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In this number we are happy to include a special feature on the topic of rundale. First introduced to the academic community by Estyn Evans seventy years ago (Evans 1939), it later became a major research topic among historical geographers in Queen’s University Belfast (e.g. McCourt 1947; Buchanan 1973). Anthropologists may be familiar with it from the work of Robin Fox on Tory Island (1979). After a lull of some years, rundale has again emerged in a number of disciplines as a topic of debate, including on the questions of its historical origins and its dynamics (e.g. Whelan 1997, Yager 2002, O’Sullivan and Downey 2008).

Our lead article by Slater and Flaherty provides a comprehensive analysis of rundale as a system or series of systems, and it draws heavily on the comparative and historical work of Marx and Engels. As well as touching on patterns of land tenure, population increase, and Ireland’s incorporation into the wider world, it deals substantially with the themes of mode of production and of the structural tensions between communality and individualism, between the natural and the social, and between use-value and exchange-value (commoditization). Particular use is made of the ecological concept of metabolic rift.

Given the multi-dimensional nature of the topic, the editor sought responses from scholars representing a number of disciplines, who could respond to different aspects of the article, including the theoretical framework, the historical aspect, and the ecological, cultural and linguistic dimensions.

We are also happy in this number to continue our practice of publishing the best undergraduate theses in anthropology from NUI Maynooth (Coen and Fagerroos, ex aequo) and from Queen’s University Belfast (Briggs).

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Marx on Primitive Communism: The Irish Rundale Agrarian Commune, its Internal Dynamics and the Metabolic Rift

Eamonn Slater and Eoin Flaherty*
Department of Sociology and NIRSA

It is not a question here of definitions, which things must be made to fit. We are dealing here with definite functions, which must be expressed, in definite categories. Karl Marx *Capital*, vol. 2.

In the dialectical method of development the movement from the abstract to concrete is not a straight-line process. One returns to the concrete at expanded levels of the total curve, reconstructing the surface of society by 'stages', as a structure of several dimensions. And this implies, finally, that in Marx's *Capital* we shall find a continuous 'oscillation between essence and appearance'. Bani 1979.

1. Introduction
In the following account we apply a Marxist 'mode of production' framework that attempts to create a better understanding of the complex relationships between society and nature. Most of the discussion of the dualism of nature/society has tended to replicate this divide as reflected in the intellectual division between the natural sciences and the social sciences. We hope to cross this analytic divide and provide an analysis that incorporates both natural and social variables.

Marx's work on ecology and 'mode of production' provides us with the theoretical framework for our examination into the essential structures of the Irish rundown agrarian commune. His analysis of modes of production includes not only social relations (people to people) but also relations of material appropriation (people to nature) and therefore allows us to combine the social forces of

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*Map – Dooagh Village, Achill Island, Co. Mayo. Scale 1:10,560 (6 inch), Sheet 54, Surveyed 1838, Published 1839 ‘Glucksman Map Library’, Trinity College Dublin*
production with the natural forces of production. The latter relations are conceptualized by Marx as mediated through the process of metabolism, which refers to the material and social exchange between human beings and nature and vice-versa. However, what is crucial to Marx is how the natural process of metabolism is embedded in its social form – its particular mode of production. Marx suggested that this unity of the social and the natural was to be located within the labour process of the particular mode of production and he expressed this crucial idea in the concept of socio-ecological metabolism. Some modes of production such as capitalism create a rift in the process of metabolism. The metabolic rift is a disruption of the soil nutrient cycle as nutrients are removed from the soil when they pass into the crops and animals and are not returned. Declining soil fertility therefore becomes a social/economic problem for society.

Historically, the rundale system occupied a large spatial area in pre-Famine Ireland. For instance, Almquist suggests that 58% of all the land in Co. Mayo in 1845 was held in common by joint tenancies (Almquist 1977: 103). According to McCourt, the rundale system, as indicated by clachan settlements, was concentrated in a crescent that included the north, west, and south-west (McCourt 1971: 136). Freeman estimated that in 1845 on the eve of the Great Famine the rundale system occupied some 2,000,000 acres of land (Freeman 1965: 180).

In his introduction to Marx’s Ecology, Foster (2002) stated that ‘... to be truly meaningful, the dialectical conception of a totality in the process of becoming ... had to be placed in a practical, materialist context’ (Foster, 2002: 5). Contrary to this suggested approach, ‘mainstream’ sociological inquiry concerned with the analysis of human-natural relations has tended to proceed in the opposite direction, maintaining an analytical separation between the social, and the natural. The effects of this separation have amounted to what Benton describes as an ‘obstructive dualism’, within which non-social entities remain beyond the remit of sociological inquiry (Benton, 1991: 7). Despite notable contributions from the aforementioned authors,² the state of research from within the social sciences has remained largely conceptual. Consequently, little attempt has been made to reconcile such restrictive dualisms within a particular case study. The case of the rundale agrarian commune, therefore, is presented in an attempt to resolve both deficiencies in our knowledge of the internal dynamics of the system itself within its broader context, and to overcome these separations through a mode of production analysis.

2. The Contrasting Conceptualizations of Academic Scholarship on the Rundale System: either Overculturalized or Overspatialized

To date, the most prolific debates on the rundale system have concerned theories of its origins, most often expressed as a conflict between, on the one hand, documentary and archaeological evidence and, on the other, supposedly epistemologically inferior ethnological work. The nature of this debate has hinged on the widely-contested notion of the antiquity of the rundale system, and its concomitant pattern of nucleated settlement. Institutional Irish scholarship on the rundale system and clachan finds its roots in the Queen’s school of Historical Geography; most notably the contentions

raised by Estyn Evans's 1939 paper 'Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System' and, years later, the work of Desmond McCourt. Evans's prominence is reflected in Whelan's description of his rejection many years later by historical geographers as 'discarding some of the most venerable concepts in Irish geography' (Whelan 1999: 187). Given the unfortunate scarcity of documentary sources detailing the rundale system in comprehensive detail, and the extent to which the work of the Queen's geographers dominates our empirical knowledge, it is necessary to critically assess their work and the more recent revisiting of the rundale by their later geographer colleagues.

In a comment originally made in 1981, Evans stated that his 'particular brand of anthropogeography, which is that of H.J. Fleure and Carl O. Sauer, [was] currently out of fashion' (1992: 1). According to Graham, Evans's life work remained preoccupied, for the most part, with the intent to document the "undocumented", his writings remaining rooted within a holistic regional framework and legitimating a distinctively Darwinian interpretation of 'regional particularities'.

In a series of papers delivered to the Geographical Society of Ireland, Andrews (1974, 1977) criticized what he saw as the homogenizing effect of studies, such as those of Evans, conducted within a 'regional personality construct.' Buchanan later noted that, despite criticisms to the contrary, such formulations were essential to 'make connections across great distances of time and space, to stress ecological settings ... and to show the relevance of space-relations in the evolution of culture' (Buchanan 1984: 133). Whelan and Doherty point to the potential criticisms of Evans in this respect, by noting that Evans's work claimed to produce a study of settlement, which offered a direct window to a form of great antiquity, empirically rooted within a holistic regional framework and legitimating a distinctively Darwinian interpretation of 'regional particularities'.

Citing 'numerous subtle and political and philosophical differences', Graham (1994: 194) rejects the notion of a distinctively 'Evans school' of geography and suggests that McCourt's approach departs significantly from that of Evans. Throughout his writings, McCourt maintains a separation between the 'rundale' as social practice, as spatial configuration (the clachan), and as a system of infield-outfield cultivation (McCourt 1971, 1955). McCourt's approach arrives at a dynamic conceptualization of 'the rundale': 'Not [as] a homogeneous population at a given time, but ... one exhibiting manifold features of variation inside a framework of broad similarity' (1947: 1), and in its broader historical context as 'scattered dwellings and compact farm units ... [with the] possibility of the former at any time evolving into or emerging from the latter' (1971: 127).

McCourt of course is right to emphasize the dynamic nature of the rundale, but we suggest that it involves more than just physical settlement patterns – rotating from scattered dwellings to compact farms. If this is a feature of change within the rundale system, the conditions that allow such a strange pattern to emerge need to be investigated.

Kevin Whelan has developed a perspective on the rundale system in terms of its adaptability to nuances of context (environment), particularly the marginal conditions of the western seaboard within which the rundale system thrived (Whelan 1995, 1999). Whelan's approach marks a significant departure from previous pronouncements on the emergence, nature and antiquity of the rundale system, by depicting it as a functional adaptation to specific ecological conditions. But this approach is very close to a form of environmental determinism, which has a consequential tendency to underplay the complexity of the social determinisms, especially the social relationships within the rundale.

Countering Whelan's adaptive determinism is Yager's culturalism. Writing on the village of Faulmore, Co. Mayo in 1976, Yager commented that '... its palpable collective spirit led me to suspect that a more thorough-going communalism lurked in the past' (Yager 2002: 154), concluding:

It is safe to assume that co-operative work ties were cemented by a strong sense of neighbourly affiliation and a lively evening social life, as I saw myself in Faulmore in the 1970s. Rundale was more than a technical arrangement; it was a way of life. (Yager 2002: 162)

Yager concludes that a utilitarian 'group mind' formed the basis of the rundale system, thereby idealizing communality at the level of interpersonal interaction, and perhaps over-emphasizing the historical permanence of collective sentiment. This charge has underpinned much of the debate over the antiquity and subsequent emergences of rundale throughout history, in the issue of the validity of evidence-forms (McCarthy 2002: 534). It has been noted by various authors (Graham 1994: 184; Crossman and McLaughlin 1994: 80, 89; Nash 2005: 52) that critiques themselves are contested knowledge forms, constituted within particular parameters of appropriate academic practice.

In tracing the origins and trajectory of the development of the rundale system, therefore, we are left with a body of material situated within a philosophical and methodological debate of polar opposites: those of 'anthropogeographic' extrapolation from fieldwork on surface features both material and cultural (those
associated with the 'Evans school'), against an adherence to formal (spatial) documentation (Andrews). Consequently, we are left with an idealist-reductionist dichotomy in our literature corresponding to the authors located within the respective opposing positions above: idealist to the extent that the supposed antiquity of the rundale system emerges within a framework of anthropogeographic generalization, and reductionist to the extent that its form, function, and origins may only be understood through abstract spatial units, and within a deterministic framework of functional adaptation. In this respect, McCourt's approach held greater promise for reconciling these contested aspects, as his analysis had already moved far beyond Evans's initial hypotheses and provided for the possibility of a number of context-dependent rundale emergence scenarios, and, as we will see, for a number of mechanisms of decline and re-emergence over time. Evans employed a particular methodology with the explicit aim of 'overcoming what he saw as the 'ard minutia of an elaborate bibliographical apparatus' (1992: 13). In this respect, and as noted by Graham, subsequent historical-geographical criticisms were notably deficient in their ability to cope with social structures and even more so social processes, through an over-reliance on privileged documentary sources (Graham 1994: 194; Crossman and McLoughlin 1994: 87). Notwithstanding Evans's own inability to cope with the diversity of social structures in rural Ireland (especially class), his comment that 'one must admire these scholarly aims so long as curiosity is not stifled by technique, and the scaffolding does not obscure the building' (Evans 1981: 15) lends further credence to the argument for a theoretical, systemic development of discussion of the rundale and a revision of the conceptual constraints implicit within critiques from an empiricist-spatial tradition.

More recently, James Anderson identified the contradictory tendencies of the rundale system with regard to the contrasting values of communal and individualistic attitudes:

(Rundale) was based more on communal than on individual enterprise, originally in kinship groups, later on partnership farms. Co-operation and equity were among the guiding principles, though by the nineteenth century ... more competitive and individualistic attitudes often prevailed. (Anderson 1995: 448).

We want to argue that these contrasting tendencies do not just operate on the level of the psychological mind-set of the participants but are actually determinants of the diverse economic and social structures of this agrarian system. The aforementioned frameworks applied to the rundale have failed to examine the internal processes that have determined how the rundale system has gone through many metamorphoses — it was never a timeless entity. To unlock the unity of these diverse forms, we turn to Marx to provide us with the materialist key.

3. Marx (and Engels) on the Agrarian Commune

According to John Maguire, Marx proposed a typology of agrarian communal forms in which communal property is combined with private property in varying combinations. These types are identified by Maguire in the works of Marx as the Oriental or Asiatic, the Ancient and the Germanic forms of agrarian communities. These primitive forms of community have evolved from an archaic form in which communal property existed without private property (Maguire 1978: 212). Marx stated this evolutionary tendency in the agrarian communal forms in the following way and suggested that the Russian commune is a variant of the Germanic form:

Primitive communities are not all cut according to the same pattern. On the contrary, they form a series of social groups which, differing in both type and age, make successive phases of evolution. One of the types, conventionally known as agrarian commune, (la commune agricole), also embraces the Russian commune. Its equivalent in the West is the very recent Germanic commune. (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 118)

Marx in his unsent letter drafts to Vera Zasulich classified the Russian commune as the latest developed form of communal property – developed from its earlier archaic form. It had three main characteristics:

1. The Russian variant of the agrarian commune was ‘the first social group of free men not bound together by blood ties’ (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 119), while the archaic community was determined by close blood relations between its members.
2. In the agrarian commune the house and garden yard belong to the individual farmer, while in the more ‘archaic’ type of village community there was no private ownership at all.
3. The cultivable land, ‘inalienable and common property’ (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 119), is periodically divided among the communal members, each of whom works his own plot and appropriates its fruits.

Marx suggested that inherent in these three concrete characteristics is a ‘dualism’ which ‘bestows the agrarian commune with a vigorous life’. This dualism is based on the opposing trends of individualism and communality where, in the case of the Germanic/Russian commune, the house and garden yard was the private preserve of the individual family and subsequently ‘fostered individuality’ and the rest of the commune’s land was for communal use. In the third draft of Marx’s letter to Vera Zasulich, according to Shanin’s re-ordering of their presentation, we have the most theoretically developed conceptualization of the agrarian commune by Marx. In this draft, Marx seems to be attempting to bring out the dialectical moments (and contradictions) inherent in the continuing evolving relationship of communality and individualism and their varying concrete manifestations.

In attempting to explain these moments he uses a variety of concrete categories to identify the differing relationship that the dualism conveys on the social relations of production. Individualism is expressed through the use of such categories as personal, individual, private and property (private). These are contrasted on the communal side of the dualism with categories such as collective, communal, common and co-operative. All of these
adjectives are applied across various moments of the social relationships of production. Those categories that attempt to conceptualize the impact of individualism on the immediate production process generally suggest a process of disintegration, e.g. fragmented, scattered, petty and parcelized. The tremendous variety of categories used by Marx in these drafts suggests that he had a very deep understanding of the complex nature of the evolution of the agrarian commune from its archaic form of prehistory to its contemporary variant forms – Oriental, Germanic, Russian (and Rundale). The problem as Marx saw it was that their evolution and devolved essential structures varied considerably from location to location. What is definite is that Marx sees them emerging from a common archaic form which he identified as primitive communal property:

It (primitive communal property) is (not) a specifically Slavonic, or even an exclusively Russian, phenomenon. It is an early form which can be found among Romans, Teutons and Celts, and of which a whole collection of diverse patterns (though sometimes only remnants survive) is still in existence in India. (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 49)

What remnants remain of communal property depended on how the process of individualization had eroded the communal aspects of the commune. Consequently, the dualism of communality and individualism allows the researcher to assess the degree of communal disintegration. And, crucially, the comparative aspect of this procedure of assessment revolves around the concept of property (communal and private) and how it relates to concrete spatial forms that were under the auspices of the agrarian commune. In the original archaic form of the commune, all land was communal; so, emerging from that communal property base meant an increasing integration of private property over the communal lands. Therefore, the concepts of communal and private property are phenomenal forms which operate at the concrete level, while the concepts of communality and individualism are abstract formulations since they are part of a concealed ‘inner dualism’ (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 104). As part of the hidden essential structure of the commune, they, as abstract concepts, are the initial concepts used by Marx to uncover the determining laws and tendencies of this particular mode of production. In the following, Marx’s draft highlights the concreteness of the property relationships and the analytical role of the ‘inner’ dualism:

It is easy to see that the dualism inherent in the ‘agricultural commune’ may give it a sturdy life: for communal property and all the resulting social relations provide it with a solid foundation, while the privately owned houses, fragmented tillage of the arable land and the private appropriation of its fruits all permit a development of individuality incompatible with conditions in the more primitive communities. It is just as evident that the very same dualism may eventually become a source of disintegration. (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 109)

It is crucially important to observe not only how the abstract dualism manifests itself in the concrete forms of the changing property relationships (concrete dualism which we would expect to exist within the spatial plane) but also how that abstract dualism incorporates production and consumption relationships. Therefore, the abstract dualism of communality and individualism merely gets us under the surface of the agrarian commune to uncover a possible structural link between the communal property relationships and production relations; it does not provide us with a dynamic conceptualization which can explain change in this particular mode of production.

As a consequence, the dualisms of individuality and communality and communal and private properties provide us with simple classification devices that can highlight how far the particular commune under examination has moved on from its archaic origins. These classification procedures operate essentially at the level of the spatial, although the more abstract dualism of communality and individualism appears to be moving towards incorporating production and consumption relationships as well. In the following, Marx discusses how this dualism has had a dissolving effect on the stability of the commune:

It is no less evident, however, that this very dualism could eventually turn into the seeds of disintegration. Apart from all the malignant outside influences, the commune bore within its own breast the elements that were poisoning its life. (Marx 1983: 120)

This was especially so, according to Marx, when labour was engaged on individually-held plots and the subsequent fruits of that private labour were enjoyed by the individual and his immediate family.

It gave rise to the accumulation of movable goods such as livestock (and) money … Such movable property, not subject to communal control, open to individual trading in which there was plenty of scope for trickery and chance, came to weigh heavily upon the entire rural economy … It introduced heterogeneous elements into the commune, provoking conflicts of interest and passion liable to erode communal ownership first of the cultivable land, and then of the forests, pastures, waste grounds etc. (Marx, 1983: 120)

What is interesting to observe is that this mobile capital merely erodes – it does not determine its destruction.

Consequently, to conclude this section, it seems that the crucial determining factor of change within the agrarian commune does not reside within the dualisms identified, nor is it the emergence of exchange-value, as this merely ‘undermines’, ‘dissolves’, ‘erodes’ etc.; neither of them ‘causes’ the balance within the dualism to swing one way or the other. However, since the transition involves a property relationship, which in turn is about changing the usufruct of a spatial entity within the communal lands (Marx stated that it ‘leads first to the conversion of the arable into private property’), it must be determined by changes in the customary rights of land-holding through the social mechanism of the communal council or the intervention of an external power to enclose the communal lands (the state or a landlord), or both. However, before we turn to this, we
need to explore the nature of ownership both communal and private within the context of the agrarian commune.

4. Marx on the Changing Forms of Property Relationships: Property Form as determined by its Mode of Production

Again, John Maguire provides some useful theoretical insights into Marx's ideas on communal and private ownership within the draft letters. Maguire suggests that Marx and Engels were always interested in the concept of ownership – private property as the legal cornerstone of capitalism and communal property as the future basis of communism. According to Maguire, Marx throughout his career emphasized the inability of primitive communal ownership to handle the complexity of human development, but:

The theoretical import of communal property was to illustrate the merely historical necessity of private property, and back up the abstract theoretical possibility of post-capitalist communism by showing that communal property had once already been the basis of social formations. In this vein, Marx frequently emphasizes the ‘artificial’ nature of private property … (Maguire 1978: 213)

What did Marx mean by the artificial nature of property relationship? Answering this question will hopefully bring us closer to identifying a methodology from Marx's apparent eclectic work on the agrarian commune.

Marx and Engels in their various works engaged in a constant critique of the speculative philosophy of law and especially how it attempted to put forward idealist analyses of law based on the reification of legal concepts. The danger in the speculative philosopher's approach to understanding law and the legal system was that of treating law as autonomous – a mere working out of its own logic or, as Marx put it, based ‘on a so-called general development of the mind’ without any recognition that the decisive factors shaping law were economic relations (Marx 1977: 20). Consequently, Marx reacted against this idealistic reification by continually demonstrating the dialectical relationship between the economic base of society and its ideological superstructure – including the legal system. For example, in Volume 3 of Capital, Marx gives his most explicit statement on the nature of private property in land and in doing so links up its legal form with the economic conditions prevailing at the time – capitalism:

Landed property is based on the monopoly by certain persons over definite portions of the globe, as exclusive spheres of their private will to the exclusion of all others. (Marx 1981: 614)

And:

With the legal power of these persons to use or misuse certain portions of the globe, nothing is decisive. The use of this power depends wholly upon economic conditions, which are independent of their will. The legal view itself means that the landowner can do with the land what every owner of commodities can do with his commodities. And this view, this legal view of free private ownership of land, arises in the ancient world only with the dissolution of the organic order of society. (Marx 1981: 618)

Accordingly, following the logic of Marx's argument, communal property and private property can only be adequately understood by putting them into the economic contexts (conditions of production) of societies, with differing economic contexts producing differing forms of property. Marx makes this point more explicit in the following passage, where he locates the specific forms of property relationships not only in differing types of agrarian communes but also in differing conditions of production:

Property – and this applies to its Asiatic, Slavonic, Ancient Classical and Germanic forms – therefore originally signifies a relation of the working (producing) subject (or a subject reproducing himself) to the conditions of his production or reproduction as his own. Hence, according to the conditions of production, property will take different forms. The object of production itself is to reproduce the producer in and together with these objective conditions of his existence. This behaviour as a proprietor – which is not the result but the precondition of labour, i.e. of production – assumes a specific existence of the individual as part of a tribal or communal entity (whose property he is himself up to a certain point) … (Marx 1964: 95)

Consequently, in order to uncover the essential structure of the agrarian commune wherever it is located along the evolutionary path, it is necessary to clarify not only the social relations of the commune (its property relationships) but also its production relations with the land. It is crucially a ‘double relationship’ in which the individual is a member of the community and in which this social relationship mediates his relationship to the land (Sayer 1987). To deal with this type of complexity, Marx developed the framework of the mode of production. In this light, the numerous examples of agrarian communes mentioned by Marx in the drafts and beyond are differing concrete variants of the same mode of production – primitive communism.

5. Marx and Engels on the Irish Rundale

Included in this list of concrete variants was the rundale system. From what sources we have available to us, with regard to Marx's and Engels's research on the rundale, the first explicit mention of this agrarian commune comes from Engels's Anti-Dühring (1878). Marx's first published reference to the rundale is in part three of his Ethnological Notebooks (Krader 1974), where Marx is taking excerpts from Maine's Lectures on the Early History of Institutions. In this reference to the rundale, Marx seems to be reinterpretating Maine's description of the rundale by challenging his use of the legal term of severity to explain the relationship of the communal members to their arable land. Marx, in Grundrisse, described this as a form of individual possession (Marx 1973: 492) rather than private property, which the legal term of severity would suggest. And, crucially, this type of possession was mediated through the agrarian commune and communal
property. The next reference to the rundale comes from Engels’s *The Origin of the Family Private Property and the State* (1884), which was based on Marx’s comment in the *Ethnological Notebooks*. As the reader can see, it displays a deep understanding of the rundale system:

Forty or fifty years ago village fields were very numerous and even today a few rundales, as they are called, may still be found. The peasants of a rundale, now individual tenants on the soil that had been the common property of the *gens* till seized by the English conquerors, pay rent for their respective piece of land, but put all their shares in arable and meadowland together, which they divide according to position and quality into *gewanne*, as they are called on the Moselle, each receiving a share in each *gewann*; moorland and pasture land are used in common. Only fifty years ago new divisions were still made from time to time, sometimes annually. The field-map of such a village looks exactly like that of a German *Gehoershaft* (peasant community) on the Moselle or in the Mittelwald. (Engels 1884: 194)

What Engels is suggesting here is that the feudalization of Irish land began with the Plantations, since which all occupiers of Irish land have had to pay a rent to a landlord, thereby becoming tenants. However, such tenancy is only one form of property relationship and it can co-exist with communal property, because the emergence of private property does not imply the demise of the commune, especially since peasants are still ‘putting all their shares in arable and meadowland together’– communally. This idea of a communal property relationship continuing to exist even after the attempted introduction of feudal land-tenure relationships during the Plantations of Ireland reiterates an earlier point made by Engels in his *Anti-Duhring*, that the rundale as a form of community ownership was able to continue to exist under ‘indirect feudal bondage’ (Engels 1878: 481). The final reference appears in the revised edition of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1888, when, in a footnote, Engels changed the famous line ‘The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles’ to ‘all written history’ (Engels 1888: 34, emphasis added). As the footnote discusses, the emergence of class was predicated on the dissolution of primitive communities and the rise of private property. This empirical fact was, according to Engels, unknown in 1847 when the first edition of the *Communist Manifesto* was published, but:

Since then, Haxthausen discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and by and by village communities were found to be, or have been the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. (Engels 1888: 34)

The theoretical pronouncements, then, that Engels and especially Marx made on the agrarian commune and its variant forms across time and space include the Irish rundale as a concrete manifestation of this particular mode of production of primitive communism.

6. The Rundale Forms of Communality and Individuality

As we have uncovered from Marx’s work on the agrarian commune, communality without individualism has only existed under the archaic form of this mode of production. All the other devolved forms – the Ancient, the Oriental, the Slavonic, the Germanic and the Russian – are penetrated to varying degrees by the element of individuality, to the extent that this integration of the two gives each type of agrarian commune its concrete particularity. Therefore, although communality and individualism are diametrically opposing each other as aspects of the social relations of the devolved agrarian communes, they were essential components of this communal production. What we need to investigate is how they specifically manifested themselves in the rundale form and subsequently impacted on the actual conditions of production – the land. These processes – the social (the property relationships), the economic (production relationships) and the ecological – form a unity within a mode of production as the following testifies:

Now this unity, which in one sense appears as the particular form of property, has its living reality in a specific mode of production itself, and this mode appears equally as the relationship of the individuals to one another and their specific daily behavior towards inorganic nature, their specific mode of labour (which is always family labour and often communal labour). (Marx 1964: 94)
And crucially, because of this essential unity, the reproduction of any one of these processes is simultaneously a reproduction of the other two:

To be a member of the community remains the precondition for the appropriation of land, but in his capacity as member of the community the individual is a private proprietor. His relation to his private property is both a relation to the land and to his existence as a member of the community, and his maintenance as a member is the maintenance of the community, and vice versa. (Marx 1964: 73)

So the interpenetration of these ‘property’, production and ecological (natural) processes determines the essential structure of the primitive communist mode of production. Let us begin our analysis of the rundale agrarian commune with the property relationships, but not forgetting the problems associated with dealing with this level and its inherent tendency to reify property categories. The most identified and controversial category associated with the rundale is _gavelkind_, which Gibbs suggests is an entity that has evolved from the Brehon Laws:

What traces did Brehon Law, though abolished by the Judges and the Lord Deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester, leave in the habits and sentiments of the people, and can any of those traces be observed at the present day? Of the custom of Tanistry we hear no more; but the custom of gavelkind long survived, reappearing, under English law, in the form of tenancy common down to the early part of this century; and it may still be traced in the love of holding property in families, in the tendency to subdivide the land, and in an unfavourable shape, in Rundale, where the tenement is made up of a number of scattered patches of each particular quality of the land. (Gibbs 1870: 4–5)

According to De Laveleye, the English word gavelkind comes from the Irish _Gabhail-cine_, which denotes ‘accepted from the’ (De Laveleye 1878: 124–25). And this ‘tribal’ social relationship continued to exist under the rundale system in the nineteenth century:

There are, however, very extensive common lands, covered with grass and heath, which serve as pasture for the cattle. Portions of the communal domain are cultivated in turn, according to the practice still in force in many countries, and especially in the Belgian Ardennes; the occupancy is, however, only temporary, and the ownership still remains in the tribe. The system of periodic redistribution, with alternate occupancy, is still maintained under the form of rundale. A great part of the soil was subject to methods of tenure and agrarian customs, strongly impreiguated with traditions of the old joint ownership. (De Laveleye 1878: 124–25)

This system of periodic redistribution of land, mentioned by De Laveleye, was described by Arthur Young as ‘change-dale’ (Young 1892: 215–16). Therefore, the concrete social practices of gavelkind and changedale – where ‘occupancy (of land) is only temporary’ in the rundale system – suggest that communal property and private possession co-existed together. Gavelkind meant that all members of the rundale commune had a right to access the land and none of them were able to alienate their share of it. And this communal property relationship allowed equality of access for all communal members.

But gavelkind under the rundale system did not mean access to equal amounts of land but to equal accessibility to communal lands. According to Eric Almquist in his work on Co. Mayo, these rights of access were given to both men and women, and in certain instances may have been given to illegitimate children and orphans (Almquist 1977: 95). The most important implication of this devolved form of gavelkind within the rundale context is that this system accommodated the claims of new families and existing family members. All the commune’s members had a claim to both the arable and grazing shares of the communal land by birth (Almquist 1977: 95). And these shares were divided among the members with regard to soil fertility, as William Tighe observed:

The custom of these partners, when the ground is broken for tillage, is to divide it into shares or what they call ‘lochs’ and they are so desirous of making divisions equal in value, that each portion though small, does not always tie together but in scattered fragments according to the quality of the soil, so that a man having two acres of tillage may have two roods in coarse ground, two in deep, two in stony and two in wet, if these varieties happen to occur, when the division is made out … (Tighe 1802: 18)

Therefore, with regard to the procedures of landholding under the rundale communal conditions, the amount of arable land held by an individual member was never quantified by a determinate or definitive measurement system, such as acres, furlongs, roods etc, but was determined by the potential ecological output (or value) of the land area and the sharing out of its ecological output equally among the communal members. A similar method of share allocation was done for the pasture grounds of the commune, where the share/unit was known as ‘a cow’s grass’ – the amount of pasturage needed to support a cow. Marx suggested that a similar tendency among the Russian communal members to engage in a process of spatial fragmentation was determined by the need to equalize the ‘chances of labour’ and thereby secure the same economic benefits for each of the communal members who possessed individualized usufruct rights. Within the rundale, ‘personal usufruct is thus combined with communal ownership’ (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 119). The process of ‘changedale’ determined that any possession of communal lands by the individual members was to be of a temporary nature. Otway identified the existence of periodic redistribution among rundale communes in Co. Mayo in 1841:

… in the land appropriate to tillage, each head of the family casts lots every year for the number of ridges he is entitled to … and moreover the ridges change ownership every third year, a new division taking place. The head of the village … makes the division, requiring each tenant to
cast lots for his ridge, one in a good field, another in an inferior, and another in a worse. (Orway 1841: 35)

As a consequence of the existence of gavelkind and changedale within the rundale agrarian commune, there was no private property in the soil, and this determined that the individual member had only possession of continually changing pieces of the communal lands. The only space that may have been permanently occupied by an individual family was the clachan house and its adjoining walled garden and haggard. There is some evidence, though, to suggest that commune members exchanged their clachan cottages in a similar fashion to the changedale operating in the arable infield (Buchanan 1973: 592–93). Marx summarized this social relation to the soil (the conditions of production) thus: ‘What exists is only communal property and private possession’ (Marx 1867: 36).

Accordingly, the essential social form of production of the rundale system was the necessary reproduction of individuals as communal members, as Marx stated with regard to this particular mode of production:

The member of the community reproduces himself not through co-operation in wealth-producing labour, but in co-operation in labour for the (real or imaginary) communal interests aimed at sustaining the union against external and internal stress. (Marx 1964: 74)

In a real sense, then, this particular mode of production was essentially about producing people as its major ‘product’ of production, not just as ‘dot-like’ entities but as communal members of a particular agrarian commune, whose communality valorized itself in the need ‘for the continued existence of the community’ which required ‘maintenance of equality among its free self-sustaining peasants’ (Marx, 1964: 73). However, the valorization (Marx 1964: 72) of communal property requires maintenance not only of the material conditions of the commune in a production process, but also of the ‘possessor rights’ associated with the complex aspects of communal property. To reproduce the latter, it was necessary to have an institutional entity that stood above the everyday activities of the commune in order to maintain the customary codes of communal property relationships – the commune’s council.


