

PALGRAVE STUDIES IN
THE HISTORY
OF CHILDHOOD

ADOLESCENCE IN MODERN IRISH HISTORY

Edited by CATHERINE COX
& SUSANNAH RIORDAN



Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood

Series Editors: **George Rousseau**, University of Oxford and **Laurence Brockliss**, University of Oxford

Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood is the first of its kind to historicise childhood in the English-speaking world; at present no historical series on children/childhood exists, despite burgeoning areas within Child Studies. The series aims to act both as a forum for publishing works in the history of childhood and a mechanism for consolidating the identity and attraction of the new discipline

Editorial Board: Jo Boyden, University of Oxford, Matthew Grenby, Newcastle University, Heather Montgomery, Open University, Nicholas Orme, Exeter University, Lyndal Roper, University of Oxford, Sally Shuttleworth, University of Oxford, Lindsay Smith, Sussex University, Nando Sigona, Birmingham University

Titles include:

Heather Ellis (*editor*)

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND THE LIMITS OF WESTERN INFLUENCE,
1850–2000

Hilary Marland

HEALTH AND GIRLHOOD IN BRITAIN, 1874–1920

Heidi Morrison

CHILDHOOD AND COLONIAL MODERNITY IN EGYPT

George Rousseau

CHILDREN AND SEXUALITY

From the Greeks to the Great War

Lucy Underwood

CHILDHOOD AND RELIGIOUS DISSENT IN POST-REFORMATION
ENGLAND

Karen Vallgård

IMPERIAL CHILDHOODS AND CHRISTIAN MISSION

Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark

Stephen Wagg and Jane Pilcher (*editors*)

THATCHER'S GRANDCHILDREN

Politics and Childhood in the Twenty-First Century

SE Duff

CHANGING CHILDHOODS IN THE CAPE COLONY

Dutch Reformed Church Evangelicalism and Colonial Childhood,
1860–1895

Johanna Sköld and Shurlee Swain
APOLOGIES AND THE LEGACY OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN IN 'CARE'
International Perspectives

Catherine Cox and Susannah Riordan (*editors*)
ADOLESCENCE IN MODERN IRISH HISTORY

Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood
Series Standing Order ISBN 978-1-137-30555-8 (Hardback)
978-1-137-40240-0 (Paperback)
(*outside North America only*)

You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and the ISBNs quoted above.

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd, Houndmills,
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

Adolescence in Modern Irish History

Edited by

Catherine Cox and Susannah Riordan

University College Dublin, Ireland

palgrave
macmillan



Selection, introduction and editorial content © Catherine Cox and

Susannah Riordan 2015

Individual chapters © Respective authors 2015

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2015 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-55295-5 ISBN 978-0-230-37491-1 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230374911

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Typeset by MPS Limited, Chennai, India.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	viii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xii
Introduction	1
<i>Catherine Cox and Susannah Riordan</i>	
1 Robert Hyndman's Toe: Romanticism, Schoolboy Politics and the Affective Revolution in Late Georgian Belfast <i>Jonathan Jeffrey Wright</i>	15
2 'A Sudden and Complete Revolution in the Female': Female Adolescence and the Medical Profession in Post-Famine Ireland <i>Ann Daly</i>	42
3 The 'Wild Irish Girl' in Selected Novels of L. T. Meade <i>Sandra McAvoy</i>	63
4 'The Most Dangerous, Reckless, Passionate ... Period of Their Lives': The Irish Borstal Offender, 1906–1921 <i>Conor Reidy</i>	82
5 An Irish Nationalist Adolescence: Na Fianna Éireann, 1909–1923 <i>Marnie Hay</i>	103
6 'Storm and Stress': Richard Devane, Adolescent Psychology and the Politics of Protective Legislation 1922–1935 <i>Susannah Riordan</i>	129
7 'How Will We Kill the Evening?': 'Degeneracy' and 'Second Generation' Male Adolescence in Independent Ireland <i>Bryce Evans</i>	151
8 A Powerful Antidote? Catholic Youth Clubs in the Sixties <i>Carole Holohan</i>	176

9	The Emergence of an Irish Adolescence: 1920s to 1970s <i>Mary E. Daly</i>	199
	<i>Select Bibliography</i>	216
	<i>Index</i>	219

Acknowledgements

This volume owes its origin to a workshop held in University College Dublin which was generously supported by the Wellcome Trust, the Centre for the History of Medicine in Ireland at University College Dublin and the UCD Humanities Institute. We would like to thank all those who attended and participated in this workshop for a stimulating discussion, our colleagues in the School of History, University College Dublin for their support and insights and, in particular, our contributors for their enthusiasm for this project and their prompt and graceful response to our suggestions. We would also like to thank the staff at the National Library of Ireland and the National Archives of Ireland.

We are grateful to everyone at Palgrave Macmillan for their excellent guidance and unfailing patience and to the reviewers whose painstaking and imaginative critiques of each chapter have made a substantial contribution to the development of the volume.

Catherine Cox and Susannah Riordan

Notes on Contributors

Catherine Cox is a lecturer at the School of History, University College Dublin and Director of the Centre for the History of Medicine in Ireland, which she co-founded in 2006. She is the author of *Negotiating insanity in the southeast of Ireland* (2012) and numerous articles, as well as the co-editor of two collections – with Maria Luddy (eds), *Cultures of care in Irish medical history, 1750–1970* (2010) and with Hilary Marland (eds), *Migration, health, and ethnicity in the modern world* (2013). Her research interests span medical practice and the medical marketplace in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mental illness in Ireland and England, alternative healing cultures and the relationship between art, disease and the body in medical education in the early nineteenth century. She is working with Hilary Marland on a Wellcome Trust Senior Investigator Award entitled ‘Prisoners, medical care and entitlement to health in England and Ireland, 1850–2000’, the topic of her current research.

Ann Daly is a second-level history teacher whose research interests focus on nineteenth-century Irish social history, with a particular emphasis on the history of medicine and the history of education. She is author of “‘Veiled obscenity”: Contraception and the *Dublin Medical Press, 1850–1900*’ in Elaine Farrell (ed.), *‘She said she was in the family way’: Pregnancy and infancy in modern Ireland* (2012) and ‘Medical victories: The *Dublin Medical Press* and the medical charities debate, 1838–51’ in Virginia Crossman and Peter Gray (eds), *Poverty and welfare in Ireland 1838–1948* (2011).

Mary E. Daly is President of the Royal Irish Academy and Adjunct Professor of Irish History at the School of History, University College Dublin. Her research interests are concentrated on Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, primarily though not exclusively on socio-economic history. She has published widely in peer-reviewed journals including the *Journal of British Studies*, *Éire-Ireland*, *Women’s History Review* and *Irish Historical Studies* as well as numerous book chapters. Her recent books include *The Irish state and the diaspora. NUI Centennial Lecture. The O’Donnell Lecture 2008* (2010); with Margaret O’Callaghan (eds), *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising* (2007) and *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland* (2006),

which was nominated as a Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2006. With Eugenio F. Biagini she is co-editor of the *Cambridge social history of Ireland* (forthcoming 2016). In 2015 she was appointed by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs as a member of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes.

Bryce Evans is a Senior Lecturer in History at Liverpool Hope University. A graduate of the University of Warwick and University College Dublin, his main research interests lie in modern Irish economic and political history and food history. His books include *Ireland during the Second World War: Farewell to Plato's cave* (2014), *Frank Aiken: Nationalist and internationalist* (2014) and *Seán Lemass: Democratic dictator* (2011). He is working on a global history of food and conflict to be published in 2016.

Marnie Hay is a lecturer in the Department of History, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, a college of Dublin City University. Her research interests include the Irish cultural revival, the Irish revolution, and the history of children and childhood. She is the author of *Bulmer Hobson and the nationalist movement in twentieth-century Ireland* (2009) and several articles, many of which examine Irish nationalist youth culture in the early twentieth century. She is writing a monograph entitled *Scouting for rebels: Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish revolution, 1909–23*. She previously lectured in history at University College Dublin, where she completed her PhD, and Trinity College, Dublin, where she held an Irish Research Council Fellowship.

Carole Holohan is a teaching fellow in the Department of History, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, a college of Dublin City University. She is particularly interested in the social history of the sixties and the way in which experiences of, and responses to, social issues in Ireland both mirror and are different from those in other jurisdictions. Her PhD thesis focused on youth and it forms the basis of her forthcoming monograph *Reframing Irish youth in the sixties*. She was awarded an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship in 2012 for her project: 'The rediscovery of poverty in the Republic of Ireland, 1963–73', her current research focus.

Sandra McAvoy is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin and University College Cork. She teaches on Women's Studies postgraduate and adult education programmes in University College Cork and coordinates the

MA in Women's Studies. Her research interests include the history of sexuality, the history and politics of reproductive rights and women and politics. She also enjoys bringing a historian's perspective to rediscovered women's writing. She is working on the history of birth control in Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and on the political life and writing of Cork suffragist Susanne Day (1876–1964). Recent publications include 'Vindicating women's rights in a foetocentric state: The longest Irish journey' in Noreen Giffney and Margrit Shildrick (eds), *Theory on the edge* (2013) and a co-edited volume: Jennifer Redmond, Sonja Tiernan, Sandra McAvoy and Mary McAuliffe (eds), *Sexual politics in modern Irish history* (2015).

Conor Reidy graduated with an Irish Research Council funded doctorate in history from the University of Limerick in 2007, where he lectures in family history. He has also taught at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. He is the author of two monographs: *Ireland's 'moral hospital': The Irish borstal system 1906–1956* (2009) and *Criminal Irish drunkards: The inebriate reformatory system 1900–1920* (2014). He is currently Secretary of the Women's History Association of Ireland. His research interests include crime and punishment in twentieth-century Ireland, the social history of deviance, the Irish borstal system, gender, drunkenness and crime in pre-independence Ireland. For his current research project, he is investigating the borstal system for males and females in Northern Ireland between 1926 and 1972.

Susannah Riordan is a lecturer in Modern Irish History at the School of History, University College Dublin, an associated staff member of the Centre for the History of Medicine in Ireland, and Secretary of the Irish Historical Society. Her main research interests lie in the fields of Irish and British social, religious and intellectual history and the history of sexuality. She has published on these topics in *Irish Historical Studies*, *Irish Economic and Social History*, and *The Irish Review*. She is concluding a long-term project on the social and medical history of venereal disease in independent Ireland.

Jonathan Jeffrey Wright is a lecturer in British History at Maynooth University. His research addresses British and Irish politics and culture during the age of revolution and reform and the Irish experience of empire. His first book is *The 'natural leaders' and their world: Politics, culture and society in Belfast, c. 1801–1832* (2012) and he has recently published articles on the Irish-born metropolitan radical Peter Finnerty

and the writer, parliamentarian and sometime colonial administrator Sir James Emerson Tennent. He is the editor, with Diarmid A. Finnegan, of *Spaces of global knowledge: Exhibition, encounter and exchange in an age of empire* (forthcoming) and is working on a full-length biography of Emerson Tennent.

List of Abbreviations

BAI	Borstal Association of Ireland
BMH	Bureau of Military History
CLÓ	An Comhairle le Leas Óige (Council for the Welfare of Youth)
CSSC	Catholic Social Services Conference
CSWB	Catholic Social Welfare Bureau
CVC	Colleges Volunteer Corps
CYC	Catholic Youth Council
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives
<i>DIB</i>	<i>Dictionary of Irish Biography</i>
<i>DJMS</i>	<i>Dublin Journal of Medical Science</i>
<i>DMPC</i>	<i>Dublin Medical Press and Circular</i>
<i>DQJMS</i>	<i>Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science</i>
GPB	General Prisons Board
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
IWCLGA	Irish Women Citizens and Local Government Association
JCWSSW	Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers
MA	Military Archives
MIOA	Mary Immaculate Oral Archive
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
TD	Teachta Dála (Deputy to the Dáil, the lower house of parliament)

Introduction

Catherine Cox and Susannah Riordan

In January 2011 a workshop in University College Dublin supported by the Wellcome Trust and the UCD Humanities Institute brought together a group of established and emerging scholars of Irish political, social, economic, cultural and medical history to discuss whether it was possible to develop a history of Irish adolescence. We were keen to explore how Irish adolescence fits within the international literature and to decouple it from the history of childhood, which was then beginning to emerge as a field of enquiry among Irish researchers. This volume – one of the outcomes of that conversation – represents the first collection of essays to engage with the question of whether there was such a thing as a distinctively Irish adolescence – or, rather, a variety of adolescences, differing with time, gender, class, religion and geography, reflecting common western patterns, but nonetheless recognisably Irish. These chapters offer some answers to this question and highlight new areas of research in what is a potentially rich and vibrant topic.

