As a miscegene, Davys has both freedom and constraint in negotiating how she identifies herself in *The Fugitive* since the ambiguity provides a space for identifying with either of the ideologies of nationness that comprise Anglo-Irish. For Davys, she can be both a wanderer and a fugitive depending on the needs of the moment. Such freedom allows her to satirize stereotypes like the “Waild Irish” or to illustrate her Englishness by employing those same stereotypes. However, she is constrained by that very ambiguity that grants her freedom. She is neither English nor Irish in her cultural construction. Thus, seeking to claim a loyal English sentiment proved difficult because she was easily identified as Irish even in her own text, and the ideology of a subordinate Ireland permeated English political cultural, and in some respects, social as well. In the ambiguous space of a miscegene, constructs of nationality become explicitly complicated and contradictory. In a travel narrative where a traveler must actively construct nationality in the contact zone of domestic-foreign encounters, the miscegene traveler must construct nationality as both imperial subject and as colonial Other. The contact zone is both internal and external. Consequently, the miscegene is useful as a depiction of Anglo-Irish nationality in the early years of the eighteenth century. Though the English in Ireland had long been a staple of the population, the political upheavals of the late seventeenth century brought forward the question of the political loyalty of all inhabitants of the island, including those of English origin. It was a time of changeable and often contradictory allegiances. But this period exemplified the desire of the Anglo-Irish to be viewed as loyal English subjects. Yet, being of mixed origin, such a desire would seem unattainable.

However, a mixed nationality was not the only axis of identity that Davys had to contend with. She was as constrained by concepts of virtue as she was by those of nationality. The contact zone where gender and social morays meet in the authorial persona was equally precarious. This contact zone, as Davys illustrated, is the eighteenth-century concept of Virtue. As long as the travel writer was able to present herself as a virtuous woman during her journey, she was able to overcome the fear of professional women writers, a fear that labeled writers such as Aphra Behn and Eliza Haywood undesirable. The presence of virtue afforded a woman travel writer the social sanction to write, provided that she maintained her virtuous reputation. Davys employs juxtapositions of women of high caliber and women of ill repute to illustrate her fidelity to the concept in addition to framing her text as above such scandalous writing as the romance. Fidelity to Virtue also aided in representing her loyal English sentiments. As Laetitia Pilkington's text showed, being Irish could be synonymous with questionable values, especially in women. Thus, being a miscegene required Davys to confront these labels in her travel narrative.

In the complex interconnection of self and world, the miscegene woman travel writer navigates not only the physical journey, but the metaphysical journey through which nationality is conceived. But Davys's purpose is not to detangle, to separate out the "-Irish" or the "Anglo-," but to investigate the overlapping boundaries. As the purpose of the travel narrative was to offer pleasurable instruction, knowledge of place was at the core of such a text. However, women's travel writing tended to incorporate personal interaction more than male writers. Thus, ideology of nationness is revealed through the contact zone of traveler and native rather than detailed descriptions of place. And since the labels of traveler and native are upturned in Davys' journey through England because she attempts to be (and is understood as) both traveler AND native, this

contact zone ruptures those ideologies into the very contradictions they were created to cover. The entanglement cannot be unraveled and cannot be made whole. The mixed self in *The Fugitive* illustrates the mutable boundaries that exist for a woman travel writer from a hyphenated culture. The journey is the symbol of liminality, and the miscegene is the ambiguous liminal subject outside of, but always within, Nation.