The customary mechanisms of communal accessibility as manifested through the concrete processes of gavelkind and changedale needed a governing apparatus of some sort to oversee the continuation of these particular customs and others concerning the regulation of everyday life of the communal members. There is evidence to suggest that within each commune there was a council of elders, headed by a local ‘King’. Peter Knight, in his survey of Erris in the Irish Highlands in 1836, describes the function of such a King and his council:

There is a headman or King [Raight I had understood to be ‘King’], until Mr. Hardiman, the celebrated antiquarian and author of the History of Galway, told me that it meant ‘Kanfinne’, or ‘head’ of the local tribe, according to the Brehon administration[25] appointed in each village, who is deputed to cast the lots every third year, and to arrange with the community what work is to be done during the year in fencing, or probably reclaiming a new piece [though for obvious reasons, this is rare] or for setting the ‘bin’, as it is called, that is, the number of head of cattle of each kind, and for each man, that is to be put on the farm for the ensuing year, according to its stock of grass or pasture – the appointment of a herdsman, also for the whole village cattle, if each person does not take the office on himself by rotation – a thing not infrequent. The King takes care generally to have the rent collected, applorts the proportion of taxes with the other elders of the village; for all is done in a patriarchal way, ‘coram populo’. He is generally the advisor and consultor of the villagers; their spokesman on certain occasions, and a general man of reference on any matters connected with the village. He finds his way to the Kingly station by imperceptible degrees, and by increasing mutual assent, as the old King dies off. (Knight 1836: 47–48)

The various functions that the local king performs in this account underline the importance of the fact that his ‘office’ and the council of elders comprised a form of self-government, which ‘is simply the particular part of the whole social system which deals with general questions’ (Maguire, 1978: 230–31). Maguire continues:

… Marx believes that in primitive communal society there is no in-built antagonism between individual and collective interest … it is a case of genuine self-government, where the members of the commune are not subject to a centre of authority outside them. (Maguire 1978: 229)

Dewar, in his observations of Tory Island, identifies this aspect of self-governance:

… the inhabitants are still unacquainted with any other law than the Brehon code. They choose their chief magistrate from among themselves and to his mandate, issued from his throne of turf, the people yield a cheerful and ready obedience. (Dewar 1812: 166)

There are a number of other references made to the existence of this kingly (and queenly) station in the West of Ireland. Ó Danachair (1981) makes extensive reference to a multitude of kin-based ‘king’ selection methods: in Claddagh, the king survives until the late nineteenth century (1981: 17); reference is made to a queen in Erris (1981: 20); the ordnance survey letters make reference to a king on Iniskea (1981: 23); and, on Inishmurray, reference is made to a ‘monarch’ (Robinson 1924, cited in Ó Danachair 1981). The king in all instances exhibits a definite set of characteristics attesting to his suitability:

As to the qualities desired in the king, we are not left in any doubt. Stature, strength, comeliness of person are mentioned, as are justice, wisdom and knowledge. Literary attainment is desirable; a good talker, a good storyteller, knowledge of two languages, the ability to read and write, all of these were laudable in the King. A
degree of economic well-being or independence was also thought fitting. He had very positive and definite functions. The regulation, division and apportioning of fishing and shore rights and the allotment of tillage and pasture land was left to him, and in some cases, he appointed subsidiary officers such as herdsmen. He was expected to maintain traditional laws … in some instances we are told that he specifically punished wrongdoers. He was expected to speak for his community in their relations with the outside authority. (Ó Danachair 1981: 25–26)

It is interesting to note the discrete personal characteristics needed to become the local king, which indicate the diverse roles such a functionary had to play. But what is crucial to emphasize is that the vast majority of the accounts of the communal king stated that it was not a hereditary position; he was chosen from among the communal members, as Lewis testifies in the following:

… the islanders had a resident king chosen by and from among themselves, and an ancient code of laws handed down by tradition, which it was his duty to administer; though the king had neither funds for the maintenance of his dignity, nor officers to enforce his authority, the people generally submitted voluntarily to these laws, and were always ready to carry out his judgements into execution. (Lewis 1837: 250)

The democratic procedure of the kingly election is important to point out, in that it highlighted that this was essentially a form of self governance, where the decisions were not imposed upon the members from a central authority but from their own king and council. This becomes critical, in light of the fact that disputes were a constant feature in the rundale system of farming on account of the indeterminate nature of land holding26 as the following suggests:

The least trifle is a cause of disagreement. They were formerly perpetually quarrelling about their share of stock, and about what ground should be tilled, and who should occupy the different parts of it. The fences round the cornfields are made in the most temporary manner because the fields would be pastured in common after it was let out in tillage. (McCourt 1947: 233)

Constant disputing meant that they needed a mechanism that stood apart from their own personal needs and adjudicated in these communal disputes. Wakefield comments on this:

… and the elders of the village are the legislators, who established such regulations as may be judged proper for their community, and settle all disputes that arise among them. (Wakefield 1812: 260)

Therefore, the King and the council of elders oversee not only the continuation of customs but also establish regulations for the commune as a whole, and settle all disputes that may arise among the commune members (Sigerson 1871).

Finally, there is another aspect of this style of informal self-governance, which has a supernatural dimension to it. According to Ó Catháin and O’Flanagan in their study of place-names for the townland of Kilgalligan, Co Mayo, where an old clachan existed, there was a high density of ‘supernatural places that were only visible to the local eyes’. Especially important were the connections between the fairies and land boundaries. These boundaries were protected by the fairies, and the local people did not like to work the land too near the boundary in case they would anger the fairies (Ó Catháin and O’Flanagan, 1975: 267). Further:

Such tangible supernatural features … were palpable reminders of the existence of the otherworld, and they were both respected and feared. Their presence in Kilgalligan, as in other parts of Ireland, has frequently served as a determinant governing the arrangement of fields and crops, tracks and ditches, and even the location of dwelling houses and other buildings. (Ó Catháin and O’Flanagan 1975: 268)

Within the rundale landscape, then, there were certain spatial nodes, which were perceived not only as ‘spiritual’ but as also performing the role of protecting the boundaries of the commune, without the need for on-the-spot surveillance. This form of communal governance is essentially a moral code embedded in the landscape through the medium of oral culture (Slater 1993). The ‘fairies’ patrolled the individual plots and the communal lands while the commune’s members slept. But let us leave the world of the fairies and come down to the mundane – the spatial and temporal aspects of the agrarian commune of the rundale.

8. Simple Communal Production: The Spatial and Temporal Configurations

In our discussion of the social relationships of this particular mode of production, we highlighted how the dualism of communality and individualism realized itself in the property forms of communal ownership and individual possession over spatial aspects of the commune’s lands. Therefore, it is necessary to outline the physical layout of the rundale communal lands and the activities that occur within these spatial entities. Buchanan provides a summary of the diverse aspects of the rundale spatial layout in the following:

Their land lay mainly within a single townland, a territorial unit whose mean size for the country is about 325 acres. If the townland was large, it was sometimes divided among several Rundale groups, each holding its land in lots separate from the others. The system varied greatly in detail, but had five main components: common arable or infield, an outfield used for pasture and periodic cultivation, common meadow, rough grazing which usually included peat-bog, and small enclosures near the farmhouse for gardens and haggards. Finally, the settlement was usually in the form of a loose cluster of dwellings and outbuildings. (Buchanan 1973: 586)

The latter cluster of dwellings or village has been described by the term clachan. The infield area of the communal land was the main location for the production
of arable crops. According to Buchanan the physical appearance of the infield looked like the following:

The infield was normally held in rectangular strips, varying in length from 50 to 250 yards according to slope and soil conditions, and not more than 20 yards in width. Most were cultivated with the plough, and where the spade was used, the plots were demarcated by low, earthen banks, known by such terms as ‘mearings’, ‘ribs’, ‘roddens’, ‘teelogues’, or bones, and a higher earthen bank frequently bounded the infield. (Buchanan 1973: 586)

The ploughs used were either an ordinary lea-plough, or else a special paring-plough, and both these ploughs broke up the sod to be later shoveled into ridges or lazy-beds (Evans 1967: 144). The spade was the main instrument of production in the arable infield. The importance of the various types of markings in the infield becomes explicit when we realize that the infield was divided up into individual plots – sums or collops, which had a tendency to change hands under changedale. And the constant variability of land-holding under gavelkind and changedale had the effect of leaving much of the arable infield unenclosed or very badly fenced off from the outfield. During winter, the commune’s livestock roamed freely throughout the infield and outfield, which also tended to damage the fencing between these two areas.\(^{29}\)

The lack of permanent and solid fencing must be seen as an effect of the indeterminacy of landholding under the rundale system. This can be accounted for, firstly, by the need to constantly expand the infield to accommodate the increase in the commune’s population and, secondly, by the prevailing custom of allowing the livestock to winter on the arable infield. The Ordnance Surveyors for Co. Donegal were especially observant of the lack of hedgerows and trees as a form of permanent fencing in rundale areas.\(^{30}\) The consequence of the lack of permanent fencing was that the commune’s livestock had to be strictly supervised, either by constant herding or by the tethering of animals. Evans describes this feature:

The old customs of tending [‘herding’] the cattle and tethering or spaccelling them also derive from the Rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. ‘Cattle, sheep and goats’, wrote Arthur Young, ‘are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw … cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom.’ Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used; even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. (Evans 1967: 55)

The lack of hedgerows and subsequent herding or tethering of livestock is caused by the inability of the communal members to grow such permanent fences on account of the number of years it takes to grow into effective fencing; a time period never allowed by the indeterminacy of this type of communal land-holding. The outfield tended to complement the infield in the production of livestock – mainly cattle and sheep (Buchanan 1973: 586–87). The outfields, combined with mountain pastures, were the physical areas where livestock production was essentially carried out. The allocation of communal grazing land was calculated by the number of units of infield land allotted to each communal landholder. As with the plot held by the communal member in the arable infield, the amount of pasture land held was not devised by the acre, but by ‘a cow’s grass – a collop’, which again reflected the indeterminate nature of landholding within the rundale system. The outfield was therefore the source of fodder for the livestock and sometimes hay:

Where natural meadows existed along river or lake their use was carefully regulated to give each farmer a share of the infield. Sometimes the land was divided into plots scattered as in the infield, worked in severity and grazed by herding the animals, each on its own plot. Occasionally the hay was mowed by communal labour and then divided in shares, with common grazing. But most of the grazing had to be found elsewhere in summer, and especially in mountain districts there are traditions of moving livestock long distances to seasonal pasture. (Buchanan 1973: 587)

During the summer period, there was a tendency for the animal stock to be moved from the vicinity of the clachan village to mountain pasture, depending on whether the commune had a right of pasturage on a particular mountain. In the old traditional custom of booleying, the animals were herded to these mountain pastures. This form of transhumance was done communally; again, like the outfield, each individual member was allowed to pasture so many heads of cattle and sheep. In this way, most rundale communes had certain grazing rights to mountain pastures and, at times, other rundale communes may have shared the same mountain pasture (Hill 1887: 18). The process of transhumance or booleying was mainly carried out by the young people of the commune, especially the young girls and women (Graham 1954: 76). The young people of the ‘booley’ not only herded cattle and sheep, they also churned milk into butter, spun the flax and knitted wool. The young men collected these products produced in the mountain booley and brought them back to the clachan on a weekly basis (Graham 1954: 14). At Halloween the livestock returned to the clachan from the summer booleying and between St. Patrick’s Day and Halloween the livestock were either herded in the outfield or on mountain pasture, in order to allow the communal crops to be grown in the infield (Evans 1979: 50). Consequently, during the winter months the commune’s livestock was allowed to feed on the stubble of the crops harvested in the infield. Generally, no hay was grown for winter feeding and this lack of winter fodder was made up by allowing the livestock into the infield:

In the Upper portion of the Parish the spade is necessarily used … The tenantry in the high grounds grow no hay and feed their cattle in winter usually on oaten straw, which is shorn very close to the ground, and much grass is consequently in the butts of the sheaves. (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Parish of Urney, Co. Donegal, 1836: 6)

The arrival and departure of the commune’s livestock to and from the infield during winter had important
consequences for the cropping of the infield, as the infield was unsuited for the winter sowing of crops:

... in this parish from the first week in November until the latter end of April, the entire fair of the country resembles a great common, where cows, horses and sheep graze promiscuously, a man's cabbage garden is not secure from the depredations of his neighbour's cattle. It is no uncommon thing in winter to see a man drive his cows or sheep to a distance from his own farm, where he thinks the grass is better or the shelter warmer. (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Parish of Pyemoaghy, Co. Donegal, 1836: 53)

Hence, not only was autumn sowing restricted by winter cattle-feeding practices, the types of crops grown were also extremely limited under the rundale system of crop rotation. From the evidence of the Ordnance Survey memoirs and reports it seems that white crops predominated. Potatoes began the rotation followed by barley (except in mountain areas where it was found to be unsuitable), then oats and flax and back to potatoes again (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Parish of Urney, Co. Donegal, 1836: 67). It is interesting to note that within this type of crop rotation there was no fallow or lea allowed. This led to the extraordinary situation that this arable infield was never rested nor rotated with any other spatial location within the agrarian commune. Within the rundale crop rotation system there appear to be two essential crops missing – wheat and green crops. Wheat is not sown because it is sown in autumn and harvested in spring and it therefore would interfere with the winter pasturing of livestock on the stubble of the infield. Green crops are also excluded not only because of the livestock occupation of the arable land in wintertime but also because green crops demand the use of plough technology which did not exist under the rundale system. Spade husbandry was the essential labour process of the rundale commune, as is indicated by the existence of ‘lazy-beds’ or ridges in the commune’s infield.

Finally, with regard to the spatial configuration of communal lands, there was the clachan – a ‘loose cluster’ or ‘ridges in the commune’s infield.

There is no row of houses ... but each cottage is stuck independently by itself, and always at an acute, obtuse or right angle to the next cottage as the case may be. The irregularity is curious; there are no two cottages placed in a line, or of the same size, dimensions or build. As this is the largest village I ever saw, so it is the poorest, the worst built and most irregular and most completely without head or centre, or market or church or school of any village I ever was in. It is an overgrown democracy. No man is better or richer than his neighbour. It is in fact, an Irish Rundale village. (Foster 1846, cited in Buchanan 1973: 594)

As previously stated, there is some evidence to suggest that the commune members interchanged their cottages in a similar fashion to the changedale system operating in the arable infield. The clachan was also the physical location for a number of communal activities, as Evans indicates:

Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains. (Evans 1979: 32)

According to Gailey, the communal kilns were sometimes worked by individuals but mostly by the commune when a larger quantity of grain had to be dried (Gailey 1970: 52). The drying of large quantities of corn is attributed to the malting of corn preparatory to the illicit distillation of poitin (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Parish of Inniskeel, Co. Donegal, 1836: 25).

What we have discovered in our survey of the spatial configuration of the rundale’s lands and the diverse productive activities within them is that they were essentially determined by the indeterminacy of individual possession of land. And the central hub of the amount of land possessed is determined by the individual’s access to the infield, which in turn determines the amount of livestock allowed on the commune’s pasture land. This indeterminacy of land-holding manifests itself in the concept of collop or sum, which as we have discovered was originally the amount of land necessary to feed a cow – ‘cow’s grass’. Knight suggests the origin of this type of rundale measurement and its extension into the arable infield:

The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number of heads of cattle the farm could rear by pasture, but, as some tillage became afterwards necessary, they divided the crop-ground into collops as well as the pasture, and each farm then had its number of tillage collops and grazing collops. The tillage collop is supposed to be capable of supporting one family by its produce. (Knight 1836: 46–47)

The concept of the collop is not really a measurement of land area such as the acre, but it is a measurement of the physical output of land, taking in the quality of the land necessary to keep a family or a cow. Consequently, its spatial dimensions may vary from location to location depending on the quality of the land. But probably its most crucial characteristic is its ability to be flexible, not only with regard to soil qualities but also with regard to ensuring an equal standard of living among the rundale members. For example, the incorporation of the potato within the commune’s crop rotations would allow the tillage collop to reduce in size, because the potato would produce more yields per unit area than any other crop. The arrangement of both grazing and tillage collops with regard to their redistribution in changedale and the amount of collops held by each individual commune member, therefore, needed a communal organization. This complex set of procedures was provided by the commune’s council of elders, headed by the commune’s ‘king’.

Therefore, the commune’s council had to arrange not only the productive behaviour of its direct producers but also the technical exploitation of the physical means of production. This involved two processes. The first process concerned the actual physical location of the
commune's means of production (i.e. the areas designated for tillage and for pasture) and the distribution of those means of production on an equal basis between the communal direct producers. The second process involved organizing the respective working periods of the individual producer in a coordinated way so that no one individual member could upset the working periods of the other communal members (e.g. vacating the infield after the last day of October). All these complex arrangements had to be based on customary rules and laws, where the actual production process of the commune as a whole had to be communally organized to the last detail. Therefore, the inherent tendency of the rundale commune was to reproduce its members as equal members of the commune. It was not primarily concerned with the production of wealth but with the physical reproduction of its members as members of the commune (i.e. use-value production in essence). In order to achieve this aim, it was necessary to attempt to continually maintain and preserve the established equilibrium of shared physical resources between the communal members. But, if the essential social form of communal production is the reproduction of communal members, any increase in their numbers will demand a reallocation of these communal resources, which will in turn undermine the initial equilibrium. Marx stated this in the following way:

If the community as such is to continue in the old way, the reproduction of its members under the objective conditions already assumed as given, is necessary. Production itself, the advance of population (which also falls under the heading of production), in time necessarily eliminates these conditions, destroying instead of reproducing them, etc., and as this occurs the community decays and dies, together with the property relations on which it was based. (Marx 1964: 82–83)

The dynamic of this particular mode of production is population growth, which is ironic. This situation comes about because the essential social form is the reproduction of communal members, yet an increase in the number of members, which is a ‘natural’ consequence of family reproduction practices – especially where agricultural work is done with family labour – causes a realignment of communal resources. Marx highlighted this tendency with regard to the Ancient variant of this mode of production:

For instance, where each individual is supposed to possess so many acres of land, the mere increase in population constitutes an obstacle. If this is to be overcome, colonization will develop … Thus the preservation of the ancient community implies the destruction of the conditions upon which it rests, and turns into its opposite. (Marx 1964: 92–93)

Therefore, in order to accommodate new family members, the rundale agrarian commune had to engage in an expanded form of communal production.

9. Expanded Communal Production

The overall reproduction process of the rundale system concerns not only the physical reproduction of the direct producer, his immediate dependents and the social relations of communality and individualism that ‘rest’ upon those physical conditions of production, but also the financial reproduction of the commune and its members. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, all members of Irish society were tied into a monetized economy, whether they were from the city of Dublin or Tory Island. The rundale communities of the West were no exception to this trend. All of these processes of reproduction, although distinct in their respective determinations within their own processual forms, are inherently connected to each other because they mediate each other. A contraction or collapse of one will have a major impact on the other processes of reproduction.

a) Increasing Parcellization of Land and the Subsequent Fragmentation of the Labour Process

The major constraint of the rundale system on its physical reproduction process was the inherent tendency of the system to subdivide the means of production in order to accommodate its growing population. An example of such subdivision is the Gweedore estate, Co. Donegal:

By 1851, subdivision had almost reached its physical limits and the arable area per holding had become very small. The average arable per holding had fallen to 2.3 acres, while the average per person was .43 acres. (Douglas 1963: 11)

And this subdivision of the arable land, coupled with the arable land increasingly ‘colonizing’ the pasture lands of the commune, caused a devastating decline in the physical subsistence of the communal members:

To make matters worse, in the early decades of the nineteenth century … the numbers of livestock had to be reduced, with a resultant decline in protein-giving milk and butter in the local diet. Thus in the eighteenth century the diet had included ‘milk, curds, butter, fish, rabbits, potatoes and bread’, in 1802 ‘potatoes, benefits of seashore and a little oaten bread, milk and butter’, but by 1840 ‘potatoes, and peppered water with occasional sprats and salt’ were said to be the main foods. (Douglas 1963: 11–12)

We have already discovered from Marx’s analysis of primitive communism that the essential consequence of attempting to maintain the equality of communal membership was to allow members’ children access to the communal land, but this custom imposed an internal stress in that it was necessary to continually subdivide the commune’s means of production in order to accommodate its growing population of direct producers. Buchanan identifies this trend in the rundale system, specifically in the growth of the clachans:

In Western districts meantime, clachans not only survived but actually grew in number and size. For example, four to eight dwellings was an average size in the early eighteenth century, but by the first decade of the nineteenth century, clachans in Co. Donegal averaged
thirty dwellings, rising as high as 120 to 200 in Co. Clare. The chief reason for this increase was rising population, which in the rundale system was accommodated by subdivision of holdings in the customary practice of gavelkind inheritance. Towards the end of the century, pressure of population was so great that even farms formerly held in severity might become rundale holdings, in this way, the new generation of joint-tenants building their houses alongside the original dwellings to become clachans. (Buchanan 1970: 153)

But the degree of immiseration depended upon the development of communal subdivision, which varied from rundale commune to commune, and was determined by population increase. The rundale system did not posit a surplus population outside the social conditions of reproduction, but attempted to accommodate all its increasing communal membership within its own communal system. As a consequence, not only was there a tendency to encourage population growth, there was also little tendency towards emigration:

The survival of the infield-outfield system of farming in parts of South-east [Derry] until late in the nineteenth century may have been an important factor in limiting emigration from that area, due to the way of life it represented, as well as through its economic effects. The subdivision of land held in common, associated with this form of agriculture, meant that some increase of population could be absorbed, even though there might be a fall in the standard of living of the whole community; in those districts where subdivision had halted, however, the problem of obtaining land for the members of an increasing population could only be solved by emigration. (Johnson 1959: 155)

So, where there was no barrier of access to land, not only were communal members encouraged to stay, they could also get married without waiting to inherit the leasehold, as occurred where the landlord class determined accessibility to land. In consequence the rundale members tended to marry early. There is some evidence to suggest that they married frequently at the age of sixteen and, in one instance, the combined ages of one couple did not exceed twenty-eight (Ordinance Survey Memoirs, 1834, Parish of Desertagney Co. Donegal: 11).

Therefore, early marriages, determined by communal access to land, led to massive population increase in rundale areas. But this type of social and sexual reproduction process has inherent dangers as indicated by the increasing immiseration of the rundale's physical means of subsistence. The lowering of the physical standard of the means of subsistence narrows the ability of the commune to continually reproduce itself. Concretely, this involved the commune subsisting more and more on the potato as its staple crop for subsistence. And any contraction in potato crop yields can force the communal members into a situation where they have no choice but to emigrate. Emigration in this context is the emigration of entire families as they flee starvation, which has come about because of collapse of the physical means of reproduction to maintain itself.

As we have already stated, the arable infield of the rundale system was the hub of the whole system. The infield of the commune was organized through the system of spade husbandry with its inherent structure of ‘lazy beds’ or ridges. And in the system of changedale, not only were the ridges rotated every one or two years, they were also given to new members of the commune. The consequence of the latter tendency was that the arable infield tended to be increasingly ‘parcellized’ into smaller individually-held plots and that it physically began to expand upon the outfield and the pasture lands of the commune. This, coupled with the physical digging of the lazy beds, meant that the arable area expanded every year, as the following passage from the Devon Commission (1845) suggests:

A change takes place in occupation every two years, owing to their mode of tillage, which is very singular. They grow their crops in very wide ridges, which are formed into inclined planes: one side of the ridge being two or three feet higher than the other. The seed is spread upon the ridge and it is covered from a furrow always dug from the high side, so that every year the mould of the field is moved by the breadth of the furrow, or about eighteen inches, from one side of the field to the other. Hence the necessity of a change every two years. (McCourt 1947: 56, quoting from the Devon Commission)

Of course this inherent expansion of the arable infield does not necessarily suggest that the actual location of the infield changed. The opposite is true. The arable infield never rotated with the outfield, but was constantly cropped as is indicated in the following account from the landowner J.N. Thompson's diary, Carndonagh, Co. Donegal:

The system of rundale is still rife and prevails over most of this estate. The ditches are for the most part mere dividing lines over which cattle and sheep can freely pass, even on the best farms well fenced fields are a modern improvement … People too are beginning to understand something of rotations of crops; formerly after potatoes, barley or oats was grown till the land would no longer give corn, then perhaps a wretched crop of flax, then potatoes again. Upland grass was not thought of, and pasture land was quite apart from arable. Some land was always ploughed, other land never, but always kept in pasture. Some of the land I now have I do not think had been rested within living memory. (Thompson, n.d., circa 1801–1833: 237)

These emerging trends of more intensive cultivation of the arable land (through the process of plot subdivision) and the necessary expansion of the arable out on to the pasture lands of the commune were a direct consequence of the rundale system’s need to engage in expanded reproduction. This inherent and essential tendency of communal production had a major impact on the labour processes of this particular mode of production in the concrete context of the rundale commune. Because of the necessary requirement to accommodate new family members and allow them access to the arable infield, this spatial area becomes increasingly ‘parcellized’ (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 113) – breaking down into smaller and smaller plots of tillage cultivation. Probably one of the
most extreme example of such a process of parcelization, reported by Bell, was the case from Donegal for the 1840s in which 'one man had his land in 42 different places and gave up in despair, declaring that it would take a very keen man to find it' (Bell 2008: 55). Marx has suggested that the land is the essential 'condition of labour' (Marx 1964: 74); with the increasing partitioning of the commune's infield, the labour process itself becomes more fragmented with the declining size of the individual plots of cultivation. Fragmentation of the labour process under these dispersed spatial conditions 'compels a dispersion of strength and time' (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 122) of the labour power of the individual communal member and his immediate family. And, although these arable 'tillers' were to be seen working in the infield and apparently side-by-side with each other, they were actually working not with each other but were engaged in 'uncoordinated individual activities on scattered means of production, where each follows the logic of his particular situation and nobody has an overall plan of the totality' (Maguire 1978: 224).

Labouring under these fragmented conditions, the individual commune members appropriated the fruits of their own labour not only from the arable infield but also from the pasturing of livestock on the communal grazing grounds. This surplus product was then sold as a commodity in a market, and thereby the commune entered into simple commodity production.

b) Simple Commodity Production under the Communal Conditions of the Rundale

Marx, in his discussion of the Russian variant of the agrarian commune, suggested that fragmented labour was the key factor in the private appropriation of surplus product and its realization into exchange value. In the case of the rundale commune, the accumulation of money by the individual communal members was necessary for them to reproduce themselves as members of a society beyond the immediate confines of their particular commune. Money was needed to pay the landlord, the priest, the taxman, the merchant trader and the usurer.

Consequently, the mediation of money within the social relations of production in the rundale commune determined that a certain proportion of the commune's surplus product had to be produced for exchange value. And although the essential 'precondition for the continued existence of the community' was the 'maintenance of equality among its free-sustaining peasants', the commune had now become dependent on the accumulation of money to meet these expenses. Whether these necessary expenses were paid by the commune as a whole or by individuals depended upon the degree of individualism developed within each rundale commune.

Besides producing agricultural products as marketable commodities, strategies were developed by the communal members that involved essentially adding more exchange value to the actual agricultural products, by changing 'primary' products into more 'finished' commodities. These subsidiary activities included brick-making, fishing, kelping, knitting, flax spinning, the weaving of linen cloth, and the illicit distillation of alcohol. In the Parish of Inniskeel, Co. Donegal for example, poitín was produced:

Barley and oats are the only descriptions of grain grown in the parish, from the universal practice of illicit distillation. (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, 1836, Parish of Inniskeel Co. Donegal: 25)

The production of poitín was aided by the communality of the rundale system, and the subsequent difficulties that the Revenue officers had in identifying the individuals involved in producing this illicit alcohol was due to the communality of landholding under the rundale system (Bonner 1969: 82–83). But these subsidiary 'industries' to agricultural production must be seen as an attempt to counteract not only the diminishing material returns from the rundale's immediate agricultural production process but also the diminishing financial returns from the traditional agricultural commodities of the rundale system. But, as can be seen from the apparent diversification of these subsidiary products, their production was extremely nonspecialized and consequently undercapitalized with regard to their production techniques. Therefore, the development of this type of commodity production never got beyond the stage of a putting-out system (linen and wool), in which merchant capital dominated rather than industrial capital as under the capitalistic mode of production. However, whether a particular rundale community produced these subsidiary commodities depended on its specific historical conditions and locality as the following indicates for the Parish of Inniskeel, Co. Donegal:33

In the districts neighbouring the seashore the females are universally employed in [the] spinning [of] linen yarn – in the mountainous parts of my parish they knit woollen stockings, and on average the knitters earn 5d per day. The neighbouring district of [the] Rosses is celebrated for its knitting of woollen stockings. (Bonner 1969: 69)

In Mayo, for instance, spinning yarn was later substituted by seasonal migration and egg production from rundale areas (Almqvist 1977: 253–254). But these subsidiary 'industries' and their specific development function more to reproduce the rundale system as a whole than as a determining structure in this particular mode of production. The reason for this is that these industrial activities were never engaged in under communal conditions of production, and the determining structure continued to be the need to reproduce the individual as a communal member. It should be stressed, however, that the development of exchange-value production meant that more of the rundale system became dependent on market relationships, which had the tendency to encourage the accumulation of money capital by individuals rather than by the commune as a whole.

In the previous section, we observed how population increase imposed severe constraints on the rundale's production process, as it led to increasing fragmentation of the labour processes on the scattered plots. But this tendency had to cope also with the necessary commercialization of production, incorporating both agricultural and 'domestic' industries. The combination of
these two tendencies called for expanded production. But what was crucial for expanded production was for the commune to attempt to maintain the market/subsistence balance. For example, for Clare Island, Co. Mayo, Whelan argues that, as the potato became the subsistence crop of the villagers, the oat crop was ‘increasingly assigned to the market’ (Whelan 1999: 81). This demarcation became so pronounced that the local island population eliminated oats from their diet to the extent that they became overdependent on the potato as their only source of subsistence.

The twin stresses of accommodating the rundale’s increasing population and of the need to engage in commodity production put extreme pressure on the capacity of the existing means of production to produce sufficient products to meet these competing needs. In fact, these production demands for physical subsistence and commodity production were limiting the development of each other. With increasing population, more of the communal land would have to be given over to providing more of the physical means of subsistence. This eventually would limit the area of land for commodity production. But it is interesting to note that it could not happen the other way around, in that, if the area under commodity production grew to the detriment of the commune being able to provide sufficient subsistence for its members, existing and new, the whole raison d’être for this form of communal production would collapse i.e. the continuing maintenance of equality, if (and unfortunately when) the subsistence crop failed.

c) The Consequences of Restricted Land for Spatial Expansion on the Expanded Communal Reproduction Process

Marx, in his discussion of the reproduction of the agrarian commune, made it clear that an increase in population in the context of maintaining equal possession of land among its members can become an obstacle to the process of reproduction. Equality for the new members cannot be achieved under the existing spatial conditions. ‘If this (obstacle) is to be overcome, colonization will develop …’ (Marx 1964: 92). Here, the agrarian commune in question will need to expand spatially in order to provide the land required to maintain that share equality. With regard to the rundale, this necessary process of spatial colonization ideally meant establishing a new commune on unoccupied lands, with its own infield/outfield and clachan locations, which would halt the process of land parcellization. But in the Irish context, especially from the Plantations onwards, this seemingly necessary process of colonization was limited by the impositions of landlordism and their associated form of land tenure. As a consequence, the rundale communes were themselves colonized and many may have been pushed out of the fertile lands and onto the bogs and mountains by the landlords in search of increased rents. Whelan gives an example of this type of external colonization of the rundale communities for the West of Ireland in the early part of the eighteenth century, as cattle grazers, through the power of the landlords, got their hands on the fertile rundale lands, by evicting the members. He quotes an account by Charles O’Hara of this instance of rundale farmers’ removal from the limestone lowlands:

By 1720, the demand for store cattle from the south had reached us (in Connacht) and the breeding business grew more profitable. Many villagers were turned off and the lands which they had occupied were stocked with cattle. Some of these village tenants took mountain farms but many more went away. About 1726, the graziers, encouraged by the markets, first raised the price of land in order to cant all the cottagers out of their farms. (Whelan 1999: 78, quoting from Charles O’Hara)

The implications of this expropriation of the rundale communes from the low-lying fertile lands may have been quite profound and impacted on them in various ways. Firstly, it limited their own ability to colonize, as the landlords grabbed a large proportion of the West of Ireland land for the grazing entrepreneurs. Secondly, being left with only bog and mountain to exist upon, the rundale communal members had no choice but to physically colonize these marginal lands. Thirdly, since they were being colonized, their essential need to colonize in order to maintain equality could only be met internally – within their own communal lands which they themselves controlled. And since the original arable infield is the essential hub of the established commune, and therefore could not be interfered with without undermining the social and material basis of the communal production, the only alternative left was for the agrarian community members to colonize their own ‘waste land’, in which they had traditionally ‘booleyed’ their livestock. Clachans, as the most visible indicator of the rundale system therefore, began to ‘spring up’ not only in old booley mountain locations but also on so-called compact farms where the original legal tenants were able to undermine the landlord’s resistance to land subdivision by allowing a rundale commune to establish itself upon these previously enclosed tenant farms.

In certain instances, the landlord attempted to maintain some sort of formal control over this clandestine development by issuing partnership leases to some of the rundale communal members. But, in reality, the landlords in this situation had lost control of access to their estates, and thereby the determination of accessibility had moved from the landlords to the agrarian communes. But this countertendency of the landlord class to maintain its colonial control over ‘legally’ held estates was very much determined by the power relationships between the landlords and the communes – between formal legal state processes and the customary landholding system of the rundale communities. And, crucially, this resistance to the full operation of landlordism on the part of the rundale commune was very much predicated on their respective overall processes of reproduction. A collapse or even a significant contraction in any one of these mediated processes of reproduction would not only weaken the commune but could spell disaster for the commune as the landlords, seeing a weakness in their ability to resist, pounced on them with the full power of the state legal and military apparatus. Consequently, the sustainability of the rundale system was not dependent upon one essential structure but was determined by a diverse unity of its reproduction processes. Not only had the commune
members to survive the vicissitudes of the market and the ever-present opportunism of the landlord class to enclose their communal lands, they also needed to sustain the fertility of their lands, which they physically subsisted upon. The land and its inherent ecological systems on which the rundale communes physically maintained themselves on had to be constantly reproduced.

10. The Socio-ecological Metabolism of the Rundale and its emerging Metabolic Rift

Marx has provided us not only with the complex theoretical tool of the mode of production which has allowed us to begin an exploration of the dynamics of the rundale communal system of production, but he also developed a conceptual framework which can help us to understand the role that the ecological system played in the reproduction of this particular agrarian system. According to John Bellamy Foster, the theoretical cornerstones of Marx’s materialist understanding of society’s ecological base were his concepts of the socio-ecological metabolism and the metabolic rift (Foster 1999). These ‘ecological’ concepts operated at a particular level within the overall workings of a mode of production. As part of this essential aspect of a mode of production, society directly engages with the forces of nature, in which there is a necessary exchange (or flow) of materials from nature to ourselves, and from ourselves back to nature. Marx used the concept of metabolism to capture this reciprocal exchange of materials between living entities such as ourselves and the natural environment. Crucially, this process of metabolism includes both the natural and social forms of exchange and, at the level of the labour process within a particular mode of production, Marx states this in the following with regard to how man engages with nature through this process of socio-ecological metabolism:

Labour process … regulates and controls the metabolism between himself [man] and nature. He confronts the materials of nature as a force of nature. He sets in motion the natural forces … in order to appropriate the materials of nature in a form adapted to his needs. (Marx 1976: 283)

Therefore, the complex relationships expressed in the concept of socio-ecological metabolism are present in all modes of production, but take on a specific form depending on how they are embedded into a particular mode of production.

Marx, inspired by the work of the German agricultural chemist Von Liebig, developed the concept of metabolic rift to explain the situation when the socio-ecological metabolism becomes disrupted and the nutrients from the soil are not adequately replenished during the agricultural production process. The consequence of this ecological trend is that soil exhaustion emerges as the nutrients continue to be extracted from the soil. The decline in the natural fertility of the soil was due to the disruption of the soil nutrient cycle. As crops and animal products were being produced in agricultural fields, nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium were being removed from these fields and shipped to locations far removed from their points of origin, especially to urban centres. As a consequence, the constituent elements of the soil that made up the products/commodities were also removed and not replaced naturally. The transportation of these nutrients in the form of agricultural commodities had two important consequences. Firstly, they created a rift in the natural soil cycle, which had to be replaced by human intervention or the conditions of reproduction in the soil structure would be permanently undermined. Secondly, the excretion of these nutrients in the urban environment tended to cause pollution in the local waterways (The River Thames in London in the nineteenth century, for example).