At the heart of most enquiries into the history of childhood and of adolescence has been the question of whether the analytical categories, ‘childhood’ and ‘adolescence’, are ‘transhistorical phenomen[a]’.¹ For childhood studies, Philippe Ariès’s thesis that childhood as a separate stage of life was a construction of the early modern period has been generally rejected.² John Gillis’s study of the history of European youth has revealed that ‘preindustrial society recognised and institutionalised a stage of life that was different from both childhood and adulthood.’³ For Gillis, ‘youth’ denotes a transitional period of life when children begin to live more independently from families until finally reaching the point of complete independence.⁴ The modalities of transition from dependent member of a family household to adult ‘independence’ incorporated periods when ‘youths’ – male and female – were

removed from family households and acquired new 'masters' as apprentices, students or domestic servants. Until the late nineteenth century, these roles were not clearly age-delineated. As Gillis argues 'personal, social and economic tasks of development were concurrently rather than sequentially organized, a fact which accounts for the lack of distinction between adolescence and youth in the society's conception of the normal life cycle.'⁵ The task of revealing a national or transnational history of adolescence is highly complex; deeply embedded in local concepts of class, ethnicity, gender and 'demographic and economic' development across centuries.⁶

The construction of 'adolescence' by the new discipline of psychology as a specific developmental phase between childhood and adulthood is associated with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American psychologists, notably Granville Stanley Hall. Hall's interest in adolescence emerged from his work with the 'child study movement', which aimed to deepen 'public and scientific understanding of human development.'⁷ He published his comprehensive description of adolescence as a transitional period worthy of examination in a two-volume publication *Adolescence: Its psychology, and its relations to anthropology, sex, crime, religion, and education* in 1904. In many respects, his publication was part of the tradition of advice books on child rearing produced in America from the 1820s that drew on an older genre of English and French literature but it differed in its treatment of the fourteen to twenty-five-year-old age group.⁸ While other authors stressed the importance of 'youth's' speedy assumption of adult responsibilities, Hall emphasized the importance of delaying induction into the duties and obligations of adulthood.⁹ For Joseph Kett, the factors that set Hall's definition apart from other texts was the stress placed on the physical bodily changes associated with the age cohort, specific character changes and traits which he linked to these physical changes and, finally, the easing of the pressures for youths to shoulder adult duties and anxieties. Hall characterized adolescence as a period of turmoil and danger: to assist in the smooth transition from childhood to adult, he advised that male and female youths avoid the stimulation and stress that could produce an early and precocious adolescence and fail to bring about sexual and personal maturity.¹⁰

Hall's work on adolescence was linked to the emergence of the broader academic discipline of psychology and the acceptance of psychology as an intellectual culture in the first decades of the twentieth century.¹¹ Yet, contemporaries and later schools of psychologists criticized his theory of adolescence: for example, Margaret Mead's *Coming of age*

in Samoa contended that the turbulence linked to adolescence was culturally dependent and her research promoted a more positive view of adolescence.¹² Hall's work was soon to be overshadowed by that of Sigmund Freud and his reputation was short lived.¹³

Scholars interested in the history of adolescence – Hall's late nineteenth-century conceptualization of it but also its earlier history – have revealed how his theory reflects many of the social and economic changes evident in America, but also in western society more widely. The period in history associated with the 'discovery' of adolescence, the late nineteenth century, witnessed changes in experiences of growing up. These resulted from the prolongation of youth dependency, displacing older, 'premodern', preindustrial and agrarian mechanisms and roles – apprenticeships, servanthood – that supported the progression of youths from dependents within family households to heads of, and spouses in, new units. These changes were in part enabled by the expansion of a prosperous middle class with the financial resources to support continued secondary education for larger numbers of youths and consequently delay their entry into the labour market. The chronology of education as a 'mass experience' differed across national contexts, for example, 'as late as 1957–58, less than a quarter of English fifteen- to seventeen-year-olds were in school'¹⁴ and, as Mary E. Daly's chapter in this volume highlights, the provision and enforcement of compulsory secondary education for Irish youths arrived even later. Gillis, however, has stressed the importance of the 'dynamics of continuity and change' tracking the significance of education, changing employment roles and bonds of fraternity in shaping early modern experiences of 'youth'.¹⁵ As Jonathan Jeffrey Wright's and Ann Daly's chapters demonstrate, awareness of a period between childhood and adulthood, marked by heightened emotions, intense affections, profound if contradictory influences and moral malleability, existed long before Hall discovered adolescence.

Another important context to the formulation of the concept of adolescence in the later nineteenth century was the increase in anxieties about the urbanization and industrialization of western society. The extent of the threat posed by the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century city to the physical, mental and moral wellbeing of its inhabitants was extensively debated among medical, secular and religious commentators. Specific groups, demarcated by age, race and gender, were viewed as especially vulnerable. This included youths – male and female – migrating to unfamiliar, urban environments in search of employment and living away from the parental guidance and control deemed vital for negotiating the new and threatening context in which they progressed toward maturity.

Thus, the emphasis on these themes in the work of psychologists but also penologists and reformers in the second half of the nineteenth century, reflected contemporary anxieties about the changing nature of society rather than revealing much about what it was like to be an 'adolescent'.

Studies of attitudes toward, and conceptualizations of, adolescence have tended to highlight the dangers and concerns about girl and boy youths in mid- to late-Victorian Britain and America, leading to the formulation of the category of 'juvenile delinquency' from the 1850s onwards. Male youths, and the danger they posed in terms of destabilizing societal norms, have received in-depth attention. Research has explored state, religious and medical initiatives to reform, discipline and obviate the alleged negative influences of male youths on society, producing strong surveys of the nineteenth-century history of youth crime, especially of juvenile delinquency in England.¹⁶ In recent years, the question of female juvenile delinquency and criminality has received more attention, with specific studies devoted to interrogating the tension between moulding young women into potential mothers while simultaneously reforming and containing corrupt and delinquent tendencies.¹⁷ This builds on a body of literature exploring how late-Victorian and Edwardian medical authors perceived and portrayed female puberty as a period of danger and pathology that required careful management and supervision so as to ensure successful transition to adulthood and motherhood.¹⁸ More recent research on England and France has revealed more complex and ambivalent attitudes towards the dangers of female puberty and adolescence.¹⁹

To date, research on the subject of adolescence in Ireland has followed a similar trajectory, highlighting links between adolescence, danger and criminality, and examining the emerging youth culture of the 1960s and 1970s. It has also emphasized Ireland's unique demographic inheritance, its religious and political cultures, the dominance of the voluntary sector in the social arena and especially the protracted deployment of institutionalization as a panacea for problems most particularly associated with adolescence.²⁰

The nine chapters in this volume describe aspects of the experience of, commentary on, and efforts to mould and control Irish adolescents from the 'affective revolution' of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, through the 'discovery of adolescence', to the emergence of the 'teenager' in the 1960s. Jonathan Jeffrey Wright explores the political ideals, literary tastes, friendships and amorous adventures of a circle of young men from the reformist Presbyterian merchant class of

early nineteenth-century Belfast. He draws on an exceptional source, the papers of Robert James Tennent, which include juvenilia, reading diaries and schoolboy correspondence, to provide a rare opportunity 'to "listen in" to a group of bright, gossipy adolescents communicating unguardedly among themselves.'

As the sons of a political elite with strong views about preparing the next generation for active citizenship, the highly-politicized Tennent and his friends may be seen as untypical of Irish adolescents of their age and class. Nonetheless, their education in the recently-founded Belfast Academical Institution draws attention to two related strands in the history of childhood and adolescence in Ireland: firstly, it highlights the impact in Ireland, as elsewhere in western society, of the educational writings of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, if only among the most liberal circles within the aristocracy and gentry, and the professional and merchant classes. Secondly, although the Belfast Academical Institution reflected a very particular political and philosophical environment, it was only one of many private establishments founded for the education of the male, and sometimes the female, youths of the merchant classes in Irish towns and cities. Combining – for young men – a classical curriculum with a training in the skills required to pursue a life in trade, such schools marked the recognition, in these classes, of a period of transition between childhood and adulthood.

If adolescence is associated primarily with an extended period of education, the extent to which a transitional period existed in the social classes above and below the families of urban merchants and professionals requires further analysis. The history of education, in particularly the history of educational policy, of schools and of curricula, is well-represented in Irish historiography²¹ but the history of educational experience is under-developed. John Logan has observed that in the pre-Famine period few parents in the aristocracy or gentry on the one hand, or among tenant farmers on the other, were equipped to educate their own children. Both governesses and tutors were few in number and tutors appear often to have been peripatetic and shared among several families in remote rural areas. The reform of the British public school from the 1830s made this an increasingly attractive option for the Irish elite and the aspirational middle classes.²² This raises a range of questions about identity and adolescent development which are touched on in Sandra McAvoy's chapter in this volume.

Devised for a young, female and primarily British audience, the heroines of L. T. Meade's novels were preoccupied with negotiating their transformation from children to ladies or women – both Meade and

McAvoy draw a distinction between the two. One of the populizers of the girls' school story at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, Meade has been criticized for both taming and ethnically stereotyping her 'wild Irish girls'. McAvoy's study reveals Meade to have been a far more nuanced novelist. Her Irish subjects embraced almost masculine codes of honour, which were problematic in an English setting but worthy of celebration.

Following Catholic Emancipation in 1829, an extensive network of fee-paying secondary schools under the management of Catholic religious orders grew up and, from 1878, received indirect state grants. Between this time and the introduction of free secondary education in the 1960s, these schools specialized in offering an education to the sons and daughters of the Catholic middle classes. The maintenance of what was essentially a late-Victorian educational structure and curriculum for most of the twentieth century, suggests that the character formation of the Irish adolescent, or at least the middle-class Catholic adolescent, may have differed significantly from that of his and her peers throughout western Europe, a subject that is worthy of further research.

Among the unpropertied classes, there is considerable evidence of a profound enthusiasm for the education of their children on the part of parents both before and after the establishment of the national education system in 1831 but, given the protracted existence of the pre-industrial family economy well into the twentieth century, the education of individuals was generally subordinated to the needs of the family and, for most, ceased entirely at about fourteen years of age. Mary E. Daly suggests in this volume that in the hundred years following the Great Famine, adolescence – if regarded as a period during which young people were permitted to enjoy a 'freedom that leans a little toward licence' while retaining an element of 'shelter and protection' – was a luxury for a minority of Irish youths, most of whom experienced either an accelerated introduction to adult responsibilities or an extended period of infantilizing dependency.

Both the premature adulthood of the twentieth-century Irish youth – whether in terms of emigration, employment or responsibility for the care of younger siblings – and the dependency of the unmarried middle-aged 'boy' or 'girl' have been the subject of extensive attention from scholars, most usually by literary critics, sociologists, anthropologists and collectors of oral histories. Both pose particular challenges for the historian of adolescence. James Walvin has argued that childhood – and by extension adolescence – cannot be defined in the modern period by schooling or work, by economic independence or even by physical

characteristics, as each of these differed, sometimes dramatically, according to class.²³ In the Irish context, the unmarried and economically dependent male has frequently been associated with varieties of semi-ritualized violence, such as faction fighting and agrarian agitation. Should these be seen as an aspect of adolescent experience and associated with the international literature on the cultural aspects of male youth violence or should they be regarded as resulting from specific Irish socio-political circumstances, unrelated to age, and therefore excluded from the history of adolescence?

This question draws attention to a general hiatus in the historiography of adolescence, which has paid inadequate attention to the experience of rural youths. Indeed, it might be argued that the historical study of adolescence has been largely, and perhaps unduly, influenced by the concept of juvenile delinquency with adolescence consequently defined as an urban, working-class, male phenomenon. Ann Daly's chapter in this volume offers a valuable counterpoint to this general tendency, highlighting as it does the dangers which continued to be associated with female delinquency, primarily sexual delinquency, in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Daly charts the pathologization of the adolescent female body in the second half of the nineteenth century and its association with physical and mental precariousness. This was a phenomenon common to western societies and associated with the professionalization of medicine and the emergence of gynaecology as a specialism. However, Daly relates it to the particular Irish association between family and land and argues that in post-Famine Ireland female reproductive capacity was more than usually valued and adolescent female sexuality perceived as being more than usually hazardous.

For the most part, however, and despite the overwhelmingly rural and agricultural history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland, Irish historiography to date has tended to reflect the common conceptualization of adolescence as both urban and problematic. In Ireland as elsewhere, the 1850s were marked by extensive commentary about the presence on city streets of apparently unsupervised young people, who were either actively involved in criminality or in danger of becoming so. Jane Barnes has noted that Irish observers tended to associate juvenile criminality with Famine orphans and, in general, to be more sympathetic than their English, Scottish and Welsh contemporaries and readier to attribute it to socio-economic difficulties than to the existence of a criminal sub-class.²⁴ This, together with the abolition of transportation from Ireland in 1853 – a sentence often seen as particularly appropriate for, and indeed as an opportunity for, juvenile

offenders – resulted in belated attention being paid to the treatment of child and adolescent offenders in the Irish penal system and to the best means of ‘redeeming’ young people seen to be in danger of falling into criminality.