The Autobiography/Memoir

From the story of a journey, I moved to the story of a life. An autobiography, or memoir, gives the writer an opportunity to construct her life in her own terms, but it is bound as equally by the expectation of virtue as the other genres of literature discussed in this project. As in the travel narrative, virtue was central to the reception of autobiographical texts written by women. That Pilkington is interpolated as unequivocally Irish by English citizens reflects how central the concept was to the concept of Nation in women's writing. Pilkington defends her English subjectivity in a number of ways, but she is constructed as Irish despite her own words. In reading *Memoirs*, one could argue that it is virtue that determines the construction of nationness by women as much as the English preconceptions about the Irish people. Pilkington was unable to separate the imagined self of her life story from the indiscretions that informed her reception in both Ireland and England. They were inextricably linked in this cultural moment. The autobiography is a "woven thing" according to Shari Benstock.³⁶⁰ It is woven by the author with the threads of history and individual experience, even those experiences that the author might wish to omit. The autobiography is an imagination of self within history, but is also bound by the conventions of genre and gender. The burden of fact, that an autobiographical narrative must be a verifiable account of history, binds Pilkington to her identification as Anglo-Irish. She can

³⁶⁰ Shari Benstock, *The Private Self: Theory and Practice in Women's Autobiographical Writing* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

claim a noble, Anglo-Irish nationality through her paternal lineage. But the ‘fact’ of her marital infidelity, which she vehemently and repeatedly denies, binds her to a marginalized representation—an Irish whore. While Davys can manipulate her identity because of the ambiguity of the miscegene, Pilkington is reduced to ‘merely Irish’ by her English countrymen, the subordinate liminal subject. But Pilkington’s autobiography is not the story of an Irish life. A compromised virtue may have reduced her to such a reception in her historical moment (and perhaps with later scholars as well), but Pilkington imagines herself as Anglo-Irish in many places in her text. As such, Pilkington’s memoirs reflect an idea of Anglo-Irish nationality that is a defensive, but proud: one that is not dictated by virtue, but national loyalty. Though liminality requires unconditional subordination, Pilkington challenges such a limitation.

However, the imagined self does not exist outside of historical context. The *métissage* illustrates where these meet. Like miscegene, the word denotes a mixing of culture. However, the *métissage* is most often articulated in autobiographical writing. The miscegene is a fact of cultural origin. The *métissage* is a construction of authorial persona dictated by genre. The term is sometimes simplified into the concept of cross-breeding, but it embodies far more than a genetic implication. The *métissage* employs “a way of merging and blurring genres, texts and identities; an active literary stance, political strategy...a creative strategy for the braiding of gender, race, language and place into autobiographical texts.”³⁶¹ This blending, blurring, and braiding offer mutability to the boundaries of convention. Pilkington can be read as Irish and/or a whore, but she can also consciously transcend those designations. Her invocation of her great grandfather, the Earl of Kilmallock, whose family supported Henry VIII’s subordination of rebellious Irish nobility, works to provide a sound premise of English loyalty. Detailed

³⁶¹Cynthia Chambers, Dwayne Donald, and Erika Hasebe-Ludt, *Creating a Curriculum for Métissage*, <<http://ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v07n02/metissage/metiscript.html> >, accessed 24 January 2010.

accusations of entrapment by men, including her husband, challenge the label of adulterer. As a métissage, Pilkington illustrated not only the struggle of being mixed, but its usefulness as well. She is not ambiguous, but her claims cannot be summarily dismissed. She can manipulate the historical context with her imagined self.

One cannot imagine a Self without imagining Nation, and for a woman writer in the eighteenth century, without confronting Virtue. The historical context out of which the story of the author's life comes informs how the author imagines herself within a nation. And, just as the self is liminal, so is the nation in the eighteenth century. In the 1730s and 40s, the Jacobite threat bore heavily on Anglo-Irish relations, and doubt about the political support of the Irish government infused English popular and political sentiment. Yet, Nation for Pilkington is not just politics; it is virtue as well. As the bearer of nationness in a liminal culture, the woman must offer a firm moral foundation upon which to rest Nation; subordination cannot be challenged by one who is so obviously subordinate. Predominantly bereft of virtue, Pilkington must fight the contradictions of her hyphenation. She is labeled Irish (and in some ways accepts that label in its noble sense), but maintains a loyal English ideology. The métissage, Pilkington, works to imagine a self that can be both English and Irish in a temporal moment where they seem incompatible. The blurring, blending, and braiding of Self, Nation, and Virtue created a text woven into the historical moment and reflective of the mutability of Anglo-Irish as a national identity. However, Pilkington's low status symbolizes the liminality that still echoes the subordination.