As we have discovered in our analysis of the expanded form of communal production, the rundale commune was engaging in commodity production, which saw agricultural products, such as various types of livestock and crops, thrown onto the market. These rundale agricultural commodities with their embedded nutrients were similarly searching for exchange value as capitalist commodities and subsequently entered into the diverse circuits of commodity exchange in this global market context. And, like capitalist agricultural products, their nutrients were forever lost to the local rundale eco-system that helped produce them. In this context, it is likely that the local ecosystems of the rundale communes suffered a similar disruption of their nutrient cycle – a metabolic rift.

a) Balancing Livestock with Crops as a way of maintaining an uninterrupted Flow of Nutrients: a ‘leaky’ Ecological Solution to the Metabolic Rift within Simple Communal Production

O’Sullivan and Downey provide a good summary of what was seemingly required to maintain the ecological sustainability of the rundale system of farming:

The sustainability of rundale farming required the effective integration of the crop and tillage dimensions of the system. In particular, a dynamic ecological equilibrium had to be maintained between livestock-carrying capacity … and the optimization of crop production. (O’Sullivan and Downey 2008: 23)

And, as we have discovered in our discussion of the simple form of communal production, the arable infield was permanently cultivated and never rested to allow it to restore at least some of its fertility naturally. This endemic metabolic rift was determined not solely by overcropping but also by use of a poor crop rotation system, which did not allow any possibility of the soil restoring fertility by the application of nutrient replacing crops such as red clover or peas, etc. The exclusion of ‘green crops’ from the rundale crop rotation system meant that white crop rotation dominated the arable infield, which in itself can lead to soil exhaustion. Continuous white crop rotation without falling meant that the arable infield could not avoid the emergence of the metabolic rift and its physical manifestation in soil exhaustion. The following Ordnance Survey report from Donegal, where rundale was prevalent, testifies to the determining effects of metabolic rift on local agriculture:

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And, as we have discovered in our discussion of the simple form of communal production, the arable infield was permanently cultivated and never rested to allow it to restore at least some of its fertility naturally. This endemic metabolic rift was determined not solely by overcropping but also by use of a poor crop rotation system, which did not allow any possibility of the soil restoring fertility by the application of nutrient replacing crops such as red clover or peas, etc. The exclusion of ‘green crops’ from the rundale crop rotation system meant that white crop rotation dominated the arable infield, which in itself can lead to soil exhaustion. Continuous white crop rotation without falling meant that the arable infield could not avoid the emergence of the metabolic rift and its physical manifestation in soil exhaustion. The following Ordnance Survey report from Donegal, where rundale was prevalent, testifies to the determining effects of metabolic rift on local agriculture:
Rotation of crops is badly attended upon here. After they raise their crops of barley, they sow corn after corn, until their land is exhausted before they begin to potato it. (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, 1835, Parish of Donagh)

So, in this context, the only means through which the soil could be replenished of its ‘lost’ nutrients was if the rundale members, either collectively or individually, came up with a strategy which ‘sourced’ the required nutrients from the non-arable lands of the commune. And, since no artificial fertilizer existed at this time, any attempt at maintaining the fertility of the infield ‘was fundamentally dependent upon the availability of animal manure, its single most important nutrient component’ (Whelan 1997). Therefore, livestock, especially cattle, performed contradictory roles with regard to the metabolic rift in the rundale system of farming. As potential commodities, the nutrients that they absorbed into their own metabolic system, which became physically part of that system, were to be permanently lost when they were moved off the communal land and sold to cattle buyers. Thus, they were part of the rundale’s metabolic rift – a rift in the nutrient cycle of the communal pasture lands. However, while roaming and grazing on the communal pasture lands and even on the winter stubble of the arable infield, they were ‘harvesting’ the soil’s nutrients, which had been metabolized in the natural grasses and flora of the meadow ecosystem. In processing these nutrients through their digestive system, they were not just ‘deconstructing’ the concrete plant forms of the nutrients but simultaneously concentrating these released nutrients into a more socially useable form of animal manure. In this last stage of the animal phase of the socio-ecological metabolism, the nutrients pass through the body of the beast to finally emerge in a concrete form that can be used by society. Within the animal phase of the metamorphosis, the nutrients get transformed into a transportable form, and in this form they move from their original soil location. When the excrement leaves the body of the animal, it provides the material conditions for the ‘socio’ to be reunited with the ‘ecological’ in this constant metabolic movement of nutrients. But in this stage, society becomes the necessary conduit, as the excrement is gathered up to be later put back into the soil. In the case of the rundale, this transfer of nutrients occurs between the communal pastures of the outfield and commonage (including the infield stubble during the winter months) to the individual arable plots of the infield. But, in order to facilitate the accumulation of animal manure, the livestock of the commune were penned in various kinds of spatial locations for short periods of time. The most dramatic example of this was the keeping of livestock, especially milking cows, during the winter nights within the houses of the clachan. At one end of the house the livestock were penned in by a low partition wall, where they had a littering of straw (Collins 2008: 302). The dung was brought out of the house and piled into individual dung-heaps near the door of the clachan house. Evans has even suggested that the lay-out and location of the clachan on the side of a hill was planned in order to facilitate the movement of the manure downhill and into the infield. Another location for the accumulation of useable excrement was when the livestock were moved to their summer booleying grounds on the common mountains. In the evenings, the cows were brought down to a rectangular enclosure beside the booley huts for milking and were kept in over night (Bell 2008: 53). Again this facilitated the construction of a dung ‘hill’. The removal of the manure from the stockpiling locations was ‘almost entirely the work of the female members of the families’ and it was ‘conveyed in baskets on women’s backs’ (Robertson 2007: 244). With increasing parcelization of the land into smaller individual plots and the subsequent scattering of these plots throughout the infield (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 122), the work of transporting the dung became more physically demanding as it had to be brought to more and more locations within the infield. Within the infield, the manure was brought to the lazy beds which were being prepared for the potato crop. This was so because the potato crop was the only crop manured in the white crop rotation. The manure was then selectively placed on the potato lazy beds as the following testifies:

He does not spread the manure under the seed, but ribs or prabbins them. Ribbing is done two ways. The first method was to make a hole in the ground with a stick made for the purpose and drop the seed in it. But a better way is found out – the man digs five shallow marks with a spade in which the dropper deposits the seed, he then digs five more and throws the clay off the spade on the seed already dropped, and so till the Dale is finished. When the fibres of the seed shoot forth [which could not extend so well otherwise] the manure is spread as thin as possible, set sightly dressed, dressed neatly, and by the shovelling heavily a good crop is expected. Some neither set nor rib but prabbin their potatoes. (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, 1835, Parish of Donegal, Co. Donegal: 5)

The implication of this selective application of the manure to the lazy beds in the arable infield suggests that the manuring process was inadequate to overcome the loss of nutrients from the tilled soil and thereby unable to repair the damage done to the nutrient recycling process by the metabolic rift. More nutrients apparently leaked from the ecological system than were replaced by the rundale members and this was manifested in the continuing decline in the fertility of the soil. One possible solution to the metabolic rift was to find more nutrients from other sources than the communal livestock – other non-animal fertilizers. But it must be pointed out at this stage in the analysis that, with the continuing presence of the metabolic rift (even after animal manure was used to counteract its effect), the amount of crop production had to keep pace with the population structure of the commune and its necessary financial requirements. The consequence of this is that the arable infield had to logically expand outwards in order to take in new spatial areas that were not as depleted of the soil nutrients as the original infield. The problem was, however, that the new arable plots were on old communal pasturing grounds.

b) Enclosing the Outfield as the Final Attempt to thwart the Metabolic Rift under the Expanded Communal Production
The direct producers attempted to counteract the natural tendency of white crop production to exhaust the land by using a diverse range of natural fertilizers with the potato crop, such as marl, lime, burnt sod, peat, mud, sea-sand and shells and bones (Collins, 2008: xv). Of course, cattle manure is constantly used when available and, near the seashore, seaweed was the commonly used form of manure. However, the ability of manure to recuperate the soil’s condition from the effects of the metabolic rift depended not just on an adequate availability but also on the quality of the nutrients ‘gathered’, and the ‘harvesting’ of the nutrients was determined by the amount of livestock that the commune had. But, with the growth in the commune’s population and the subsequent need to expand arable production for subsistence, the demand for manure increased accordingly. But the supply of dung manure was itself limited by the expansion of the area given over to arable production, since the arable area had to encroach on pasture land; the amount of stock, particularly cattle, had to be restricted accordingly. Therefore, as the demand for manure increased with the expansion of arable, its supply was reduced proportionately. McCourt identifies this problem and the measures taken to overcome it:

... less grazing also meant fewer stock could be kept, thereby reducing the quantity of manure at a time when an increase was necessary to sustain corn yields on the infield where diminishing shares, because of increased population, were expected to produce an expanding cash crop. Two short-term measures helped to postpone the crisis. Enclosed pasture was provided on the outfield; and the intensive application of shell-sand, seaweed and, in some areas like Lecale, marl, allowed continuous cropping of the infield to continue, albeit not indefinitely’. (McCourt 1981:125)

The important general conclusion to be reached from our examination of these tendencies was that the manuring process of the rundale system was totally inadequate in preventing the ever-diminishing crop returns due to soil exhaustion. In fact, the failure of the manuring process to revitalize the soil caused even further expansion of the arable cultivation over the pasture, as the commune tried to make up declining yields through further colonization of the commune’s own pasture lands, even encroaching on the communal bog and mountain commonage. These newly-enclosed arable areas produced higher crop yields: But reclamation of land for cropping led to curtailment of grazing, and a reduction in the number of livestock meant less manure for the infield when animals grazed the stubble. Livestock numbers could be maintained if alternative winter fodder was available and root crops were an obvious solution, used in combination with a green fallow, which in turn would help maintain the fertility of the infield. If this was adopted, however, livestock would have to be denied access to the infield in winter. There were two possibilities: to provide enclosed pasture for the livestock or to enclose the infield strips. The former was often achieved by enclosing the individually owned plots on the outfield, or on the edge of the common grazing; but the latter required common agreement since it denied rights of common grazing. This was impossible to achieve where changedale was practised, and it became increasingly difficult as subdivision progressed. (Buchanan 1973: 595–596)

It is interesting to note that there was greater flexibility in the outfield to allow for the development of individualized landholding than in the arable infield. These newly-enclosed fields were thereby capable of overcoming the declining productiveness of the arable production under the rundale system. But this measure came at a price, in the sense that these new cuts allowed for a greater individualization of communal production. Therefore, this practical solution to declining soil fertility was the beginning of the gradual process of disintegration of this form of communality within the pasture lands of commune. This final process began on the fringes of the rundale system rather than in the essential core of the system – the arable infield. The reason for this was that root crops and artificial grasses not only needed to be physically enclosed, they were also winter-sown crops. This could not be done if the rundale commune wanted to maintain its communality within the arable infield. McCourt sees the consequences of such alternatives:

In such circumstances, the ultimate solution lay with the ‘new husbandry’ – the introduction into the rotation of root crops and green fallow, usually clover, which provided alternative fodder in winter and summer, and enhanced soil fertility. However, being winter crops, the stubbles could no longer be thrown open to the stock after harvest in the traditional way. The alternative was to consolidate and enclose the infield, creating compact holdings more attuned to the production of a commercial surplus. (McCourt 1981: 25)

The inability of green fallow to integrate itself into the arable infield was not just determined by the communality of changedale, but also by the customary time restraints of booleying. The booleying of livestock from the infield to the mountain pastures and back again was the determining factor in the timing of sowing and harvesting of the arable crops. There was a dramatic strategy that the rundale commune could take in order to overcome the problem of booleying and crop production. This was to enclose some of the outfield and mountain pastures so that the commune could grow winter-sown potatoes and wheat, which seems to have happened in West Ulster (McCourt 1981: 125), leaving
the infield to oats and barley. And it was only a matter of time when the infield would be enclosed, leaving the only remnants of communal land to be mountain commonage and bog. The rundale agrarian commune had now become a patch-work of small enclosed fields which existed beyond the clachan. And becoming such a spatial entity meant that the process of individuality had finally ousted communal property relationship from the infield and the outfield and banished it to the areas of commonage. This all came about because of the inability of the rundale commune to deal with its metabolic rift.

However, the enclosure of the communal pasture lands and the subsequent triumph of individualism over communality were rarely achieved by the communal members themselves, through this process of internal colonialization. What mostly occurred was that the landlords, seeing a very visible decline in the fortunes of the rundale communes, took the opportunity to take back their control of the rundale lands and subsume the members under a rental regime. The Great Famine provided the ideal opportunity for the landlords to send in the crowbar brigade, which Marx dramatically expressed in a headline taken from a Galway newspaper of 1852: ‘The sun that rose on a village sets on a desert’. This recolonizing of their rundale landed estates through enclosure by the landlord class is therefore about external stresses on the rundale system and how that communal system was subsumed under a feudal mode of production (Slater and McDonough 1994). We have only concentrated on the internal stresses, in order to address the essential dynamics of the rundale agrarian commune. The external stresses are about the co-existence of the rundale agrarian commune with other modes of production and that is another story!

11. Conclusion: The significance of socio-ecological metabolic system

What we have attempted to uncover in this essay were the internal tendencies and laws of development of the rundale agrarian commune. In this pursuit we discovered that the system of production was very much prone at the ecological level to soil exhaustion. With Marx's concept of the primitive communist mode of production we were able to account for the emergence in Ireland of a particular socio-ecological metabolism which created a metabolic rift in the agricultural ecosystem of the rundale agrarian commune. And the specific characteristics of this rundale socio-ecological metabolism were the increasing penetration of individualism over the various communal aspects of the rundale system. This itself was 'fuelled' by the inability of the commune to cope with its own population growth. These levels of determination formed a complex unity, which we needed to unravel in order to discover the internal dynamics of the rundale agrarian commune.

What we believe is significant in the Marxist approach is how the material form of an object metabolizes with the social and natural forms and their respective processes in which the immediate forms are mere moments in a constant state of flux. An agricultural product is not just a physical amalgamation of nutrients it also possesses diverse social forms which can be valorized under various social conditions. For example, an agricultural product can realize itself as a commodity with exchange value in the market place. But that same money form of the agricultural product can be partly used to purchase seed or pay the rent, or even provide a donation to the priest. Accordingly, the exchange form of the original product becomes a moment in the social processes of the rental system, the circulation process of circulating and fixed capitals and the social costs of reproduction. The same physical object simultaneously performs functions for the natural ecosystem and the social processes of production. Crucially the material object of the agricultural product acts as a conduit for the natural and social processes that not only pass through the physical entity but also structure that entity in their metabolizing movements. For example, a potato, if left to natural evolutionary propensities, as a moment in the natural ecosystem, will eventually rot and return its nutrients to the soil. But, when the same potato is metabolized as a mere moment of a social process, it is destined to be physically appropriated by society either as a commodity or a means of human subsistence, and its departure from its immediate ecosystem will create a rift in the soil nutrient cycle – a metabolic rift. In this context crop production under whatever agricultural system will give rise to a metabolic rift with regard to the original ecosystem that ‘produced’ the crop as it is removed from that ecosystem. Therefore, the concept of metabolic rift is very much part of the natural ecosystem, although it is a disruption in the flow of the ecosystem's nutrients. But, crucially, what determines this metabolic rift in the natural nutrient cycle is the specific social form in which our potato is embedded. For example, if the potato is to be a commodity, its respective nutrients will be lost forever as it gets traded to far-off locations through a market system. However, if it is destined to be consumed locally as a means of subsistence, its encased nutrients may make it back into its ecosystem of origin. But this depends on the manuring practices carried out by the crop cultivators. If the human excrement is actually collected and reapplied to the depleted original ecosystem, then the metabolic rift is overcome. But, in reality, nutrients ‘harvested’ from other soil locations is more likely to happen as we discovered when the grazing cattle of the rundale commune were gathering nutrients while grazing from the communal pasture lands and the individual families were spreading them as manure onto their respective tillage plots of the infield. Consequently, it is the socio-ecological metabolic process rather than the metabolic rift that becomes the more significant determination in the overall flow of nutrients out of and into the ecosystem of the farmed lands. It is the specific social conditions under which the direct cultivators work in their labour processes that determine the flow of nutrients. The metabolic rift is therefore a mere consequence of the socio-ecological practices performed by the agricultural producers which are themselves determined by the specific mode of production under which these producers are working. The socio-ecological metabolism of the mode of production becomes the essential concept of analysis through which we can explore further our societal relationship with nature. And Marx's legacy to us of the twenty-first century is that he has provided us with the necessary roadmap to continue such a vital intellectual exploration.
Notes

1 Dunlap (1980) coined the term ‘human exceptionalism’ to describe this academic trend.

2 See also Benton, 1996, and Foster, 1999.

3 ‘Queen’s School’, in this sense, refers broadly to subsequent (mainly doctoral) graduates of the Queen’s Institute of Irish Studies, whose work constitutes the most comprehensive body of collated knowledge on the rundale system to date. For a complete bibliography of McCourt, see Thomas 1986: 19–21 (‘A bibliography of the writings of Desmond McCourt’). For a complete bibliography of Estyn Evans, see Buchanan et al 1971: 264–276 (‘A bibliography of the writings of E. Estyn Evans’).

4 Doherty’s comments give an interesting insight into the theoretical underpinnings of early twentieth-century Irish historical scholarship, most notably the broad ‘Darwinian assumptions of unilinear development’ occluding the possibility of nucleation in early Irish settlement patterns (Doherty 1999: 56).

5 According to Evans,

There is no incontrovertible evidence for the existence of the single-farm system in pre-Celtic Ireland, but both literary and archaeological evidence shows that the raths, cashels and crannogs of the Gaels were the isolated homes of chieftains and freemen. Where then did the peasantry live? Neither history nor archaeology furnishes us with much evidence, but working back from the recent past, we can say that the traditional unit of settlement accompanying rundale or infield/outfield system … was the hamlet or kin-cluster. Both clustered settlement and some kind of infield/outfield agriculture have their historical parallels in Highland Celtic Britain, and these cultural traits have accordingly been labelled Celtic … (Evans 1992: 53)

6 Andrews points out the distinctions between Evans’s approach and that of the broader established tradition of Historical Geography. His situating anthropogeographic generalization against historical-geographical specialism allows us to glimpse something of the broader paradigmatic debates occurring in geography throughout the 1970s. Notwithstanding, the implications of Evans’s work are of a relatively static and unchanging society of Celtic descent, ‘who live in clustered kin groups and practise something analogous to rundale cultivation, remaining largely unchanged until 18th century market influences begin to undermine the peasant economy’ (Andrews 1971: 1).

7 The ‘peasant model’ that emerged from Evans’s work faced subsequent criticism in the context of T. Jones-Hughes’s writings on the diversity of pre-famine Irish class structure:

The peasant scenario elided class differences by ignoring the intense social stratification of pre-Famine Irish life … [Jones-Hughes] established (long before it became fashionable among historians) that pre-Famine Ireland was not an undifferentiated mass of unrelieved poverty and that class, itself determined by broader economic forces, was the key to understanding Irish settlement history in the post-seventeenth-century period. (T. Jones-Hughes, cited in Whelan 1999: 188)

Kevin Whelan has attempted to overcome the reductionist models of Irish society as expounded by authors such as Evans, developing a pluralist schema of regional archetypes to overcome the epistemological limitations of earlier work – the ‘deceptive homogeneity’ – and, in relation to the archetype of the small farm, he locates the emergence of rundale clearly within a context of functional adaptation (Whelan 1999: 190 and Whelan 1995: 24).

8 Gibbons has placed similar emphasis:

Concern for others in extreme situations was not discretionary, a matter of private charity or philanthropy, but was part of the underlying connective tissue of society. So far from being obsolete in Ireland, moreover, these sentiments formed the basis of the moral economy of the ‘Rundale’ system in Irish agriculture, and the close webs of affiliation through which rural townlands wove their identities. (Gibbons 1997: 253)

9 The extent to which Evans idealized peasant society has been questioned by Crossman and McLoughlin (1994: 90)

10 The debate itself began (and featured prominently in the later works of McCourt) over the accuracy of Seebohm’s, and later Meitzen’s emphasis of the Einzelhof pattern of settlement across Ireland as a seventh-century Celtic continuity, to the exclusion of clustered settlement (McCourt 1971: 127). Subsequent studies and critiques of approaches to the rundale have relied heavily on limiting spatial arguments (Graham 1994: 194).

11 See Doherty (1999: 55–56) and Whelan (1999: 187–188) for a criticism of Evans’s theoretical formulations on peasant society. See Jones-Hughes, ‘Society and Settlement’ (cited in Whelan 1999: 188) for a development of the diversity of class structure; see Graham (1994) for a discussion of the political context of Evans’s writings; see Crossman and McLoughlin (1994: 80) and Graham (1994) for comments on Evans’s noted avoidance of political, religious and class dimensions.

12 Dated February/March, 1881 (Shanin 1983: 117).

13 The problem of interpreting what Marx is attempting to express in the drafts is compounded by his continually eliding the concrete level of analysis with a more abstract level of analysis – the two forms of dualism is an example of this practice.

14 Adjectives applied by Marx across various moments of the social relationships of production. Italics indicate our proposed opposing concept where Marx did not specify one in his original draft.

Property element………………………collective element
Individual labour……………………collective labour
Petty/small plot cultivation…………….communal cultivation
Individual possession………………….collective possession
Fragmented labour……………………co-operative and combined/collective labour
Personal usufruct……………………..communal usufruct
Private property………………….communal/common/social property
Private appropriation……………collective appropriation
Private land…………………………….. communal land
Private ownership…………………..communal/common ownership
Personal labour………………………..collective labour
Movable property…………………… fixed property
Privately owned house………………..communal house
Fragmented tillage/agriculture………large-scale agriculture
Individualist – agriculture……………collective agriculture
Individually owned……………………jointly-owned
Augmented labour .................co-operative labour
Individual production................collective production
Individual trading.....................communal trading
Scattered means of production.......socially concentrated means of production.

15 Marx stated this in the following way: 'The history of the decline of the primitive communities has to be written (it would be wrong to put them all on the same plane); in historical as in geological formations, there is a whole series of primary, secondary, tertiary and other types' (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 107, footnote C).

16 See Cain and Hunt (eds), 1979.

17 See Head, 2008: 32.

18 See Anderson (2007) for comments on Irish manuscript material written by Marx and Engels during the 1860s.

19 ‘Among the Celts, Germans and Slavs community ownership can still be traced historically, and among the Slavs, Germans and also the Celts (rundale) it still exists even in the form of direct (Russia) or indirect (Ireland) feudal bondage’ (F. Engels, 1878 – Engels’s preparatory writings for Anti-Dühring, p. 481). ‘Rundale holdings in part of Ireland, now the most common form, arable land held in severalty, (This describes the thing wrongly) [sic], while pasture and bog are in common. But only fifty years ago, cases were frequent in which the arable land was divided in farms which shifted among the tenant-families periodically, and sometimes annually.’ (ibid.) Marx makes reference to the rundale by commenting on Maine’s poor conceptualization of its essential structure:

According to Maine,

‘the Irish holdings “in rundale” are not forms of property, but modes of appropriation’. But the lad [sic] himself remarks: ‘archaic kinds of tenancy are constantly evidence of ancient forms of proprietorship … Superior ownership arises through purchase from small alodial proprietors, through colonization of village waste-lands become in time the lord’s waste, or (in an earlier stage) through the sinking of whole communities of peasants into villeinage, and through a consequent transformation of the legal theory of their rights. But even when a chief or lord has come to be recognized as legal owner of the whole tribal domain, or great portions of it, the accustomed methods of occupation and cultivation are not altered. (Marx 1881: 5)

20 Marx refers to this trend in the following way:

Where property exists only as communal property, the individual member as such is only the possessor of a particular part of it, hereditary or not, for any fraction of property belongs to no member for himself, but only as the direct part of the community, consequently as someone in direct unity with the community and not as distinct from it. The individual is therefore only a possessor. What exists is only communal property and private possession. (Marx 1964: 75)

21 Writing of Tory Island, Fox describes the presence of equal opportunity to access the communal land in the following way:

Every child of a landholder has a right to a portion of his or her land, no matter what happens to the land, all the heirs retain a claim to it … But that every heir has a right, and can make a claim, does not mean that every heir gets a portion. Some will, some will not. Some will press their claims and be denied, others simply will not press them at all. But, in the end, every household will end up with some land … (Fox 1979: 99)

22 In Bélaoideas, the Irish Folklore Journal, Seamus Ó Duilearga stated the following:

The principle of rundale was that each legitimate participant in the division should get not an equal amount of land in superficial extent, but an equal amount in value. If the farm lay on a hillside, each person in the division got some of the good land below and some of the poor land high up the hill. (Ó Duilearga 1939: 290)

23 In Mayo, this cow’s grass was called a collop and in Ulster it was known as a sum. These ‘units’ would be broken down further where a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. (Evans 1967: 36)

24 In one of his letter drafts to Vera Zasulich, Marx stated this tendency in the following way with regard to the communal arable ground:

The members, without studying the theory of ground-rent, realized that the same amount of labour expended upon fields with a different natural fertility and location would produce different yields. In order to [secure the same economic benefits and] equalize the chances of labour, they therefore divided the land into a number of areas according to natural and economic variations, and then subdivided these areas into as many plots as there were tillers. Finally, everyone received a patch of land in each area. (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983: 122)

25 Knight’s original footnote.

26 See Mac Náimhsí 1970: 83 for how fighting acted as a bar to improvement through disputes over lot quality.


28 Evans invokes the term ‘clachan’ to differentiate functional settlement (defined as former nuclei of townlands, containing services such as shops and inns) from those associated with rundale:

Here and there, especially in the west, we see little ‘clusters’ ‘onsets’ or ‘clachans’ of peasant houses, a dozen or so together … the houses were clustered without plan or order (and never strung together end-to-end) generally in some sheltered hollow in the richest part of the townland … the village had neither shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or ‘rundale’ system of cultivation. (Evans 1967: 47–50)

29 The following report of the Ordnance Survey for Co. Donegal confirms the lack of fencing, under the Rundale system:

There are large districts totally unenclosed … cattle during the winter being permitted to roam at large, destroying the wretched fences now in use, they must be consequently made a new each successive spring. (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Parish of Iniskeel, Co. Donegal, Royal Irish Academy, Box 21, ms, p.5)

30 Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Parish of Deserachtne, Co. Donegal, Royal Irish Academy, Box 21, ms: 9–10.

31 Marx identified the financial guns that pounded the walls of the Russian agrarian commune with the following question:
How can the commune resist, pounded by state exactions, plundered by trade, exploited by landowners, and undermined from within by usury! (Marx, cited in Shanin 1983).

Similar guns had the rundale communes in their sights. Nixon, for example, attempted to impose poor law tariffs upon his tenants, despite their valuations falling below the £4 threshold (Mac Cnáimhsí, 1970: 193). The practice of ‘taxing’ rundale sub-tenants through increasing rates in accordance with agricultural prices is noted by Cunningham (1981: 30).

32 The mere existence of the rent payments between the rundale commune and the landlord, coupled with payments for governmental taxation such as county cess and poor law, and church tithes would be sufficient in itself to force the rundale commune into commodity production. But, the commune had also to pay a certain amount to cover production costs such as seeds, spades and milking equipment, and like everyone in Ireland at the time they had social costs – marriages, church dues, dress and when necessary purchased food. Although the rundale village lacked elements of a real village, such as an inn and shops, this does not suggest that they did not buy and sell commodities. Evans suggests the following:

Interaction ‘tinkers and tailors’ paid periodic visits and with the peddlers and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. (Evans 1979: 31)

33 Knight (1836) also remarked on the extent of illicit distillation in Erris.

34 Such enclosures on the Nixon and Leitrim estates in Donegal, and the resultant stress placed upon the rundale has been discussed by Mac Cnáimhsí (1970) and Mac Aoidh (1990).

35 See McCourt: ‘Even when it is evident that fragmentation had occurred through the subdivision of an original group of two, three contiguous farms, these in the beginning were also often held in severality’ (McCourt 1971: 131). See also Currie on the various circumstances through which rundale emerged in Derry: ‘… (iii) the need for co-operation in clearing, enclosing and draining land which would have been beyond the technical and financial capacity of the individual tenant, despite the fact that contemporary leases lay the responsibility for such work on the lessee and not the landlord; (iv) the abundance of marginal land especially mountain, bog, and natural meadow which was ‘conducive to exploitation by the communal methods of rundale’ (Currie 1986: 100).

36 Downes and Downey explore the concept and dynamics of ‘systems’ in detail (see Downes and Downey 2009).

37 Evans even suggested that:

The Irish clachan was often placed at the infertile apex of a deltaic fan, the slope facilitating the washing and carrying-down of the accumulated manure, human as well as animal. (It is an interesting detail that for this purpose the women went with the cows and the men with the horses). (Evans 1956: 299)

38 However, it should be stressed that, although the use of seaweed as a fertilizer was extremely beneficial to the potato crop, it had detrimental effects on other crops, as the following quotation from the Ordnance Survey Reports from Donegal suggests:

Their land they say does not answer for oats and flax, and this defect they attribute to the constant use of sea manure. (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, 1835, Parish of Clondavaddog, Co. Donegal).

Ted Benton

As an outsider to the literature on the Irish rundale community, I found this piece of great interest for two main reasons. One is the straightforward one, that it provides a really fascinating analysis of the structure and dynamics of this distinctive form of social organization. But is has a wider, conceptual importance, in putting to the test recent re-workings (or, for some, re-readings) of the historical materialist legacy. These have been prompted by the urgency of our contemporary ecological predicament, and they have involved both recovery of neglected work by Marx and Engels, as well as work of theoretical reconstruction within the tradition. Even so, this newer work has tended to focus almost exclusively on the ecological problems of modern capitalist societies. This essay draws on the ecological re-workings of the materialist tradition, but uses them creatively – and successfully – to understand the internal tensions and dynamics of a non-capitalist social formation.

As Slater and Flaherty point out, the concept of ‘mode of production’ is a quite central starting point for analysing what Marx called the ‘metabolism’ of forms of human social life with the rest of nature. This concept includes both the forms of social relationship through which productive activity in relation to nature is conducted and the substantive interactions between human labour thus organized, and the naturally given conditions, means and materials employed. The concept enables transcendence of the ‘nature/society’ dualism that has limited the ability of both natural and social scientists to provide fully integrated accounts of human socio-ecology. At the same time it avoids over-generalized approaches to the relation between ‘humans and nature’ that see ecological problems as resulting from ‘greed’, ‘growth’, ‘hierarchy’ or ‘technological development’ in the abstract. The different modes of production can be seen as so many qualitatively different ways in which human labour is divided and combined with the rest of nature in meeting individual and social need.

In the case of the rundale analysed here, the division of labour between different activities is combined with a normative framework defining and allocating occupation of dwelling space and the spatial distribution of different sorts of agricultural and other activities. As the analysis shows, this pattern of normative regulation of activity served both to reproduce the members of the community as such, while also maintaining a sustainable ‘metabolism’ between their need-meeting activity and what ecologists might call the ‘carrying capacity’ of the land and local environment.

The authors go on to employ an important concept – ‘metabolic rift’ – to characterise a process whereby these norms progressively fail to secure the reproduction of the conditions (especially soil fertility) for continuance of the system. In their account, the shift from a mainly local subsistence economy toward increasing production of commodities and integration into wider markets played an important part in this.
This analysis is innovative in, so far as I know, extending the explanatory role of the idea of metabolic rift beyond the topic of specifically capitalist agriculture. But the analysis also indicates an internal tension in the rundale prior to the penetration of market relations. This appears to have been the problem of accommodating population growth within the limits determined by the available productive land and the division within it between arable cultivation and stock-grazing. Here, yet another of the socio-ecological concepts developed in recent historical materialist thought might have some application. This is the concept of a ‘second contradiction’ developed especially by the US scholar James O’Connor. Again, this was initially devised to enable analysis of the ecological dynamics of capitalism, but some revised version of it could offer insights here. If land is conceptualized as a ‘condition of production’ (rather than, as in this paper, a ‘means of production’) then the ecological consequences of population growth even while the rundale was primarily as subsistence economy could be seen as exemplifying a contradiction between the mode of production and its conditions.

Martin Downes
What follows is a speculative commentary on what evolutionary biology and agricultural science might offer as factors in the development, continuance and decline of communal farming, especially the rundale systems discussed by Slater and Flaherty.

It is remarkable and probably very significant that the farming arrangements broadly recognized as rundale seem to have been present mostly in, or at least survived longer in, agriculturally marginal regions. So let us focus on marginal regions and carry out a thought experiment: imagine a valley with some amount of arable land on the valley floor and less-than-arable land on the valley sides where some grazing of livestock is possible. This is fairly representative of parts of agriculturally marginal Ireland. Even if we start with a single farming family occupying such a valley in the pre-industrial past, the inevitable multiplication of kin units (families), or in-migrating people, all needing access to the better (tillage) land, will lead to several households exploiting the scarce arable valley floor. At this point, the question becomes one of cooperation or competition. Crudely, each kin unit asks ‘Are we better off cooperating (commonality) with the others or acting independently (individualism) of them?’ In a better biological form the same question appears for each person as ‘Which arrangement accommodates best my genetic tendency towards leaving more copies of my genes in the breeding offspring of future generations?’ (Note that this is not quite the same as asking how many breeding offspring I have myself, because my genes are also passed on, though not as powerfully, through my relatives, notably through my brothers and sisters.) Evolutionary biology suggests that the tendency to leave more copies of one’s genes has to have been universal and persistent in our ancestors. It also suggests that the copies passed on will have included genes for flexibility in how to achieve yet further breeding success, in the varied conditions encountered by successive generations. A tendency to cooperate may be expected to be expressed as long as neighbours are kin and as long as cooperation seems best for the breeding success of those carrying most shared genes.