Since the history of youth in Ireland has been dominated by studies of institutions and, in particular, by the relationship between the state and voluntary, especially religious, management of such institutions it is essential to note that neither the state-run workhouse system nor the state-funded but religious-managed system of industrial schools were primarily associated with adolescents. For most of the nineteenth century, residents of workhouses were deemed to have reached adulthood at fifteen, while inmates were discharged from industrial schools at sixteen. Indeed, one of the complaints made about both by the end of the nineteenth century was the lack of follow-up care for young people leaving these institutions. It is a notable feature of the Irish welfare system and the relationship between state and churches that both were slow to develop an interest in youth welfare. The exception to this was in provisions for youth offenders made in church-run reformatories and, ultimately, in the borstals discussed by Conor Reidy in this volume. It has been noted that the regime in these institutions was strongly influenced by ideas – both pre-dating and reflecting Hall’s researches – about the potential for corruption as well as redemption of the adolescent and that the quality of both nutrition and training was considerably superior to that in either workhouses or prisons.²⁵

If Irish socio-economic and religious circumstances had an impact on experiences of adolescence, so too did the political environment. The second half of the nineteenth century in Ireland, as in the UK as a whole, was marked by increasing economic opportunities for young people, particularly in the state and commercial sectors. More leisure and greater spending power meant that greater attention was paid to the adolescent as consumer and R. V. Comerford has suggested that the growth of Fenianism in the 1860s and 1870s was greatly facilitated by the growth of a cohort of more independent and leisured city and small town youths.²⁶ The growth of organized sport in this period reflected both a common UK experience and an increasing Irish nationalist appeal to a youth constituency.

By the beginning of the twentieth century this dual inheritance was compounded by growing concerns about degeneracy and the associated international rise of youth movements. Nationalists such as those studied by Marnie Hay in this volume both replicated and abhorred the example of the Baden-Powell scouts and other British imperialistic youth

movements. Reidy's and Hay's chapters describe youths who were almost exact contemporaries, their adolescence occurring between 1906 and 1923, but whose life experiences and perceived potential were very different. Reidy's subjects are the 'borstal boys', the juvenile-adult offenders who were regarded as being on a trajectory towards a life of crime but who were believed to be redeemable through a programme of educational and physical discipline. Hay's are the young men (and occasionally young women) identified by Irish advanced nationalists as being suitable to be prepared for the military and political leadership of a new Ireland – again through a programme of educational and physical discipline – and who progressed to become the elite of the Irish revolution. Both illustrate how the 'discovery of adolescence' played itself out in a specifically Irish context.

As Hay demonstrates, organisations such as Na Fianna Éireann also contributed to the youthful profile of the Irish revolutionary movement in the 1916–1923 period. While the militarism of the early twentieth century affected adolescents across the western world, Ireland was unusual in experiencing neither war nor revolution – both of them regarded as formative experiences for youth – after the end of the Civil War in 1923. Youths growing up in the wake of the Irish revolution were often seen by their elders as degenerate and particularly prone to criminal (in the case of males) or sexual (in the case of females) temptation and deviant behaviour.

The legacy of a generation of nationalist activists and martyrs – the young men studied by Hay – placed a considerable burden on the generation that succeeded them. Accusations by one generation of degeneracy in the next are a common trope in the history of adolescence but Bryce Evans suggests in this volume that the exceptional youth of the Irish revolutionary generation gave rise to an unattainable example for its successors, who were frequently portrayed as idle, self-obsessed and criminally inclined. The memorial genre in Irish literature reflects this tension but Evans argues that, in reality, the 'second generation' of Irish adolescents were no more degenerate than their fathers.

Indeed, conflicting interpretations of the relevance of the youth contribution to the Irish revolution and Civil War deserve greater attention from historians. To what extent, if any, did this determine the development of the new state? On first analysis, the answer would seem to be 'very little'. The period after independence was marked by the evolution of a welfare system which was unusually dependent on a sensitive relationship between a parsimonious and deferential state and a Catholic church with exaggerated fears of sectarian, communistic and Freudian encroachments on its voluntary efforts. The consequence was, as Tom

Feeney suggests, the continued representation of adolescent crises in spiritual, rather than psychological, terms.²⁷

Undoubtedly this outlook contributed to an unwarranted complacency about the efficacy of institutional and religious solutions to the problems posed by adolescent deviance. It is particularly noteworthy that, for most of the twentieth century, male adolescent transgressions, particularly sexual transgressions, escaped the attention of either church or state, while the sexual vulnerability of adolescent females – many of them the victims of rape or incest – became effectively criminalized and institutionalized, particularly in Magdalene asylums.²⁸ Despite this dark history, the general Irish reluctance to embrace psychological solutions should not be seen entirely in a negative light. As the social services in Britain and the United States became professionalized, they moved towards a model of generic delinquency which was, for the most part, avoided in Ireland. The recent and well-justified criticism of the Irish welfare system has tended to be *sui generis* and to have neglected comparative analysis and an awareness of the traumatic potential of state intervention in the lives of adolescents in a variety of western circumstances.

Without disputing the justified impression that independent Ireland embraced an excessively institutional and carceral approach to female sexual and social deviance and was exceptionally unforgiving of unmarried motherhood, Susannah Riordan's chapter suggests the root causes of this require revision where the adolescent unmarried mother is concerned. Her study of the campaign for protective legislation in the 1920s and 1930s indicates that there was considerable sympathy for the young 'fallen woman' among social workers and that harsher attitudes were more associated with traditional practitioners of the law and medicine than with clerical or political advocates of a new, Catholic, independent Irish dispensation.

As the foregoing suggests, Irish adolescence both resembled and diverged from, British, American and continental European experiences in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Significant differences began to be observable at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth, and these were for the most part relatable to class, to the continued dominance of the small farm in the Irish economy, and to the absence of opportunities for industrial employment for the sons and daughters of farmers. A confluence of experience occurred in the late 1950s as increased job opportunities, economic independence and the emergence of a commercialized youth culture marked the belated arrival of the Irish teenager.

In the cities, particularly in Dublin, youth clubs sprang up to redirect the energies of this newly-enfranchized group. The subject of Carole Holohan's chapter, these youth clubs drew on international experience but were crucially redefined, primarily by Catholic Archbishop of Dublin John Charles McQuaid, as sites for the enactment of class. McQuaid's comprehension of the youth club as a forum in which middle-class youth leaders might pass on their values to a passive working-class constituency was ultimately, and predictably, a failure.

The final chapter in this collection, that by Mary E. Daly, has been extensively referred to above, providing as it does a contextual framework against which the preceding chapters should be read. However, it also offers a fitting conclusion, not only giving a detailed overview of the socio-economic factors which determined Irish experiences of youth in the century after the Great Famine but also reflecting on the rapidly changing landscape of the 1970s.

Ireland's adolescences were shaped by the country's demographic legacy, marked by late marriage, permanent celibacy, large families and endemic emigration among the young of both sexes. This combined with limited industrialization, which restricted employment opportunities for the young, and the continued dominance, into the second half of the twentieth century, of the pre-industrial family economy. These factors not only impacted on adolescent autonomy but on the decisions made by parents concerning such crucial issues as which children to educate, how and to what level.

In Ireland as elsewhere, where adolescence was perceived as a problem it was perceived as an urban, working-class and primarily male phenomenon, and interventionist initiatives of the kind likely to leave records were to be found mainly in cities or at least to target city youths. Likewise, youth organizations, political or otherwise, which sought to harness the positive potential of the young were, for very practical reasons, organized on an urban basis. Reflecting the available sources, this volume is therefore more orientated to the experiences of the urban than the rural youth. Most of the chapters in this volume offer comparisons only with Britain and the United States. In doing so, they reflect accurately the cultural and intellectual engagement of Irish experts, practitioners and commentators, which was primarily with their Anglophone peers. Nonetheless, there is considerable scope for broader comparative perspectives on the history of Irish adolescence. While presenting a new dimension on the international historiography of adolescence and making an innovative contribution to history of modern Ireland, these chapters also open up a potentially fruitful field for future research.

Notes

1. Paul Griffiths, 'Juvenile delinquency in time' in Pamela Cox and Heather Shore (eds), *Becoming delinquent: British and European youth, 1650–1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 23, cited in Heather Ellis, 'Introduction: Constructing juvenile delinquency in a global context' in idem (ed.), *Juvenile delinquency and the limits of western influence, 1850–2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 5.
2. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of childhood*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Random House, 1996) [1st ed. 1962] and Harry Hendrick, *Children, childhood and English society, 1880–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
3. John R. Gillis, *Youth and history: Tradition and change in European age relations, 1770–present* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1974), 2.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 5.
6. *Ibid.*, xi–xii.
7. John Demos and Virginia Demos, 'Adolescence in historical perspective', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 31:4 (1969), 632–8, 635. See also Judith Semon Dubas, Kristelle Miller and Anne C. Peterse, 'The study of adolescence during the 20th century', *History of the Family*, 8:3 (2003), 375–97, 377.
8. Demos and Demos, 'Adolescence in historical perspective', 633.
9. Joseph F. Kett, 'Reflections on the history of adolescence in America', *History of the Family*, 8:3 (2003), 355–73, 357.
10. *Ibid.*, 357.
11. Mathew Thomson, *Psychological subjects: Identity, culture, and health in twentieth-century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); idem, 'The psychological body' in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone (eds), *Medicine in the twentieth century* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), 291–306.
12. For an assessment of challenges to Hall see Dubas et al., 'The study of adolescence'; Margaret Mead, *Coming of age in Samoa*, (New York: W. Morrow and Company, 1928).
13. Demos and Demos, 'Adolescence in historical perceptive', 636.
14. J. Floud and A. H. Halsey, 'Introduction' in A. H. Halsey, J. Floud and C. A. Anderson (eds), *Education, economy, and society: A sociological reader* (New York: Free Press, 1961), 1–12, cited in Kett, 'Reflections on the history of adolescence', 356.
15. Gillis, *Youth and history*, 21–4.
16. For example see John R. Gillis, 'The evolution of juvenile delinquency in England, 1890–1914', *Past and Present*, 67 (1975), 96–126; Peter King, 'The rise of juvenile delinquency in England 1780–1840: Changing patterns in perception and prosecution', *Past and Present*, 160 (1998), 116–66; Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and citizenship: Reclaiming the young offender, 1914–1948* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); John Springhall, *Coming of age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860–1960* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1986); Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or rebels? An oral history of working class childhood and youth, 1889–1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981); Harry Hendrick, *Images of youth. Age, class and the male youth problem, 1880–1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Christine Griffin, *Representations of youth: The study*

of youth and adolescence in Britain and America (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

17. Pamela Cox, 'Girls, deficiency and delinquency' in David Wright and Anne Digby (eds), *From idiocy to deficiency: Historical perspectives on people with learning disabilities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 184–206; Cox and Shore (eds), *Becoming delinquent*; Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen women; problem girls: Unmarried mothers and the professionalization of social work, 1890–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent daughters: Protecting and policing adolescent female sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
18. Karl Figlio, 'Chlorosis and chronic disease in nineteenth-century Britain. The social construction of somatic illness in a capitalist society', *Social History*, 3:2 (1978), 167–97; Anne Digby, 'Women's biological straitjacket' in Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and subordination: Interdisciplinary studies of gender in the nineteenth century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 192–220.
19. Hilary Marland, *Health and girlhood in England, 1874–1920* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Mary Lynn Stewart, *For health and beauty: Physical culture for Frenchwomen, 1880s–1930s* (Baltimore MD and London: John Hopkins University Press, 2001).
20. Jane Barnes, *Irish industrial schools, 1868–1908: Origins and development* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989), 38–43; Sarah-Anne Buckley, *The cruelty man: Child welfare, the NSPCC and the state in Ireland, 1889–1956* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); James M. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the nation's architecture of containment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Virginia Crossman, 'Cribbed, contained and confined? The care of children under the Irish Poor Law', *Éire-Ireland*, 44:1/2 (2009), 37–61; Ian Miller, 'Constructing "moral hospitals": Improving bodies and minds in Irish reformatories and industrial schools, c. 1851–1890' in Alice Mauger and Anne Mac Lellan (eds), *Growing pains. A history of children illness in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2013), 105–122; Carole Holohan 'Challenges to social order and Irish identity? Youth culture in the sixties', *Irish Historical Studies*, 38:151 (2013), 389–405.
21. For example, D. H. Akenson, *The Irish education experiment: The national system of education in the nineteenth century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970); D. H. Akenson, *A mirror to Kathleen's face. Education in independent Ireland* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); John Coolahan, *Irish education: Its history and structure* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981); Mary Cullen (ed.), *Girls don't do honours: Irish women in education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin: Women's Education Bureau, 1987); John Walsh, *The politics of expansion: The transformation of educational policy in the Republic of Ireland, 1957–72* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).
22. John Logan, 'Governesses, tutors and parents: Domestic education in Ireland, 1700–1880', *Irish Educational Studies*, 7 (1988), 1–19.
23. James Walvin, *A child's world: A social history of English childhood 1800* (Houndsworth: Penguin, 1984), 12–13.
24. Barnes, *Irish industrial schools*, 15.
25. Miller, 'Constructing "moral hospitals"', 117–18.

26. R. V. Comerford, 'Patriotism as pastime: The appeal of Fenianism in the mid-1860s', *Irish Historical Studies*, 22:87 (1981), 239–50.
27. Tom Feeney, 'Church, state and family: The advent of child guidance clinics in independent Ireland', *Social History of Medicine*, 25 (2012), 848–62.
28. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen laundries*, 17.