The Sentimental Novel

Griffith's novel *The History of Lady Barton* also presents the difficult relationship between the presence/absence of virtue and the construction of nationality. The sentimental

novel, the literary expression of sensibility, teases out the conflict between individual consciousnesses, which grows out of the experience of intensified feeling, and the function of the individual within society, which demands a reasonable expression of those spontaneous feeling experiences. Virtue's role in the sentimental novel is to balance the conflict between feeling and reason so that the heroine can achieve the delicate feelings necessary to place her above the rough elements of society, but keep her from spiraling into hedonistic pleasures, which would negate her value to society and as Pilkington's text shows, negate her value to the nation. The balance that virtue provides works as a metaphor for the concept of an Irish nation within, but distinct from, the British nation. These constructions, of sensibility and of balanced intra-national government, avoid the extremes in feeling or in reason that break apart relationships and cultures. In an era of fomenting revolutions, balance was integral to being Anglo-Irish as it could address the construct of subordinate while at the same time provide reassurance of loyalty. What *The History of Lady Barton* illustrates is how precarious such a balance would be and how the mere presence of doubt, in virtue or loyalty, will comprise and even destroy the balance and the relationship.

Most important in Griffith's novel is the manner in which Lady Barton's sensibility and the subsequent accusations of infidelity lead to an irrevocable break down of the social relationships in the novel. Doubt cast upon her character effectively compromises most of her relationships, which ultimately leads to her death. Significantly, it is the *English* Colonel Walters that first accuses Lady Barton though he knows she is innocent. Walters is an absentee landlord coming to Ireland to take over an estate, which he had inherited from a distant relative. However, Griffith's novel is not a tale of an evil English landlord besmirching the reputation of a noble Irish heroine. An overtly nationalist construction like that would inflame the sort of tensions that

sensibility sought to cover over. Instead, Lady Barton is an Englishwoman married, somewhat resignedly, to an Anglo-Irish landlord, Sir William. Later, she falls in love with Lord Lucan, who is also an Anglo-Irish landlord, and it is this love that drives Colonel Walters to accuse her of infidelity. He too wants to possess her. Lady Barton is situated between the boorish Sir William, the sentimental Lord Lucan, and the Machiavellian Walters each representing a different construction of national loyalty. That Lady Barton could not be trusted by her husband, though she was guilty of no transgression, proves to be fatal. This bewildering circle of loyalties and relationships, the tension between Lady Barton's sensibility and her role as a wife, reflects the growing conflict between ideas of Ireland as a nation and ideas of Ireland as a colony in the era of the constitutional debates of the 1760s and 70s between Stephen's Green and the Crown.

The sentimental novel negotiates nationness implicitly because the role of virtue is bound up in the ideology of nationality. Lady Barton, as an English transplant in Ireland, is also a metaphor for the Anglo-Irish nation, but one that is separate from the 'Irishness' of the native population such as the villagers whom Barton meets upon arriving in Ireland. As an Englishwoman living in Ireland, she represents the most basic concept of Anglo-Irish nationality. Her marriage to a resident landlord ties her ever more closely to Ireland as does her sympathy for the tenants of Sir William's estate. However, she maintains very close ties with her sister—most of the novel is written in letters between the two of them—making her a bridge between the two cultures. But if Lady Barton is the bridge between England and Ireland, then her virtue is the stanchion. When the stanchion is compromised, a fall is inevitable. Once Colonel Walters introduces doubt into her relationship with Sir William, her reputation begins to deteriorate. This construction, and its instability, suggests that while a virtuous woman is a sound foundation of society, she is simultaneously perfect and ephemeral. The vulnerability of virtue echoes the

vulnerability of the position of the Anglo-Irish within a British nation. Subordination seems inevitable.