However, as generations pass, the kin groups in our imaginary valley will become ever-more distantly related, and further, quite unrelated immigrants are likely to arrive. In that situation, and as a means of sequestering scarce resource for one’s close kin group, some kind of preferential access to the scarce arable land is likely to be sought, especially by those who would gain most from it, perhaps those having largest kin groups. This preferential access may be in the form of private property or of increased access to arable arising from increases in one’s cattle herd. (The latter seems to have been a common feature of rundale, at least in the later forms of it, of which we know most.) In any case, we see that evolutionary biology suggests that the likelihood of commonality should decrease with falling relatedness, in agriculturally marginal areas. Of course resource acquisition is never the whole of life’s challenge for any species, and so this underlying tendency to lose communality with relatedness may be weakened by such things as stringent need for cooperation in projects of high labour requirement or in political or military defence. In other words the tendency to lose communality may be offset at times by particular needs to maintain manpower and social capital that reduce the risk of compromised reproduction.

The communal approach to land usage in rundale has received a great deal of attention; the private ownership of livestock is less mentioned. Yet livestock was a kind of key to both high tillage yields and the proportion of scarce tillage area to which the owner might claim access, in agriculturally marginal areas. Good quality arable mineral soils in more favoured parts of Ireland can produce very moderate yields under continuous cultivation without farm manures or artificial fertilisers. This is borne out by experience with conventional continuous cropping of cereals in Ireland, where (by the application of the three major nutrients nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous, typically in short supply) it is clear that good Irish mineral soils provide enough minor plant nutrients and adequate soil structure for repeated, enormous, cereal yields. It is borne out too by the results from very long-term continuous cereal experiments on English mineral soils where wheat yields of about a tonne per hectare are common without any added nutrients at all. This is not a high yield, but it would have been acceptable enough in the past in those areas where farms and arable areas were larger, as in Irish regions of better land. Farming in marginal areas has to have been a very different matter.

In marginal areas, farms were small and land suitable for tillage very scarce. Turning to the example of our imagined valley again, it is clear that since tillage land is very scarce it is important to achieve high yields from what there is. This is so despite both the land itself and the climate often being quite poor. In those circumstances, farmyard manure is very necessary if high yields under continuous cultivation are to be obtained. That is what made livestock such an important element in rundale. And apparently, their owners had an entitlement to that amount of tillage land for which they provided...
manure. If this system of retaining the fertile land for tillage crops worked properly, the cattle must have been grazed mainly outside of the arable area (the infield), in the outfield or commonage. Manure from the animals would have to have been collected, perhaps when cows were housed on straw or other bedding, between evening milking and morning milking. The farmyard manure replaced the mineral nutrients that had been removed from the arable land in crops consumed elsewhere. Otherwise, those rather poor soils would have become poorer still. Crop rotation is often thought of as necessarily including taking land out of tillage for some period in the cycle. This was convenient in larger farms on better land where tillage could be moved around most, or all, of the farm. It was less easy in small farms with only a small proportion of tillable land. But after the spread of potato-growing it became possible to devote portion of tillage land each year to this non-cereal crop. This meant that it was possible to have rotation of crops while keeping all the tillable land in continuous tillage. That practice would have reduced year-to-year carry-over of crop pathogens and improved soil fertility. Potatoes would have responded well to high levels of nutrition, and the way in which they were grown would have facilitated the heavy application of farmyard manure. This, coupled with the fact that the improved soil fertility following potatoes would be expected to improve cereal crops in succeeding years, possibly explains the observation that: ‘Rotation of crops is badly attended here. After they raise their crops of barley, they sow after corn, until their land is exhausted before they begin to potato it’ (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, 1835, Parish of Donagh, quoted in Slater and Flaherty). Perhaps these farmers were delivering most of their limited supply of farmyard manure at that point in the crop rotation where it gave the best food-crop response.

Despite all this, we are oddly confused about the availability of farmyard manure. On the one hand there is an insistence that grazing animals were not housed in Ireland, because the mild climate did not necessitate housing. But on the other hand there is the belief that every Irish cottage had its dungheap placed indelicately just outside the door.

In a pastoral society, animals may be herded in common but everyone knows how many (s)he owns. In rundale too, animals are private property. Indeed the crops are private property. The only things the community members hold in common is access to, and the way in which they were grown would have facilitated the heavy application of farmyard manure. On the one hand there is an insistence that grazing animals were not housed in Ireland, because the mild climate did not necessitate housing. But on the other hand there is the belief that every Irish cottage had its dungheap placed indelicately just outside the door.

Chandana Mathur
Given Eamonn Slater’s always incisive insights on Marx on the subject of Ireland, it is not surprising that the discussion of the rundale system and its eventual demise that he and Eoin Flaherty have developed, in the context of Marx’s and Engels’s writings on primitive communism, should be quite as impressive as it is. Fracturing the divide between the social and the natural sciences, Slater and Flaherty assemble an analytical framework that defines the essential structure of the rundale system through the complex and changing inter-relationships between property ownership and production and ecological processes, and charts the historical transformations that the system underwent. Noting that ‘the socio-ecological metabolism of the mode of production becomes the essential concept of analysis through which we can explore further our societal relationship with nature’, they end the essay by designating it as ‘Marx’s legacy to us of the twenty-first century’ (24). It is really they who are to be thanked for having discerned this level of analysis across a staggering breadth of Marx’s and Engels’s writings – swimming against the tide of the standard presumption that this was classically modernist theory that endorsed the domination of ‘nature’ by ‘man’ – and for prising it out and honing it to apply it so powerfully to Irish rural history.

There are, however, specific moments in their discussion of rundale as a form of primitive communism where one wishes that they had pressed further. They clarify that their concern is with the internal dynamics of the rundale system (‘the external stresses are about the co-existence of the rundale agrarian commune with other modes of production and that is another story!’ (24)), and the external context impinges in this account chiefly through the market imperatives imposed by the colonial system (‘In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, all members of Irish society were tied into a monied economy, whether they were from the city of Dublin or Tóir Islánd. The rundale communities of the West were no exception to this trend. (17)). Nonetheless, Slater and Flaherty would probably agree that the faltering of the rundale system should be seen as part of the massive global renegotiation of the relationships between peoples, labour processes and the natural world that was happening at the same time, and that this wider setting could be explored further in their account. Some of the decades and centuries discussed in this essay were also the era of mercantile adventure, of the birth of plantation agriculture and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Thus, the ‘incorporation of the potato within the commune’s crop rotations’ (16) is not an innocent externally introduced variable, it places the rundale system directly within these force fields of global transformation. Later, although the colonial state appears in their account as the forceful initiator of the market economy within which the rundale system came to be inescapably entangled, it would be interesting to consider the fact that this colonial power was itself undergoing a traumatic transformation from feudalism to industrial capitalism, and to ponder the social, political economic and ecological consequences that might have been belched out into the agrarian sector of ‘the first colony’.

One of the most consequential outcomes of the decline of primitive communism noted by Engels in The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State was ‘the world historical defeat of the female sex’. Slater and Flaherty offer tantalizing glimpses of women in the structures of rundale governance and in its division of
labour, leaving one wishing for follow-up work on the gender dimension of the rundale commune’s social relations of production and ecological relationships, and on the gender consequences of the demise of the system. Detailing the consequences of restricted land for spatial expansion on the expanded communal reproduction process, Slater and Flaherty observe that ‘Clachans, as the most visible indicator of the rundale system therefore, began to “spring up” … also on so-called compact farms where the original legal tenants were able to undermine the landlord’s resistance to land subdivision by allowing a rundale commune to establish itself upon these previously enclosed tenant farms’ (20). The rundale commune was thus a site of anti-colonial resistance, and later a potent symbol thereof, as in James Connolly’s formulation of ‘celtic communism’. David Lloyd has argued that, for Connolly, ‘in political terms, then, far from being a backward element in need of radical conscientization, the peasantry can be seen as already possessing, if in inarticulate ways, the counter-cultural consciousness that would be the basis for the syndicalist co-operative commonwealth. It should be stressed that this memory or consciousness is not for Connolly an effect of any ethnic essence or even of some deep, occult continuity in Irish culture … It is precisely colonization, the violent rupture with a past social organization, that produces the conditions for the politically effective memory of a past formation among the dispossessed …’ (Lloyd 2008: 110). It may be difficult, but still possible, in subsequent work to tease out the forms of consciousness that might have corresponded with the ecological and production relationships and practices of the rundale commune, and their later transition into forms of political memory.

If these further demands are too numerous, it is only because the scholarship contained here is so exciting and generative!

Nollaig Ó Muraíle

My initial response on reading this article was one of pleasure that this intriguing topic had been tackled – even though I could not really engage with some of what struck me, as a non-specialist in the area, as excessively technical (or Marxist?) jargon. The article’s subject-matter also revived memories of sharply differing views on the so-called ‘Brehon Laws’. Whatever insight they were able to gain into early Irish law would have been based on the notoriously inadequate series of volumes issued by the nineteenth-century Brehon Law Commission under the title Ancient Laws of Ireland. Since that time there has been a revolution in our understanding of the Gaelic law tracts, and any attempt to deal with the roots of the so-called Rundale System of landholding that does not take certain publications of the past forty years or so into account is bound to be seriously deficient. Given constraints of space, all I can do here is mention some of the more relevant works that could be consulted with profit (and which might compel some modifications in certain aspects of the authors’ thesis). Significant among these are the works of Fergus Kelly on the early Irish law tracts (see 1988: 100–8) and on early Irish farming (1997: 398–431). Important, too, are the early volumes of the New History of Ireland (Vols I to IV), with special attention to contributions from Donnchadh O Corráin (Vol I, 2005: 553–6); Kenneth Nicholls (Vol II, 1987: 430–5); D.B. Quinn and K.W. Nicholls (Vol III, 1976: 34–6), and from Aidan Clarke (ibid.: 170); from Louis Cullen (Vol IV, 1986: 169) and John Andrews (ibid.: 242, 244). Nicholls is also author of other important works, which anyone studying landholding in Ireland cannot afford to ignore (1976; 2003: 64–76).

I would also like to raise the question of the origin and continued usage of the term ‘rundale’. It and its variants, rigdale and changedale, are assumed to be in origin English, and this is no doubt correct. But what was the native Irish term for what is often thought of as a quintessentially Irish practice? Patrick Dinneen in his great Irish-English Dictionary (1927: 914) has rondáil as the Irish for rundale and (ibid.: 1166) talamh ronndáil for rundale land, but he gives no indication of the word’s antecedents and would seem to have viewed it as a simple borrowing from English. It is interesting that, since the system involved a degree of shared ownership, the Irish word he cites has the appearance of a compound that includes the Irish word dáil, meaning ‘a share’ – one wonders if this is a calque based on nothing more than coincidence.

My interest in this topic was aroused some time ago by the occurrence of an Irish term in the late-sixteenth-century Connacht text known as Seanchas na mBúrcach. That work includes a detailed survey of the lands on which Mac William Burke claimed rents in Co. Mayo, and in the course of it the word ‘ronntáile’ appears (although the manuscript reading omits the accent). The entire sentence reads (in normalized spelling): ‘Ag so ronntaille tighearnais Meicill Uillte Óglaigh Ó Briúin a Buir a baile Ardaigh agus Baile an Chnuic’ (This is the ronntaille of the lordship of Mac William under the progeny of Ó Briúin a Buir, i.e. Baile Ardaigh and Baile an Chnuic). The three authors who have hitherto dealt with the text, Hubert T. Knox, Standish Hayes O’Grady and Tomáis Ó Raghallaigh (the work of the first was published in 1908, that of the other two in the 1920s), were clearly baffled by the word. Both O’Grady and O Raghallaigh rendered it ronnt aile and the former – following Knox (who did not edit the original text) – rather bafflingly translated it as ‘extent’, while O’Grady (clearly interpreting it as ‘rónnt aile’) took it to mean ‘another portion’. Now it seems more than probable that what we have here is simply a thinly-disguised Gaelicization of the word ‘rental’, but it is so tantalizingly close to the word rundale (and its Irish form, ronndáil, as given by Dinneen) that one wonders if,
at the very least, the latter word might not have had some influence on the form it takes in Seanchas na mBúrcach.

The foregoing brief discussion should at least suffice to show that a good deal of work remains to be done on the peculiarly Irish feature that we know as rundale. Happily a useful start has been made by Messrs Slater and Flaherty.

*Criostóir Mac Cáithigh*

Slater and O'Flaherty's study offers a fresh perspective on the problem of rundale in Ireland. It brings a useful theoretical framework to bear on the mechanisms – both social and cultural – at the heart of the practice. The authors' analysis highlights the tensions arising from the competing needs of the individual and the collective or partnership – in Marxist ideology the dual yet opposing forces of primitive communism and capitalism. Marx argued that the elevation of private property, supported by speculative legal systems, was responsible for the 'dissolution of the organic order of society'. The theoretical framework outlined by the authors is a valid way of explaining the origins and ultimate disintegration of this system of land management.

It does not, however, adequately address the historic and spatial dimensions of rundale. From the sixteenth century particularly, the growing complexity of Irish society in terms of economic relations, population growth and colonization profoundly affected farming and settlement patterns in Ireland. As McCourt has demonstrated, rundale manifested in dynamic and flexible ways, with on the one hand common property being privatized and in other contexts compact farms devolving to fragmented openfield. Factors influencing the occurrence and regional character of rundale include diversity of habitat, availability of farm manure and receptivity to innovation and consequent change. Material culture also played a part: in the northern and western fringes, and in the highland zones, where the prevalence of rundale is most concentrated, the combined byre-dwelling was once a conspicuous element of vernacular architecture and livestock management – livestock were not housed in dwellings solely for the purpose of accumulating precious farm manure but for reasons of animal health and safe-keeping.

Rundale might also be interpreted in part as a product of social principles such as partnership, cooperation, adherence to collective decision-making and dispute adjudication, principles which appear to have been an integral part of farming in Ireland since ancient times. Indeed, partnership modes of production are still evident to a degree today – the sharing of farm machinery and other resources, and the 'meitheal' doctrine of cooperative labour. The 'king' or village head-man – a role traditionally assigned by collective agreement to a prominent individual in the group, a position which was neither permanent nor hereditary – mediate competing demands of the individual and communal, and negotiated on behalf of the group with the landlord or his agent. In this context, rundale should not be seen as a mechanism for ensuring 'equal' shares of arable and pasture but a system which facilitated an equitable distribution of varying qualities of arable land of which individuals possessed greater or lesser portions (traditionally measured in tillage ridges). Studies of rundale settlements in Clare Island and the Inishkea Islands in Mayo point to inherent inequalities in the size of tillage shares (which were nonetheless periodically rotated in accordance with rundale principles) and the related numbers of livestock kept by households on pasture land (Mac Cáithigh 1999; Mac Enri nd). Further detailed case studies of individual rundale settlements in the modern period are necessary to clarify internal property relations.

In a general way, the concept of 'metabolic rift' (soil exhaustion and consequent impoverishment) can legitimately be used to explain the disintegration of rundale 'communes', but as Burtchaell's study of the farm villages of south Kilkenny (which operated in a comparable way to villages in less-favoured zones) demonstrates, rundale settlements on superior land, practising improved farming methods and having stable property relations with absent landowners, ensured long-term viability of such joint-ownership schemes (Burtchaell 1988).

*Eamonn Slater and Eoin Flaherty: Reply – The Necessity of One Science*

We would like to thank the respondents for their insightful comments on our paper. As can be gleaned from them, their opinions are as diverse as the disciplines they come from. We are all too well aware of our own inadequacies and shortcomings in conceptualizing the internal dynamics of the rundale system. And, as an attempt to reply to their various comments in a general way, we would like to describe more explicitly the theoretical approach we adopted and why.

It was Marx and Marx only that attempted to develop a theoretical framework that conceptualized nature as a moving process (Darwin) that had a continuing historical relationship with the evolution of society. Crucially he simultaneously perceived human history as having a natural basis to it. Therefore, society and nature in Marx's materialist framework were not just externally connected as one entity to another but they actually interpenetrated each other in a metabolic synthesis. This synthesis of processes was and is in a constant state of movement – of evolution. Marx's dialectical materialism and in particular his concept of a mode of production created the theoretical conditions for Marx to develop analysis. These conditions included an adequate method of exposition that could deal not only with the complex relationships between the synthesized processes but also with how those 'abstract' processes determined the concrete phenomena of the rundale system. Crucially, this method of exposition was very much structured by an attempt to present the conceptualization of the data (empirical facts and abstract concepts) in a systematically arranged framework which reflected the complex relationships between the 'internal organic coherence and life process' (Marx 1978: 166) and the 'external phenomena of life' (ibid.: 165) of the rundale agrarian commune. We take our cue from Marx's following dictum.
No natural laws can be done away with. What can change is the form in which these laws operate’ (Marx and Engels 1934: 246).

This ‘form’ is the societal or social form, which we explicated by sifting through Marx’s work on theprimitive agrarian commune in Grundrisse and in his unspent letter drafts to Vera Zasulich. What we uncovered was not only the essential structural dualism of commonality andindividualism but also a variety of other concepts, which allowed us to make sense of how this contradictory dualism impacted on the diverse concrete practices ofcommunal production. These included the concepts of parcellization, fragmented labour, collective appropriation andpersonal usufruct etc. And crucially these became guiding principles, which allowed us the opportunity to assess the evolution of this type of agrarian commune, in all its complexity as a system, comprised of many synthesized processes, but especially with regard to the metabolized processes of nature and society. We needed logically to uncover the internal dynamics of this particular agrarian system, before moving our analysis into its next level or stage, i.e. its external relationships with the wider aspects of Irish society, e.g. the State, landlordism etc.

With regard to the whole area of exploring society’s relationship with nature, we believe that it is necessary to engage in comparative investigations as we have attempted to do in this article in order to redefine and develop conceptualizations necessary to understand our unsustainable contemporary relationship. To achieve this understanding, Marx has suggested that we as academics may need to take a further step in our interdisciplinary endeavours, and become analysts within one science, as he indicated in the following:

Natural science will in time incorporate into itself the science of man, just as the science of man will incorporate into itself natural science; there will be one science. (Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts 1975 [1844]: 355)

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The Church and the Marketplace: Communal Identity in Ahlainen, Finland

Laura Fagerroos

In this essay I focus on the topic of how the changes in the tradition of churchgoing have affected the communal identity of the people in Ahlainen, Finland, between the late nineteenth and early twenty-first centuries. Based on the material I gathered during my research in Alakylä (part of Ahlainen) during the summer of 2008 I attempt to answer questions such as whether strong communal identity still exists among the people in small villages such as Ahlainen and also whether the experience of communal spirit has changed and, if so, what is its effect on the people sharing this same social space. I am also going to look at new ways of experiencing the collective feeling of togetherness, such as attending clubs, societies and the village marketplace, as well as at the importance of spatial identity. It could be argued that, even though many changes have taken place in the village during the last century and even if the forms of socializing have changed from a church-going tradition to participating in other activities, the sense of communal identity has remained the same if not grown stronger despite the many difficulties the community has had to face during modern times, such as the migration of its youth.

KEY WORDS: Church; Collective identity; Finland; Migration; Social structure; Spatial identity; Tradition

Introduction

Ahlainen is a small village located in the west coast of Finland with an approximate population of 1400. It is part of Satakunta County and the neighbouring towns and cities are Honkajoki, Isojoki, Merikarvia, Siikainen, Paimio, and Noutamarkku. It used to be an independent municipality until 1972 when it was united with Pori, located approximately ten kilometres from Ahlainen, with a population of 13,000. The reason for the union was mainly to guarantee better services for the people of Ahlainen as a part of a larger city with many facilities and also to assure the on-going development in Ahlainen. The area itself is divided into four smaller parts: Alakylä, Ylikylä, Kellahti and Lamppi. My research concentrates on Alakylä, since my grandfather originally comes from the area, and its history and everyday life thus interest me the most.

Alakylä is a small area by the sea. Its streets are narrow and they were only being paved in the summer of 2008. The smaller lanes are still unpaved and with old wooden houses painted in different colours they create an almost magical atmosphere for someone visiting Ahlainen for the first time. Street-lights are still relatively new; they were installed in spring 2008. Summers are the best time for the village. Most of the houses have big gardens with flowers in bloom, the sea attracts many people to swim and have picnics by their boats on the little islands near the coast-line and, most importantly, summers are when people of the village most actively visit the Lilac Market located in the heart of the village. Although much has changed in Ahlainen, as with all villages in general, it seems that something very basic remains in the way of living in Alakylä and its communal structure. The suggestion here is that, even though globalization, modernization and secularization of society have taken place in Ahlainen and the means of communication have transformed from one type to another, the experience of collective identity still remains among the people of Alakylä.

The Fear of God and the Neighbours

The beginning of the twentieth century was still a relatively significant time-period when it comes to people participating in church activities, such as attending services on Sundays as well as acknowledging the tradition of special occasions throughout the church year. This did not show only in the numbers of people attending church services regularly but also to assure the on-going development in Ahlainen. The area itself is divided into four smaller parts: Alakylä, Ylikylä, Kellahti and Lamppi. My research concentrates on Alakylä, since my grandfather originally comes from the area, and its history and everyday life thus interest me the most.

According to Segal (1990: 2), Clifford Geertz and Peter Berger share the idea that ‘to be human is to seek sense in life’ and also ‘to make sense of life is not to discover the way life is but to organize life a certain way’. In addition, Segal continues by writing:

Geertz and Berger take it for granted that only collectively can humans make sense of life. For both, culture,
including religion, is a social product. No solitary individual could either create or sustain it. Even if making sense of life serves the individual rather than the society itself, only together individuals foster that sense (Segal 1990: 3).

Thus it could be noted that the church and all the traditions related to it not only held religious value but also helped the community to construct its everyday life in a certain way (Firth 1981). However, one cannot claim that the reason for people attending services etc. more in the early twentieth century than nowadays was because they were merely more religious. Even though religion played a more significant part in the early twentieth-century Alakylä community, the social pressure must be taken into account as well. Since Alakylä is a very small place, many people knew each other relatively well and most of the people had at least one church member or an active churchgoer living nearby. If one missed a service on Sunday questions were raised or at least one's relationship with God would be questioned. In the 1920s the church had to admit that its influence did not reach many people anymore, and men especially refused to participate in Sunday services (Heino 1979: 690). Even though the Lutheran religion was the dominant belief in the village of Ahlainen, it was not the only one. Less religious people who lived far away from the church participated in seurat (religious revival meetings). These events were normally organized in some villager's house where the Bible was read and virret (hymns) were sung but there was no official representative of the Church involved. When people gathered together on these occasions it also meant socializing. Because seurat gathered together only a group of people, they also strengthened the social ties between these individuals. The Church in Ahlainen, however, brought together most people in the village and made a wider scale of socializing possible.

The Church in the beginning of the twentieth century did indeed have a huge impact on people's everyday lives when it came to socializing and strengthening social ties, but religion as such was not the only basis of these meetings; partly the reason was rather a general feeling of obligation to go to the church and thus remain a member: 'salesperson', 'fisherman', landowner', 'farmer' etc. Since the community was somewhat smaller than it is today and since people knew each other better, one's identity was not as 'private' as it is nowadays. However, since the Church was the most significant social authority in the beginning of the twentieth century, in Ahlainen this meant that no one was left outside the society as such and the church thus provided some social shelter.

When moving away from the beginning of the twentieth century, people felt that the social stigma of failing to attend church was not as strong as it used to be, that is, that one was able to miss services without receiving any criticism. This meant that to get people to attend services, the church needed a new attraction in order to do so. Also the discipline and formality that people attached to the church ceremonies did not appeal to most of them and they felt neither connection with nor loyalty towards the church on a religious or on a social level (Williams 1999). Gradually, it was mainly the same individuals who remained loyal to the church and would regularly attend services. These people were more religious and they were involved with the parish activities for religious reasons as well as for social ones; after all, there they met people whose world philosophy was similar to theirs and with whom it was easier to identify. Thus the church served as a medium for forming sub-communities instead of bringing all the villagers together like it once did. Today, people in general feel that the tradition of church-going has changed into a relatively shallow one. Some people go because they seek comfort and peace but some social criticism seems to remain today, even if it is considerably different than before. Once it had lost its power, the Church was not able to gain it back. The generation still 'loyal' to its customs had passed away; most members of the following generation were not living in the village anymore or were very young and rather indifferent towards the Church. I believe it is possible to argue that these changes in the churchgoing habits were caused not only by decreasing stigma in relation to attending services but also by the possibility of forming sub-groups of which seurat could be seen as the first example; many more would follow.

From Choirs To Clubs: New Ways Of Socializing

The 1950s was a starting point of non-religious clubs, societies and village organizations in general and these organizations are partly what came to be the new medium of experiencing collective identity among the new generation of villagers in Ahlainen. Hammond writes:

"The chief research task obviously involves discovering what primary and secondary group ties people have, and how strong those ties are. It also involves learning whether the strength of those ties is related to any difference in meaning that church involvement has for people, and whether this difference influences their identities. (Hammond 1988: 6)"

Whereas before it was through the realm of the church that people knew who they were and where they belonged, after the turn of the century they were increasingly able to choose smaller sub-groups in order to re-form their communal identities. After the 1950s, several societies had been established. I am going to concentrate on the women's choir called 'Laulun Lyömät' ('Inspired by the Music') which seemed to be the most visible and active organization in the village. This choir had replaced the official church choir, since almost all of the latter's previous members had gradually joined the 'Laulun Lyömät' choir. The members of the choir, approximately 25 women in their 60s and 70s, gather together twice a week to rehearse. For a small choir from
a small place like this, it is surprisingly active. It performs several times a year in festivals and events organized in the neighboring towns and, when members are not practising, they are organizing other social events. For the majority of them the choir was almost like a second family. Jeffery G. Reitz argues (1980) that the stronger one's ethnic ties are, the more loyal one remains to the church and all it represents. This, however, is not what one can find in Alakylä. The sense of communal identity still seems to exist even if in different forms than before. In addition, the people of Ahlainen (especially the elderly) give the impression of possessing a clear idea of their ethnic background, only the church does not appear in the picture. Luckmann (1967: 98) notes:

(...) the individual is alone) in choosing goods and services, friends, marriage, partners, neighbors, hobbies, and ... even 'ultimate' meanings ... In a manner of speaking, he is free to construct his own personality.

What one could call a 'new freedom' most certainly played a significant part in the construction of new communal identities. Whereas everything related to the church was described as 'pretentious', 'stiff' and 'humourless' by many of my informants, clubs and societies offered ways to communicate, with the element of enjoying oneself and also deciding oneself which group one wanted to belong to. Another important aspect in forming a different kind of sense of community was seeing the space where one lived in a different manner. Korhonen and Räsänen write (1989) that understanding history has always served as the main medium in understanding Finnishness among the people in Finland. However, after the 1950s, concepts such as regionalism and separation into smaller ethnic minorities from the main population began to emerge and at times distinctions between different villages and towns were clearly highlighted. One's own village or town became an important signifier of one's identity on both a personal and a more collective level. As Korhonen and Räsänen note, re-formation of one's communal identity can be understood as an element in counterculture, renewing the communal ideology is under threat and people feel the need to strengthen their cultural identity (Korhonen and Räsänen 1989: 16). Even though Ahlainen is nowadays a part of Pori and is described as 'the most northern part of the city', the people themselves in Ahlainen still draw a clear line between Pori and Ahlainen. They do not count themselves as part of either alone or with a family member, the market itself creates a small enclosed continuum. Hermanowicz and Morgan (1999) argue that groups affirm their identities through 'ritualizing' the routines of their communal life. Indeed, gathering together every Saturday on the market place could be described as 'ritualizing' the everyday routine among the villagers. Coming together holds important value for many villagers since apart from the society activities (in which not everybody is involved), nothing else gathers so many villagers together anymore apart from the market. In addition, by discussing many topics with one's neighbours, friends and acquaintances, one is able to define what is valuable and right and thus promote and protect a collective self-image. It can be noticed that Church and religion bring only an extremely small group of people together in Ahlainen village today. This, however, does not signify that the villagers do not feel connected to each other or do not feel sameness in a general sense. Sub-groups such as clubs, societies and organizations have created fresh and innovative channels for the villagers to redefine who they are and where they belong. Even though the world today is becoming more segregated and more globalized than ever before, the villagers have nevertheless managed to create ways to maintain their collective identity.

What About the Future?

Sökefelt (1999: 417) notes that the concept of identity has undergone a lot of changes over the past few decades, since previously it was understood as 'sameness', which in the psychological sense meant 'selfsameness'. The same can be said about communal identity. Unlike before, one cannot expect to find identities or cultures that are entirely whole. Indeed, James Ferguson (1999: 97) writes in connection to cultural styles and currents in communal identities:

Those participating in common stylistic practices are united in sending similar stylistic messages ... but they may at the same time have very diverse motives, values, or views in the world ... Cultural style need not map neatly onto an underlying cultural orientation or even, as Bourdieu would have it, a 'habitus'.

Thus one can become aware of the fact that, even though the people in Alakylä have managed to maintain relatively strong social ties and even though the sense of belonging is reasonably solid, not every individual sees the world and everything in it exactly the same way nor do people even preserve similar values in life. However, neither religious nor spatial identity (or any village-based identity
in fact) seem to hold much importance among younger people and their migration to bigger cities poses a problem to the remaining villagers, so much so that they talk about Pori (the nearby town) as an actual ‘threat’. Basso (2000) notes that sense of place is a universal experience and relationships to places are usually lived in the company of other people. In addition, he examines the importance of acknowledging the relationship people have with land and scenery in order to understand conceptions of themselves (2000: 67, 148). Harner (2001), too, discusses spatial identity, claiming that scenery plays a significant part not only in an individual’s identity but also in communal identity. He sees place identity as a cultural value which is shared by the community and which also contains a collective way of understanding communal identity, which is also intertwined with place meaning. For his argument he cites Edward Soja:

> Place is the location in which people struggle to achieve goals and understand their existence. Through struggle, meaning is built into inanimate objects that give place symbolic significance. This meaning can become a part of social identity – a place-based identity for groups within society. Place and identity are tied together in the sociospatial dialectic. (Harner 2001: 661, quoting Soja 1989)

Similar elements can be found in Alakylä. Most of the people I interviewed told me that they could never imagine living inland, far away from the sea. In addition, especially for one of my female informants, the rapids hold almost spiritual value already from her childhood. The rapids, called Rytökoski, were located near her childhood home and she described to me how deeply shocked she was when the government of Pori decided to destroy them. I believe that, even though associations and organizations might be the most important method of creating and sustaining communal identity, one cannot turn a blind eye to the significance of place identity either. I was told after I left Ahlainen that almost all the lilacs had been cut around the market place by the municipal council for health and safety reasons. However, after the lilacs were cut, gradually only half the number of people frequented the market as compared to previous years. Many of my female informants who actively visited the marketplace told me that the atmosphere had disappeared along with the lilacs, leaving the market looking ‘sad and bare’. Thus, one could claim that it was not only the products sold and the people themselves that attracted villagers to the market, but also the market as a place.

Even though different forms of identity appeared, the Church and churchgoing did not lose their place and significance within the society completely. Even though people are relatively alienated from the church in Ahlainen nowadays, it does not necessarily mean that they have lost touch with religion entirely. Moreover, even though the villagers do not build their communal identity around the church anymore, the importance of the Church has not completely disappeared, since it still serves as a place for people, even if in relatively small scale, to come together and feel ‘united’. What poses the greatest threat for the community in a social sense, however, is not where and when to gather together, but who is participating (Taylor 1981). What people are the most worried about is not only what happens to them when all the young people are gone but also what happens to the village and, most of all, the community itself? The question that arises is what to do or how to react when the youth of the village in fact are part of that ‘other’ instead of the village itself. This is, however, a question to which only time can give an accurate answer.

**Conclusion**

Ethnology is like fishing; all you need is a net to swing, and you can be sure that you’ll catch something. (Marcel Mauss)

So what exactly did I catch? It could be claimed that the reasons for the alteration of social patterns and communal behaviour in Alakylä had a lot to do not only with the change of the age structure in the village but also, and mainly, with the modernization process of the whole village in general. What we are looking at here in Ahlainen is a village which is contemporary but which has not (at least not yet) urbanized and does not show any signs of doing so in the near future. Even though the importance of the Church and religion hold different significance in the lives of the people in Ahlainen, and even though the importance of church-going has ceased to be the principal medium of socializing which brings the villagers together and intensifies their social ties, the communal identity of the villagers has nevertheless remained relatively strong if not even stronger than before with the help of the organizational activities. Taylor (1995) writes that ‘in the process of making themselves [the people of southwest Donegal], they make religion’ (ibid.: 242). In the case of the people of Ahlainen, however, if not rejecting religion, most of them reject the Church in the process of making themselves or, to borrow Benedict Anderson’s (2006) term, ‘re-imagining’ their communal identity. Even if the future poses a threat for the communality of the villagers in form of the migration of their youth, the collective experience among the villagers has remained as strong as the scent of the remaining lilacs surrounding the market place, the heart of the village and social encounters.

**References**


During the months of June to August 2008 I spent ten weeks in Kenya, East Africa. Six of these weeks were spent conducting interviews, living with and observing Maasai women's behaviour with regard to the effect of formal education on their lives. I have been fortunate to have grown up in Kenya amongst the Maasai people, as my parents are mission development coordinators who work with the Church Mission Society Ireland. I lived in Kenya until the age of nine, before my family moved back to Northern Ireland, but I have since returned to Kenya numerous times. Due to childhood friends and contacts my parents provided, the support of the Anglican Church, the respect and position my mother and father have within Maasai culture, an understanding of the local language (Swahili) and knowledge of appropriate cultural behaviour, I was able to bypass many levels of assimilation into Maasai culture and gain a much deeper understanding of how education affects Maasai women.

I conducted fieldwork amongst the Maasai people in two distinct communities in the Kajiado District of Kenya. I spent four weeks working in a town called Isinya where the Kaputiei Maasai clan are situated sixty kilometres south of the capital, Nairobi. I lived in my family home and was able to gain access mostly to educated Maasai women as well as talk to other community members, family and friends about the issues that were arising from interviews and observations. Within this discussion I regard Isinya as a non-'traditional' community where Maasai culture, although retained through different elements, has merged with new discourses of living through inter-tribal, market, transport, media and tourist exposure.