1

Robert Hyndman's Toe: Romanticism, Schoolboy Politics and the Affective Revolution in Late Georgian Belfast

Jonathan Jeffrey Wright

On 2 April 1821 an eighteen-year-old Belfast youth named Robert James Tennent received a letter from a young woman with whom he was conducting a flirtation. Little is known about the letter's author, one Hannah McGee, but much can be said about Tennent. Born on 30 April 1803, he was a scion of one of Belfast's most prominent Presbyterian families: his father, Robert Tennent, was a well-known philanthropist and reformer, while his uncle, William Tennent, was numbered among Belfast's wealthiest merchants and had, in the 1790s, played a prominent role in the United Irish movement.¹ Following an early education in Belfast, Robert James Tennent had, in 1820, enrolled in Trinity College, Dublin, where he studied law: he was thus a young man with prospects, and, as McGee herself quipped, a 'fine, dashing fellow'. Given all of this, it might be supposed that McGee's family and friends were favourably disposed towards her connection with him. But such was not the case: 'Let me turn where I like,' she complained in her letter, 'I hear of nothing but of such and such a one saying what a pity it is I should have fixed my eye on that harum scarum youth as they are pleased to style you.'²

Conveying, as it does, a sense of reckless, juvenile abandon, 'harum scarum youth' was a fitting description, for notwithstanding his evident recommendations – his connections, education and prospects – Tennent was, in other respects, an unreliable individual. Inspired by a sequence of libertarian uprisings that had swept through southern Europe in 1819 and 1820, he was a young man flushed with revolutionary enthusiasm, who had declared his intent, the previous December, to quit his studies in Trinity College and travel to Italy to support the Neapolitans in their revolutionary struggle.³ Moreover, he was a young man whose sincerity in matters of the heart could not be depended upon. McGee's letter

conveys her awareness of these points vividly: 'I cannot express to you my dear Robert James the restless uneasiness I endured for a few days before I received your last letter,' she wrote; 'a thousand disagreeable ideas crowded into my brains but the most lasting was that you had forgotten you had such a correspondent, or that that one thought of going to Naples had swallowed up all the rest ... I sat with my Aunt the other night till nearly one o'clock talking of you, she told me if you went I need never expect to see you again, for my own part I think you may return but most probably not to me.'⁴

Viewed singly, McGee's letter offers a tantalising glimpse – but a glimpse only – into the world of late Georgian Belfast's middle-class adolescents. Fortunately, however, the letter constitutes just the tip of a substantial archival iceberg, for among the papers of Robert James Tennent – themselves merely a subset of the larger Tennent family archive – a rich cache of juvenilia and schoolboy correspondence is preserved. Offering more than a glimpse into their world, this material enables us to 'listen in' to a group of bright, gossipy adolescents communicating unguardedly among themselves. Utilising this revealing source base, the following discussion seeks to reconstruct the adolescent milieu inhabited by Tennent and his friends, though this is, of course, to raise questions of definition and anachronism: what, precisely, is meant by the term adolescent, and is it appropriate to apply the concept to the late Georgian period? Beginning with definition, following Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, adolescence is understood, in the current context, to refer to a distinct life-phase, between childhood and adulthood, occupying the years between 'the early teens and the mid-twenties'. It is possible, as Ben-Amos has done, to subdivide this life-phase into two further periods: adolescence ('the early and mid-teens') and youth ('mid-teens and upwards').⁵ In what follows, however, these two phases are viewed as overlapping and adolescence is used in general terms to cover the periods of adolescence proper and youth, though the bulk of the discussion relates to the activities of individuals in their late teens and early twenties.

Definition aside, applying the concept of adolescence to the late Georgian period is to risk anachronism, for the emergence of adolescence as a distinct concept has been presented as a phenomena of the later nineteenth century. In John R. Gillis' influential analysis, '[t]he discovery of adolescence belonged essentially to the middle classes' and was closely related to changes in educational practice, whereby precocity was discouraged, children were educated for longer, and stricter demarcations were established between primary and secondary

schooling.⁶ But while it is certainly true that the idea of adolescence came into sharper focus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the experience of a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood had been a reality for much longer. Ben-Amos, for instance, has suggested that adolescence and youth constituted 'a long and dynamic phase in the life cycle' in early modern England.⁷ Likewise, while dating the discovery of adolescence as a concept to the later nineteenth century, Gillis has acknowledged the variety of youth cultures that existed in Europe during the earlier period 1770–1870.

During these years, Europe's middle-class youths gathered in revolutionary coteries and secret societies, organized themselves into student fraternities and, in Paris, postured as urban bohemians, experimenting with romanticism, libertinism and occultism in 'avoidance of roles in the real (adult) world to which most knew they must ultimately turn.'⁸ This wider context is by no means irrelevant to a discussion of the milieu inhabited by Belfast's middle-class adolescents, for Belfast was far from being a political or cultural backwater and Tennent and his associates shaped and inhabited an adolescent sub-culture which combined political engagement with literary consumption and romantic intriguing. As such, theirs was a milieu that was arguably characterized by the same 'all-of-a-piece approach toward life' that Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob have identified among those circles influenced by the revolutionary upheavals of the 1790s. 'The French Revolution released a kind of seismic affective energy,' Hunt and Jacob argue, 'not only among those who witnessed it first hand, but also further away from its epicenter ... Radicals and romantics developed new kinds of intensity in their personal relationships, explored the prospects of democracy, sniffed newly discovered hallucinogenic gases, and wrote poetry, good and bad.'⁹ While there is no evidence to suggest that Tennent and his associates experimented, like Humphry Davy, with hallucinogenic gas, they certainly did debate politics and write poetry, and in what follows it will be suggested that theirs was a world touched by the 'affective revolution' – the broader transformation or 'opening up' of male sociability – ushered in by the revolutionary epoch.¹⁰ Thus, in reconstructing the world of Tennent and his associates, the ensuing discussion will not only contribute to existing knowledge of the diversity of adolescent experience that existed in early nineteenth-century Ireland, but will also reflect on the cultural and political parameters of Presbyterian Belfast in the crucial period following the 1798 Rebellion and the passage of the Act of Union. It will posit a link, albeit tentatively, between cultural consumption and adolescent behaviour.

I

To begin, some context is required. The early nineteenth century is often viewed as a period marked by two main trends in Ulster: one political, the decline of Presbyterian radicalism; and the other religious, the spread of evangelicalism. To focus solely on these developments is, however, to simplify what was, in social, political and intellectual terms, an altogether more complex period. This is not to suggest that the impact of evangelicalism should be ignored: as David W. Miller has argued, it was during the early nineteenth century that Ulster Protestantism acquired the ‘distinctly “evangelical”’ flavour it has retained to this day.¹¹ Nor is it to overlook the very real changes in Presbyterian political opinion that took place over the longer period between the 1790s and 1890s. ‘That many Presbyterians in Ulster were deeply involved in the United Irish movement in the 1790s, whose aims included “the total separation” of Ireland from Britain and which culminated in the rebellion of 1798, and that many of their children and grandchildren became ardent unionists, utterly opposed to any weakening of Ireland’s links with Britain, are,’ as Finlay Holmes put it, ‘incontrovertible facts of Irish history.’¹² Yet, as important as these developments undoubtedly were, they were also complex, protracted and contested, and the years following the Act of Union should not simply be viewed in negative terms as a period which saw opportunities for expression shut down by a creeping conservatism in matters political and religious.

This complexity is readily apparent in late Georgian Belfast. In the late eighteenth century, Belfast was known for the advanced political sympathies of many of its inhabitants. The town gave birth to the United Irish movement in 1791, and was, inevitably, viewed with suspicion by the government.¹³ In the period immediately following the 1798 Rebellion, however, Belfast appeared chastened and quiescent. When the question of Union was mooted in the autumn of 1798 it provoked little debate in Belfast, and in the early years of the nineteenth century the town appeared, like the north in general, politically stagnant.¹⁴ As William Drennan put it, in April 1807, ‘the North seems dead and rotting.’¹⁵ In that same year, however, Drennan, who had spent the previous seventeen years in Dublin, resettled in his native Belfast and the political climate began to change.¹⁶

A doctor by training, Drennan was, by inclination, a writer and political reformer. His musings on Masonic secret societies had helped shape the United Irish movement when it was first established in the autumn of 1791 and while he subsequently withdrew from the movement,

having been tried for seditious libel in 1794, his return to Belfast coincided with a revival in his political enthusiasm.¹⁷ In 1806, greatly cheered by the inclusion of the pro-reform Whig grandee Charles James Fox in the so-called 'ministry of the talents', the coalition government established by William Grenville in the aftermath of William Pitt's death, Drennan returned to the political fray.¹⁸ In print, he expressed his hope that a more 'auspicious period' had dawned, during which the cause of reform could, once more, be canvassed, and upon returning to Belfast he established links with a group of individuals who had remained wedded to the reformist cause.¹⁹

Including such individuals as the Lisburn Quaker John Hancock, John Templeton (a former friend of the United Irish leader Thomas Russell) and William and Robert Tennent, this group occupied a position in Belfast similar to that occupied in Manchester by Thomas Walker and his associates, the so-called 'small but determined band', or in Liverpool by the Roscoe Circle.²⁰ Referred to, at the time of the 1832 election, as the 'natural leaders', they constituted a pro-reform elite, which played a prominent role in the public and the political life of Belfast throughout the 1810s and 1820s.²¹ In 1808, in a bid to revive the cause of reform at a local level, they established the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, a political and cultural journal, and in subsequent years they exploited a series of local and national scandals, including the Duke of York affair and the Queen Caroline affair, using them to challenge the authority of Belfast's corporation and critique the corrupt and oligarchic structures of power that existed in Britain.²²

In addition, they sought to propagate a shared political ideology, informed by a blend of Lockean contractualism and neo-Machiavellian classical republicanism, among a younger generation, inculcating values of virtuous, active citizenship through both the Belfast Historic Society, a debating club which enabled young men to prepare for public life, and, more diffusely, through the Belfast Academical Institution.²³ Opened in 1814, and augmented with a collegiate department the following year, the Academical Institution was an ambitious establishment, which aimed to disseminate 'as widely as possible throughout the province and population of Ulster, the benefits of education, both useful and liberal.'²⁴ In this, it might be said to have embodied the real-Whig belief that a liberal education was central to the shaping of the virtuous citizen, and the 'natural leaders' supported it actively.²⁵ Not only were Drennan and the Tennent brothers named in the Institution's act of incorporation, but Drennan delivered the address on the occasion of its opening and, alongside a number of other prominent reformers,

all three played an active role in its management.²⁶ Small wonder, then, that conservatives viewed the Institution as a seditious seminary managed by men of 'revolutionary character'.²⁷

II

As the son of Robert Tennent and the nephew of William Tennent, Robert James Tennent was a product of, and heir to, the reformist culture of the 'natural leaders', and was numbered among the earliest students enrolled in the Belfast Academical Institution when it opened in 1814. Entering the Institution at the age of eleven, he was to study there for six years, until the age of seventeen. During this time he received a broad liberal education, encompassing belles-lettres, French, Greek, Hebrew, Irish, Italian, Latin, logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy; attended occasional lectures in anatomy, divinity and natural history; and participated in the Institution's Debating Society, at which historical, cultural and classical questions were discussed.²⁸ But it was not all work. In addition to pursuing his studies, Tennent also developed a network of friendships among his fellow students, forging relationships with individuals such as Robert Templeton, son of John Templeton; William 'Billy' Drennan, son of William Drennan; and a number of others, including William Mitchell, James Emerson and the colourful James 'Monti' Montgomery.²⁹

That Tennent's circle included Drennan and Templeton, young men who were, like him, the sons of members of Belfast's reformist elite, is significant, highlighting the fact that we are dealing here with a distinct and privileged group. As such, it would be unwise to assume that their experiences of adolescence were typical. Indeed, it seems reasonable to conclude that Tennent and his associates experienced a more prolonged adolescence than was usually the case, even among boys of a similar social status. 'Except for the tiny minority destined for university,' John Tosh has observed, 'most middle-class boys ended their formal education in their mid-teens.' Following this, they entered the 'world of work', an adult world, in which they were expected to conduct themselves as men. By contrast, Tennent and his associates, several of whom progressed from the Belfast Academical Institution to Trinity College, Dublin, experienced an 'extended transition between childhood and adulthood.'³⁰ But if this was unusual, it was not necessarily unique: social and cultural elites existed elsewhere in Ireland and Britain, and other young men received an extended education. Thus, while the ensuing discussion may appear to present an atypical case study, it is

one which is nevertheless relevant to a broader discussion of the nature and variety of Irish adolescent experience.

Whatever might be said about their typicality, the first point to note about Tennent and his associates is that, as with all adolescents, the relationships they conducted were not always harmonious. In March 1821, for instance, William Mitchell branded James Emerson a 'rascal' and advised James Montgomery, a mutual friend, to 'cut' him.³¹ The dislike appears to have been reciprocated. 'He [Montgomery] tells me Emerson hates me,' Mitchell subsequently noted, in a letter to Robert James Tennent.³² Likewise, in 1823, Montgomery quarrelled with Emerson, leading to speculation, ultimately unfulfilled, that Emerson would seek redress by issuing a challenge to duel.³³ Clearly, adolescent passions could run high. Yet, notwithstanding these quarrels, what emerges most clearly from Tennent's papers is the sense of a close-knit coterie of adolescents, drawn together both by similar social and cultural backgrounds, and by a range of shared interests.