The Sonnet

While Davys, Pilkington, and Griffith find nationality tied directly to the social conventions that govern virtue, Mary Tighe found—indeed created—an alternate public sphere wherein virtue is superseded by skill and nationality is linked to lyricism and self determination rather than sexual purity. The Sonnet Revival of the late eighteenth century, driven primarily by women poets, became a forum in which to negotiate subjectivity frequently outside the sex/gender system that governed Virtue. Emergent Romantic Nationalism fit naturally into the sonnet form as both worked to understand and articulate an individual consciousness dictated by individual experience. Unlike the tension between the spontaneous individual feeling and socially acceptable expressions of those feeling which characterized the sentimental novel, the sonnet was a form that required feeling not only be self-determined, but uniquely expressed. Thus, the sonnet comes as a natural conclusion to this project. The travel narrative and the autobiography illustrate the effects of mixed origins which focused the author on the task of “proving” herself loyal while not accepting a subordinate designation. To do so meant working within the constraints of genre and virtue as dictated by the culture. The sentimental novel explores the tension between the individual and society and recognizes individuality in the Nation, but only as a struggle against the demands of culture. But the sonnet is a space in which to explore the conflict and bring those ideas together into a whole subject, or at least a perceived whole. Tighe’s sonnets do not create a unified, codified Anglo-Irish subject, but they do construct a perception of her nationality that explores an Irish identity because it is an individual one. This identity is not absent from a connection with England, but it is centered on Ireland.

Thus, Tighe's work illustrates the culmination of the ideology of Nation in Anglo-Irish women writers. She is not a patriot, but she is Irish in that she writes herself that way not struggling to "prove" loyalty or struggle against subordination.

However, the sonnet form is not without a politically significant history. Practitioners such as Shakespeare and Milton conferred a quintessential English character onto the sonnet. And poets such as Anna Seward and Charlotte Smith wrote of great "Fathers" of the sonnet in their debates over form. Thus, nation and gender still informed the cultural capital of the sonnet form. Yet, the sonnet must be created by an autonomous ego, or more accurately, the writing of a sonnet is the writing of an autonomous ego, an individual Self. Unlike the miscegene, the métissage, or sentimental heroine, the sonnet allows for an experience of nation that is separate from that of the nation at large, and subsequently, while it is still derived from culture, the experience is individual. Although it is not divorced from that nation at large, and indeed is greatly influenced by the collective experience of nationness, the experience of Nation in the lyrics of the poet is individual, even private. The lyrical subjectivity conferred by sonnet writing is a means for a lyrical representation of nation. This offers the poet a space in which nationality can be constructed out of the individual experience. Tighe, living in that space between English and Irish, can resolve, or attempt to resolve the conflicts that the earlier writers struggled with. It is lyrical nationality.

The subject/subordinate conflict of the Anglo-Irish nationality reaches a tipping point in the 1798 United Irishmen's rebellion. Writing in this historical moment with sonnets such as "Written at Rossana, November 18, 1799," Tighe explores an evanescent Ireland, "the last poor flower" that disappears under a "rash hand."³⁶² The function of the liminal state is to raze the

³⁶² Mary Tighe, *The Collected Poems and Journals of Mary Tighe*, edited by Harriet Kramer Linkin, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005) 44.

identity of the subject so that it can be rebuilt. Tighe's imagery illustrates the last stages of this process—the flower is plucked and then discarded. As it is her hand that destroys the flower, the conflict has been metaphorically staged—the English hand destroys the Irish flower. She claims that it is the “desolating power” that has devastated what the flower represents. However, the resolution of the sonnet suggests that this identity, this Irish flower, can be revived through “domestic love” and brought out of this liminal state. For Tighe, the conflict is resolved by a separation from the English experience.