I then spent two weeks in a number of Maasai bomas (villages) in Oltaisika where the Matopato Maasai clan live, which is situated two hundred and seventy kilometres south east of Isinya and has a population of approximately two thousand people. It is an extremely rural area located within the Chyulu Hills. Within this discussion I shall regard Oltaisika as a ‘traditional’ area where education, although compulsory, is not necessarily enforced by the local community. This is where I lived with, interviewed and observed non-educated Maasai women.

The dichotomy between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ is an important aspect involved with the education of Maasai women. Carrithers argues that ‘change, creation and re-creation, interpretation and re-interpretation, are all part of the fabric of everyday experience’ (Carrithers 1992: 8). When I use the term ‘traditional’, I am referring to ideas and practices that Maasai people have referred to as their ‘traditional’ methods, not an idea that their traditional methods are juxtaposed alongside modern ways of living. Hansen reminds us to ‘remember the sources of our insight, the human beings who gave of themselves in providing them’ (Hansen 1976: 133). In order to protect the rights and privacy of my informants, I have used pseudonyms.

Rosaldo argues that female gender roles are ‘... not the product of the tasks women undertake or of their biology. Rather, their construction is a result of the meanings women’s activities acquire through actual social interaction’ (Rosaldo 1974 quoted in Van Allen 1997: 553). This discussion focuses on how education affects Maasai women’s gender roles. From my fieldwork and other authors’ concepts, I describe the ‘traditional’ role of a Maasai woman and then discuss the impact that education has had through the perspectives of non-educated and educated women.

In order to do this it is important to understand how the inter-play between education and female gender roles can be understood. Galaty argues that identity ‘shifters’ can be analysed through ‘inclusion or exclusion across lines or boundaries of social identity’ (Galaty 1993: 179). ‘Traditional’ Maasai culture has constructed specific
women's gender roles. When the boundaries of a normative woman's role are transgressed Maasai 'traditional' mores are challenged and undermined. Keller suggests that in order to understand change within a culture one must ‘... take a key image employed by a culture in transition and attempt to track its shifting meanings, referents, and evocative force’ (Keller 1997: 209). By analysing 'traditional' woman's role in the village, it is also possible to understand the shifts that women are experiencing as a result of education causing them to transgress normative gender boundaries of Maasai culture.

A Maasai woman's 'traditional' role

Maasai women live in a patriarchal society where kinship groups are based along patrilineal descent lines. During my fieldwork I often heard the term of respect 'Mzee' meaning 'older man' used by younger women towards men in older age-sets, as it encompasses the cultural importance of respect from young to old and from female to male. Between younger and older women, the respectful word for older woman 'Mama' is also used; however, it has more familial connotations as '[w]omen are regarded as dependents throughout their lives, but seniority of status among women, also associated with age, is rigidly acknowledged within the domestic domain and ... demands respect' (Spenser 1993: 141).

Salvadori and Fedders highlight some of the roles women perform in the domestic sphere such as cooking, making chai, looking after their families, collecting firewood and water, milking cows, looking after livestock and maintaining their bomas (Salvadori and Fedders 1973: 46–51) but these often pose a conflict with other desires for educational opportunities. I learned about women's desires to improve their education and witnessed these roles being performed in Oltsiaka upon arrival. On my first day in the field, while walking around a boma with Mary, I met Sarah, a thirty-two year old woman who has three children who agreed to talk about these matters. (Mary was a childhood friend of mine, born and was raised in Oltsiaka. She was acting as my interlocuter and had allowed me to live with her and her family). Sarah invited us into her house out of the hot sun and offered us some chai (milky tea). It was always a source of amusement for my hosts as I, the 'nzungu' (Swahili for white person), bumbled and banged my way into their house. The first thing you have to get used to in a Maasai house is the darkness, as there are only ever a few, very small windows that are there to let smoke out, not the light in. Once I had 'felt' my way to the seat provided I had to get used to the smoke being produced from the cooking fire in the centre of the house. Through my streaming tears and Sarah's condolences for them, we were able to talk about her life and the life she was wanting for her two daughters. When I asked her about her own schooling she replied, 'I would like to have gone to school because then I would be able to get a job,' like making clothes and selling them. Then I could have my own money and not be dependent on my husband. Sarah emphasized a change in how Maasai women perceive the possibilities around gender expectations today and how the older generation felt they had perhaps missed out of gaining increased independence.

Each day was punctuated by a range of practical chores. Mary's younger sister Susan, who is thirteen and is the only remaining unmarried daughter of Mary's mother, Mama Ruth, was responsible for maintaining domestic order around the boma. I would wake before dawn to the sound of her sweeping the floor with the aromatic Osinoni1 bush, before she re-lit the fire and boiled some water for chai. She would then milk the cows and separate out the milk into amounts for Mama Ruth's house and the other houses in the boma where her brothers and their families lived. When she returned from school she would often repeat these chores along with making dinner for us and usually the other members of the family. Sarah explained to me that culturally, a girl is 'not considered equal to her mother until she is circumcised, married and has her own family' and in the intervening time she must help and learn the skills needed to maintain a household from her mother. This demonstrates a hierarchy of power amongst women linked to age and patriarchal power that is enforced through discourses of respect and domestic responsibility.

In addition to carrying out the appropriate chores, the dress and adornment of Maasai women is also an important factor of tradition marking respect amongst men and women. This was highlighted to me when a woman came to me in Oltsiaka to have her picture taken and had specifically dressed in her 'traditional' shukas (red cloth) and beads for the photograph. I saw this woman a few days later in a boma and she was dressed in a skirt and t-shirt with no jewellery. This emphasizes the importance Maasai women associate with their 'traditional' dress as a means of emphasizing their identity and gender. It also reveals individual agency, as they choose the occasion to dress 'traditionally'. Klumpp and Kratz emphasise this point by arguing that Maasai women ‘advertise their own identity through the beaded ornaments they create and wear. Even when they are absent, they also help state and negotiate that of their husbands, sons, brothers, and friends who wear their creations’ (Klumpp and Kratz 1993: 218). This suggests that Maasai women's 'traditional' dress is used selectively to assert their identity and gender roles as well as facilitating and emphasizing men's gender roles within Maasai culture.

Nicholson argues that central to Maasai women's sense of worth is ‘... the joy of being good at caring for husband, children and animals' (Nicholson 2005: 260–1). The desire for a husband and family is an extremely important ideal for Maasai women as it is within this familial role that they gain their cultural respect and recognition as truly being a Maasai woman. Maasai women play a critical and central role in upholding, continuing and maintaining Maasai culture. Spenser argues that 'while women are regarded by elders as peripheral to Maasai affairs, and in a subordinate role with no control over their individual destinies, they are at the heart of the Maasai age system, and to this extent they are unquestionably Maasai' (Spenser 1993: 153). A woman's 'traditional' role is played out within the boundaries of patriarchal ascribed notions of what it means to be a Maasai woman. Education is introducing a shift into women's actual and perceived gender expectations.
**Uneducated Maasai women’s views of schooling**

Despite women’s desire to uphold traditional cultural values, Sarah spoke with pride at being married, having children and her hopes for her daughters’ future education: ‘They both need education to get a job, then marriage to get a family’. Sarah had never gone to school but she had her own views about the benefits of education. During my fieldwork in Oltiasika most of the uneducated women I spoke to wanted to be educated, wanted to have been able to continue in education or wanted their children to be educated. Apart from Sarah’s desire for financial independence from her husband, she also wanted to ‘read and write, to know other languages like Swahili or English and to no longer be idle’. ‘Idle’ women, she protested, were women who had no control over their lives, sat around their bomas and had to depend on their husbands for everything they required. She added ‘Education is like a tree that bears fruit. When you finish education you can harvest the fruits’. This independent role Sarah envisions for herself and her daughters is not necessarily attainable for the majority of women from Oltiasika. It directly challenges patriarchal authority and does not account for financial issues, problems of transport to local markets or the normative role a Maasai woman is expected to undertake within her culture. This suggests that uneducated Maasai women’s roles are being affected by education through an idealized version of what they feel is achievable through education. The headmaster from Oltiasika primary school confirmed this by claiming that in his six years of employment, only one girl had continued in education to become a teacher.

Mary is a unique example of a Maasai woman who, although she did not finish secondary school, has been encouraged by her husband to work independently. While we were talking to women in the bomas they would often reply that they wanted to be educated because they wanted to be like us – Mary and I. Our presence in the bomas represented different role models to Maasai women which, although relative to our individual situations, would be mostly unachievable to the women we were talking to. Lesorogol emphasises this by suggesting that ‘... young women with some education still have relatively few options and most of them ... end up in arranged marriages, managing livestock and raising children, alongside their uneducated counterparts’ (Lesorogol 2008: 572). Education is presenting alternative gender roles to uneducated women that make them aware of their own gender status within their culture. Through these role comparisons, uneducated women perceive their status within their community as inferior which can lead to discourses of frustration and perceived ‘idleness’. Sarah remarked that ‘women are treated like cattle; actually, the cattle are treated better than us’. Van Allen emphasizes this by arguing that ‘... western influence can sometimes weaken or destroy women’s traditional autonomy and power without providing modern forms of autonomy or power in exchange’ (Van Allen 1997: 536). Uneducated women in Oltiasika can perceive the shift that is occurring through education for younger women but they have no option to move out of patriarchal ascribed ideals of female roles.

**Educated Maasai women’s views of schooling**

Education has had an effect on gender roles amongst educated Maasai women. I spent a lot of time in Isinya with twenty-four year old Rachel who is single with no children. She is studying psychology part-time at Nairobi University and had come from a ‘traditional’ background in an area about fifty kilometres from Isinya. The first time I met Rachel she was in her office and was dressed in a pair of tight denim jeans with a printed t-shirt and was sporting a fashionable ‘waves’ pattern in her hair. When I asked her if she liked ‘traditional’ clothes she said ‘Yes, but only if I have to go home to my boma’. In Isinya, it is only during the last five years that women wearing trousers has become acceptable; however, by wearing these types of clothes, Rachel is publicly shifting the acceptable dress practices used by Maasai women and therefore influencing perceptions of gender.

Rachel felt that education affected her in many positive ways such as issues in personal and family health and hygiene, food preparation and nutrition, family planning, HIV and AIDS. Rachel also talked about the alienation she felt from her friends who were not in school and how she was perceived as being ‘proud’. She remembered a time when she was in one of these friend’s homes and was handed some chai in a noticeably dirty cup. ‘I knew if I pointed out the dirt she would be embarrassed, but I also didn’t want to drink out of it … I didn’t know what to do’. Her comment suggests that education is changing women’s ‘traditional’ methods into new discourses of living, running a household and bringing up a family.

Rachel’s studies in psychology were also influencing how she viewed her ‘traditional’ relationship with her father. She spoke of her frustration at having to obey rules of cultural avoidance with her father and their subsequent effects on her own relationships with men. ‘It frustrates me when I cannot look my father directly in the eye or that I am not supposed to sit too close to him. I have had issues with men all my life and I think this is why’. Spenser highlights this point by claiming that: ‘The avoidance of the father’s age set is regarded as fundamental to Maasai morality – and pride’ (Spencer 1993: 153). Being educated has meant that Rachel takes a different perspective on these cultural issues that affect her gender and as a result does not want them to continue. The Maasai ideal of marriage and children for Rachel was still something she aspired to; however, by continuing in education she felt she had effectively ostracised herself from traditional marriage practices. She claimed she had been labelled as ‘cursed’ by elders because she was not yet married and felt alienated from eligible men because she had not followed the ‘traditional’ role of Maasai women. Her move away from traditional gender expectations has impacted both positively and negatively on how she is perceived within her community.

Rachel also spoke about the importance of circumcision as an ideal for Maasai women. Once women are circumcised they can ‘traditionally’ fulfil their Maasai duty of getting married and having children. Boddy highlights this ideal by arguing: ‘The operation ... renders her marriageable; undergoing it is a necessary condition of becoming a woman, of being enabled to use her one great gift, fertility’ (Boddy 1997: 310). Rachel talked about
the differences that now exist between the circumcision of girls who are not in school and girls who are. Girls in education will only receive a small snip whereas girls who do not go to school will receive the full clitoridectomy. Boddy highlights how this difference in circumcision is affecting female roles in other cultures:

... many western educated Sudanese are now having their daughters ‘pseudocircumcised’ ... Apparently the infibulation is reversible and is performed only so that the girl might save face before her traditionally circumcised cohorts at boarding school. (Boddy 1997: 312)

This reveals how deeply rooted in Maasai culture the practice of circumcision is and how, although education is shifting its boundaries, it is still an important part of Maasai tradition and the process of gender role formation. From more conversations with educated Maasai women, there is a strong sense of independence and a hope to remodel ‘traditional’ gender roles within a new generational format. This is evident through Rachel’s persistence despite the socially and emotionally painful journey through education that has left her ostracized from her uneducated peers and cut her off from the cultural benefits of following her traditional role.

In sum, then, education has opened up new gender roles for Maasai women as well as created new discourses of inequality and differentiation. The perception of an educated women’s gender role has also created differences between educated and non-educated Maasai women. This was evident through Rachel’s uneducated peers perceiving her as ‘proud’ and her unease with accepting a dirty mug of chai. Lesorogol emphasizes this by suggesting that there is now a gender role dichotomy that is actively perceived within and between the two groups (Lesorogol 2008: 572). Lesorogol argues that education is having a differential and negative effect on Samburu girls by suggesting that there are two differences between non-educated and formally educated girls; the first is ‘... differences in knowledge and capability imparted by formal education while the second is ideas about female sexuality and gender roles’ (Lesorogol 2008: 553). She argues that this has led to ‘increased differentiation among girls and women, with some negative implications for individual girls and women as well as for female solidarity more generally’ (Lesorogol 2008: 553).

**Conclusion**

Education is affecting Maasai women in many ways as well as Maasai culture in general; however, one of its biggest impacts is on the collective identity that Maasai hold as a core value within their culture. Mbti argues that:

In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately ... He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group. (Mbti 1969: 108)

The Anglican Bishop of Kajiado spoke to me about how education is affecting the support networks that were ‘traditionally’ available within a clan. ‘The clan could offer you protection, support, they would fight for you’. He argued that education, as well as contact with other tribes, the economy and travel were breaking up clan support mechanisms. Rachel felt this loss of clan support from the elders through her stigmatization of being ‘cursed’ because she wasn’t yet married. Cohen argues that forces of incorporation can ‘... weaken and even destroy the corporate nature of local communities or groups as these are “opened up” socially and as their members link up with wider social circles’ (Cohen 1997: 330). Education is creating new roles for women that provide them with a higher degree of power and autonomy within their culture; however, in doing so it is also removing the support mechanism that has ‘traditionally’ maintained them. In doing this it has left women exposed and marginalized within their community, as education attributed values such as independence and self-reliance are being juxtaposed against the collective support of conformity.

Waller argues that the Maasai have ‘tended to hone a sharply defined notion of ‘Maasai’ as ‘people-of-cattle’, which has been used – socially and rhetorically – to ‘cut away’ or distance those who deviate from a pastoral ideal’ (Galaty 1993: 175). Through ‘shifting’ across gender boundaries women are creating new discourses in what it means to be a Maasai woman. These alternative models of living are active or perceived according to the amount of patriarchal authority the women live under. Waller argues that the ‘Maasai must accept the ‘modernization’ of their economy and the invasion of their world by outsiders ... Entering the market, going to school or moving to town are merely new forms of boundary crossing’ (Waller 1993: 301). New gender roles are being created through alternative power dynamics that education is generating which in turn is affecting the lives of the women in Oltiasika and Isinya. In defiance of this, Maasai men are using an ideological notion of ‘traditional’ female roles as the standard from which women should not deviate in order to reassert their patriarchal authority. Spenser emphasizes this, arguing that ‘The most protected part of their society – women and children as dependents – is the part that is crucial for the future of Maasai’ (Spenser 1993: 154).

Through a shift in gender roles and relatively available cultural power, Maasai women are challenging boundaries of gender normative expectations and in turn disputing men’s reliance on their ‘traditional’ roles. All the Maasai women I spoke to were proud of their culture and many aspects of their ‘traditions’; however, they also realized the value of knowledge and choice. Waller claims that for the Maasai ‘Survival now seems to lie in adaptation and in fashioning an identity flexible enough to encompass the variety of modern experience and to make use of modern resources’ (Waller 1993: 301). My juxtaposition of ‘traditional’ practices with ‘modern’ ones was not intended to create a dichotomy per se, but to reveal the ongoing personal and collective processes of incorporation and rejection within the lives of Maasai women and their changing gender roles. Sarah in Oltiasika may have had unrealistic expectations regarding the benefits of education, however, she wanted to enjoy the ‘fruits’ of it with her most important ‘traditional’ Maasai ideal – her family and children.
Notes

1 Osinoni – a local shrub that grows all over the Oltaisika area and gives off a strong mint smell when crushed.

2 The Samburu are a group of people that live in northern Kenya who are closely related to the Maasai.

References


Introduction
Separation from family in order to take up one’s role in university is a ritual liminal stage that students routinely experience. Many students reintegrate into families or forge new relationships in the workplace when college life comes to an end. For other students a form of liminality can continue indefinitely. The group with which I conducted fieldwork from September 2008 to January 2009 was the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Society at the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), known as the GLB. I was curious to explore how the GLB society appeared to perpetuate itself within the liminal space of university life. This paper is about the camaraderie developed by this community of people who are sharing an experience of communitas (Turner 2002), an intense feeling of social togetherness and belonging within this double liminal space of university life and gayness.

I argue that students who are gay or bisexual must negotiate a double form of liminality, and when the liminality of university ends, the liminality of gayness continues. Van Gennep’s treatment of rites of passage shows that a clear distinction exists in ritual between the stages of separation, transition (which Turner named the liminal stage) and re-incorporation. But is being homosexual or bisexual in Ireland a perpetual liminality? How do gays or bisexuals, after finding acceptance within the particularly strong communitas experienced by the GLB, ‘reintegrate’ within a society from which they have always been excluded? There is no accepted ritual process to reintegrate them; when heterosexual students have gone through the graduation ceremony, society welcomes them as they are, but gay and bisexual students have a different experience.

My research methods consisted of participant observation, one-on-one interviews, and semi-structured open-ended interviews. My research will be of value because, as Weston asserts, ‘Coverage of same-sex sexuality and transgendering remains uneven, for reasons that include wilful ignorance, fear of professional repercussions, paucity of documents from earlier periods and reticence on the part of ethnographers’ (Weston 1993: 339–367).

From an early stage of the fieldwork several GLB members freely offered me the information that they were not gay. This concerned me, as it caused me to wonder whether I should offer the information that I am gay. James Wafer poses the idea of having a ‘gay sensibility’, whereby the writer in some way is part of the text; he asserts that ‘the writing of a gay ethnography entails greater risks than coming out of the closet because it threatens cultural norms in a more profound way’ (Wafer 1996: 262). My hope is that my coming out, yet again, will serve to legitimize my work.

Prior to NUIM becoming a separate entity from St. Patrick’s College Maynooth in the transition period 1995 to 1997, the GLB Society had existed for three to four years. The foundation-stone of communitas in this society stemmed from its need to oppose the Catholic authorities of St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth, which refused to ratify the group.

Coming out of St. Patrick’s
The GLB in NUIM is historically unique in that it was the last Irish university gay society to be ratified, in 1996, three years after the decriminalization of homosexuality in the Republic of Ireland. Although the GLB community is naturally located in the liminal space of

Groundhog gay: An experience of Communitas and Liminality
Caitríona Coen
It was originally separated from other societies by the disapproval of college authorities. Turner asserts that 'liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial' (Turner 2002: 359). The foundations of the GLB had been outside the margins of mainstream Irish society. During the struggle for recognition, both the society and its members were juxtaposed in a liminal state within the liminality that typifies college life. The double liminality separating the GLB from the greater college community served to heighten the sense of communitas among GLB members. Once NUIM became independent from St. Patrick's College, the GLB got recognition. This was considered a great victory not just for the society but for the students' union and a sizable number of the student population. The GLB developed its sense of communitas by challenging the hierarchical structure of the university. The ratification of the society was a triumph for the students, but only insofar as the fight for ratification and equality injected a strong sense of communitas into the society. The GLB Society still had to discover what GLBs actually do.

Communitas and liminality appeared evident in the GLB from the foundation of the society, but the cohesion which binds both together comes from a shared understanding within this group of people. A salient cultural manifestation of the GLB revealed through focus groups during my research was that reincorporation into Irish society – which fails to grant some people the same human rights as others, due to their sexuality – gives both an alternative view of liminality and a sense of communitas. A strong impression from semi-structured focus groups was the fact that gay, lesbian, and bisexual people experience a constant emotional roller-coaster sense of coming out with family members, new friends and even within their extended families.

I noted that the topic of coming out presented itself in several different ways to different people. But all informants had one interesting point in common. They were always coming out and having to consider to whom they could come out. There is continual pressure enveloped in the repetitive aspect of constantly feeling that one must come out. Can being gay or bisexual bind one into a perpetual liminality, a 'groundhog gay' sensation, which is not of one's own making?

Groundhog gay

For many of the informants, coming out could be potentially awkward and stressful in environments both inside and outside the college. Weston asserts: 'As someone who claimed membership in the community I studied, I knew too well the subtle but no less debilitating effects of living in a society where heterosexuality remains a grounding assumption for social action' (Weston 1996: 275). The identification of the 'groundhog gay' concept through focus groups was a direct result of my own gay sensibility. Like Weston, I claim membership of this community, and one of the most stressful things in my life was not getting married nor moving house (which I did) but coming out to my mother-in-law. One informant remained confused by his parents’ reaction: 'I told my parents I was gay and their response was 'we are not going to tell your sister. We don't know how to take it and we are not sure how she will'.' GLB members can empathize with each other with regard to understanding if family members decide to censor or exclude them.

All thirty informants empathized with this type of reaction from within the immediate family structure. None of the respondents found it unusual that the support offered for coming out consisted in being asked not to be yourself in particular situations, depending on the 'straight people' involved. The coming out process, once vocalized, became ongoing and seemingly perpetual. Individuals run the risk of losing their identity and becoming defined by their sexuality. For two-thirds of the informants, coming out represented a significant loss of identity as opposed to an appreciation by the friends or family members with whom they had shared this important aspect of their lives.

In the GLB, webs of support are strengthened through understanding of the trappings of a world where to be straight is considered a societal norm. In this context Geertz's definition of culture, 'that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' (Geertz 1973: 5), highlights the fact that the GLB are spinning their own web of significance. Twenty-first-century Irish society does not recognize homosexuals as equal citizens or to be part of what is spun to be culturally natural. The groundhog experience of perpetually coming out to people who at times can be unsupportive and judgemental revealed a fresh dimension to the specific quality of the communitas at work in the GLB.

Gay rites

The majority of my informants have had to, or will have to, disclose their sexual orientation to people in an Irish context. GLB rites of passage are particular to the society and they serve to underscore the experience of communitas transmitted within this transitional society. Turner notes that 'Communitas cannot stand alone if the material and organizational needs of human beings are to be adequately met' (Turner 2002: 373). The 'groundhog gay' concept could potentially sharpen the focus between an indefinite liminal stage and a perpetual sense of liminality.

One salient rite of passage within the social life of the GLB is related to the cultural aspect of being gay and Irish. GLB members took pleasure in exposing their Irishness (rather than their gayness) in upholding the tradition of Irish 'tea-time'. A majority of collective GLB gatherings took place at 'tea-time' each Tuesday between five and seven p.m. Through those tea-times, the GLB gives its members the opportunity to become more aware of their civil rights and to meet individuals judged within the same cultural web. It struck me as being 'very Irish' to have these meetings at tea-time, because the tea-time concept within Irish culture is culturally specific to an Irish person's social identity.

When I was growing up in the 1970s in the west of Ireland, tea-time referred to the 6 p.m. meal families simply called 'tea'. Around six o'clock was demarcated by the peal of the Angelus bell. For many families tea represented the one meal of the working day when all the family members would gather as a unit. Children were seen but the radio was heard.

Children were seen but the radio was heard.
This tea-time is a rite of passage for GLB members because the collective spirit of communitas worked in order to help the individual understand his or her culturally specific identity. This was further fortified by the realization that certain members were too self-conscious to openly attend ‘tea-time’. In order to facilitate those people, closed coffee meetings were arranged in a room over the Juice Bar for GLB members only. I noticed that different people would usually attend the open and closed meetings, as some people felt that they were being stared at or classified by other customers. To some people, homosexual men or women, or those of a different colour or religious persuasion, may be considered ‘beyond the pale’ (Bowie 2000: 38). Arguably this would considerably hinder reintegration for a wide range of minority groups.

GLB rites support its members by acknowledging their sexuality without confusing it with their identity; therefore, as Turner asserts, the members become ‘revitalized’. The company that a person seeks or chooses can inform her or him and, indeed, her or his personality. Weston asserts that en masse the gay community is ‘an entity too abstract, too encompassing, and too homogenizing to provide the face-to-face relationships, the tolerance for conflict, and the emotional sustenance’ a person may need (Weston 1996: 282). During research I observed how GLB members see themselves, both individually and collectively, within the particular space and time of the society.

Glad To Be

The GLB rites of passage are particular to the members’ experience of a perpetual state of liminality. Over three-quarters of the informants that I interviewed felt that the transition back to ‘structure’ would be an easier transition as a result of the experience of communitas within the GLB. Turner notes that communitas ‘is a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be no society’ (Turner 2002: 360). The GLB rites of passage serve to re-inforce this sense of communitas. An important ethnographic moment to witness this type of recognition among GLB society members arose when the GLB held an Annual General Meeting in order to change the society’s name.

Four members had proposed the following names:

GLBT
GLAD TO BE AT NUIM
NUIM LGBT
OUTLOUD

The reason for the name change was in order to reinstate the letter ‘T’ into the title, as some members were concerned that future transgender students might not consider the GLB to be a GLBT society. The committee had short-listed four names which were to be debated amongst the members. Throughout the fiery debate people from the floor reasoned why a particular name should or should not represent the society. The choice of name seemed to be crucial, as members argued that it would represent not just a society and its members but would need to be instantly recognizable to potential members.

The GLBT speaker did not wish to part with the old GLB name because it was the name of the society when it had won the best society national award in 2007. The speaker proposing the name NUIM LGBT felt that this name-change was key as it represents ‘us’ as a group but also as a wider community looking to a wider sexual identity, because ‘people still do not recognize gay rights.’ The speaker representing OUTLOUD argued that the name symbolized that the members of the society are united in fighting for their rights. The Glad To Be representative faced tough questions, particularly from many members who worried that the name did not clearly define a GLBT society. When it looked unlikely that he could convince the floor and the heated debate had reached a crescendo, this speaker regained composure and spoke with great clarity: ‘Glad To Be accepts everyone. We welcome everyone and that is what Glad To Be is all about … also it shows that being gay is not a personality, you know yourself, you know who you are, and you are glad to be.’

Prior to that moment, Glad To Be had been the most contentious name. A silence fell across the room, the first of that lengthy evening. The votes were cast shortly afterwards and showed resoundingly in favour of the name Glad To Be at NUIM. The meeting defined how the GLB members see themselves as a group and succinctly captured how the society wished to be viewed externally. The name-change further signified the society providing a space where people are granted the right ‘to be’. The communitas within the GLB provided a liberal space where members could forge social relationships without feeling that they have to hide a part of themselves, announce or justify a sexual preference.

It was notable that people spoke about themselves not as individuals, but as an extension of the group’s communitas. The name-change highlights a significant contribution to the group’s sense of communitas and identity.

A Celtic Kula

There exists in the GLB an important social exchange interlinking the society with other GLBT university societies nationally. This event is called a GLBT Intervarsity. Aspects of this social structure mirror elements of Malinowski’s Kula Ring concept which was ‘not done under stress or need, since its main aim is to exchange articles that are of no practical use’ (Malinowski 1984: 86). I attended the first Intervarsity event, which included eight other Irish universities.

Malinowski noted that, for the Trobriand Islanders, the practice of the Kula Ring helped to maintain peace between the inhabitants of many islands and sustain communication over long distances. In comparison to Malinowski’s ‘Kula Ring’, the Intervarsity ‘Kula’ would appear to have no economic value; but the social connections that could be forged are potentially vast, involving a wide span of people. Similar to the social structure of Malinowski’s Kula Ring, each GLBT society places its focus on healthy social connections and a sharing of information as opposed to competition.

The Intervarsity evening was held in Dublin in the Dragon Bar. For some society members it was the first time that they had been to a gay bar. The opportunity to
go as part of a community alleviated the anxiety that can routinely be experienced. It was easy to become comfortable in this space, which contrasts sharply with the usual soulless, drag gay venues on offer. The exterior Georgian bar with the inviting blood-red sofas, red velvet swags and candelabras blended perfectly into the more seductive Asian decor, which leads you into the dimly-lit interior main bar, fitted with intimate leather booths on one side of the bar and a mezzanine overlooking the dance floor. The variety of funky artwork is thought-provoking, while mosaic tiling and statues adorn the walls.

The focus of this particular evening was to forge social interconnection between the different college GLBT societies. The GLBT Intervarsity societies are seeking to form alliances in order to strengthen their social connections and to be more unified in the future. The evening was primarily social. Many remarked that the Intervarsity ‘Kula’ was a great opportunity to meet a cross-section of people with similar interests. Malinowski observed that one must not underestimate that ‘all around the Ring of Kula there is a network of relationships, and that naturally the whole forms one interwoven fabric’ (Malinowski 1984: 92).

An unforeseen, but welcome, consequence of the Intervarsity evening was that it had renewed several long-lost social connections. GLBT members met people from their secondary-school days and friends from other colleges with whom they had lost contact. This social ‘Kula’ has provided the opportunity to link people’s pasts with their present. In an understanding Intervarsity environment these forgotten social connections may be restored, perhaps enabling people to experience a greater sense of belonging within a wider reaching social context while reconnecting with their own inner identity in a more clearly-defined way. Providing a space to build self-confidence for people who have experienced similar emotions and social challenges is very important for members.

Over two-thirds of the informants of the GLB agreed that the Intervarsity social ‘Kula’ bestows respect, acknowledgement, and social support to the people involved. These three gifts, exchanged and received through the structure of the Intervarsity ‘Kula’ are priceless. These gifts could help members to develop a stronger national voice when dealing with issues of their sexual identity in Ireland today. These are invaluable gifts of exchange within the communitas of the GLB, which, according to Turner should be anti-struc-ture, members find incorporation and structure into an accepting society.

The features of the ‘Kula Ring’ exchange proved to be a portable set of concepts and applicable with regard to the social life of the GLB society. The potential power of shared knowledge and communication channelled through the Intervarsity social ‘Kula’ should not be underestimated. The normalizing factor of shared experiences through the social ties and contacts could potentially serve to improve the Intervarsity GLBT members’ social skills if and when they return to ‘structure’.

It is the responsibility of GLB society members to maintain the experience of communitas within their society. It is the GLB members’ legacy, within the liminal university space, to transmit the GLB collective memory to which they have contributed, and from which they have derived support. This is the sense of belonging that forms the community of the GLB society, who are now Glad To Be at NUIM. During the course of researching this project it occurred to me that I had never asked anybody when they realized that they were heterosexual. It has simply never occurred to me. We are frequently and repeatedly taught that culture is all-encompassing. Is it?

Conclusion

Weston questions if there is a gay community waiting for queers when they do come out (Weston 1996: 282). She keenly observed that ‘coming out’ is further complicated, ‘crosscut by lines of race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, and class’ (Ibid.). The particular quality of participants’ observation revealed how the experience of communitas permeated the GLB vis-à-vis the members’ individual freedom of sexual expression.

The society members shared with me how they see themselves as individuals. More than two-thirds of my informants described the GLB as a community. For all GLB members the society is a space where they neither need to identify themselves nor feel identified.

The struggle for the ratification of the GLB society created an intense feeling of social togetherness and belonging within the liminal space of university life. It exemplified the group’s sense of communitas, which is the core strength of the GLB because it recognizes difference.

Although all found great amusement in the initial identification stages of ‘groundhog gay’, it remains an unsettling life challenge that is an ongoing source of perpetual discomfort for over three-quarters of the informants that I interviewed. I noted a change in people’s body language during these sessions, as they made the sudden realization that perpetually coming out is an anxiety that can invade one’s life without warning and is largely out of their control.

This study is rich with ideas for future research projects. Groundhog gay almost inverts van Gennep’s formulation because in wider society (which should be the structure they reincorporate into) gays and bisexuals are perpetually in liminality; but within the communitas of the GLB, which, according to Turner should be anti-struc-ture, members find incorporation and structure into an accepting society.

The rites of passage particular to the GLB acknowledge members’ sexuality without neatly bundling it as one’s identity.

The features of the ‘Kula Ring’ exchange proved to be a portable set of concepts and applicable with regard to the social life of the GLB society. The potential power of shared knowledge and communication channelled through the Intervarsity social ‘Kula’ should not be underestimated. The normalizing factor of shared experiences through the social ties and contacts could potentially serve to improve the Intervarsity GLBT members’ social skills if and when they return to ‘structure’.

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Notes

1 This article is based on my undergraduate anthropology thesis undertaken in NUI Maynooth. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Patty Gray for her consistent support, advice and encouragement. I gratefully acknowledge the interest shown in this project by the members of the GLB community in NUIM. I wish to thank two anonymous reviewers for their useful comments and insight.

2 All informants’ names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

3 The GLB society is registered in the Constitution of the Students Union as a GLBT, to cater for transgendered students. At the time of this writing there were no transgender student members.

4 I adopted this phrase from the title of the film *Groundhog Day* (1993), in which a character is trapped in a cyclical time-warp out of his control.