One of the most important of the shared interests binding Tennent and his contemporaries was politics, a point illustrated neatly by their attempts to establish a political association – the 'Society of the Crescent' – in 1819. Then aged sixteen, Tennent played a prominent role in this enterprise, drafting notices and a prospectus articulating the society's aims and principles in Paineite terms. Intended as an association of 'friends to the sovereignty of the people', it had, as its aim, the promotion of 'the knowledge of the duties & of the rights of man', and adopted a 'creed' holding that:

All men are born with equal rights & that the only just superiority is that acquired by superior wisdom & virtue ... that no man should be bound by any laws except those which he has had a voice in making ... [and] that no man should be in the slightest degree injured or disqualified on account of opinions merely religious.³⁴

But while all 'honest men' were invited to assist the Society of the Crescent in 'propagating & defending' its principles, it proved a signal failure. In the autumn of 1820 Tennent enrolled in Trinity College, Dublin and by December he had received word of the society's demise; he later observed that it 'went to ruin when I left Belfast'.³⁵

As short-lived as it was, the Society of the Crescent is revealing on a number of levels. Most notably, it demonstrates the extent to which a younger generation internalized, and adopted as their own, the modes of political discourse employed by Belfast's reformers. The Paineite

overtones of Tennent's early prospectus have already been alluded to, but the real-Whig concepts of virtue, knowledge and active citizenship propagated by their elders were equally apparent. 'In accordance with the maxim that knowledge is power, we endeavour to increase & to diffuse information'; 'the only just superiority is that acquired by superior wisdom & virtue'; 'the spirit of inquiry has moved upon the chaos of ignorance & slavery, & the inevitable result will be, knowledge & freedom': drawn from the Society's prospectus, this rhetoric is redolent of that employed by the 'natural leaders'.

Indeed, there are striking similarities between the prospectus's declarations and the educational philosophy outlined by William Drennan at the opening of the Belfast Academical Institution in 1814. Seemingly inspired by Robert Molesworth, the first-generation real-Whig writer who established a link between 'good learning' and virtuous citizenship in the preface of his *Account of Denmark as it was in the year 1692* (1694), Drennan articulated a desire to 'tear down that veil of prejudice that makes one knowledge for the learned, and another for the vulgar' and asserted that 'Virtue is as nearly related to Knowledge, as Knowledge is to Power.' In a similar vein, Tennent's prospectus for the Society of the Crescent insisted that 'knowledge is power', and complained that the 'human mind has too long been weighed down & rendered imbecile by the weight of authority.'³⁶

In less positive terms, the failure of the Society of the Crescent can also be seen to point to some of the difficulties inherent in advocating pro-reform politics in the post-United Irish context. That the society was abandoned within a year of its initial formation, having failed to inspire a libertarian revival, is, in its own right, telling. But equally revealing was the fact that, as Tennent later recorded, the society's membership made a conscious decision, going so far as to vote on the matter, to remove from its prospectus all passages 'inculcating secrecy'.³⁷ That the prospectus had contained such passages is itself intriguing, raising questions concerning how, exactly, the Society's members planned to propagate the rights of man. The key point, however, is that the passages were dropped, demonstrating a willingness to conform to the political realities of late Georgian Belfast.

In the aftermath of the 1790s, anything that appeared to hark back to the United Irish movement was potentially controversial. When, in February 1825, the first issue of the short-lived *Belfast Magazine and Literary Journal* published an account of the battle that had taken place in Ballynahinch, Co. Down, during the 1798 Rebellion, one reader wrote to advise the editor that his 'bold *debut*' had toyed with 'potent,

stirring subjects'. 'You are handling edge-tools with a vengeance,' the correspondent, pseudonymously identified as 'anti-Jacobite', advised, 'and if you escape unhurt amidst such a number of malignant Demons, you are the most miraculous man alive.'³⁸ Likewise, as late as May 1832 attempts were made to discredit Belfast's reformers by the circulation of a placard, ostensibly originating from the office of the pro-reform *Northern Whig*, bearing the legend 'Reform, or the Pike'.³⁹ It does not, of course, follow from such examples that there was no support for reform. But it does follow that those seeking to promote the reformist cause were required to do so with a degree of delicacy. In this context, the decision to retract references to secrecy, which were calculated to bring the spectre of the United Irishmen to contemporary minds, appears shrewd, and points to the seriousness with which Tennent and his associates initially approached the Society of the Crescent.

This seriousness of intent can be identified in two additional areas. Firstly, it is apparent in the correspondence Robert James Tennent conducted with his friend William Mitchell when attempting to establish the Society of the Crescent. There is, admittedly, an element of jocular-ity and badinage in this correspondence. Mitchell, for example, mocked the 'manifest absurdity' of Tennent's arguments, while Tennent, in turn, scoffed at what he believed to be the superficiality of Mitchell's positions. But neither were poseurs. Despite the raillery, what emerges most clearly from their letters is the depth and sincerity of their political engagement; while Tennent advocated republican government and Mitchell contended that the stability offered by a limited monarchy was more desirable, both mobilized an extensive range of authorities and examples, and defended their respective positions with a rigour that reveals them to have been both earnest and well-informed.⁴⁰

Secondly, the seriousness of Tennent's political engagement is illustrated by the fact that he succeeded in fulfilling the revolutionary ambitions Hannah McGee had alluded to in her letter of April 1821; not in Naples, or in Spain, where he planned to travel in 1823, but in Greece, where he and James Emerson joined the struggle against the Ottoman Empire in 1824.⁴¹ A degree of caution is required when assessing the significance of this expedition. For one thing, it was short-lived: by the autumn of 1825 Emerson and Tennent had returned, disillusioned, to Britain.⁴² In addition, there is some evidence that Tennent had been motivated by a desire to escape the mundanity of his life as a student. As early as November 1820 he had expressed his dissatisfaction with Trinity College, misquoting Burke to describe the teaching method adopted by the College as 'a complete and elaborate system, ingeniously

constructed in all its parts, & as well calculated for the impoverishment and degradation “of mind”, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.⁴³ But while we might conclude that Tennent’s revolutionary ambitions were partly fuelled by his aversion to his studies, we need not dismiss them solely as the reflection of wanderlust or an adolescent desire for adventure. On the contrary, it is clear from the correspondence that Tennent conducted while attempting to establish the Society of the Crescent and the letters in which he articulated his support for the Neapolitan revolutionaries, as well as from the bitter complaints he later made concerning the Greeks’ apparent indifference to the cause of liberty, that political considerations were equally important.⁴⁴ ‘My wish,’ he had noted when informing his father of his original desire to assist the Neapolitan revolutionaries, ‘is to devote myself to the holiest cause that ever yet warmed a human heart – to serve mankind on the theatre that now offers, & by so doing to discipline myself to serve them everywhere hereafter.’⁴⁵

III

Politics were thus important for Tennent and his contemporaries, but so, too, were their shared literary pretensions, which find their most immediate expression in the numerous poems and verses preserved in Tennent’s juvenilia. These productions vary widely in quality, and range from the playful, such as the unattributed valentines written for ‘Miss Clara D–y, whose hair is tricolor’ and ‘Miss Sarah McG, an elderly young lady’, to the melancholy, such as J. M.’s bleak ‘Lines’, which describe the ‘pale and shattered form’ of a warrior sleeping the ‘last long sleep of death’ on a ‘blood stained heath’.⁴⁶ This J. M. – most likely James Montgomery – also penned a striking ‘Fragment of a description of the abbey of Movilla Co. Down’ which, notwithstanding its melodramatic tone, might be placed squarely within the ‘poetic tradition of the ruin in the landscape’, epitomized by William Wordsworth’s ‘Tintern Abbey’.⁴⁷ Equally, a Wordsworthian influence can be identified in Robert James Tennent’s ‘Sonnet on seeing a coalmine bursting into flames’, with its reflexive title, emphasis on the spontaneous power of nature and melancholic rumination on the ‘dull bondage’ of mortality and the ‘shackles’ of life.⁴⁸

The aesthetics of romanticism appear, indeed, to have effected Tennent deeply. A hankering for the sublime can be detected in the sketches of dramatic ruins and mountainous landscapes he produced, under the instruction of Gaetano Fabbrini, in the Belfast Academical

Institution's art class, and his diary reflects an appreciation of the wild and barren.⁴⁹ While holidaying in his uncle's country residence in Tempo, Co. Fermanagh in July 1818, for example, he recorded a visit to Lough Derg, noting that 'after a wild walk through a dreary tho' romantic region we were recompensed by a beautiful view of the Lough and its islands.' Similarly, in June 1819, following a trip to Portpatrick in Scotland, he noted his appreciation of the 'beautifully bold' Scottish coastline, though he was equally impressed by Scottish women, declaring them to be 'mostly very handsome'.⁵⁰

Leaving aside his appreciation of the sublime, Tennent's engagement with romanticism is equally evident in his literary consumption. Two reading diaries are preserved in his juvenilia. The first, dating from 1 May to 11 December 1819, indicates that he read the standard radical texts of the 1790s. Alongside works by Rousseau, Voltaire, Wollstonecraft and Godwin, these included Tom Paine's *Rights of man* (1791) and *Age of reason* (1794–1807). In addition, he read titles with a particular Irish significance, such as Edward Hay's *History of the insurrection in Co. Wexford in 1798* (1803); more recent contributions to the radical canon, such as Robert Southey's *Wat Tyler* (1817); and a number of other works, including Maria Edgeworth's *Popular tales* (1804), Byron's *Childe Harold* (1812–18) and several volumes of what appears to have been a pirated edition of Byron's verse.⁵¹ Regrettably, this first diary records titles only, and offers no indication as to what Tennent thought about the texts he read. However, a second diary, covering the period 1822 to 1824, is more revealing.

During this later period, Tennent read equally widely, consuming, alongside numbers of the *Edinburgh Review*, books on history, theology and political economy, and works of a radical political bent, including Vicesimus Knox's spirited attack on aristocratic corruption and government repression, *The spirit of despotism* (1795, 1821).⁵² Most notable, however, was his consumption of imaginative literature. Alongside minor works such as Margaret Holford's *Wallace* (1809) and Jane Porter's *Duke Christian of Luneburg* (1824), Tennent read works by several key romantic writers. These included Walter Scott's *Halidon Hill* (1822), *Peveril of the peak* (1822) and *Redgauntlet* (1824); Thomas Moore's *Loves of the angels* (1823); and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Rosalind and Helen* (1819).⁵³ But his favourite was Byron, whose works he was already familiar with, and whose *Werner* (1822) he read towards the end of 1822. *Werner* itself did not impress him. Nevertheless, his comments reveal the high esteem in which he held Byron's work: 'Lord Byron's genius seems to move in chains in his tragedies,' he noted, 'but the

genius is there.' His admiration is equally evident in his comments on Shelley who, he believed, 'falls immeasurably below Byron, in whom the utmost sublimity of idea is clothed in language scarcely less sublime.' Likewise, having read James Hogg's collection of poetic imitations, *The poetic mirror* (1816), he noted that the Ettrick poet failed only 'where he attempts to imitate the inimitable, Byron' and, further revealing the extent of his engagement with the romantic writers, applauded Hogg's imitation of Wordsworth, noting: 'It paints to the life the affected childishness and unintelligible metaphysics in which Wordsworth delights to envelop his beautiful imaginings.'⁵⁴

During the romantic period Belfast might have existed, as William St Clair has recently observed, on 'the furthest borders of the reading nation', but insofar as the reading habits of Robert James Tennent are concerned, this was the case in a geographical sense only.⁵⁵ An ardent admirer of Byron, comfortably conversant with the works of Hogg, Moore, Scott, Shelley, Southey and Wordsworth, Tennent was a young man immersed in British romantic literature, and he was not alone: James Emerson was equally immersed in romantic literature. Indeed, when travelling from Belfast to London, en route to Greece, in the summer of 1824, Emerson attempted unsuccessfully to meet Walter Scott at Abbotsford, and stopped for several days in Keswick, where he visited with Wordsworth and Southey. Wordsworth, who found time during their initial meeting to belittle the work of Byron ('blasphemous, childish & commonplace'), Moore ('licentious tinsel'), Campbell ('a boyish declaimer'), as well as that of Scott, Hogg, Crabb and Rogers, impressed Emerson little. Conversely, Southey, whose 'remarks on the productions of living authors are never severe but always favourable or palliative,' charmed him. 'On the whole,' he noted, 'I have seldom met a man with whom I was more pleased ... he combines no affectation or pedantry with his acquirements ... We parted at a late hour & I never passed an evening with more satisfaction and amusement.'⁵⁶

That Tennent and Emerson were so familiar with romantic writing raises broader questions concerning literary tastes in late Georgian Belfast. Were these young men unique, or did their preferences reflect the existence, among Belfast's middle classes, of a broader appetite for romantic literature? Existing scholarship would suggest not. John Hewitt, for example, alluded to the existence of a cultural and aesthetic 'time-lag' between England and Ireland, the result of which was to ensure that 'the English eighteenth century persisted well on into the nineteenth century among us,' while Terence Brown, writing of the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, has observed that 'one encounters so many

odes, formal elegies and classical pastorals that an image of Ulster's literary taste, frozen in statuesque Augustan impotence, overpowers one.¹⁵⁷

It is, of course, possible to detect evidence in support of such assertions: in October 1808, for instance, the *Belfast Monthly Magazine* attacked the 'affected simplicity' of Southey and Wordsworth and 'the effeminate littleness of Tommy Moore.'⁵⁸ However, by the same token, there is much evidence to suggest that the tastes of Belfast's literati changed, and changed quickly. As early as 1809, the Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge – in seeming contravention of its rule prohibiting the purchase of books of 'trivial amusement' – acquired Walter Scott's *Lay of the last minstrel* (1805) and *Marmion* (1808) and, by the 1820s, romantic writing attracted widespread appreciation.⁵⁹ Thus, William Cairns, professor of belles-lettres at the Belfast Academical Institution, alluded to the writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, Moore and Keats in the lectures he delivered to his students; the *Rushlight*, a short-lived literary and political journal, published poems by Byron, Wordsworth and Moore; and, in September 1831, the members of the Belfast Historic Society were advised to study the works of these same writers, on the grounds that they would instruct their imaginations, refine their intellects and elevate their tastes.⁶⁰

IV

Rather than a remarkable exception, then, the literary preferences of the Tennent circle reflected the wider popularity of romantic literature among the literate middle classes of late Georgian Belfast. But this is only half of the story, for engagement with romanticism – particularly as it appeared in its Byronic manifestation – engendered rather more than intellectual refinement.