Becoming Irish

The trend that is represented in this project, the evolving identification as Irish in these Anglo-Irish writers, illustrates the liminal nature of a hyphenated culture as that culture develops a concept of itself within the two cultures of its origin. The becoming here, as a state of liminality is one of becoming, could be considered a growing Irishness of the Anglo-Irish. Yet, the collective experiences of these women illustrate that the Anglo-Irish experienced nationness as a contradiction, as a paradox even into the nineteenth and twentieth century. And while a culture is in a liminal state, it is unclear how much of its past it will retain as it reaches aggregation. Ulick O'Connor writes that the “assimilating qualities of the island...throughout the nineteenth century, though the country was now governed directly from England, it could be seen that a personality was emerging on the island, neither Anglo-Irish nor native Irish, but a blend of both.”³⁶³ However, this blending was not homogenous, but rather just as complicated as it had been in the eighteenth century. O'Connor illustrates the complexity by describing the process that George Moore and William B. Yeats go through when collaborating on the play *Diarmide and Graine*. He describes the conflict over language between the novelist and the poet because Moore wrote in French, but Yeats felt that the character Graine must be written in Irish.

³⁶³ Ulick O'Connor, *Celtic Dawn*, (Dublin: Town House and Country House, 1999) 14.

The process would work like this: “after Moore had written it in French, [Lady Gregory] would translate it into English and a member of the Gaelic League would then translate it into Irish. The Lady Gregory could translate it back into English again.”³⁶⁴ To make Graine “Irish” required a journey through France, England, Ireland, and then back to England. This, as Yeats rationalized, would cast Graine as the archetypal Irish heroine, ancient and sorrowful. Moore agrees to what O’Connor calls an “extraordinary transmutation of dialogue” because the novelist admits that he “had come to hate [the English language] for political reasons” and looked to “tongues that had not been corrupted by over-use.”³⁶⁵ But Graine could only be articulated as Irish by first being constructed in French followed by English. It would be too easy and oversimplified to understand Moore’s words as anti-English, though he likely meant them to be so. There is a tacit understanding and acceptance that to be Irish meant that one was irrevocably tied to the English, an idea that the eighteenth-century women writers in this project both accepted and manipulated. And it is through Lady Gregory that this translation occurs.

In *The Rising of the Moon*, Lady Gregory provides another perspective on the relationship between the two parts of being Anglo-Irish. The play takes its title from the J.K. Casey ballad about the 1798 United Irish Rebellion, and it was performed in an equally unstable period of Anglo-Irish history in the early twentieth century. The Sergeant is a loyalist, an enforcer of the Crown’s policies. He is certain in his nationality, a loyal English citizen. And he is certain of the rightness in his task of finding and arresting the escaped prisoner, who masquerades as Jimmy Walsh, the ballad singer. Though Gregory provides no specifics, she implies that the escapee’s crimes were politically motivated and against the English governance of Ireland. Yet, through a brief, yet passionate conversation between the two men, where the

³⁶⁴Ibid., 281

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 282.

titular ballad and others are sung, the Sergeant finds himself in the bind of the Anglo-Irish in the eighteenth century—being loyal, but being subordinate. Of his duty, he says, “Well, we have our duty to the force. Haven’t we the whole country depending on us to keep law and order? It’s those that are down would be up and those that are up would be down, if it wasn’t for us.”³⁶⁶ From his perspective, the Crown protects law and liberty. However, his encounter with the escaped convict/rebel begins to breakdown his certainty. In disguise, the rebel is able to connect to the sergeant through their shared history of Irish nationalism. The rebel ballads reach into the sergeant’s youthful past of political idealism, but this connection is not uncomplicated. The Sergeant’s last line illustrates the paradox of being Anglo-Irish: “I wonder, now, am I as great a fool as I think I am?” Is he a fool for giving up his youthful idealism, or a fool for giving up the hundred-pound reward? Such is the question that Gregory poses.

The nationalist tones of the short play are explicit, but Gregory’s words on her work illustrate the paradox of the Sergeant’s character. She writes,

“The play was considered offensive to some extreme Nationalists before it was acted, because it showed the police in too favorable a light, and a Unionist paper attached it after it was acted because the policeman was represented ‘as a coward and a traitor’; but after the Belfast police strikes (in 1907) that same paper praised its ‘insight into Irish character.’ After all these ups and downs it passes unchallenged on both sides of the Irish Sea.”³⁶⁷

The 1907 Belfast strike adds to the ambiguity in this play. It was one of the few moments in the troubled and violent history of Northern Ireland when both Unionists and Nationalists stood

³⁶⁶ Isabella Augusta (Lady) Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon in Modern Irish Drama*, ed. John P. Harrington, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991) 55.