5 Interview with Colin, 15/12/2008.

6 Irish tea-time should not be confused with the English ‘high tea’ or ‘low tea’, from which it differs considerably.

7 Prayers Roman Catholics say at midday and six in the evening to the sound of a church bell.

References


Written Out and Written In: Inishkillane remembered

Judith Okely

Anthropology is littered with conflicting interpretations of the same field sites. In this essay the anthropologist considers fieldwork where close companions shared encounters at the same time and place, producing contrasting interpretations. Different standpoints included gender, intellectual priorities and research status. Texts should be scrutinized in the context of fieldwork. In a submerged tradition of a partner, usually female, accompanying the fieldworker, the experience may be transformed under one author, as lone explorer. The text under discussion (Brody 1973) helped stimulate a genre emphasizing ‘demoralization’ and disfunction in rural Ireland. The book's template had been an earlier, fixed imaginary. By contrast, Brody’s companion saw ingenuity, pride and resilience in communities with centuries of migration and movement. Flexibility was not pathological. Inspiring Irish women and gendered positionality are restored.

Constructed Texts

My former partner presented me with an advance copy of *Inishkillane* (Brody 1973), a partial record of shared experience, in whose text I did not feature. Anthropology is littered with conflicting interpretations of the same field sites in different time spans. Here, events between spring 1966 and late summer 1967 in the West of Ireland were experienced by ‘married’ companions. Social science graduates, unqualified in anthropology, we shared encounters at the same time and place. Contrasting standpoints included gender, intellectual priorities and the tradition of submerged female spouse. For any partner, subordinated to the funded partner’s project, cultural capital is invested in the author. Prefaces thank the anonymous ‘wife’ (McDonald 1978). Illicit or ex-partners are camouflaged or written out. Other Others ‘unmentionable … often not untouchable, (are) not … given honest attention’ (Weil 1987: 198, and cf. Levi-Strauss 1974: 30). The Brody text elicited similar responses in early drafts of this essay and drew me into problematizing the fieldworker (Okely 1992, 1996 ch. 2). John Blacking (personal communication 1983) emphasized the importance to Brody of my presence as ‘wife’, otherwise access by an unknown single Englishman would have been problematic (no matter the many Irish bachelors – their kinship was known). Blacking, like Steven Lukes, our former tutor, insisted I write my perspective.

The Lone Male Explorer

Anthropological ambivalence toward personal narratives and tropes of ‘arrival’ disguised as objective science have been highlighted (Pratt 1986). Brody was selective by omission of his companion:

In early spring of 1966 I first visited the west coast of Ireland … to the home of Kate Nee … maintaining entirely on her own a small farm in Connemara, that I had been directed by an old friend of Kate's living in England … she appeared, walking down the hillside … black shawl draped around her shoulder. Nervously I began to explain who I was, but no sooner had I said the friend's name than Kate cried, ‘My darling!’ clasped me in a tight hug, and hurried to make the first of a thousand teas. (Brody 1973: 1)

I remember Kate in floral overall, not the poetic ‘peasant’ black shawl. Kate said: ‘Oh me *darlings* with crucial plural *s*’. The author’s ‘wife’ had acquired a ‘gold’ wedding ring from Belfast’s Woolworths. We had been given Kate’s whereabouts through Maud Kennedy from Oxfordshire, where we had lived for a year after graduating. Maud had once lived in a cottage adjoining Kate’s.

One review praised *Inishkillane* for the innovative use of the first person in the text. However, this usage acted more as an authoritative ‘I was there’, reproducing the trope of the lone, male explorer. Feminists have since
deconstructed the narrative of the lone male penetrating ‘virgin’ territory (de Lauretis 1984).

**Interpretations: demoralization or celebratory resilience**

The cover describes ‘Inishkillane’ as: demoralized and socially atrophied … the intricate web of traditional life … has been undermined by an economic and social involvement with urban capitalism … the young regard the cities of England and America as their principal cultural and economic resource. (Brody 1973).

The Introduction privileges ‘demoralization’ which is:

to lose belief in the social advantages or moral worth of their own small society … demoralization is aggravated by … a milieu which, in the view of the Inishkillane people, offers neither real advantage nor compensatory dignity. (Ibid: 16–17)

The paradigm emphasized inner mental states, encouraging a genre of decay and mental illness (e.g. Schepers-Hughes, 1979, despite Gibbon, 1973). Later, Peace (1988), then Wilson and Donnan (2006: 23–27) would problematize this genre. In contrast, I marveled at ingenuity and resilience in communities historically marked by movement and migration, subsequently labelled diaspora (Fog Olwig and Hastrup 1997). For example, Brody's descriptions of 'John Joyce' and his mother, not knowing whether he would stay (1973: 123–24), were to me not pathological symptoms, but instead standard flexible practices.

Sitting in our van on rainy days, Hugh read out passages of *The Great Hunger* (Woodham-Smith 1962). Walking along the cliffs, staring at the Atlantic, I was haunted by lost voices of emigrants. Ireland was long marked by movement. Brody's sedentary template was the imagined community of Arensberg and Kimball (1968; cf. Gibbon, 1973).

Parallel accounts of decline and ‘disfunctionalism’ emerged in relation to Irish Travellers (Gmelch 1977; cf. McCarthry 1994). My contrasting analysis of English Travellers was to be described as ‘optimistic and even celebratory’ of ‘strength and adaptability’ (Helleiner 2000: 12). Earlier, I held similar interpretations of rural Ireland.

**Before Fieldwork**

We had graduated in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, with Sociological Theory and Social Institutions as new options. Brody was offered a Sociology postgraduate studentship. Immediately after graduating, we travelled to Greece. Thanks to Hugh, I learned new ways of meeting people beyond our class and culture. On Poros, we passed days alongside George, the fisherman. He declared ‘You no same tourists’.

Subsequently, in the Cherwell valley, we lived far from university elitism. I obtained occasional research assistantships. We befriended Maud, Aubrey (a farm worker), and Harold Bushy (a WW1 deserter) (Okely 1996). Within one year, Hugh was offered a permanent lectureship at Queen’s University, Belfast, in the Philosophy Department.  

From autumn 1966 Hugh conducted fieldwork in Ireland during vacations. Wanting autonomy, I qualified in further education in London, planning to teach in Belfast. Renting a bedsit in ‘Swinging London’, I could fly cheap standby Heathrow/Belfast for extended weekends. I spent two springs, two summers and numerous briefer periods with Hugh in rural Cork, Connemara and Clare between 1966 and 1967. These localities, with Donegal, were merged as ‘Inishkillane’ (cf. Wilson and Donnan 2006: 26). Brody made subsequent visits after moving to London. The main text was completed in 1970 (as Hugh informed me).

Before fieldwork, our contrasting intellectual activities may have reinforced differences in interpretation. In contrast to Hugh’s directed reading and seminars, I was reading Tolstoy, Eliot and Austen; watering the desert left by the undergraduate syllabus. As research assistant for an economist then a psychologist, I found advance hypotheses imposed on early data unsatisfactory. Alongside Hugh, I read O’Sullivan about the now uninhabited Blaskets (1953). However, without having to relate my experiences to the earlier corpus of anthropological literature, I did not transpose the idealized functionalist text of Arensberg and Kimball on 1930s County Clare (1937, 1968) onto apparent descendants. I went to the West of Ireland without preconceived theories.

**To the West**

In the Spring of 1966 we drove into Belfast off the ferry. Before the struggles of the later ‘60s, we were very ignorant of conflicts in the North. But I sensed a pent-up energy in those back streets. My previous experience of Ireland had been visiting my sister at Trinity College, Dublin and O’Donoghue’s folk-music bar. I had seen Synge plays at the Abbey Theatre and read Yeats, Joyce and Connolly.

Soon, we were driving south. The vent in the van’s roof whistled wildly with the wind and sucked in the smell of turf smoke. We slept in the van, finding lovely places to park. Those heather-bordered roads, the mountains and loughs; I was absorbing rural Ireland, a place I was to love, alongside my companion.

Our travels took us to a small town in County Clare. In one bar, I was the only woman. A man was playing a tin flute. The pure tones had howling melancholy or merriment. When he put the flute inside his jacket, I said ‘Don’t put it away’. He would always delightedly remind me of this. He limped with a damaged leg. We were invited to his home where his mother described the agony of having dropped him as a child. A bachelor, with an invalidity allowance, he was vital companion for his widowed mother. He declared that he had ‘travelled the world’ for festivals – his ‘world’ was Ireland. I saw no demoralization, instead purity and artistry. He was respected in bar and street.

We spent hours in that bar. People bought us Guinness. The glasses sat in twos and fours on the bar. Attempts to reciprocate were refused. Anthropology later revealed that this was proof we were strangers, providing examples for my introductory lectures.

It was common practice to hitchhike to and from the small town. Hugh and I got to know people who hitched a ride. They were *au fait* with metropolitan ways. One of
those ‘rural farmers’ we gave a lift to told how he helped build the London Victoria Underground Line. This involvement in metropolitan capitalism undermined any theories of isolation. Residence by locals was even more ‘multi-sited’ than that conveyed in Inishkillane. Numbers of people were coming and going. They chose to return to their earlier landscapes, not necessarily by default. Metropolitan engagement had not brought permanent exile.

Mary and her Bar

In the summer of 1967 we had been introduced to another beautiful place in County Cork through a Queen's student. After his testimony, we were in. Questioned about the date of our marriage, we gave this as when we had moved as committed couple into our Oxfordshire cottage. Both Kate and Mary put us up as married couple in their homes.

Mary, who ran a local bar, became a close confidante. We exchanged enthusiasms about the sea, rocks and changing skies. She loved her surroundings and celebrated a sense of history. Mary was pleased that I liked the dark panelled walls. Customers showed solidarity towards Mary; a single mother separated from a husband abroad. She owned and ran this place. A trained teacher, she preferred this independent position. Such an example is not developed in Inishkillane.

In Mary's bar, I learned 'The Black Velvet band'. In naïve triumph at a later Belfast philosophy dinner party, I performed this 'cultural gem' from a 'rural enclave'. Someone said: 'That's The Dubliners' latest hit!' Presumptions peeled away.

Within one year, Hugh gave up the lecturership in Belfast. We returned by autumn 1967 to the Cherwell valley, after renovating a canal cottage. On return trips, Hugh explored a Donegal locality, producing a voyeuristic description of a farmer's breakdown (1973: 104). A priest became informant elsewhere. Soon, the book emerged. After we separated in November, Hugh moved to a communal flat in London; a metropolis towards which, he admitted, the rural young directed their concerns.

We had planned to spend Christmas 1967 in County Cork at Mary's invitation, but it wasn't to be. When we parted, I found myself severed also from the peoples of all the places of Inishkillane. I could hardly reappear in a part of my life that had served as a magical world. At my London College in 1967, I wrote an essay as a debate between the then UK Prime Minister Harold Wilson's promotion of 'the white heat of technology' and what would now be seen as Green scepticism. The West of Ireland presented alternatives to the consumerist 'Swinging Sixties' which had captivated the metropolis. An extract, albeit romantic, records my admiration:

I know an Irish woman who has several acres of land overlooking Lough Corrib. On this she grazes a few cows, bullocks and a donkey. The cows give her milk, butter and calves. The bullocks she sells. The donkey is used for carting manure to the potato patches. He also brings up the turf. She is never short of fuel. She bakes her own bread. She grows lots of vegetables. Everything is part of a wonderful pattern. Sixty-five, she dances like a young girl. When she sings she is a great artist. Brought up in a road accident.

Alternatives to Carnaby Street

There was the contrasting simplicity of daily material needs. The nutritious potatoes, boiled in their skins, were served at every meal. Kate asked if I would like an egg for breakfast. Subsequently I discovered the hen laid only one each day and I was getting it. She had visited her children in the United States. They begged her to stay. She preferred Connemara. One daughter rebuked her for not wearing gloves in the snow. She loafed the central heating, all those cars and city life. Her children's remittances had financed her bungalow. An electric cooker stood unused. Instead, Kate hung her pots over the open fireplace.

Kate shared her tragedies, like her husband's sudden death when away working on the roads. Among her visitors was Michael, a local man who helped in heavy jobs. He talked of Rachel Carson (1962). Thus I appreciated intellectual wisdom from an unassuming roadman. I loved the calm of Kate's bungalow and the surrounding hill slopes. We helped Michael bring up the hay and reeds on our backs. I took the donkey to the bog and loaded its panniers with turf, then lay in the green scrub, daydreaming amid wild flowers.

Kate's sideboard displayed photographs of weddings: signs of triumph and absences of adult children in
'Amereeca' and England. Her eldest, Nora, lived the other side of the Lough. We visited Nora up a mountain track. Her son happily walked us up the slopes to enjoy his landscape. Nora’s daughter had some allergy. The doctor advised them to move. Her husband and son stayed at the farm. We visited Nora in a caravan in a dreary town pub car park. She missed the mountain. We recalled the wind in the hillside greenery and the magnificence that she had to abandon – no recompense in the shops and urban bustle. This powerful counter to the major theme is absent.

Practice and Theories
Hugh had this way of getting to know the farmers. Walking past someone working, he would ask ‘Can we help you?’ This never failed to disarm. Soon we were having hay or weeding vegetable patches, then invited to join the family for tea. This offer of labour provided me later with similar openings in Normandy (Okely 1996).

The final year of my degree had killed the adventure of knowledge. Here in the West of Ireland, the body was integrated with learning; helping behind the bar, learning in a different ambiance from people I grew to respect and love. All this was living knowledge and my route to anthropology (Okely 2007).

Where the text depicts atrophy, I saw ingenuity and mutual support. The solo singing in bars was notable for the encouragement given the singer with ‘yes Jimmy’ or ‘good Jimmy’ after each verse. This contrasted with the tuneless violence or boorish banter that kept me from English pubs. I did not interpret as mere sadness the silences Brody so described. I sensed the comfort of companionship. Granted, I was not there in winters when Brody noted contrasts.

Suicide, or Contested Masculinities at Sea?
I began a short story about a lobster fisherman, ‘Jimmy’ (suitably disguised in the text), tall with red hair, his skin pale and freckled. With his own boat he emptied lobster traps in the bay. The live lobsters were sent to German restaurants. We went out in his boat. He took crabs from the lobster pots, snapped off their legs and crabs from the lobster pots, snapped off their legs and claws before throwing them helpless into the sea. That cruelty belied his gentle manner. On my last evening in County Cork, I was serving behind the bar. Jimmy leaned against the counter. Hugh disingenuously expressed envy of the fisherman. I remained behind the bar on which Jimmy was leaning. An unspoken rapport was expressed in the moving of glasses and exchange of glances. He grew softer. But I was a married woman, in love with my partner.

Jimmy offered to take us on a daylong boat trip the next morning. But we had unexpectedly been offered a lift to Belfast by a tourist couple. At six a.m. on the brightest of mornings, I pinned a note on Jimmy’s windscreen, writing how sad I was not to go on the water with him is recent if contrasted with Arensberg and Kimball. However, Gibbon argues that ‘nobody ever challenged him is recent if contrasted with Arensberg and Kimball. However, Gibbon argues that ‘nobody ever challenged the once-colonized had to appear vague with outsiders. However, on broader issues of colonization, Hugh and I had fraught political arguments between ourselves about the 1967 Six Day War (cf. Wroe 2001), the Gaza Strip, and what I considered appropriated Bedouin land. Hugh’s and my differing standpoints doubtless affected our interpretations. The Irish, with centuries of colonization, had subtle strategies. They were, in my view, not merely helpless victims with desires directed primarily towards some distant metropolis.

Ethnographic evidence
The book’s interpretation of ‘hard’ archival data is compelling because enhanced by the vivid fieldwork examples. Leach (1967) argues that ethnographic work may inadvertently explain statistics which the latter did not convey. With Brody it is the opposite; migration statistics are used unconvincingly to confirm a less tangible socio-psychological mood, which according to him is recent if contrasted with Arensberg and Kimball. However, Gibbon argues that ‘nobody ever challenged their ethnography’, which saw ‘only harmony, integration and stability’. I would argue that this was imagined. In the
example of *Inishkillane*, Gibbon's conclusions concerning Arensberg and Kimball are equally apt: 'their ethnography still remained as a repository of revealed truth' (1973: 496). Here I offer an alternative perspective on Brody's ethnographic repository based on less fieldwork, but uniquely contemporaneous in both time and place.

The book's encounters, not with 'Orientals' but with nearby 'peasants' appealed to metropolitan readers, especially after the resurgence of Irish nationalism and the Troubles. Internationalist Socialists had prioritized the industrial urban working class. No matter that the Irish 'peasants' had a hand in building the infrastructure of a global metropolis. Urban radicals had rarely sought encounters in rural peripheries. The text's authority rested on rare, impressive proof that the author had actually 'been there', especially as lone pioneer.

**Age and Gender**

There is a tendency throughout the text to conflate the life-cycle of the aged with social change and decay. Predictably, the surviving aged may reminisce about the past and lonely bereavements. This may befall the aged in any context, indeed more brutally in a metropolis. The quotation from the island woman in her nineties is poignant (1973: 17) but no proof of collapse for all. True, Kate reminisced about the many happy *ceilidhes* of her youth when people walked miles. Now the car facilitated dance-hall gatherings.

As a young woman originally from London, I was interesting as a stranger to young women and invited for tea on my own. Hugh would grill me after. I never relayed tales of despair nor yearning for city lights. Shortall criticizes Brody for not problematizing his gender analysis of women's migration (1999: 61–62). My experience revealed wonderful autonomous women. Mary hoped her husband would stay in England leaving her 'in peace'. If the bar Brody calls O'Dwyer's, with women 'at its outer perimeter' (1973: 161), is Mary's (ibid: 158–161) the woman is actually the manager. This, as much as the shop, made 'a good living' (ibid: 159). Mary's influence at the core of the community cannot be explained by 'old age', which Brody gives as the only time when women transcended 'insignificance'. Mary, with a young son, was not even middle aged.

There is genderized invisibility in the presumption that all householders and farmers are men (ibid: 160), despite Kate, as widowed householder and farmer. Shortall later queries Brody concerning labour: 'Farming structures, by tradition do not acknowledge the contribution and value
of female farm labour, but this does not mean that it is non existent’ (1999: 62). There is no consideration of widowed, separated, as opposed to unmarried women among those frequenting shop or bar (Brody 1973: 161, 163). Innovatively, Brody suggested that male inheritance gave women the freedom to emigrate, leaving male heirs trapped. Nevertheless, the ‘adaptiveness of the small community has much more evidence in the cultural and socio-psychological demoralization described by Brody’ (Shortall 1999: 40). Additionally, the inheritance system may have prevented agribusiness.

My gendered positionality towards both Kate and Mary, whom I recognized as powerful, made me receptive to resilience. Brody’s unproblematised treatment of gender-defied ethnographic experience is explicable. Brody and Okely, identified by gender, were treated differently. Our specific biographies also affected perceptions. At Oxford, the prevailing masculine discourse dismissed feminists, especially de Beauvoir, for their alleged ‘lack of humour’ – a typical poutdown where the subject is threatening. The subversive irony of the subordinate is unintelligible to those with power (Okely 1986). Otherwise, it was precisely because Hugh did not fit the stiff-upper-lip, Anglo-Saxon mould and had sensibility and charismatic charm that he had such rapport with strangers. With him, I moved beyond class and cultural boundaries.

Thanks to the shared experiences, I became enthralled by intellectual endeavours involving fieldwork. With savings from teaching and a loan, I enrolled as an anthropology postgraduate at Cambridge. Twenty years later, I found my alternative Kate Nee in Jacqueline Grégoire who hand-milked cows on a small farm in Normandy (Okely 1996: 227–30). When I walked into her kitchen, and, as long ago, asked if I could help her in the stable, I knew, after a twenty-year exile, that I had come home.

Notes
1 I thank the following for insights on the 2001 completed draft: Andy Dawson, Hastings Donnan, Susan Drucker-Brown, Terry O’Neill, Sinead Ni Shúinéar and Sally Shortall, then more recently Helena Wulff.
2 This is confirmed in the flyleaf (1973) and in Wroe (2001). Recent publishers re-designate this as Anthropology. There was no such department in 1966.

References
‘We took the children from their mothers’: A Reflection on the Politics of Apology, Recognition, and Respect in an Australian Context

Fiona Murphy

This article is presented as a reflection on the problematics of the now almost ubiquitous public or political apology. Using the recent apology by Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, to Australia’s Stolen Generations, the author will argue that an apology, while complex and contradictory, has the possibility to engender both healing and reconciliation. The ways in which a public ‘sorry’ can lead to forgiveness and contrition will also be examined. The article concludes with an analysis of the manner in which the Rudd apology generated further debate and controversy about how best to remedy a shameful and abusive past.

Key Words: Apology, Aboriginal Australia, Stolen Generations, Trauma, Recognition, Reconciliation

Introduction
On 13 February 2008, Kevin Rudd, the new Labour Prime Minister, granted an apology to members of the Stolen Generations and the broader Aboriginal community for the removal and institutionalization of Aboriginal children from the early 1900s to the mid 1970s. The apology broke through a long moral impasse about the nature of removal practices and opened onto a nascent landscape of hope. Broadcast globally, the apology was an event of great emotional intensity. Australians, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, gathered in Canberra to be present at what for them quickly became a historic occasion, forming in the shape of a ‘tent city’ outside the parliament, the kind of ‘instant place’ about which Kate Altork (1995) writes. The reluctance of former (Liberal) Prime Minister John Howard to give an apology (after the Bringing Them Home Commission of Inquiry and report tabled in 1997 recommended one) gave a particularly rough and unfinished texture to the tapestry of Stolen Generations’ experiences and the history of their survival. Howard claimed that the Australian nation could not or should not assume responsibility for past mistakes. Rudd’s apology, however, countered years of official dismissal and even denial, and has created a space where much more seems politically possible for members of the Stolen Generations. Over the course of my fieldwork, the Liberal Government’s unwillingness to grant an apology and the impact this had on members of the Stolen Generations figured large. I present this article, then, as a reflection on the important place that the apology as a symbolic apparatus assumed in the debate around the Stolen Generations in what some have called the ‘age of apology’ (Brooks 1999). In so doing, I will map out how the peculiar life of an Australian Federal State ‘sorry’, as a much-vaunted mechanism for ‘moving forward’, became such a controversial issue.

The history of the Stolen Generations is a long and difficult one, continually marred by acrimonious debates. On 26 May 1997, the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) tabled one of the most shocking and painful reports that Australia had ever seen. The Bringing Them Home (BTH) report was the result of months of consultations right across Australia and established that, from 1910 until the late 1970s, between one-in-three and one-in-ten Indigenous children...
were forcibly removed from their families. Generally, children of mixed parentage were removed and often they were placed in institutions or occasionally adopted by white families. The Commission listened to nearly 600 stories of removal, abuse, loss and continuing pain and trauma, and had access to nearly a thousand more in written form. A large number of those removed came forward to tell their stories, including a number of my informants. The report made a number of recommendations, including one that called for National, State, and Religious apologies. What followed were months of intense debate in the media, amongst Government officials, and between ordinary individuals, on the nature of the removals, on the policies, on whether what had happened was genocidal in intent (see Moses 2004), and on whether or not it was somehow possible to collectively atone for past abuses. Stolen Generations were called upon across the continent to tell their stories, to allow Australians from all backgrounds to bear witness to the story and stories of removal, even as the burning question of an apology hung in the air. The story of the Stolen Generations has been described as, ‘the cornerstone of the pursuit of reconciliation’ (Whitlock 2001), with the quest for a ‘sorry’ being anchored in the broader discourse of reconciliation, one which traverses a global conceptualization of reconciliation shifting from Latin America right through to South Africa.³

‘Sorry’, then, was frequently discussed by my informants at the many meetings and events that I attended with them. For some Aboriginal Australians, the word ‘sorry’ is also anchored in the idea of ‘Sorry business’, which is the work of mourning and bereavement. ‘Sorry’, then, has a deeper reference point for some Aboriginal groups.⁴ It looks beyond the idea of regret for a past misdeed, becoming instead a way of mourning losses engendered through the force of removal. In so doing, it reaches towards those who are no longer around to receive their long-overdue apology, an idea that permeated many of the discussions I had with Stolen Generations about the apology. The utterance of an official Federal State ‘sorry’, would be an utterance anchored in temporal, generational, spatial, and emotional interstices.

The majority of my informants had attended one of the many institutions for Aboriginal children in NSW; a small few had been adopted into white families. Many of them had been removed from their families in the 1940s, particularly during the period of the World Wars. Sitting one afternoon with Patrick, a close informant, helping him write a speech for the National Sorry Day commemoration, he began to tell me a story, one which he felt reflected the place of ‘sorry’ in his own life; it is a story that has lived with him since his days in Kincadena Aboriginal boy’s home. As we sit together, he relays a story about the old schoolmaster from Kincela, who used to tell the young boys a tale about a mischievous child. ‘This little boy, Patrick tells me, found himself in a lot of trouble with his parents. The young boy’s father eventually decided that every time the boy got into trouble, he would put a nail in the door. After some time the door was covered in nails, and the boy complained to his father that the door had an ugly appearance. The father responded stating that for every good deed the young boy would do, he would remove a nail. The boy started to behave and the father kept his word, removing a nail each time the boy did something good. When all the nails had been removed, the boy complained again about all the ugly marks all over the door. His father explained that the marks signified all the anxieties and stress that the boy had caused his parents and that, even though he was sorry and had been forgiven, the marks would serve as a reminder of all that anguish. The door for Patrick was representative of his suffering, all the marks pointing to the ongoing trauma of members of the Stolen Generations. The nails were removed one by one as the various churches, organizations, and States apologized for the role they had played in the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. I scribbled down Patrick’s story as fast as I could in the disappearing light, and his wife and I both waited as he reflected on what he had just told us: ‘There is still one nail left in that door, Fiona, and not until the Australian government apologizes will that nail be removed and then the door can be sanded down’.

For Patrick, and many other members of the Stolen Generations I spoke with during my time in the field, the imagined potency of an apology had a persistent presence. I too came to question what Tavuchis (1991: 5) has called the ‘paradoxical and talismanic qualities’ attributed to the word ‘sorry’. An apology cannot undo the past nor can it sculpt a future that can assure healing, but, as Tavuchis (ibid.) writes, ‘in a mysterious way and according to its own logic, this is precisely what it manages to do.’ For some of my respondents, their entire relationship to healing and moving forward had somehow become enmeshed with the potential utterance of an apology. Both healing and moving forward became defined as being linked to ideas of reparative justice in its many forms. Both concepts became anchored in the quest for an apology, as well as the enduring hope for a broader programme of reparation.⁵ One of my respondents, Paul, puts it thus: ‘They are waiting for us to die, we are never going to get an apology, I will die without finding any peace’ (Paul, Interview 2004).

For Paul and a number of other members of the National Sorry Day organization, the idea that their lives and removal experiences had not been fully acknowledged or ‘repented for’ in the shape of a national ‘sorry’ became something of a mantra. Paul frequently repeated that the Liberal government lacked any compassion and that, if they waited long enough, the Stolen Generations’ issue would slip into the veil of forgetfulness.

One of my closer respondents, Valerie, regularly reflected on the issue of the apology with me and other members of the Stolen Generations. In the lead-up to the Bridge Walks for Reconciliation in 2000, Valerie described herself as angry and hurt.⁶ She recalled seeing an advert in the Koori Mail (an Indigenous newspaper) by the National Sorry Day Committee (NSDC), inviting people to come and walk over the Sydney Harbour Bridge with the NSDC, in a journey of healing. Valerie phoned the number on the advert and spoke angrily to the secretary of the NSDC. She recalls saying, ‘I need my justice before I can walk with the journey of healing’ (Valerie, Interview 2004). After discussing the matter further over the phone with the Secretary, she decided to go and walk. Armed with banners and accompanied by other members of the Stolen Generations, she told me she still felt angry on the day of the walk, until she looked up at the sky. Written
across the warm blue sky, in bright bold letters, was the word ‘sorry’. A gesture offered not by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation or the State, but by a small group of people, thirty or so, who thought this act would be a ‘good idea’ (see Casey 2006). Glancing around, Valerie told me that she saw all kinds of people from different backgrounds and age groups, and it was only then, she told me, that she felt ready to begin her personal journey of healing: ‘I saw up in the sky this sorry and as I looked around I saw so many people, different people, supporting us on Aboriginal issues. Not just supporting the Stolen Generations but supporting us on lots of other issues too. I just cried . . .’ (Valerie, Interview 2004).

The potency of the word ‘sorry’ draped across the sky as thousands of people marched across one of Australia’s most famous landmarks, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, indicates just how salient the apology debate is. For Valerie, the image of ‘sorry’ brought her to realize that she was not completely alone; it, along with the energy and compassion of those who walked beside her across the bridge, enabled her to forge a confidence of spirit from the depths of her anger. The ‘sorry’ written across the sky gave Valerie and those who walked with her the courage to complete that symbolic journey across the bridge. For a few hours, some Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians were united under a banner called reconciliation. Other members of the Stolen Generations also called my attention to the ‘sorry’ etched onto the blue backdrop that would serve to energize and invigorate, for a little while at least; the ‘sorry’ made from white smoke; the ‘sorry’ that evaporated within a few hours, but which left its imprint in the hearts of Indigenous people, and those who walked with them; the ‘sorry’ which made the Government’s refusal to apologize seem all the more deleterious.

Mea Culpa: A sorry crisis

‘We must not join those who would have us portray Australia’s history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation, and racism’ (John Howard, Australian Reconciliation Convention, 1997).

Central to the apology concept is the idea that in saying sorry there is an inherent ‘exchange of power’ (Lazare 2004). This exchange was a risk John Howard was unwilling to take. His recalcitrance is typified in an oft-repeated story of his speech at the Australian Reconciliation Convention in 1997, where, while making a personal statement of regret for the experiences that Stolen Generations had to endure, Howard cautioned the audience about enjoining the nation to reflect negatively on the past. The account goes on to tell how a group of people, thirty or so, who thought this act would be a ‘good idea’ (see Casey 2006). Glancing around, Valerie told me that she saw all kinds of people from different backgrounds and age groups, and it was only then, she told me, that she felt ready to begin her personal journey of healing: ‘I saw up in the sky this sorry and as I looked around I saw so many people, different people, supporting us on Aboriginal issues. Not just supporting the Stolen Generations but supporting us on lots of other issues too. I just cried . . .’ (Valerie, Interview 2004).

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Polarized attitudes to the issue of apology in the Australian context are visible everywhere from the university classroom to the parliamentary halls. The Prime Minister’s opening speech at the Reconciliation Convention, deemed weak-spirited by some and valiant by others, opened the floodgates of debate. Many non-Indigenous Australians saw in the idea of an apology a subtext of shame and guilt. The idea of reconciliation and consequently, forgiveness was marshalled into a relationship with the act of apology. After the BTH report was tabled, blank books called Sorry Books were deposited in libraries, community halls, churches, museums, and schools around Australia; inviting individuals to write their expression of sorrow for past traumas. People of all ages and backgrounds signed the books in an attempt to express their solidarity with those who had suffered. In 2004, the Sorry Books were ascribed the status of UNESCO world documentary heritage, registering the significance of the act of personal and group apology as a vector of memory and acknowledgement. The books galvanized support for the reconciliation movement, and encouraged an atmosphere of contrition and expiation. There were many, however, who supported Howard’s stance, seeing his words at the reconciliation convention as a catalyst in engendering antipathy towards the idea of the apology. The ‘sorry debate’ has also had its critics amongst Aboriginal people. Aboriginal politician Warren Mundine went on public record in 2004 to say that it was time to stop asking for an apology, urging Aboriginal people to move beyond the ‘symbolism’ of the sorry debate and to focus on the ‘hard issues of health, education, and poverty’. The call to move beyond symbolism from Mundine was strongly welcomed by some members of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community. What Mundine overlooked in his statement was that apologies are not just about the past, they look to the future; apologizing is a type of moral reform that brackets issues of social justice. Apologizing, therefore, does not simply acknowledge past traumas but also signals a commitment to establishing a ‘human rights culture’.

The calls for apology and the subsequent debates are perhaps as interesting and insightful as the actual delivery of an apology itself. The demand to apologize in the Australian context has largely come from members of the Stolen Generations and their advocates. The valence and potency of apology is seen as inextricably linked to the notion of healing. While some of the people I spoke to bestowed on the idea of an apology the powers of a panacea, others negated this view, seeing the debate as something that was holding some members of the Stolen Generations back. James, one of my respondents, removed as a baby from his family on the South Coast of NSW and recently reconnected with them, felt an apology was intimately linked to his ‘moving on’:

I need Howard to say ‘sorry’. I have started saying sorry to some white people. I remember sitting on the train the day of the Bridge walk. The train was packed and we were all standing. A woman got on with her small child, and I remembered the way I had treated some white people in the past because of everything that went down in my life. I decided to say sorry to her, she seemed startled and asked what I was saying sorry for. She told me she was bringing her child to the reconciliation walk, that she was the one that should be saying sorry. It was a bloody great feeling for that to go on even though we did not know one another.

The emphasis then that many members of the Stolen Generations place on the use of the word ‘sorry’ is interesting. Lovitja O’Donoghue, speaking about the wording of the apology, has argued that ‘for all the right practical reasons, it must say sorry – no other word will do. Only then can that great journey towards reconciliation be seen to have begun’ (O’Donoghue 2007).

Moving Forward

One of the first substantive pieces of business for the Rudd Government was the apology. The granting of an apology on the first day of Parliament drew a symbolic line in the sand between the Howard and Rudd Governments. Tavuchis (1991) argues that timing is of the essence with an act of apology, what he has called the ‘kairotic moment’. An apology given too quickly or not soon enough loses its impact. The Rudd government orchestrated a key moment in which to apologize for past abuses at the very beginning of its term. For many of my respondents, the Rudd Government was seen as heralding a new beginning for relations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities. In the lead-up to the apology, the issue of the removal of Aboriginal children, which had lain dormant for a number of years, was awakened, probed, and rethought. The apology revitalized interest in the issue of how best to remedy past abuses, and many commentators speculated once more on the question of financial reparation (see Cuneen and Grix 2003).

The question of whether the apology would truly achieve forgiveness and healing has also been much discussed. Goffman (1971: 139) sees apology as capable of performing a kind of remedial work in which the speaking self is split in two, one who is guilty of an offence, and the other who is aligned with the recipient of the apology, hence, ‘transforming what could be seen as offensive into what can be seen as acceptable’. How an apology actually achieves or enables forgiveness and healing is perhaps more complex than Goffman allows for, as the perceived authenticity of the apology also needs further analysis. Austin (1962) in his famous study of language and speech acts argues that ‘saying’ is in many instances ‘doing’. In saying something, Austin tells us, we are in fact making a promise. When we apologize, Austin would seem to contend, we are not always merely stating our regret for a misdeed but very often we are seeking something such as forgiveness, an idea which resonates with the Gooder and Jacobs’ (2000) position on the ‘sorry people’, earlier delineated. As such, an apology can be seen as both an illocutionary and a perlocutionary act. The shift between these two designations, and how it occurs, is what makes the idea of the apology so intriguing. The success of an apology for Austin is in how it is formulated and delivered; a measure that seems to have widespread application.