Arguably the greatest celebrity of the age, Byron was a scandalous figure. Indeed, his fame owed as much to the shocking details of his not so private life – the seductions, marital breakdown and rumoured incest – as it did to his controversial verse.⁶¹ Many disapproved of his disregard for conventional morality. 'I hate mysterious characters', the veteran reformer William Todd Jones noted in a letter to William Drennan, written in 1817:

People who plead an exclusive charter from nature ... like Lord Byron, whose conduct in life I detest; and whom, a sound horse-whipping (I imagine) laid upon him by some lusty, honest, married yeoman of Kent would be highly salutary to.⁶²

Yet while Byron's approach to life horrified many, his popularity among the poetry-reading adolescents of late Georgian Britain was 'unbounded'. Reviewing Thomas Moore's *Letters and journals of Lord Byron* (1830) in the *Edinburgh Review*, Thomas Babington Macaulay famously lamented that Byron's young readers not only sought to write like him and look like him, practising their scowls and discarding their neckclothes, but also adopted his immoral world-view. 'There was created in the minds of many of these enthusiasts a pernicious and absurd association between intellectual power and moral depravity,' Macaulay complained: 'From the poetry of Lord Byron they drew a system of ethics, compounded of misanthropy and voluptuousness, a system in which the two great commandments were, to hate your neighbour, and to love your neighbour's wife.'⁶³

To portray Tennent and his associates as depraved misanthropes would, without doubt, be to exaggerate. Nevertheless, their correspondence highlights a grain of truth at the bottom of Macaulay's fevered reflections, for the energy and enthusiasm with which they pursued their flirtations and chronicled them in their letters – some merely suggestive, other ribald and bawdy – is striking. Prior to marrying in 1830, for example, Robert James Tennent appears to have contracted at least one clandestine engagement and to have conducted flirtations and intrigues with numerous young women. In addition to Hannah McGee, these women included 'Miss McW', Hannah Charlotte Morris, 'Sweet Kate' McEvoy and Anna Maria Lynn, the last-mentioned of whom wrote letters in an increasingly arch and knowing tone, which contained injunctions to burn after reading and, on one occasion, a hackneyed declaration of love: 'Why is it that my heart doth beat/ Why is it that I sigh/ Why is it that I trembling meet/ Thy kind thy melting eye ... Oh! Yes 'tis love, I feel 'tis love/ That round my heart doth twine.'⁶⁴ Likewise, James Emerson was rumoured, at one point, to be conducting simultaneous flirtations with two sisters, though some believed he lacked the tact to 'manage so difficult an affair', and the romantic misadventures of James Montgomery provided the subject of much discussion.⁶⁵ 'I have a sneaking kindness for a brace of these fair creatures,' Montgomery wrote memorably, in a letter dated 26 February 1824, 'Maria has more brain and Anna has more cash – Maria is 22 and Anna is 19 or 20, and they are both of them more aye than no with respect to beauty – moreover they both think me desperately enamoured, and are both equally deceived.'⁶⁶

Needless to say, the seriousness of these intrigues is open to question. But while a degree of circumspection is advisable, it should not be assumed that we are simply dealing with adolescent braggadocio. For one thing, the incidents related were not always concerned with romantic successes.

In a letter written in February 1826, for example, Tennent's friend Frank Archer related how, sailing to Liverpool, where he was apprenticed to a merchant, he had encountered two young women. In a bid to seduce one of the pair he had offered his arm and spent two hours walking up and down the ship's deck only to have his amorous intentions frustrated when the subject of his advances retired, seasick, to her cabin.⁶⁷ Equally, the specificity of detail in the letters Tennent received points to the veracity of their content, as does the recurrence of references to particular incidents in letters from more than one correspondent.

Evidential issues aside, that fact we are, in at least some instances, dealing with rather more than innocent flirtations, is indicated by the fate of the Belfast actress Maria Standfield. Having succumbed to the attentions of a young man named Macnamara, who was known to Tennent and his friends, Standfield fell pregnant. In due course, this became public knowledge, whereupon Macnamara, refusing to marry, fled to Scotland in a bid to escape the scandal he had brought upon his family.⁶⁸ This inspired a degree of sympathy for Standfield: 'It is a great pity for her,' Montgomery noted in a letter to Tennent. 'I curse Macnamara at least twenty times a day, the whey faced scoundrel, he went and told his mother, crying all the while, that it was not his fault at all, that it was herself had done it; damn him!'⁶⁹ Such sympathy did not, however, prevent Montgomery from seeing an opportunity in Standfield's predicament, and in an earlier letter he had informed Tennent that he and another friend, William Mitchell, intended 'to start "for the prize" (that is Miss Standfield).'⁷⁰ Frustratingly – although perhaps, in its own way, revealingly – the subsequent lines have been torn from this letter, but in the later dispatch, in which he damned Macnamara, Montgomery also noted that he had 'had a confabulation of the length of two hours with her [Standfield] no farther off than last night at her own lodgings.' 'Mitchell is off that scent now and for your life don't mention to him that I am on the chase,' he continued. 'I am tolerably intimate with her and in the way of becoming more so.'⁷¹

Whether or not Tennent complied with Montgomery's wishes on this occasion is unknown, but it is known that he had earlier communicated with Mitchell on the subject. Thus, in an equally revealing letter, written shortly after Montgomery had first announced his intention to pursue Standfield, Mitchell reflected on his rival's chances and informed Tennent of his own intentions:

Bye the Bye you speak of his intention of starting for the second edition of Miss S ... Monti is a decent enough fellow but if I were

to say he had success with the ladies I would slander him. The circumstance of its being the second edition is the only demur to me. However as in my case I flatter myself it will not take much trouble I may proceed – but I would not on any account have it reported that I gave myself the trouble of a courtship for a second edition. As for your prudential hints they don't apply – no occasion for money [section missing] she only [-]s for love ... I have a plan. She soon sets sail for Scotland – a night before she goes you know there would be no time to spread reports.⁷²

Aside from the intriguing, if discreditable, suggestion that Tennent had advised him to offer Standfield money to sleep with him, Mitchell's letter is of interest for its arrogant and callous tone. The references to a 'second edition' and the self-censored, though no less contemptuous, observation that Standfield 'only [-]s for love' raise broader questions concerning the ways in which Tennent and his contemporaries viewed women and conceptualized the nature of male/female relationships.

In Mitchell's case it is clear that we are dealing with an individual whose views on this score were less than enlightened. 'A woman is certainly much inferior to a man,' he noted in a letter to Tennent, written in November 1820, 'therefore I can't feel that reverence & admiration for them which you seem to do ... Woman shd. be subservient to the will of man. I have not room for arguments but I could prove this.'⁷³ Time served to temper this outlook, but only slightly: while conceding, the following June, that his opinion of the 'female sex' was 'improving', he continued to believe 'the other much superior'.⁷⁴ What of Tennent? While Mitchell's comments suggest him to have believed women to be the fitting subject of 'reverence & admiration', and he is known to have been familiar with the arguments of Mary Wollstonecraft, Tennent was by no means convinced that women should be viewed as the equals of men.⁷⁵ Quite the reverse, as a letter he later received from the doctor and social reformer Henry MacCormac illustrates, Tennent believed women to be intellectually inferior to men. 'You ask if there be not a sexual difference in the intellect,' MacCormac wrote, 'I will give an answer when you define what you mean by the question. I know of nothing which women are competent to (naturally speaking) which men are not; and conversely.'⁷⁶

MacCormac may have disagreed with them, but Tennent's views were far from unconventional. While Mary Wollstonecraft's *A vindication of the rights of woman* had appeared in 1792 her radical arguments regarding the equality of men and women were by no means widely

accepted, even among those whose political outlook may be identified as 'advanced'. As Robert Quinlan has noted, the book 'fell upon a frightened world' and inspired an avalanche of didactic literature, the most notable example being Hannah More's *Coelebs in search of a wife* (1809), which upheld conventional sexual distinctions, encouraging women to view themselves as 'a species apart'.⁷⁷ That the young women of Belfast were aware of, and in some instances frustrated by, the limitations this ideology placed upon them is indicated in two letters Tennent received from his cousins Isabella and Jane Tennent. Writing in July 1819, Jane Tennent noted that Robert James's previous letter had contained 'so much politics' that she felt 'inadequate to the task' of answering it, reasoning: 'As you I presume are of the same opinion as the generality of your sex – that women should not meddle with politics, I fear if I attempted an opinion at all you would think me very presumptuous.'⁷⁸ A year and a half later, when referring to a projected town meeting, an event which she, as a woman, would not be permitted to attend, Isabella Tennent was more succinct: 'How I long to be present,' she observed. 'Oh your enviable sex!!!'⁷⁹

The spheres of activity and expression open to young women in late Georgian Belfast were, then, circumscribed, but it should not be concluded that they were passive participants, incapable of exercising agency, in the adolescent youth culture of the town. A quick glance at the letters Tennent received from the women with whom he conducted relationships reveals that Belfast's young women were as capable of developing friendship networks and engaging in flirtations as its young men. We have already encountered the playful and flirtatious letters of Hannah McGee and Anna Maria Lynn, but those Tennent received from Eliza McCracken, the young woman he later married, illustrate the point equally well. While she eventually accepted him as a suitor, McCracken made Tennent work for the honour. Initially rejecting him on the grounds that he had formerly been engaged, she conducted the relationship with caution, but was more than capable of playing the coquette. Thus, in September 1827, she teased that Tennent, who was due to leave Belfast for London, would forget her 'when among the London belles', and responded playfully to his request that she supply him with a ringlet of her hair:

How could you ask me to spoil my curls, for you? Unreasonable man! ... I will think of it, & if I can give you a small grain without much detriment to my 'dark wavy tresses' perhaps I may so far forget my 'prudish prudence' as to do so – remember, I say, perhaps.⁸⁰

Needless to say, the ringlet was eventually surrendered, but the overall sense the correspondence offers is of a young woman seeking to exert agency and conduct the relationship on her terms and at her own pace.⁸¹

The exercise of female agency is further illustrated by what was arguably the bawdiest – and without doubt the most bizarre – incident that Tennent and his contemporaries discussed in their correspondence: that concerning Robert Hyndman's toe. Montgomery first outlined this story in a letter written in January 1824, in which he informed Tennent that a mutual acquaintance named Robert Hyndman had discovered 'a protuberance on his toe which disfigured his foot as he thought,' and had lamed himself by amputating the said toe with a razor. Following this, his mother had taken 'the precious relic', preserving it in a tumbler of spirits placed upon her mantelpiece: 'In my life,' Montgomery noted gleefully, 'I never saw or heard of any thing so filthy.'⁸² But while he feigned disgust, this did not prevent Montgomery from returning to the episode and offering a fuller account, following a conversation, several months later, with Hyndman's mother.