³⁶⁷ Lady Gregory, “The Rising of the Moon” in *Modern Irish Drama*, 432-433.

together against the English government. Gregory's comments seem to lay bare the political unconscious that resonates in her text and resonates in the literature of the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish woman writer. Again, it seems that when one is writing from a marginalized position, the constructs of nationality, especially those which seek to establish a singular consciousness, are ruptured and fragmented. Gregory's *Sergeant* experiences the same contradictions that Davys's traveler, Pilkington's *Scribbler*, Griffith's *Heroine*, and Tighe's rash hand do—how can one be Irish through being English.

Hilary Mantel's *The Giant, O'Brien*, provides a contemporary perspective on the eighteenth-century ideas of Nation. A London-based anatomist, John Hunter, seeks to own the remains of the Irish giant, Charles O'Brien. Mantel's fictional account, based on the factual history, illustrates an exploitative relationship between England and Ireland. The Irish giant is codified for the morbid curiosity of the scientist. It raises the question of the possibility of a mutually productive relationship between the two cultures. In a modern sense, Mantel's novel probes such issues as the exploitation of difference and deformity, yet its setting in eighteenth century London invites one to consider the story as a commentary on these collective experiences of nationness.

Mantel's novel illustrates a typical characterization of the ideology of Nation between England and Ireland. It sets up a dichotomy between England and Ireland. Such representations tend to marginalize the experiences described in this project. They marginalize the experience of the Anglo-Irish and reduce eighteenth-century Irish nationality to one of conflict between the Native Irish and the English oppressor. In a post-nationalist reading of Irish literature, the concept of Anglo-Irish nationality ruptures such dichotomies. The experience of being in-

between represents a nascent identity that confronted the paradox that was being English and being Irish.

As I close this project, I note that “Anglo” is always first in this cultural designation. It could as simply be termed “Hiberno-English.” That the term we use, Anglo-Irish, privileges the Englishness over the Irishness, is perhaps the most important fact to accept because “Anglo-Irish” was not a contemporary description of the eighteenth century. Like Rankin has argued, the collective psyche of the Anglo-Irish sought to distance themselves from being designated as Irish. Thus, one might put the emphasis on “Anglo” by placing it first. And the texts of Davys and Pilkington illustrate that very feeling. However, Griffith and Tighe illustrate more comfort, maybe even a desire for, identifying as Irish, yet they are still identified as “Anglo-Irish.” While these writers appear to separate themselves from a native Irish population, the emphasis put on this designation can be misleading. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, it is difficult to place labels like Anglo-Irish on writers. One could employ the construct that it means an Irish writer writing in English, but then the label “Irish writer” would be just as troublesome today as Anglo-Irish is when referring to the eighteenth century literature. But this conundrum is in and of itself quite telling. That terms like “Anglo-Irish” are no longer adequate as cultural designations, perhaps even obsolete when discussing literature from Ireland suggests that there is still no singular Irishness that one can point to. The eighteenth century was a pivotal period in the histories of England and Ireland. England was growing as an imperial power, and Ireland was growing independent. English rule spread through the world, touching every continent; Ireland lost her parliament and became the subordinate against which the Anglo-Irish writer had struggled with. In thinking about Anglo-Irish literature from the eighteenth century, one must

remember that the conflict which Bradbury and Valone describe is not a struggle of the Irish against the English. It is a struggle between the realities of being both Irish and English.

This project did not seek to investigate what Nation is. I have not looked for how these writers write Ireland or England. I have looked at how they write themselves and how they write Nation. Though nationness might arise out of collective experience, it is in the individual writer that one finds the lived experience of Nation. And the texts of these authors illustrate the significance of the politics of gender in the experience of Nation. The axes of identity—English, Irish, Woman, Writer—intersect to create a nationality constructed in the margins. But it is in the margins where great change is, inevitably, initiated.

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