Before the Rudd apology was made, Government advisors worked closely with members of the Stolen Generations to ensure that the form and wording of the
apology would be acceptable, thus seeking to avoid the kind of controversy created around the wording of a memorial to the Stolen Generations in Reconciliation Place, Canberra (see Peter Read 2004). The apology was, then, a carefully worded ‘sorry’ for the years of suffering and hurt that the removal policies had created. It was an apology that looked both to the past and to the future to claim that a reflection ‘on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations’ would be an antidote to the inequalities obtaining in health, education, and the lifespan of Indigenous Australians (Rudd 2008).

The apology spoke in grand sweeping terms about, ‘mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility’ (ibid.), and evoked the possibility of a shared history, shared future, and shared country. Many Aboriginal people sat in the Parliament hall as Rudd gave his speech. Some wept, some smiled, and others sat still in solemnity; outside the Parliament walls, thousands of people watched the apology on large screens, cheering, hugging, and weeping. Michael, one of my respondents, described it thus:

“I could not sleep the night before; I know it was all the excitement of the trip to Canberra but it was also something more then this. You know yourself how much we had spoken of getting an apology and now it was finally going to happen. The morning of the apology we went to a dawn service and I felt such excitement and a deep relief that the day had finally come. When the Prime Minister finally said the words, I had to hold back the tears. It was such an intense moment, such a wonderful moment …”

In reflecting on the scope of removal practices and their racist intent, Rudd admitted the extent of just how fundamentally wrong these policies were. In offering this acknowledgement, he was beginning a process where trust could be re-established. In claiming that this would never happen again, he was attempting to recreate a space of security for Aboriginal Australians. While the Rudd apology was seen as a long overdue but overwhelmingly positive moment, the apology made by Liberal leader John Howard on 12 February 2008 was deemed a success in that it offered members of the Stolen Generations a ‘moral recognition … (and) acknowledgement of their human dignity and worth’ (Govier and Verwoerd 2002: 34). This achievement was partly due, I believe, to the depth of consultations undertaken prior to the apology; many of my informants felt that, through the Aboriginal and reconciliation organizations consulted, their feelings on the apology were in someway voiced. While the Rudd Government was careful and deliberate in conveying that financial reparation would not follow, for the majority of my respondents, this in no way diminished the value and potency of the apology. The apology was an acknowledgement by the Australian Federal State of the wrongs inflicted through removal policies, an offer of recognition for the trauma engendered, a moment of truth telling, and a public expression of remorse and conciliation. It created, in short, a space where the accountability of the State was publicly reckoned with, thus producing an intimate conversation between Stolen Generations and the broader polity.

While we may find ourselves in a new reality, post the apology, where there is now some agreement on the idea that there is something to defend (particularly with the recognition of the Bruce Trevorrow compensation case in South Australia and the move towards a reparation package in Tasmania), I believe that the full stop at the end of the Stolen Generations experiences and stories is still quite a way off. Meanwhile, the majority of my respondents have returned to their daily lives, taking care of grandchildren, tending their gardens, telling their stories when called on, and maintaining close contact with one another on the phone, or simply getting together to drink a cup of tea and exchange news and gossip. For most of those that I have spoken to, returning to their lives after the apology brought a renewed and fresh approach to life, to the idea of and belief in healing and to the existence of possibility. So, while the apology cannot be deemed a panacea, it certainly forged for many Stolen Generations a different way of being in the world. Rudd’s apology, as a kind of apotheosis of the struggle for healing, legitimated, far and away, the existential importance of dealing with traumatic pasts. It also illuminated the poetic strength of members of the Stolen Generations in lives spent waiting for acknowledgment. The ‘sorry’ given on 12 February 2008 was deemed cathartic and, unlike the sorry etched on the blue Sydney sky on the day of the reconciliation walks in 2000, which Valerie used to recall frequently, this sorry reached into the depths of sorrow, shame, and regret for a ‘blemished’ past.
the utterance of a ‘sorry’ brought with it the memory of all of mourning. For some members of the Stolen Generations, the word ‘sorry’ in the apology, and its relationship to the practice of self-inflicted injury is common. A number of my informants of mourning is conducted. Within some groups, the practice of their homes and move to a ‘sorry camp’, where the business of sorry business is being undertaken, grieving individuals vacate nonetheless, has a wide usage. In some communities, while foisted upon them by the State.

forgiveness was not a choice but something which was being

Many of my informants felt, then, that reconciliation and
definition of reconciliation is largely one anchored in a conversation on the definition and practical implementation of ‘reconciliation’, ‘reparation’, ‘justice’, and ‘healing’. In the

While mortuary and funerary practices vary greatly from one Aboriginal cultural group to the next, particularly between urban and remote communities, the term ‘Sorry business’, nonetheless, has a wide usage. In some communities, while sorry business is being undertaken, grieving individuals vacate their homes and move to a ‘sorry camp’, where the business of mourning is conducted. Within some groups, the practice of self-inflicted injury is common. A number of my informants were quick to stress the relationship between the use of the word ‘sorry’ in the apology, and its relationship to the practice of mourning. For some members of the Stolen Generations, the utterance of a ‘sorry’ brought with it the memory of all those who had been lost along the way.

In some ways the quest for a ‘sorry’ exposed the contradictions of the Australian reconciliation process and its relationship to the idea of reparative justice. The pursuit of an apology was viewed in many different ways, though primarily anchored in the discourse of reconciliation predominantly by non-Indigenous activists; many of my informants saw it as being more closely aligned to the idea of reparation.

The Bridge Walks for Reconciliation were held in 2000 in a number of major Australian cities. The bridge walks marked the end of ten years work for the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and formed part of an event called Corroboree 2000. During my time in the field, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people pointed to the Bridge walks as a pivotal point in the journey of reconciliation and healing.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in Australia promulgated widely the idea of a ‘shared history’ and encouraged through its literature the idea that all Australians should endeavour to feel part of Australia’s past. The ‘history wars’, started through the work of Keith Windshuttle (2002) ignited an intense debate, which spilled into the popular press, on the nature of history, remembering the past, ownership, and belonging. These debates formed an interesting backdrop to my time in the field.

While beyond the scope of this article’s argument, I do with to posit that the teleology of reconciliation or apology is not indeed forgiveness, in spite of the prevailing discourses in a number of ‘reconciliation’ contexts.

The tropes of guilt and shame pervaded many discussions on how best to reconcile for Australia’s colonial past. Many commentators argue that neither of these sentiments have a place in such discussions, others such as Elspeth Probyn (2005) point to the important role they play in movements such as Australia’s reconciliation movement. For many non-Indigenous Australians who subscribe to the idea that their national image is anchored in egalitarianism and the ‘fair go’, notions of shame or guilt have no place. For an excellent discussion on the issue of guilt amongst white Australians see also R. Williams, “Why should I feel guilty?”. Reflections on the workings of guilt in white-Aboriginal relations’, Australian Psychologist, 35(2) (2000), 136–42.

Kairos (Gk): ‘Fullness of time: the propitious moment for the performance of an action or the coming into being of a new state’ (OED). For Tavuchis, the ‘kairotic moment’ is a focal point of apologizing and is connected to the question of timing: an apology must be offered at the correct ‘critical juncture in time’ to be effective.

Minow (1998) believes that an apology without financial reparation could be perceived as a disingenuous apology, lacking the will to exact change. She sees apology as restorative of truth and faith in the social order, whereas financial reparation is seen as a more profound symbolic communication of sincere apology, regret, and commitment to re-establishing recognition of the victim/survivors as important members of society (a point of agreement between her and de Grieff 2006). While I do not wholly agree with Minow’s argument, I feel that apology and financial reparation are certainly engaged in an important conversation, one which in Australia, is only just beginning to be recognized.
An illocutionary act or statement is often defined as the act of informing, ordering, warning, undertaking and so on. A perlocutionary act, on the other hand, is more closely linked to a statement which incites or evokes a particular action, for example, saying something which incites anger. The terms are Austin's.

The debate around the Stolen Generations' memorial in Reconciliation Place, Canberra centred on a number of issues, but the wording of the memorial proved to be particularly divisive. In particular, the usage of the term 'Stolen Generations' created bitter debate. After a long process of negotiation between Stolen Generation and reconciliation groups, the Government allowed the term to be used on the memorial.

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Book Reviews


The three books under review here are all published under the Field Day imprint, and they represent three interesting and compelling projects underway in Irish Studies. Field Day, it is worth noting, has now an illustrious history of publishing in the broad area of Irish literary and cultural studies, beginning with its seminal pamphlet series brought out between 1983 and 1988; the massive Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing (1991–2002), and two book series: Critical Conditions (1996–2005), featuring distinguished titles by Joep Leerssen, Luke Gibbons, Harry White, Marc Caball and Seamus Deane among others; and now the Field Day Files series (2006–), of which Joe Cleary’s Oragouge Fortune was the first title, and David Dwan’s The Great Community and David Lloyd’s Irish Times are the most recent volumes. Both series were/are published in paperback; clearly it is Field Days’ intention to make this work available to as wide an audience as possible.

Of course, this was always part of the Field Day project. Field Day, from its inception as an ad hoc apparatus to tour Brian Friel’s Translations in venues large and small around Ireland in 1980, had its eye on a broad public – not only catering to such a public but working to forge one. It’s hard now to recapture the sheer excitement that attended the early Field Day tours, the attention that was accorded to the pamphlets as they appeared, and to the Anthology when it was published in its first version. For a while, one would have been forgiven for thinking that Field Day Theatre Company was the Irish national theatre. Field Day deployed its plays, pamphlets, and the Anthology also in the service of a formidable cultural-intellectual project – to offer a critique on the terrain of ‘culture’ of the dominant political presuppositions on the island of Ireland, North and South. Field Day emerged out of a particularly interesting and important conjuncture – the rise of a cadre of intellectuals particularly but certainly not exclusively from the Northern nationalist community, beneficiaries of the post-war expansion and modernization of British third-level education, during the break-down of the Northern state. The Northern crisis gave the Field Day group its defining problematic – the ambiguities and contradictions of nationality, state sovereignty, and modernity itself. These themes were crucial to plays such as Translations, Making History, The Riot Act, and Double Cross, and to the pamphlets of Seamus Deane, Richard Kearney, Declan Kiberd, Terence Brown, Marianne Elliott, and Terry Eagleton. The Northern crisis was, at least to a degree, the Irish expression of the breakdown of the post-1945 Western settlement, and Field Day can be understood as a grouping of organic intellectuals of that change.

If the task of organic intellectuals is the making and re-making of hegemonies, then it must be admitted that the Field Day project ran into trouble fairly quickly. Although the make-up of the company’s board embraced both confessional communities in the North, its starting-point – in an analysis of the crisis as colonial – alienated Northern Protestants and Southern liberals. Edna Longley declared, in a strikingly offensive and patronizing phrase, that the pamphlets enunciated ‘old whines in new bottles’, while Conor Cruise O’Brien and Colm Tóibín read an ‘unreconstructed nationalism’, and identified the ‘literary wing’ of the Provisional IRA, in Field Day’s publications and activities. The furore about the Anthology, particularly regarding its representation of twentieth-century women writers, came at roughly the same time as internal conflict within the Company when Friel produced Dancing at Lughnasa with the Abbey Theatre rather than Field Day. This, combined with the ever-more divergent careers of Field Day directors, led to the situation today where Field Day now exists principally as an academic publisher under the aegis of Seamus Deane, assisted in part by the University of Notre Dame.

The Field Day trajectory, therefore, has been one of academicization and, arguably, attenuation. The Company’s principal mode of address has become the Field Day Files volumes, and the magnificently-produced annual Field Day Review (edited by Deane and Brendan Mac Suibhne). These almost certainly do not reach the public that the plays did, and that the pamphlet and Anthology controversies did. If this appears to be a declension, then many factors have gone into its making, not all of them internal to Field Day. The extraordinary economic boom in the Republic of the last fifteen years has had as its accompanying mood music the winding down of the Northern war and the rush by all parties toward the centre-right in Southern politics. To put the matter very crudely, if the island witnessed a Gramscian crisis of authority at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, with various parties, groups, and intellectual formations – including Field Day – emerging to try to give a definitive interpretation of the crises, then the parallel unfolding in the 1990s of the ‘Celtic Tiger’
boom and the peace process helped to produce an ideological retreatment, a retreatment that found its success in the class shifts of the new politico-economic dispensation, with a new *bourgeoisie* in the South and the professionalization of formerly paramilitary politics in the North. The foreclosing on radical political possibilities, combined with factors such as the emergence of powerful culture industries, the corporatization of university education, and the ever-increasing commercialization of the public sphere, have all combined to narrow the grounds of possibility for a formation such as Field Day. It is very hard to imagine a comparable group of writer-intellectuals emerging to propose a radical cultural programme at the present conjuncture.

This may seem to suggest that Field Day’s time is over. There is no doubt that Field Day’s *modus operandi* is now that of the ‘long march through the institutions’, where before it seemed intent on making new institutions itself. Its ambitions are less, and its hope for change more modest. But it does, and in valuable and important ways, see itself clearly as holding open a space for alternative thinking about Ireland, and its culture and politics.

The contradictions I have been elaborating on above are, of course, constitutive of Field Day’s positions, and they emerge in at least two of the books under review very explicitly. This is best illustrated by a passage from Lloyd:

I write this Introduction with a feeling of belatedness, in the face of the apparent triumph of capitalist modernization in the form of the Celtic Tiger … in the face of what seems like the waning of the alternative social possibilities that republicanism once sheltered into the spectacle of political business-as-usual; in the face of Ireland’s deeper and deeper integration into Fortress Europe and its military and economic goals; in the face … of an increasingly violent world order for which nothing is new but the forms of the commons that primitive accumulation seeks to secure and the monstrous violence of the technologies developed to secure them. Under such conditions, how is it possible to speak any more of alternatives, of the unexhausted possibilities secreted in the past, of utopian hopes for a more just, less destructively exploitative, order of things? (7)

The vision here is that of a Marxism that finds itself analytically ever more relevant in the context of a now-universal capitalism, but politically unsure of its ability to project an alternative future. Capitalism no longer faces serious political antagonists, so the task of critique has changed. The Marxist critic no longer seeks to theorize the revolutionary consciousness of the workers, in the manner of Lukacs. But she also no longer focuses on resistance to commodification as embodied in a bristling modernist aesthetic, in the manner of Adorno. Rather, Lloyd takes his cue from Benjamin, who famously warned in ‘On the Concept of History’ that the past itself would not be safe from the dead hand of capitalism. Accordingly, Lloyd’s chief interest lies in a critique of what he calls ‘historicism’. This is the name that Lloyd (and Benjamin) gives to the metanarrative of modernization: the apparently progressive development of capitalism, and the growth in scope and power of the state.

Where in earlier work, notably *Anomalous States* (1993), Lloyd was keen to articulate ideas culled from Benjamin and Gramsci with contemporary postcolonial theory and Subaltern historiography, the stress now is more explicitly and trenchantly Benjaminian. In a series of brilliant essays on the Famine, on historical trauma, on Joyce, and on partition as figured in the photographic work of Allen deSouza, Lloyd sets out his project of disinterring ‘the non-modern’, from the oppressively linear and teleological narrative of modernity. Edward Said once suggested that the impulse behind critical consciousness is the unstoppable desire for alternatives, and it is this quest that moves Lloyd to seek out fragmentary writings, movements, ideas that have been discarded, left unwanted or undeveloped, in the wake of the relentless teleological forward drive of the dominant narrative of modernity.

Joe Cleary’s *Outrageous Fortune* sits at the same problematic conjuncture. Cleary’s declared remit, however, is much broader than Lloyd’s: his book contains splendid essays on the status of Ireland vis-à-vis ‘postcolonial studies’ – Cleary’s is surely the most authoritative and comprehensive argument for the validity of theorizing Ireland as postcolonial – on Irish literary naturalism, on the representation of Northern Ireland in domestic tragedy, on modernization and aesthetic ideology, and on the Pogues. Taken together, these essays, which combine superb ‘close readings’ that should satisfy the most ardent formalist with magisterial interpretative surveys, amount to one of the most decisive and powerful interpretations of twentieth-century Irish culture we now have. Yet Cleary also finds himself in the same uncomfortable situation as Lloyd. Cleary’s theoretical resources are of a more traditional Marxist kind than Lloyd’s: Lukaes and Jameson as exemplary critics, Perry Anderson as exemplary historian of contemporary ideas (and at times Cleary’s essays have the same air of considered authority that make Anderson one of the finest essayists writing today). Cleary’s over-arching account of Irish literary culture is a pessimistic one: where other critics seem willing to identify a major cultural revival in the growing international reputation of iconic Irish cultural artefacts and producers – Riverdance, U2, Conor McPherson, Martin McDonagh, Colm Tóibín – Cleary’s account is of a decidedly anti-Whiggish flavour. Repeatedly, Cleary’s narratives mark the declension between the cultural flowering of the early twentieth-century Revival and the more banal, frequently aesthetically and politically conservative recent work. Yet this is also Cleary’s difficulty, I think. He advances a powerful Marxist critique of contemporary culture, but he struggles to find a similarly radical aesthetic movement or a truly radical class politics (to which, in principle, one would imagine such a critique would wish to affiliate itself). Too vigilant and honest not to recognize the carceral carapace of late capitalist modernity, Cleary’s is a powerful but isolated book.

David Dwan is a younger critic than Lloyd or Cleary, and his project is different from theirs. It eschews their leftwing radicalism, but it brings powerful resources of an unusual kind to bear on the field of Irish Studies. Dwan’s book is a study of Irish cultural nationalism, chiefly as
manifested in the work of the Young Ireland group of poets, journalists and intellectuals of the 1830s and 1840s, and then in the writings of WB Yeats. His originary lies in his capacity to bring a powerful grasp of the history of political thought to bear on the discursive work of writers most famous as poets and ‘creative artists’. Dwan’s purpose is not to provide new aesthetic readings, nor yet to read a politics off what Cleary astutely calls the ‘semiotic content’ of texts, but rather to trace the watermark of political thought in the writings of Davis, Lalor, Mitchell, and then later in Yeats. So he discerns the influence of Burke in both the Young Irelanders and in Yeats, and he decisively revises the conventional assessment of Young Ireland as a ‘romantic nationalist’ movement. Later chapters focus on Yeats’s deeply ambivalent attitudes to political modernity.

Taken together, these books by Lloyd, Cleary, and Dwan address Irish literary culture of the last 150 years in a variety of powerful and original ways. These are distinguished additions to the Field Day canon, advancing a variety of powerful and original ways. These are distinguished additions to the Field Day canon, advancing it even as they dramatize its discontents. As such, they are required reading.

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The cover of *Transgressive Sex* shows a bespectacled man in fatigues holding binoculars looking up at a slim woman in high heels and a short skirt in a powerful stance, who is only visible from the waist down. There is, obviously, as the editors suggest, a power game at play in the interaction between the voyeur, lowly and on his stomach, and the woman standing over him. He has the power of looking, while she, dominating the foreground in a provocative pose is there to be looked at. It is a problematic image, which suggests at titillation and draws upon a history of looking that has been debated at length by Laura Mulvey and others in recent histories of the image. The photo belies the seriousness and the quality of the chapters within. It is clear from the book that there are multiple definitions of what constitutes both sex and transgression. As a result, the chapters cover a diverse range of topics and locations, from the tensions between teenage desires and societal containment in places as diverse as South Africa, Northern Ireland and England; to the possible dangers for female fieldworkers caused by cultural (mis)understandings in Vanuatu; to child prostitution in Thailand. Many are anthropological case studies drawing from years of fieldwork and a wealth of secondary reading from within and across disciplines. In the opening line, the editors establish a working definition that is re-considered many times by the other authors over the course of the book. Donnan and Magowan write, ‘This book is about sex that crosses or threatens to cross boundaries and about sex acts that flout social, moral and cultural convention.’ The word sex is used in its broadest sense to refer to orientation, gender and practices. Of course, morality and culture are very much terms that are set at a local and, sometimes, individual level. For some, for example, zoosex (sex with animals) is incomprehensible, while, for others, it is an issue that challenges assumptions about what it means to be classifiable as both human and animal. In that regard, the author, Rebecc Cassidy, examines this area without moralising or ridiculing her subjects and explores the multiple pleasures derived from Western societies’ relationship to animals as owners, companions, as well as the taboo of erotic intimacy.

As the editors point out, even though there are categories and transgressions a wider public may be uncomfortable with or may still legislate against, there are also differences within categories. Transgression is highly subjective. I draw on the example they employ in their introduction of the Polish queer community organisation examined by Monika Baer. Focusing on the women in the group who varied from the university affiliated gender studies group to the more radical anarchist squatters, Baer explores the differences among those who are often categorised together, or even act together in solidarity for specific aims. The reasons that they work together may provide a surface appearance of homogeneity, whereas beneath the broad sweep they are highly differentiated in their lived experiences.

While, the majority of the chapters draw out their arguments using specific case studies, there are chapters which consider the broader sweep, such as Mark Johnson’s examination of Western ‘Sexual’ Sciences and its creation of categories which imposed definitions on other cultures and societies, or drew down useful conclusions based on supposed transgressive behaviour. He suggests that ‘we are all ‘trans’, simultaneously caught up and constituted within the dominant categories, but always already exceeding and transgressing them in both deliberate and unconscious ways’. This is a logical development of Judith Butler’s groundbreaking work on gender as performance, oft cited in this book. It also signals one of the difficulties that many of the authors confront, that of categorisation. How can anyone be transgressive if we are all at sometime in our days or lives transgressing?

This is answered by many of the chapters, where transgressions are shown to be heavily policed by cultural practices. Kalissa Alexeyeff examines how gay male sexuality is on display at parties and group celebrations in the guise of drag performances on the Cook Islands, yet it is taboo to acknowledge the existence of male couples and they are therefore not spoken about in public. These controls sometimes can be transgressive in themselves. Such as, the attempts by health workers to provide safe sex information to men in their cruising grounds in public parks in France, as explored by Laurent Gaisss. He argues that the methods used by the health workers can be sometimes clumsy and seen as an official invasion of a private act in a public space. For the men engaged in such sex acts, cruising is an act of transgression that carries its own risks and is engaged in on their own terms. But, the health workers’ presence is another transgression of

Collections of essays are often curates’ eggs, and so it is here. This book asks the question, ‘How to build civility while maintaining the cultural uniqueness of the different groups that make up ... the wider society?’ It identifies as a crucial stratagem ‘multiculturalism’, which embraces equality and equity but also the ‘right to be different’. The essays are mostly educational or social psychological and are centrally concerned with Israel and Germany.

The first section, the ‘Overview’, provides three theoretical essays. Gordon Mitchell describes an evolving new understanding of ‘Democracy Education’ through a series of consultative workshops in which ‘gender democracy’ and ‘post-colonialism’ emerge as central ideas. Rosemarie Mielke explores ethnic stereotyping via a social psychological model that takes account of goals and motivation found within world views to explain the different ways we categorize people.

The best article of the three is by Juliane House. House uses Goffman and Gumperz to explore six types of misunderstanding that arise in social intercourse. I enjoyed her discussion of Grice’s cooperative and of misunderstanding that arise in social intercourse. I think that a learned and compelling introduction to a multiplicity of topics, which inspire debate and a wider exploration of the areas, issues and concepts they tackle. Far from the titillating read the cover and title might suggest, this is a timely and serious exploration of multiple cultures and desires.

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After a shaky start, Majid Al-Haj gives an interesting account of the asymmetry found in successive history curricula and school books in Arab and Jewish schools in Israel. He suggests, for example, that Arab narratives tend towards a fair and dispassionate approach, which however fails to address popular Arab conceptions of history. He finds Jewish ones, in contrast, partisan and Zionist. Sehiri Fathi, in another good article, looks at Palestinian historical narratives in school text-books and elsewhere, considering Holocaust denial and a pervasive competition between Jews and Arabs to impute ‘Nazism’ to their opponents. She considers more recent attempts by Arab intellectuals to overcome denial and to enter into serious historical dialogue with the Jewish ‘other’. Yet another interesting essay, by Badi Hasit, shows that a lack of proper policing in Arab areas has led there to the growth of a culture detached from the Israeli legal system. This supposedly ‘benign neglect’ originates in a belief that the enforcement of certain kinds of law in the minority community has a price. Not only might it lead to immediate conflict, but it might even undercut the hegemony of the majority community.

Éran Halperin, Daphna Canetti-Nisim and Ami Pedahzur look at Jewish xenophobia. Questioning the widespread assumption that low socio-economic status is straightforwardly associated with xenophobia, they show how ‘threat perception’ is a more significant factor. Oz and Temar Almog write about their ‘Multimedia Cultural Lexicon Project’ intended to allow Israelis better to understand the cultural differences found in Israel. Marilyn Safir, Shimrit Flasher-Kellner and Amir Rosenmann look at personal satisfaction with body image claiming that, in Israel, ethnic background does not influence body satisfaction; but that gender and age do.

Amalia Sa’ar takes a fiercer tone, when she examines what she calls the ‘Liberal Bargain’. This is the bargain by which oppressed peoples, genders, classes try to reap benefits by identifying with their liberal oppressors’ values. ‘Blacks’, she argues should ‘think black’ in order to liberate themselves. For racialized peoples to ‘think white’, she says, implies a loss of identity.

The final group of chapters deals with Germany. Joana Duarte gets off to a bad start by asserting that cultural intermingling did not exist before the fifteenth century. Her work is concerned with Portuguese migrants to modern Germany. As one might perhaps expect, first-generation migrants tend to keep to themselves, but second-generation ethnic Portuguese are opposed to segregation. Olga Visbal’s ethnographic research in bilingual classes perhaps unsurprisingly reveals that non-native German-speakers tend to defer to native German speakers when their language-mistakes are corrected. Melissa Lamson argues that foreign management consultants working in Germany should develop their inter-cultural competence. She analyses interviews with consultants in German companies. I liked an article by Inke DuBois who emphasises the ‘constructed’ nature of identity, considering the way American migrants tried to reconstruct their national identity in the face of German hostility to the ‘war on terror’.

Like many such collections, this one contains some good essays, but also some that are wordy, portentous and dull. The book would also have benefited from a more
strenuous editorship to stop clumsy phrases, infelicitous ideas or even howlers from escaping into the wild.

DR ANTHONY BUCKLEY


Something happened almost overnight that turned Ireland into the country that it is now: What was it?

‘Maybe it was Riverdance … I suspect it was more complicated than that … It, happened, I think, sometime in the mid-90s. I went to bed in one country and woke up in a different one’.

With these words Roddy Doyle introduces his most recent literary effort, The Deportees and Other Stories, a collection of eight short stories first appeared in Ireland’s multicultural newspaper Metro Éireann.

So, what was it, then? The answer is complicated because migration is not a simple affair. Interestingly, the word migration is never mentioned in the volume. Could it be that for Doyle ‘migration’ and ‘deportation’ are one and the same thing? Hard to say but not improbable if one considers the history of Irish emigration from the seventeenth century on, through to the Potato Famine, the depression years, and the Northern Troubles.

Emigration is a national trauma. The Irish know all too well what it feels like to be eradicated from their homes and be landed in a foreign place; they know what it is like to be diverse and never integrate. For this reason some maintain that Ireland is especially sympathetic to migrants and refugees that move into the country, and that there can be no racism here. Others argue, however, that racism exists in Ireland, as it does everywhere else, and also that there are evident forms of indigenous racism. Based on the assumption that religion, alongside gender, skin colour and language are racial markers, this line of thought regards sectarianism Ulster’s own racism.

The Deportees and Other Stories reflects on these debates, and it responds to the ongoing question of racism and of what being a racist actually means. Doyle seeks to address and make sense of a complex situation whereby newcomers struggle to find a voice and speak for themselves or else they wish to be left alone and live in anonymity. Set in contemporary Dublin, the volume features outsiders of different nationalities, backgrounds, age and gender, all them struggling to integrate while being confronted with all sorts of stereotypes.

The opening story is a recasting of the 1967 Academy award winner ‘Guess who’s coming to dinner’ in contemporary Ireland, in which Stephanie invites her Nigerian friend to have dinner with her family. The dinner is a metaphor for cultural encounter through which Doyle explores and exposes resilient and novel clichés (the national stereotype of masculinity and common attitudes towards migration), and poses the question of whether (and to what extent) things have changed over the past four decades.

Music is another powerful metaphor for cultural encounter. In the title story the realization of a new soul band by Jimmy (already a protagonist in Doyle’s The Commitments) offers a snapshot of ‘the spirit of the new Ireland. Easy come, easy go’ while also carrying an optimistic message that harmony in a multicultural-multiethnic society can be achieved.

‘Black Hoodie’ focuses on the issue of adolescents and their isolation within society. Targeted by security guards in department stores and bullied by the police the protagonists of this story demonstrate how common preconceptions against them are based on their looks – the hooded top functioning as a racial marker in their case. Doyle makes the point that esse est percipi, ironically exploring national obsessions with the measurability of identity (57% Irish’) and colonialism (‘Home to Harlem’). Unsurprisingly, then, Ireland is like a guinea pig in the hands of politicians and scientists who seek to mark the boundaries of an almost disturbingly leaking nation.

The question of boundaries is crucial to current debates of multiculturalism. Thus, for Polish baby-sitter Alina (‘The Pram’) settling in is a matter of ‘crossing the bridge out to the strange Island’ whereas for Joseph, an African child of nine on his first day of school in Ireland (‘New Boy’), it is about sharing and being able to laugh at all adversities (when punished unjustly by the teacher Joseph does not try to defend himself but starts laughing because the others laugh). Of the many boundaries out there, language is no doubt one of the toughest: for Tom (‘I Understand’) the acquisition of localisms is a way to ‘understand’ the place where he now lives and to erase the non-Irish in him.

The volume offers a taste of multicultural Ireland as it has become almost overnight. Doyle is good at showing variety, and he is good at showing what complexity lies behind variety too, yet his characters are never doubted or morally questioned; more often than not, and in fact, they are on the right side, which is what makes them deportees proper. A few exceptions aside, Doyle omits also to give voice to one traditionally silenced group. There are in fact not many female protagonists; stories feature mostly male characters, or they are recounted from a male perspective. This is arguably the major flaw in a collection that makes an excellent read, that is remarkably witty, hilarious and thought provocative. Doyle can make us reflect on social change and human relationships and, no doubt, tell us in more than just one way how it was that we ‘went to bed in one country and woke up in another one’.

DR LOREDANA SALIS,
Dipartimento di Teorie e Ricerche dei Sistemi Culturali, Facoltà di Lettere, Università di Sassari


One cannot help but feel that if Clancy’s book had been published last year it might have been timelier. With the current major recession plunging the Irish economy into

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the darkest depths, and 2009 seeing the enforced nationalisation of the country’s largest bank and rising levels of unemployment across the nation, a study that begins with the justification for focusing on Ireland due to its status as ‘a development “success story”’ (1) seems anomalous at best. This is by no means a fault of Clancy’s book; if anything it is a stark reminder that this ‘Brand New Ireland’, dependent on boom time economy spending, development and investment, seems to have all intents and purposes evaporated. Clancy claims that ‘The Irish government has long been a leading international marketer of tourism and in the 1990s became a pioneer in the area of “nation branding”’ (2). So what, then, is left of the hyped, modernised and re-branded concepts of Irish identity now that the Celtic Tiger cool factor has been left verging on bankrupt?

In his introduction, Clancy is at pains to point out that ‘economic dynamism in Ireland has not been without its problems’, referring to spikes in individual debt, income inequality and the relative poverty rate combined with a lack of social spending and high rates of ‘binge drinking, depression and suicide’ (7). So the relentless branding and promotion of Ireland and the faceticous yet oft-quoted Economic Intelligence Unit’s 2004 description of Ireland as being the happiest country in the world becomes exposed as being something akin to a Dorian Gray-esque morality fable in Clancy’s account.

So where does tourism fit into this picture? Clancy’s argument is that ‘rather than serving as a following sector, tourism was central in the turnaround of Ireland’s economic fortunes’ (81). Tourism itself is a curiously slippery market, involving a constant evolving strategy of branding, re-branding and ultimately selling a nation, a lifestyle, a country and a people to a fickle international audience, being all things to all people. This is an issue Clancy’s study is keenly aware of, with an entire chapter devoted to ‘Selling Ireland’ and its attendant problems, including how this relentless promotion of Ireland also necessarily involved ‘presenting a version of Irishness at home … an official exercise in writing the nation … read not only by prospective foreign tourists, but also by a domestic audience’ (81).

Questions about Ireland’s branding on an international stage must inevitably entail some discussion of Ireland’s postcolonial status – the image Bord Fáilte sought to promote throughout the latter half of the twentieth century was that of an unsullied, untouched and innocent land, about which Clancy cites B. O’Connor’s 1993 summary that while this was ‘the norm for post-colonial societies’ it was ‘unique for a European country’. This point was increasingly underlined by The Troubles, which could not be confined to the north: as Clancy points out, ‘The burning of the British embassy in Dublin in 1971 contributed to the growing sentiment that Ireland was not safe’ (84). This sentiment came along with a corresponding decline in the tourism sector, which matched the general air of economic depression that characterized 1980s Ireland. When the time came to slough this financial despondency and more money was made available once more to market the country, despite the intervening decades between Bord Fáilte’s original promotions in the 1950s and the country that now existed forty years later, Clancy comments that ‘the primary message remained largely the same. Ireland remained locked in time, unspoiled by modernity’ (84).

That this bucolic imagery chimed with the conservative political mindset of the time is hardly surprising, but Clancy’s point is that, subtle marketing techniques and prevalent imagery aside, the country was undergoing transformation in all arenas with a demographic move of population from the rural to the urban, industrialization, foreign investment and a modern economic policy. Where Clancy’s study becomes most interesting is in its analysis of why ‘tourism marketing materials, even in the 1990s, rarely reflected this fact’ (85), especially when his earlier point that all such marketing is almost equally aimed at an Irish domestic audience as well as an international one is taken on board.