She tells me that Miss Russell [the governess] used to sit night and day in his room, that she made him cut off his toe that she might have an excuse to nurse him. She used to jump out of her bed at night and fly to his room with nought but a cloak wrapped round her on pretence of hearing him groan, there she would lie for hours with her cheek on his pillow. I told Mrs H in plain English 'if Robert had been worth a damn he would have stroked her.' Aye I said stroked her and Mamma laughed consumedly and declared that for all she knew matters might have gone far enough between them ... At all events, said I, I know what I would have done in his place. We had some other small stories also which are hardly worth crediting after the above most glorious one. Kate is as fat and as fair as ever, her [word unclear] are as smooth as ever for I have taken good care to grope them heartily.⁸³

Two points in particular stand out here. First, there is the centrality of the young governess, Miss Russell, to the narrative given by Hyndman's mother. The claim that Hyndman's ill-fated experiment in podiatry was a ruse, orchestrated by the family governess to facilitate intimacy, suggests that the affair might be read as a further example of the exercise of female agency, although this interpretation assumes the reliability both of Mrs Hyndman's version of events, and of Montgomery's retelling of it. The second point requires no such assumption. Regardless of

his story's reliability, Montgomery's account of discussing the affair with Hyndman's mother and telling her 'in plain English' what he would have done had he found himself in Hyndman's position, his claim to have 'heartily' groped the 'fat' and 'fair' Kate and the evident glee he takes in relating his bawdy tale are all significant. Analysing the 'remarkable set of scatological and anal erotic letters' that passed between Gregory Watt, youngest son of James Watt, perfecter of the steam engine, and his friend William Creighton in 1800, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob have written of the 'willingness of young men in the 1790s to scoff at the rules just for the sheer pleasure of it,' presenting this as symptomatic of the 'affective revolution'.⁸⁴ Montgomery's letter to Tennent, while its content scarcely approaches the obscene nature of the letters that passed between Watt and Creighton, nevertheless evinces a similar sense of enjoyment in breaking society's rules, and hints at the persistence of affective experimentation in the post-revolutionary era.

Tennent's letters can, then, be said to reflect the activities of a group of young men behaving, in at least some instances, badly and transgressing the rules of respectable society. But can their 'bad behaviour' be attributed to the influence of romanticism? The spectacle of young men caddishly pursuing flirtations and sharing ribald gossip was by no means unique to the romantic period: young men behaved badly before the publication of *Don Juan* (1818–23), and they have done since. Certainly, it should not be assumed that all of Tennent's contemporaries were influenced by romanticism. William Mitchell consciously prided himself on his rejection of it. 'I dislike a tincture of romance to be in young men's dispositions,' he noted in a letter to Tennent, 'Monti says that is all I want to make me a decent fellow, that I say is the very thing I am a most proud of wanting.' But while Mitchell rejected the 'romantic latitude of thought' his letter makes clear that others did not: Tennent and Montgomery were both, in Mitchell's telling phrase 'infected with it', though Tennent managed to 'conceal the malady from those who have no faith in its powers.'⁸⁵

Moreover, the influence of romanticism, and particularly of the Byronic romanticism lamented by Macaulay, is, at times, altogether too pronounced to ignore: as, for example, when Montgomery related that he had lent 'M - ', most likely Maria Standfield, a number of books, including various poems by Lord Byron, and that something, the details of which he would not trust to a letter, had taken place between them which had left him happy for 'three whole days', or when Frank Archer admitted that 'Lord Byron [was] brought on the boards' during his unsuccessful attempt to seduce a fellow passenger when travelling to

Liverpool.⁸⁶ Among Tennent's coterie of friends and acquaintances, we thus encounter a group of politically and culturally engaged adolescents who not only read Byron, but who discussed him and sought to emulate him, going so far as to utilize his verse when conducting their flirtations.

V

The adolescent milieu of Tennent and his associates not only enriches our understanding of the diversity of adolescent experience that existed in early nineteenth-century Ireland, but adds depth and colour to our understanding of cultural and intellectual life in late Georgian Belfast: Ulster Presbyterians are rarely thought of as romantics. Moreover, the actions and interactions of the Tennent circle offer a fascinating glimpse behind the polite façade of middle-class society. At a time when the spread of evangelicalism was effecting a 'revolution in manners' and engendering a new moral seriousness, Tennent and his associates flouted the standards of respectability and gleefully discussed doing so in their private correspondence.⁸⁷ In so doing, they may be said to have reflected something of the influence of the 'affective revolution'. To make this point is not to suggest that they conform, in every respect, to the pattern outlined by Jacob and Hunt. For one thing, the chronology does not entirely fit: while Jacob and Hunt have focused on the radicals and romantics of the 1790s, Tennent and his associates came of age in the late 1810s. Nevertheless, in many important respects Tennent's circle does conform to the pattern. The significance of their transgression of polite boundaries as one manifestation of affective experimentation has already been alluded to, but their (largely) Presbyterian background, support for the cause of reform and engagement with romantic literature are all equally significant when viewed alongside Jacob and Hunt's assertion that: 'The zeal for affective experimentation was widely shared in the circles defined by religious Dissent, scientific innovation, French revolutionary ideals, and romantic poetry.'⁸⁸ In this light we might conclude that, in Belfast at any rate, the revolutionary epoch exercised as profound an influence on the adolescents who came of age in its aftermath as it did on those who happened to live through it.

Acknowledgements

This chapter includes material first presented in Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, *The 'natural leaders' and their world: politics, culture and society in Belfast, c. 1801–1832* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012). I am

grateful to Liverpool University Press for permission to reuse this material and wish also to thank the Deputy Keeper of Records, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, the Ulster Museum and the Duffin Trust for permission to quote from archival material.

Notes

1. For more on the Tennent family, see Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, *The 'natural leaders' and their world: Politics, culture and society in Belfast, c. 1801–1832* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), chapter one.
2. Hannah McGee to Robert James Tennent (hereafter RJT), 2 Apr. 1821 (Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (hereafter PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/407/1). Emphasis here, and in subsequent quotes, as in original.
3. RJT to John Hutton, 8 Dec. 1820 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/286/2).
4. Hannah McGee to RJT, 2 Apr. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent papers, D/1748/G/407/1). By July 1822 McGee's relationship with Tennent had ended following the intervention of her parents. See Hannah McGee to RJT, 12 July 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/407/6).
5. Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and youth in early modern England* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1994), 9.
6. John R. Gillis, *Youth and history: Tradition and change in European age relations, 1770–present* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 98, 102–3.
7. Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and youth*, 8.
8. Gillis, *Youth and history*, 37–93 (91 for quote).
9. Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, 'The affective revolution in 1790s Britain', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34:4 (2001), 496, 497.
10. Hunt and Jacob, 'The affective revolution', 511.
11. David W. Miller, 'Presbyterianism and "modernization" in Ulster', *Past & Present*, 80:1 (1978), 66. For more on the rise of evangelicalism, see David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740–1890* (London: Routledge, 1992); Andrew R. Holmes, *The shaping of Ulster Presbyterian belief and practice, 1770–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 33–50; David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: A history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989); Mark A. Noll, *The rise of evangelicalism: The age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004); and John Wolffe, *The expansion of evangelicalism: The age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2006).
12. R. F. G. Holmes, 'From rebels to unionists: The political transformation of Ulster's Presbyterians' in Ronnie Hanna (ed.), *The Union: Essays on the Irish and British connection* (Newtownards: Colourprint Books, 2001), 34. Established in 1791, the United Irish movement sought to secure parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation and initially operated constitutionally. However, as the 1790s progressed, government repression forced the movement underground. Links were established with revolutionary France and in the summer of 1798 a rebellion broke out, during which the United Irishmen sought, unsuccessfully, to sever the connection between Britain and Ireland. For a fuller account of the movement, see Nancy J. Curtin,

- The United Irishmen: Popular politics in Ulster and Dublin 1791–1798* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and the essays collected in Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Dáire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds), *1798: A bicentenary perspective* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003) and Jim Smyth (ed.), *Revolution, counter-revolution and union: Ireland in the 1790s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
13. John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare, *The speech of the right honourable, John, Earl of Clare, Lord High Chancellor of Ireland, the House of Lords of Ireland, Monday February 19, 1798, on a motion made by the Earl of Moira* (Dublin: John Milliken, 1798), 30.
 14. For Belfast's response to the Union see Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, "'Steadfast supporters of the British connection'?: Belfast Presbyterians and the Act of Union, c. 1798–1840', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 1:2 (2008), 107–26.
 15. William Drennan to Martha McTier, 17 Apr. 1807 in Jean Agnew (ed.), *The Drennan-McTier letters* (3 vols, Dublin: Irish Manuscript Commission, 1998–9), 3, 595.
 16. Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, 1, xxii–xxv.
 17. A. T. Q. Stewart, "'A stable unseen power": Dr William Drennan and the origins of the United Irishmen' in John Bossy and Peter Jupp (eds), *Essays presented to Michael Roberts, sometime professor of modern history in the Queen's University of Belfast* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1976), 80–92; John Larkin (ed.), *The trial of William Drennan* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1991). For Drennan more broadly, see Adrian Rice, 'The lonely rebellion of William Drennan' in Gerald Dawe and John Wilson Foster (eds), *The poet's place: Ulster literature and society: Essays in honour of John Hewitt, 1907–87* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1991), 77–95 and I. R. McBride, 'William Drennan and the dissenting tradition' in David Dickson, Dáire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds), *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1993), 49–61.
 18. For the ministry of the talents, see Boyd Hilton, *A mad, bad, and dangerous people? England 1783–1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107–9.
 19. William Drennan, *A letter to the right honourable Charles James Fox* (Dublin: John Barlow, 1806), 3.
 20. This paragraph is based primarily on Wright, *The 'natural leaders'*, chapters two and three. For a near-contemporary account of the 'natural leaders', see A. H. Thornton, *Memoirs of the Rea family from the period of the Irish rebellion in 1798 till the year 1857, by a Belfast man* (London: np, nd [c. 1857]). For the Roscoe circle and Thomas Walker, see S. G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A family biography, 1764–1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 29; Ian Sellars, 'William Roscoe, the Roscoe circle and radical politics in Liverpool, 1787–1807', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 120 (1968), 45–62; and Frida Knight, *The strange case of Thomas Walker* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1957).
 21. Elite is used here in a 'positional' sense, referring not necessarily to the wealthiest group in Belfast, but to a group that exercised a position of leadership and influence. See Rick Trainor, 'Urban elites in Victorian Britain', *Urban History Yearbook*, 12 (1985), 1–17.
 22. The Duke of York affair occurred in 1809, when it was alleged that the duke's mistress had accepted bribes from military officers who wished her to

use her influence on the duke, who was commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The Queen Caroline affair was played out in 1820, when George IV attempted to divorce his estranged wife, Caroline of Brunswick. For more, see Thomas W. Laqueur, 'The Queen Caroline affair: Politics as art in the reign of George IV', *Journal of Modern History*, 54:3 (1982), 417–66; Tamara L. Hunt, 'Morality and monarchy in the Queen Caroline affair', *Albion*, 23:4 (1991), 697–722; Dror Wahrman, "'Middle-class" domesticity goes public: Gender, class, and politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria', *Journal of British Studies*, 32:4 (1993), 396–432; Jonathan Fulcher, 'The loyalist response to the Queen Caroline agitations', *Journal of British Studies*, 34:4 (1995), 481–502; Philip Harling, 'The Duke of York affair (1809) and the complexities of war-time patriotism', *Historical Journal*, 39:4 (1996), 963–84; and Anna Clark, *Scandal: The sexual politics of the British constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 148–76, 177–207.

23. For classical republicanism, see Caroline Robbins, *The eighteenth-century commonwealthman: Studies in the transmission, development and circumstance of English liberal thought from the restoration of Charles II until the war with the thirteen colonies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959) and J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975). Patrick Kelly, 'Perceptions of Locke in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 89C (1989), 17–35; Curtin, *The United Irishmen*, 13–37; and Stephen Small, *Political thought in Ireland, 1776–1798: Republicanism, patriotism, and radicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) offer Irish perspectives. For the Belfast Historic Society, see W. A. Maguire, 'The Belfast Historic Society, 1811–1835' in John Gray and Wesley McCann (eds), *An uncommon bookman: Essays in memory of J. R. R. Adams* (Belfast: Linen Hall Library, 1996), 100–18 and Wright, *The 'natural leaders'*, 147–51.
24. Drennan, *Fugitive pieces, in verse and prose* (Belfast: F. D. Finlay, 1815), 217. For the history of the Belfast Academical Institution, see [Royal Belfast Academical Institution], *A view of the situation of education, in the college department of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution: Including outlines of the lectures; with accounts of the general business in the different classes, and the subjects for the public examinations* (Belfast: Joseph Smyth, 1832); [Royal Belfast Academical Institution], *Centenary volume, 1810–1910* (Belfast: M'Caw, Stevenson & Orr, 1913); John Jamieson, *The history of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, 1810–1960* (Belfast: William Mullan & Son, 1959).
25. Robbins, *The eighteenth-century commonwealthman*, 12–13.
26. [Royal Belfast Academical Institution], *The act of incorporation and bye-laws of the Belfast Academical Institution, 1810* (Belfast: Joseph Smyth, 1840); Drennan, *Fugitive pieces*, 217–29; T. W. Moody and J. C. Beckett, *Queen's, Belfast, 1845–1949: The history of a university* (2 vols, London: Faber, 1959), 1, xlvii.
27. George Hill to Joseph Stevenson, 15 Nov. 1816 (PRONI, Royal Belfast Academical Institution Papers, SCH/524/7B/10/49).
28. 'Diary of RJT, 1816–1819' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/750/1), 1–9, 23, 26, 31, 61, 70, 71, 74, 90, 91, 118.