This becomes more interesting yet when, following the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, Tourism Ireland Ltd came into being in 2000 with the aim of consolidating ‘an all-island approach to tourism promotion’ between two states which had been on increasingly hostile terms for the preceding decades. Under Tourism Ireland’s marketing strategy, the north was now just another region of an island already heavily promoted as being rural, Celtic, untouched and mystical. But just how to reconcile this approach with a troublesome region which still remained uneasily post-conflict, intransigently divided and, most importantly, distinctly Other, remains, however, an issue addressed only to a very limited extent by Clancy in this book. This may be the only drawback to Clancy’s study but it is a distinct one nonetheless, in a study that otherwise raises some very interesting points about the correlation between the version of Ireland promoted to an international audience and the one reflected back to a domestic audience. It is also relevant to any discussion of how this heavily marketed version of Ireland affected or failed to affect the nation it was marketing and the questions about writing the nation implicit in tourist literature.

MAEVE EILEEN DAVEY,
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Andre Gingrich and Marcus Banks (eds), Neo-
Nationalism in Europe and Beyond: Perspectives from

The essays in this book are based on papers from a workshop held in Brussels in 2001, yet despite the time-lag the issues discussed have increased in relevance over the past few years. Neo-Nationalism in Europe and Beyond is a methodologically precise examination of European political movements that in the past could safely have been referred to as ‘far-right’ or ‘extreme nationalist’ in ideological outlook. With the increase in membership and the success of parties such as the Front National in France, the British National Party and similar movements in Poland and Austria, this examination of
how and why these parties articulate their aims and of what kinds of dialogue they are engaged in is essential. The book actively responds to the need to take account of a rapidly-changing political terrain in an enlarged Europe.

Drawing on a wide panel of experts, the development of neo-nationalism as a break with traditional nationalism in Europe is juxtaposed to similar movements in India and Australia, giving the book something of a global focus. For example, the book describes how ideas of ethno-nationalism, belonging, and responsibility towards immigrants and refugees, vary greatly in countries where there is an acknowledged colonial legacy, in comparison to countries that were differently involved.

In the chapter by Gingrich, he highlights the symbiotic relationship between coalition governments driven by neo-liberal economic and social agendas and the far-right or neo-nationalist parties that prop up these tenuous alliances. These types of strategic and opportunistic political relationships have allowed mainstream political parties to push programmes for government that sections of their traditional support-base would not necessarily agree with, or would view ‘as an entertaining diversion’ (brought about as a necessary evil in order to maintain coalition support) (36). Gingrich also pays attention to the ‘everyman’ quality that has become an identifiable characteristic of neo-nationalist parties as they grow in popularity. In relation to this he highlights the ephemeralism and muting of the radical founding agendas of these parties as they engage in increasingly complex ways of articulating their aims.

Several of the authors also allude to this indirectly by reference to the manner in which contemporary neo-nationalists have adopted what could be termed a ‘culturalist’ style of argument. This theme will be familiar to anthropologists interested in the extent to which some of the discipline’s terminology has been taken up by nationalist and other commentators who wish to make use of a less theoretically circumscribed form of cultural relativism. In order to do this the book pays attention to a use of language that will appear both familiar and strange to anthropologists as our own terminology takes on a life outside the discipline. Upon reading the book one can’t help but feel that the terminology of multi-culturalism and cultural relativism has become something of a Frankenstein’s monster when wielded by its new media-savvy proponents. For example, the forced removal of the hijab was opportunistically referred to by nationalist groups in several countries as an attempt to liberate women.

Usefully, in the chapter by Banks, he traces the rise a more benevolent form of popular nationalism in the phenomenon known as ‘cool Britannia’, which came about during the nineties with the success of an energetic new wave of British music (Brit pop, the Spice Girls etc.) and film. Banks carefully differentiates between the intricacies of various forms of cultural, romantic and economic nationalist aspirations and fantasies. While it is sometimes fashionable to regard forms of popular nationalism as anachronistic, several of the authors distinguish between various forms and meanings attached to a nationalist outlook. The fact that for many people the ‘imagined community’ still exerts a tangible hold over populations is not rendered entirely problematic by the authors. Throughout the book, though, there is an undercurrent that reminds the reader that even the more benign forms of nationalism can unwittingly foster a ‘tolerance of intolerance’ (something akin to an inversion of cultural relativism), as easily as it can bind sections of the population together.

Anthropologists have in the past been criticized for predominantly focussing on minority, marginal and disenfranchised groups, but within this book there is a strong emphasis on the actions of political elites and those who wield power in society. At times this book could be accused of lacking an ethnographic perspective, due to its strong focus in some chapters on institutions rather than on individuals. One explanation given is that there are ‘safety and mental-hygienic issues to consider in contemplating fieldwork with members of or subscribers to neo-nationalist movements’ (60). So, for readers expecting an in-depth, ‘on the terraces’ type study of neo-nationalism, this book may not provide enough ‘thick description’. However, it more than compensates for this by providing a carefully worked-out theoretical approach to the study of politics, opportunism, and the micro and macro power structures that constitute what is the opaque and constantly evolving phenomenon now known as contemporary neo-nationalism.

DAVID MURPHY
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**News Miscellany**

**News Editor:** Emma Heffernan

If you have any news stories that might be of interest to other members please forward them to me at emma.ja.heffernan@nuim.ie. Items of interest may include recent (and forthcoming) publications, research awards and funding, conference reports, forthcoming conferences and seminars, new appointments, retirements. A sincere word of thanks to Ray Casserly for his help in compiling this miscellany.

**Anthropological Association of Ireland News**

**2008–2009 AAI Secretary’s Report**

The AGM of the Association took place on 1 May at Queen's University, Belfast in conjunction with the AAI Conference, *Anthropological Crossings*. The AGM was well-attended and the following members were elected:

- **Chairperson:** Andrew Finlay
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Chandana Mathur
- **Secretary:** Attracta Brownlee
- **Treasurer:** Sheila Fitzgerald
- **Membership Secretary:** Jaime Rollins-McColgan
- **Public Relations Officer:** David Murphy
- **Journal Editor:** Séamas Ó Síocháin
- **Web Co-ordinator:** Adam Drazin
- **Ordinary Members:** Emma Heffernan, Mairéad Nic Craith, Neil Jarman
- **Co-opted Members:** Fiona McGowan, Thomas Strong, Ruth McLoughlin, Ray Casserly.

The Chair thanked the outgoing members, Patty Gray, Anne Nolan and Gavin MacArthur for their excellent work on the Committee.

**Committee Meetings:** In 2009 Committee meetings were held in January and March at Trinity, and at Queen’s in July. Issues of membership, journal production and distribution, and conferences were the major items on each agenda.

**AAI Conferences:** The AAI ran the very successful conference, *Anthropological Crossings: Memory, Identity and Belonging in an Interconnected World* at Queen’s University in May 2009. This conference showcased the work of postgraduate students, as well as established scholars. The next Conference, *Ethnography Beyond Ethnos?*, is scheduled for 7–8 May 2010 at Trinity College, Dublin.

**EASA Conference:** The AAI had a presence at the EASA Conference in Ljubljana in August 2008. It is proposed that the AAI will also have a presence at the 2010 EASA Conference in Maynooth.

**HEA/IRCHSS:** The HEA/IRCHSS invited the AAI to submit a response to the ‘Foresight’ exercise in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. A working group comprising Andrew Finlay, Patty Gray, Chandana Mathur and Séamas Ó Síocháin submitted a formal submission on the contribution of the arts, humanities and social sciences to the Irish economy and society. The HEA/IRCHSS have acknowledged receipt of the AAI response and we look forward to receiving a copy of the report if and when it is published.

**World Council of Anthropological Associations:** The AAI was elected to the World Council of Anthropological Associations. WCAA is a network of national and international associations that aims to promote worldwide inter-communication and cooperation among anthropological associations.

**Membership** has more than trebled since the 2008 AGM. Institutional membership has also increased in the period 2008/2009. The PayPal system is proving very popular with over half of membership renewals coming through the system. Currently, the AAI is in a healthy financial situation. Maintaining current members and increasing future membership is a priority for the Association.

**Irish Journal of Anthropology:** A Special Number of the Journal on Design in conjunction with *Anthropology in Action* was distributed earlier this year. Our new presentation and style of journal has been very well received and, as well as its scholarly articles, it includes a range of current issues for debate, news items from anthropology in Ireland and conference updates.
Transregional Centre for Democratic Studies
Summer School
Wroclaw, Poland, 9–25 July 2009

Conference Reports

David Murphy

This summer I had the pleasure to attend the TCDS (Transregional Centre for Democratic Studies based in New York) Summer School, which took place in the historically complex city of Wroclaw (formerly Breslau), Poland. TCDS is affiliated with The New School for Social Research which is a ‘university in exile’ dating back to 1933 when it was founded as a home for progressive thinkers who had fled persecution in Nazi-occupied parts of Europe. Nowadays the New School provides courses across the whole range of social science subjects with a strong focus on anthropology and activism; many of its alumni have gone on to found departments in post-socialist countries or to found influential NGOs.

The theme this year was ‘1989’ and the events that led up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The format consisted of intensive seminars and discussion groups during the day, and informal get-togethers and guest lectures in the evenings. Having attended a few summer schools myself, I was quite used to this format. However, rarely have I come across such a diverse and engaged group of scholars. Where else would one have the opportunity to listen to heated debates between an award-winning journalist from Kosovo (Krenar Gashi), an anti-war/civil society activist from Serbia (Nadja Duhaček), and a noted political scientist from Kyrgyzstan (Nartissis Shukuralieva). What is more, this was just at the breakfast table with the other students; the lecturers too were of an exceptionally high calibre. Ann Snitow, who taught the course on ‘Gender: Stable and Unstable’, has a distinguished background in global feminist activism, having established several notable NGOs such as the Network of East-West Women, as well as having written extensively on the historicity of sexual experience and on the changing situation of women in Eastern Europe. Hopefully, later this year she may be coming to Ireland as a guest speaker at NUI Maynooth.

One of the highlights of the week was a guest lecture by the ‘thorn in the side of the left and right wing moral majority’, Christopher Hitchens. Hitchens, along with several other guest speakers, activists and artists, discussed the significance of the Polish workers’ movement Solidarnosc and its role in the events leading up to the fall of Communism in 1998. Later in a more informal setting Hitchens also discussed reactions to his recent book God is not Great, which ranged from the comedic to sinister, as Hitchens took on the role of atheist proselytizer in brilliantly eloquent and engaging manner. Next year it is anticipated that there will be another Summer School in Wroclaw and for anyone who has ever struggled with the dilemmas of cultural relativism and whether or not to engage in activist anthropology, the TCDS could be a useful place in which to work out these complex subject positions. Although I was the only Irish participant this year, it is anticipated that there will be a number of scholarships open to students studying anthropology and other social sciences, and it is also possible to apply to the programme as a regular participant in order to accumulate academic credits toward a Masters degree.

The AAI conference on the theme of ‘Anthropological Crossings: memory, identity and belonging in an interconnected world’ took place at Queen’s University, Belfast, on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 May 2009. Speakers from universities across Ireland addressed the central topic from a wide range of perspectives, presenting thirty-five different papers over the two days. Around sixty delegates attended altogether. The packed programme required parallel sessions, each made up of about three papers, and the second day included special panels on ‘Blurred Boundaries: community and identity in music’.

The important role of music and ethnomusicology in the event was reflected in the plenary address by Micheal Ó Súilleabháin, which opened the conference with a look at ‘Artistic Visions and Anthropological Crossings’. The two simultaneous sessions on Friday morning gave an indication of the variety of research interests that would be represented over the weekend, covering geographical regions including London, Tibet, Papua New Guinea, Scotland and Liberia, and subjects as diverse as funeral rituals (Liing Peng), multiculturalism (John Nagle), and indigenous technological expertise in developing countries (Paul McCallion). The AAI held its AGM as the other participants relaxed over lunch.

During the afternoon, clear themes began to emerge. A series of papers dealt with economic processes and globalization, focusing on debt relief in Kenya (Andrea Rigon), occupational identity in the world of banking (Roman Zaczkiewicz) and the Turkish hazelnut industry (Ebru Tekin). There was also an emphasis on issues related to migration, particularly immigration to Ireland. This was addressed from a legal and public policy perspective in a paper by Tanya Cassidy and Mark Maguire, while two other speakers focused on the experiences of particular groups of migrants, Polish people in Belfast (Marta Kempny) and Japanese women in Ireland (Naoko Maehara). Local identities and senses of belonging were addressed in presentations on The Cork Northside Folklore Project (Cliona O’Carroll) and the River Lee Valley, Co. Cork (Kieran McCarthy), as well as in Ciara Kieran’s engaging account of the role of ‘Scouse’ in the regeneration of Liverpool. The first day’s formal events ended with a wine reception at which delegates were entertained by, and in many cases participated in, a memorable Brazilian dance performance.

The ethnomusicology element of the conference became more prominent on Saturday. The day began with a session focused on music in Ireland, whether Irish traditional music (Seán Corcoran and Steve Colman), Belfast Loyalist flute bands (Ray Casserley) or Republican commemorative songs (Jaele McColgan). The emphasis
on ideas about Irishness in this panel was reflected in other sessions, which included papers dealing with Irish urban identities (Karen Lane and Síún Carden) and rural life (Phil Noone). Papers looking further afield included Gavin McArthur's work on the performance of belonging in Zanzibar and Janet French's look at approaches to Maori tradition in the New Zealand education system. While considerations of Irish traditional music formed a dominant strand in the ethnomusicological portions of the conference, very different perspectives on music and performance were provided in papers such as Cormac Sheehan's look at sound therapy, and Ivan Deasy's unforgettable stomach-turning examination of the American punk musician GG Allin.

During the closing discussion, participants noted that many of the most interesting moments of the conference had been during the relatively long periods of time left for questions and comments from the audience after each series of papers. The diversity of contributions was also appreciated, while common themes, such as memory, place and identity, performance, intercultural exchange, and the personal 'crossings' made by anthropologists in the course of their research were picked out of the varied material. The opportunity to meet so many anthropologists based in, or interested in, Ireland was valuable and gave postgraduate students in particular a chance to see their work in the context of Irish anthropology as a whole.

CREOLE Intensive Programme (IP), Universität Wien, Vienna, Austria, 13–22 July 2009
Ting Ting Shum

The CREOLE Intensive Programme (IP) was held from 13–22 July at Universität Wien this year and it was a success. The annual meeting of minds is part of the Masters in CREOLE – Cultural Differences and Transnational Processes, funded as part of the EU Socrates programme. All participating institutions were represented by lecturers and students alike: Universität Wien (Austria), the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain), Université Lumière Lyon 2 (France), the Univerza v Ljubljani (Slovenia), Stockholms Universitet (Sweden), University of St. Andrews (UK), and the National University of Ireland Maynooth (Ireland). The Irish contingent, headed by Dr Steve Coleman and Dr Mark Maguire of NUIM, was the largest present at the event.

The IP functions as a platform for guest speakers and students to present their work and to hear of other upcoming interests in the field. More importantly, the IP also provides students with an opportunity to air their Masters projects and to receive theoretical and methodological feedback from professors and students of anthropology from multiple European universities. The coordinators of the IP, Prof. Thomas Fillitz and Dr Anna Streissler (Universität Wien), also added a more student-centred component to the programme this year, which was conducive to providing an academic yet relaxed environment in which stimulating discussion and exchange could take place.

CREOLE themes were tackled for the ten days: New Identities, Material Culture and Consumption, and Visual Culture/Popular Culture within the contexts of World Culture and Nation States. Interests ranged from senses of identity among first- or second-generation immigrants to popular conspiracy theory movements. Political commentary through contemporary puppetry was debated alongside museum exhibitions and the significance of traditional handicraft. Cowboys and Indians and, in true anthropology spirit, even Argonauts were present at the IP.

Irish presentations touched upon all three areas. Dr Steve Coleman spoke on the use of ‘The Internet and Global Finance as Semiotic Machines’. Dr Mark Maguire addressed ‘The Biopolitics of Biometric’. Paul Begley referred to ‘Symbolic Geography and Political Discourses of Serbia as It Moves Towards the EU’ and, having already completed one semester at NUIM, Johan Nilsson (Stockholms Universitet) looked at ‘Notions of Nation in Understanding Wine Culture’.

The conference demanded not just work but also recreation with socializing events organized throughout. These provided students and professionals with opportunities to speak more informally about respective interests. ‘Intensive’ all-round, the CREOLE IP in Vienna 2009 made a lasting impression on all present, connecting aspiring and established anthropologists from a variety of European settings.

The Postgraduate Ethnology Conference took place at Magee Campus, University of Ulster on 1–2 May. The conference commenced on Friday evening with an opening address by Mark Wallace from Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania who spoke on the theme of ‘Christianity in an Ecological Age’. This was followed by a buffet dinner and a ceilí in the Great Hall. On Saturday, the first session was a round table discussion on ‘Speaking from the Margins – Women Travellers’, chaired by Máiréad Nic Craith. Issues concerning research with the Traveller community were addressed by Andrea Redmond and Denise Richardson from the University of Ulster and by Attracta Brownlee from NUI Maynooth. The subsequent sessions contained a diversity of contributions. The panel on ‘Changing Language, Changing Culture’ included presentations from Angelika Dietz (University of Ulster) on migration, social relations and a sense of place among Italian migrants, and from Mary Delargy (University of Ulster) on Chinese language learning in Northern Ireland. In the panel on ‘Cultural Landscapes’ Liam Campbell (University of Ulster) looked at ‘An Ecological Sense of Place in Derry/Londonderry’ and Mhaiari Sutherland (DIT) presented on ‘Second World War Landscapes in Donegal’. The final session on ‘Language, Myth and Reality’ saw contributions from Gideon Thomas (Sheffield University) on ethnographic analysis of contemporary sociolinguistic and cultural traditions in Orkney and from Maria Vega (University Complutense, Madrid) on why children’s fairytales are so frightening. Tribute must be paid to Máiréad Nic Craith, Ulrich Kockel and Liam Campbell.
for organizing a diverse and stimulating conference programme.

Annual Travel Writer’s conference
Queens University Belfast, 17–18 April 2009
Keith Egan

The seventh annual Travel Writer’s conference, jointly organized by Jonathan Skinner (QUB), John Eade (Roehampton, London) and Carl Thompson (Nottingham Trent University) was held in the Institute for Irish Studies, QUB, on 17–18 April 2009. This year, the conference considered the politics and representation of traumatic experience in travel writing. Keith Egan and Fiona Murphy from NUI Maynooth presented, respectively, ‘Walking Back to Happiness? modern pilgrimage and the expression of suffering’ and ‘Negotiating the “return”: an analysis of how Australia’s Stolen Generations engage with sites of trauma, memory, and healing’. Other papers included ‘A triumph of art over nature’, ‘How Memsahibs Remember the Indian Mutiny’ (Eadaoin Agnew, QUB), ‘Return Visits and the Politics of Trauma: The Sudeten German Case’ (Maruša Švašek, QUB), ‘Deportation as a myth of origin: the journey of Poles deported by the Soviet Union during the Second World War’ (Dr Monica Janowski, University of Sussex), ‘Volcano Revelations’ (Jonathan Skinner, QUB), ‘Lost Utopias & Traumatic Modernity: Wilfred Thesiger’s The Marsh Arabs’ (Wasfi Shoqairat, University of Jordan), ‘Reliving Journeys as a War Time Evacuee’ (Judith Oakley, Oxford University).

The keynote speaker, Tony Seaton (University of Bedfordshire) spoke on the subject of ‘Thanatourists and the dark world of William Beckford: or Visitors at Lansdown Tower and Cemetery, Bath’. The conference represents a positive move towards organized opportunities for collectively examining papers in detail, encouraging new and career researchers to present, while devising practical publication strategies for papers.

Forthcoming Conferences/Seminars/Workshops

Anthropological Association of Ireland Annual Conference: ‘Ethnography Beyond Ethnos?’
School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Trinity College Dublin
7–8 May 2010

When we think of ethnography we probably think of descriptions of a place and its people, and/or interpretation of the meanings they attach to themselves, their actions and predicaments; i.e. ethnography involves studying an ethnós held to comprise human beings. Much ethnography is still recognizably like this, but anthropologists have long worried about reifying ethnos – worries that have presented themselves sharply in the Irish context. The conference will explore this dilemma and its implications for ethnographic practice and for teaching ethnography.

The AAI invites papers that address the following issues and questions:

- The dilemma of peoples and places: implication for research and teaching
- The methodological implications of a shift from nation to state, from culture to the practices and concrete manifestations of government
- Ethnographies conducted in medical and applied settings (convened by Cormac Sheehan, Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, National University of Ireland Galway)
- Multiculturalism, conflict resolution and the management of diversity
- Design ethnography and ethnography which ‘has designs’
- Globalization and de-globalization: institutions, processes and networks
- Virtual communities and netnography
- What is left of ethnos when humans have been de-centred?

Papers from research students are particularly welcome. All participants will be expected to become members of the AAI. See the website for details: http://www.anthropologyireland.org/membership1.htm. Conference Registration: Euro15.00. Please email abstracts (300 words) to Andrew Finlay at beyondethnos@gmail.com by 31 January 2010

Alternative Spiritualities, the New Age and New Religious Movements in Ireland
Interdisciplinary conference at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, 30–31 October 2009. Contact: info@nrmireland.net or olivia.cosgrove@ul.ie

Ethnography ● Creativity ● Design A Two-Day Workshop at National University of Ireland Maynooth and Intel Ireland Campus, 11–12 November 2009. Further details please contact: mark.h.maguire@nuim.ie

Centre for the Study of Wider Europe, First Postgraduate Workshop will take place at National University of Ireland Maynooth 13–14 November 2009. ‘Methodology and practice: an interdisciplinary postgraduate workshop for the Study of Wider Europe’ Email: workshop2009@widereurope.ie or seamus.m.croll@nuim.ie

ICTM (International Council on Traditional Music)
Ireland Annual Conference, will take place at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, on 27–28 February 2010. General queries should be directed to Tony Langlois at: tony.langlois@mic.ul.ie

The ASA Annual Conference will take place at Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast. ‘The Interview – theory, practice, society’, 13–16 April 2010. Please send
inquiries, suggestions and abstracts to: j.skinner@qub.ac.uk and/or d.bryan@qub.ac.uk

The 6th symposium of the ICTM (International Council on Traditional Music) Study Group Music and Minorities and the 2nd symposium of the ICTM Study Group Applied Ethnomusicology Symposia, Vietnamese Institute for Musicology, Hanoi, Vietnam. 19–30 July 2010. Contact: hemetek@mdw.ac.at (Music and Minorities) or eric.usner@gmail.com (Applied Ethnomusicology)

The 11th EASA Biennial Conference will take place at National University of Maynooth Maynooth, Ireland, on the 24–27 August 2010 on the theme of ‘Crisis and Imagination’. Email: conference@easaonline.org

Seminars

Anthropological Studies Research Seminars, School of Anthropology and History, Queen’s University Belfast

Semester 1, 2009

13 October
‘“What You Perceive is What You Conceive”: Cultural production in transnational contexts’
Maruška Svašek, Queen’s University Belfast

20 October
‘Composing and Decomposing: Music, death and the dead in the Bolivian Andes’
Henry Stobart, Royal Holloway, University of London

27 October
‘Scales of Justice for the Former Yugoslavia: Legal Anthropology, Transitional Justice and Scalar Theory in Post-Conflict Societies’
Sari Wastell, Goldsmiths College

3 November
‘Mapping Histories: Cultural landscapes and walkabout methods’
Veronica Strang, University of Auckland

10 November: Reading week – no seminar

17 November
‘Party Songs, Crackin’ Tunes and Lovely Pieces: Class, taste, practice and identity in Ulster Loyalist Flute Bands’
Gordon Ramsey, Queen’s University Belfast

24 November
‘Turks, Jews and Germans: Blood-law, land-law, and citizenship practices’
Ruth Mandel, University College London

1 December
‘Cosmopolitics and Common sense: Aspects of a world anthropology’
Huon Wardle, University of St Andrews

8 December
‘Work ethic beyond methodological individualism approaches’
Monica Heintz, University of Paris

15 December
Ethnomusicology Concert
(details to follow)

All seminars are held in the Performance Room (13 University Square) and begin at 4.15. Everyone welcome. For further information please contact Marie George on 028 9097 3701/3876.

NUI Maynooth Anthropology Seminar Series

15 October 2009
‘Accent, Culture and Moral Panic in Contemporary Irish English’
Robert E. Moore, NUI Maynooth

22 October 2008
‘The Time of the Dead: A Midwinter Celebration’
Stuart McLean, University of Minnesota

5 November 2009
‘The Consumer Movement in the South’
Su-Ming Khoo, NUI Galway

11 November 2009
Title to follow
Christina Garsten, Stockholm University

11–12 November 2009
Ethnography • Creativity • Design, Workshop at NUI Maynooth and Intel Ireland Campus

19 November 2009
‘Erections, Addictions and Reasonable People’
Jamie Saras, NUI Maynooth.

25 November 2009
Title to follow
Anette Nyqvist, Stockholm University

26 November 2009
‘The Organization of the State’
Anette Nyqvist, Stockholm University

9 December 2009
Title to follow
Combat Diseases of Poverty Consortium Lecture

10 December 2009
Title to follow
Combat Diseases of Poverty Consortium Lecture
Please see [http://anthropology.nuim.ie/GuestSpeakersSemesterTwo0809.shtml](http://anthropology.nuim.ie/GuestSpeakersSemesterTwo0809.shtml) for further information regarding times of talks and venues.

**Innovation Interface – Technology on the Human Scale**

A series of seminars organized by the Science Gallery in Association with Intel Digital Health Group and Department of Sociology, Trinity College, Dublin

List of speakers include:

8 October 2009
Navi Radjou, Executive Director of the Centre for India & Global Business at Judge Business School, University of Cambridge

10 November 2009
Maria Bezaitis, Director of People & Practices Research Intel Corporation

8 December 2009
Liam Bannon, Head of the Interaction Design Centre, Limerick

**Publications (Recent and Forthcoming)**

**Books**


Using a rich array of ethnographic and archival data closely considering the Irish and the manner in which ‘Irishness’ was rendered inclusive, Multiculturalism’s Double Bind demonstrates that multiculturalism can encourage cross-community political engagement in the global city. This book challenges the perceived wisdom that multiculturalism counteracts the opportunity for groups to move beyond their particularized constituency to build links and networks with other ‘minority’ groups.


The last century has seen radical social changes in Ireland, which have impacted on all aspects of local life but none more so than traditional Irish music, an increasingly important identity marker both in Ireland and abroad. The author focuses on a small village in County Clare, which became a kind of pilgrimage site for those interested in experiencing traditional music. He begins by tracing its historical development from the days prior to the influx of visitors, through a period called ‘the Revival’, in which traditional Irish music was revitalized and transformed, to the modern period, which is dominated by tourism. A large number of incomers, locally known as ‘blow-ins’, have moved to the area, and the traditional Irish music is now largely performed and passed on by them. This fine-grained ethnographic study explores the commercialization of music and culture, the touristic consolidation and consumption of ‘place’, and offers a critique of the trope of ‘authenticity’, all in a setting of dramatic social change in which the movement of people is constant.


This book is conceived of as a contribution to the intellectual history of Ireland and to the history of anthropology. It seeks to document a selected yet systematic set of views on Ireland as Other during the nineteenth century. Of its ten chapters, six (chapters 2 to 7) comprise the views on Ireland (social, cultural and political) of significant thinkers from outside the island. The selected thinkers are: Gustave de Beaumont (1802–66); friend of Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59); John Stuart Mill (1806–73); Harriet Martineau (1802–76); Sir Henry Maine (1822–88); Karl Marx (1818–83) and Friedrich Engels (1820–95); James Anthony Froude (1818–94). In addition, the two significant themes of Celticism and Race, constructs through which the Irish were frequently viewed, are also included (under these headings, attention is given to the thought of Matthew Arnold and Robert Knox (chapters 8 and 9)). All of this is accompanied by a historical introduction and a concluding afterword (chapters 1 and 10). The contributors to the project have been chosen for their expertise in their respective topics and represent a range of academic disciplines. All of the topics (with the exception of that on Harriet Martineau) were presented as papers at a conference held under the auspices of the Anthropological Association of Ireland in Headfort House, Kells, Co. Meath, on Friday–Saturday, 18–19 March 2005. Contributors: Peter J. Bowler (Race), Ciaran Brady (Froude), R.V. Comerford (Historical Introduction), Brian Conway and Michael R. Hill (Martineau), Dermot Dix and Chandana Mathur (Marx and Engels), Graham Finlay (Mill), Tom Garvin and Andreas Hess (de Beaumont), Peter Gray (Afterword), Séamas Ó Siocháin (Maine), George Watson (1942–2009) (Celticism).

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Plans to publish the proceedings of what began as another AAI conference are at an advanced stage. The conference was held on 11–12 May 2007 in the National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks, Dublin. The organizers (now editors) Pauline Garvey, Séamas Ó Siocháin and Adam Drazin have agreed a contract with LIT publishers, Berlin, to produce *The Globe in a Glass Case: Ethnographic Collections in Ireland*. Contents: Pauline Garvey, Séamas Ó Siocháin, Adam Drazin (Introduction); Gosewijn van Beek (The Comfort of Things); Laura Peers (on the potentialities of North American ethnographic collections in Ireland); Rachel Hand (the ethnographic collections of the National Museum of Ireland); Bill Hart (the O’Beirne Collection in the National Museum of Ireland); Winifred Glover (the origins of the Ulster Museum’s ethnographic collection); Anne O’Dowd (the Irish Folklife Collection in the National Museum of
Ireland); Anthony D. Buckley (ethnographic collections at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum); Diarmuid O Giolláin (collecting, collections and ethnography in an Irish and comparative European context); Pat Cooke (dealing with the National Museum of Ireland’s non-European collections in a Free State).

Articles/Book Chapters


Reports


New Appointments

RAI Leach Fellowship 2009–2010
Dr Keith Egan has been awarded the RAI Leach fellowship for 2009–2010. A graduate of St Patrick's College, Maynooth in 2001 with a joint honours degree in Anthropology and Theology, Keith received his Ph.D. from NUI Maynooth in 2007 for his research on contemporary European pilgrimage practices. Before taking up his position as RAI Leach fellow, Keith was a post-doctoral fellow working in an international consortium of Irish, Dutch and Swedish researchers, examining the production of gendered and nationalist discourses at Christian European shrines. Keith will be based in the Anthropology Department at NUI Maynooth.

Research and Awards

AAI Annual Postgraduate Essay Prize
The Anthropological Association of Ireland is pleased to announce the establishment of an annual Postgraduate Essay Prize. Submissions are invited from postgraduates studying anthropology or related disciplines whose research strengthens the anthropological tradition in Ireland. The winning essay will receive a cash prize of €100, and will be published in the Irish Journal of Anthropology. Submissions should be no longer than 4,000 words, previously unpublished, and should conform to the style guidelines of the Irish Journal of Anthropology. Submissions must be made electronically (in .doc or .pdf format) to AAIessayprize@gmail.com. The deadline for submission of essays is 12 March 2010. The prize will be awarded at the Annual General Meeting in May 2010.

Global Health Research Award Grant
Dr Jamie Saris (National University of Ireland Maynooth) has been awarded a Global Health Research Award Grant of €391,000 (GHRA 2007–08) from the Health Research Board and Irish Aid for ‘An ethnographic study of barriers to access to, and maintenance of, Antiretroviral Therapy in the Western Cape, Republic of South Africa’. Duration of Award: June 2008–November 2010. Dr Fiona Larkan is the Postdoctoral Fellow on this grant.

IRCHSS-funded Project
Dr Fiona Murphy is currently working on an IRCHSS-funded project (received by Dr Mark Maguire) entitled After Asylum: An Ethnographic Analysis of Refugee Integration. A graduate of UCC in 2000 with a joint honours degree in French and English, and an M.A. in French, Fiona received her Ph.D. in anthropology from NUI Maynooth in 2009 for her research on trauma and memory amongst Australia's Stolen Generations. Fiona will be based in the Anthropology Department at NUI Maynooth.
NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Submission of Material
Authors are encouraged to submit items for the *IJA*. Articles, which may be in English or Irish, should be original and should not be under consideration elsewhere. *IJA* is a refereed journal and articles submitted will be assessed by readers for their suitability.

Articles for consideration should be sent to the Editor or Associate Editor as follows:
Séamas Ó Siocháin, Editor, Department of Anthropology, NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland. seamas.osiochain@nuim.ie
Fiona Magowan, Associate Editor, School of History and Anthropology, The Queen's University Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, N. Ireland. f.magowan@qub.ac.uk

Books for review and completed reviews should be sent to the Reviews Editors:
Chandana Mathur, Department of Anthropology, NUI Maynooth. chandana.mathur@nuim.ie; or to Máiréad Nic Craith, Director, Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages, University of Ulster (Magee), Aberfoyle House, Northland Road, Derry/Londonderry, BT48 7JA. m.niccraith@ulster.ac.uk

Other material (conference and research reports, news, advertisements, letters etc.) should be sent to:
Emma Heffernan, c/o Department of Anthropology, NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland. emma.ja.heffernan@nuim.ie

Presentation
Articles should be in the region of 4000 words and should include a title, a short abstract of no more than 100 words, and a list of key words. Included also should be the author’s name, academic affiliation, and a short biographical note.

Contributions should be submitted in electronic form, in PC format readable in Word. Receipt of a submission will be acknowledged.

The following points should be observed:

Notes should be endnotes and should be kept to a minimum.

Bibliographical references in the body of the text should be given in parentheses in standard author-date form (Lee and Devore 1968: 236). A complete list of references cited, arranged alphabetically by author’s surname, should be typed at the end of the article and adhere to the following style:


Subheadings should be typed flush left.

Quotations. Single inverted commas should be used except for quotations within quotations, which should have double inverted commas. Quotations of more than about 60 words should be indented and typed without inverted commas.

Spellings. British English (not American English) spelling should be used in English articles except in quoted material, which should follow the original. Use -ize not -ise word endings.