29. Emerson Tennent was a student at the Belfast Academy, rather than the Belfast Academical Institution, but was part of Tennent's circle. *Dublin University Magazine*, 39:229 (1852), 84.
30. John Tosh, *A man's place: Masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 105.
31. William Mitchell to RJT, 3 Mar. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/457/14).
32. William Mitchell to RJT, 17 Mar. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/457/19).
33. James Montgomery to RJT, 30 Jan. 1823 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/D/1748/G/465/20).
34. '2 plans of societies 1819' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/754/5 and 6).
35. '2 plans of societies 1819'; John Hutton to RJT, 6 Dec. 1820 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/286/1).
36. Drennan, *Fugitive pieces*, 222; '2 plans of societies 1819'. For Molesworth, see Robbins, *Eighteenth-century commonwealthman*, 88–133.
37. '2 plans of societies 1819'.
38. *Belfast Magazine and Literary Journal*, 1:1 (1825), 56–64 and 1:2 (1825), 176. For more on the Battle of Ballynahinch, a major encounter during which some 400 rebels were killed, see Curtin, *United Irishmen*, 273–5 and A. T. Q. Stewart, *The summer soldiers: The 1798 rebellion in Antrim and Down* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1995), 222–9.
39. For contemporaries the meaning of the statement 'Reform, or the Pike' would have been readily apparent, the pike having been widely used by the foot soldiers of the United Irish movement during the rebellion of 1798. *Belfast News-Letter*, 18 May 1832.
40. 'Controversy with William Mitchell upon Government 1819' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/754/1–4).
41. Tennent's support for the Spanish cause can be traced in RJT to Robert Tennent, 28 May 1823 to 13 June 1823 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/C/1/215/29–32). Wright, *The 'natural leaders'*, 111–17 reflects more broadly on his engagement with the European revolutions.
42. Robert Tennent to RJT, 25 Oct. and 6 Nov. 1825 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/667/31 and 32).
43. RJT to Robert Tennent, 15 Nov. 1820 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/C/1/215/11).
44. 'Controversy with William Mitchell upon Government 1819'; RJT to John Hutton, 8 Dec. 1820; RJT to Robert Tennent, 5 Mar. 1821 and 2 Apr. 1825 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/C/1/215/15 and 39); 'Notes on Greece' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/797/4).
45. RJT to Robert Tennent, 5 Mar. 1821.
46. 'Relics in prose and verse of sundry schoolfellows and others' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/743/1).
47. 'Relics in prose and verse of sundry schoolfellows and others'; Stuart Semmel, 'Reading the tangible past: British tourism, collecting, and memory after Waterloo', *Representations*, 69 (2000), 15.
48. 'Miscellaneous verses and other writings, principally by William Finlay, James G. Montgomery, James Gibson, James Emerson and R. J. Tennent' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/753/49).

49. 'Book of Drawings done in Fabbrini's class, Belfast Academic Institution, 1819' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/751/1).
50. 'Diary of RJT, 1816–1819', 100, 123.
51. 'List of books read from May 1 to Dec. 11, 1819, exclusive of newspapers, reviews, magazines etc.' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/749/27). For Wat Tyler's place in the radical canon see William St Clair, *The reading nation in the romantic period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 307–38.
52. 'Journal of my reading from the time I entered college to reside, 19 Nov. 1822 to 3 July 1824' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/755/1), 2, 3, 4, 6, 17–17; Privately circulated in the 1790s, the *Spirit of despotism* was published in Philadelphia in 1795, but it was not until 1821 that English edition, albeit an anonymous one, appeared. See John Barrell, *The spirit of despotism: Invasions of privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4–9.
53. 'Journal of my reading from the time I entered college to reside', 1, 4–5, 6, 21–22, 29–30. For Holford and Porter, see St Clair, *The reading nation*, 213, 216; H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (60 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 27, 637–8; 44, 958–61.
54. 'Journal of my reading from the time I entered college to reside, 1, 21, 19–20.
55. St Clair, *The reading nation*, 321.
56. 'Emerson Tennent journal, vol. i: 1 July 1824 to 26 Sept. 1825' (PRONI, Emerson Tennent Papers, D/2922/D/2/1), 40–44, 71, 73–74, 78–79.
57. John Hewitt, 'Ulster poets 1800–1870' (M.A. thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1951), 23; Terence Brown, *Northern voices: Poets from Ulster* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), 16.
58. *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 1:2 (1808), 137.
59. Introduced in 1792, the Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge's rule prohibiting the acquisition of books of 'trivial amusement' was not formally relaxed until 1865. See John Anderson, *History of the Belfast Library and Society for Promoting Knowledge, commonly known as the Linen Hall Library, chiefly taken from the minutes of the society and published in connection with the centenary celebration in 1888* (Belfast: M'Caw, Stevenson & Orr, 1888), 19, 42, 76, 82.
60. William Cairns, *Outlines of lectures on logic and belles lettres: With a synopsis of the ancient logic* (Belfast: Thomas Mairs, 1835), 103, 106–7, 110; James Hirst, *Address to the Belfast Historic Society* (Belfast: Thomas Mairs, 1831), 14; Tom Clyde, *Irish literary magazines: An outline history and descriptive bibliography* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), 84.
61. For a classic biographical study, see Leslie A. Marchand, *Byron: A biography* (3 vols, London: Random House, 1957).
62. William Todd Jones to William Drennan, letter dated 1 to 11 Nov. 1817 (PRONI, Misc. Drennan letters, D/456/44).
63. Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The works of Lord Macaulay complete, edited by his sister, Lady Trevelyan* (8 vols, London: Longmans, 1866), 5, 417–18.
64. These details have been gleaned from the following letters: Anonymous to RJT, 23 Mar. 1828 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/20/1/A); Anna Maria Lynn to RJT, letters dated Oct. 1826 to Apr. 1828 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/353/1–23); Eliza McCracken to RJT, letters dated 9 to

- 16 Sept. 1827 and 27 Nov. 1827 to 27 Jan. 1828 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/378/9–12 and 20–22); Kate McEvoy to RJT, letters dated Mar. to May 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/404/1–6); Hannah McGee to RJT, letters dated 2 Apr. to 12 July 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/407/1–6); William Mitchell to RJT, 1 Nov. 1820 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/457/5); James Montgomery to RJT, 8 Feb. 1822 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/465/19); Robert Templeton to RJT, 29 Mar. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/652/4).
65. James Montgomery to RJT, 18 May 1824 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/465/38).
 66. James Montgomery to RJT, 26 Jan. 1824 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/465/29).
 67. Frank Archer to RJT, 22 Feb. 1826 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/21/1).
 68. James Montgomery to RJT, 22 Feb. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/465/9); William Mitchell to RJT, 23 Feb. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/475/11).
 69. James Montgomery to RJT, 14 Apr. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/465/16).
 70. James Montgomery to RJT, 22 Feb. 1821.
 71. James Montgomery to RJT, 14 Apr. 1821.
 72. William Mitchell to RJT, 26 Feb. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/475/12).
 73. William Mitchell to RJT, 1 Nov. 1820.
 74. William Mitchell to RJT, 24 June 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/475/27).
 75. 'Is the relative civil and intellectual situation of women in Great Britain, what it ought to be?' (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/760/5B).
 76. Henry MacCormac to RJT, 15 Feb. 1830 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/326/6). One of late Georgian Belfast's more egalitarian thinkers, MacCormac condemned the 'unjust and barbarous' position women were relegated to in society in his pamphlet *On the best means of improving the moral and physical condition of the working classes* (1830). See Thomas Duddy (ed.), *Dictionary of Irish philosophers* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2004), 211.
 77. Maurice J. Quinlan, *Victorian prelude: A history of English manners, 1700–1830* (London: Cass, 1965), 140, 143; Hilton, *A mad, bad, and dangerous people?*, 353–71. In addition, see Catherine Hall, *White, male and middle class: Explorations in feminism and history* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 75–93 and, for a reappraisal of More's achievement, Mitzi Myers, 'Hannah More's *Tracts for the times*: Social fiction and female ideology' in Mary Ann Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (eds), *Fetter'd or free? British women novelists, 1670–1815* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1986), 264–84.
 78. Jane Tennent to RJT, 28 July 1819 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/662/2).
 79. Isabella Tennent to RJT, 29 Jan. 1821 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/660/4).
 80. Eliza McCracken to RJT, 1 Sept. 1827 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/378/8).
 81. Eliza McCracken to RJT, 10 Sept. 1827 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/378/10).
 82. James Montgomery to RJT, 26 Jan. 1824.

83. James Montgomery to RJT, 19 July 1824 (PRONI, Tennent Papers, D/1748/G/465/44).
84. Hunt and Jacob, 'The affective revolution', 491, 497.
85. William Mitchell to RJT, 26 Feb. 1821.
86. James Montgomery to RJT, 14 Apr. 1821; Frank Archer to RJT, 22 Feb. 1826.
87. Quinlan, *Victorian prelude*, 3.
88. Hunt and Jacob, 'The affective revolution', 496.

2

‘A Sudden and Complete Revolution in the Female’: Female Adolescence and the Medical Profession in Post-Famine Ireland

Ann Daly

The second half of the nineteenth century in Ireland saw the emergence of a newly professionalized medical profession, coinciding with the gradual rise of the tenant farmer. The former had gained a new level of professional recognition with the advent of the 1858 Medical Act, which required the registration of all qualified practitioners. The latter was strengthened by the consolidation of land holdings after the Great Famine (1845–1852), a process encouraged by the introduction of legislation supporting tenant land purchase.¹ These developments helped determine and shape new criteria of respectability that would merge discourses on the body within frameworks of social aspirations. This chapter seeks to explore how the medical preoccupation with female adolescence in Ireland reflected both the anxieties of an emerging middle class eager to shed the trappings of pre-Famine poverty, and increasingly self-conscious medical professionals desirous of enhancing the public’s perception of them. What resulted was a construct of female adolescence that was defined as acutely vulnerable and precarious, necessitating protection by the family and legitimizing the involvement of the medical profession.²

The 1851 Medical Charities Act established a widespread network of dispensaries throughout the country, ensuring that doctors were a real presence and influence in the lives of Irish families. The farmer and the doctor endeavoured to establish and define themselves in distinct ways, forging new codes of conduct that adhered rigidly to middle-class norms and in turn influenced the cultural landscape of Ireland in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this period, the female body was increasingly pathologized, specifically during sexual development

and reproduction, and this process has attracted much comment from historians of both Britain and the United States.

Since the 1970s, scholars have explored the relationship between emerging medical science and how the cultural construction of the female body was conceptualized in the context of nineteenth-century America.³ Charles Rosenberg, particularly, outlined how medical and scientific discourse attempted to justify accepted norms of society with biological reasoning. He identified the class-consciousness of the middle classes in nineteenth-century America, which sought to repress adolescent sexuality as a means of expressing social respectability.⁴ Such anxiety about class identity can be similarly observed in the advancing tenant farming class in Ireland and this study aims to outline how this class in late nineteenth-century Ireland looked for ideological justification for its rapidly changing social outlook. More recently, studies have moved away from the 1970s' representations of women as victims of culture and social structure.⁵ Research has increasingly focused on the cultural construction of femininity and its co-existence with scientific thought. Historians have recognized the significance of the emerging specialism of gynaecology in the late nineteenth century, noting its preoccupation not merely with the physical ailments of females, but with the psychological and moral aspects of femininity. While the various milestones of a woman's reproductive life were viewed with new interest from doctors, a number of scholars have identified female adolescence as an area of particular fascination for medics in this time period.⁶ These studies have explored the cultural expectations surrounding sexual maturation and how the medical profession depicted female adolescence as a distinct life crisis in the late nineteenth century.

This chapter seeks to explore if there were corresponding developments taking place at the same period in Ireland. Concentrating on key figures in the newly emerging discipline of gynaecology, as well as contemporary medical journals and textbooks, this study places the medical profession and its discourse on female adolescence in an Irish context. The Great Famine heralded a time of extensive change in the economic, cultural and social landscape of Ireland, which was characterized by mass emigration, changes in land ownership, the escalating importance of the Roman Catholic Church and diminishing marriage rates. Age-old certainties that had shaped the lives of Irish women for centuries were transforming, giving way to new possibilities and, conversely, restrictions in their lives. Simultaneously, medical professionals in Ireland were eager to consolidate their hard-won status and, in doing so, augment the public perception of doctors. It is the tensions

between a self-conscious branch of medicine, namely gynaecology, and the advance of a new generation of uncertain young women that shapes the core of this research.

I Adolescence in context

The rise of the tenant farmer in Ireland in the latter half of the nineteenth century is well documented by Irish historians.⁷ Certainly, by the 1870s there was a steady increase in the size of average land holdings,⁸ allowing farmers to aspire to a new economic standing, however, anxieties regarding class identity also emerged. R. V. Comerford refers to the concept of 'respectability' and the 'conspicuous adherence to a strict code' of conduct⁹ that changed definitions of acceptable behaviour, particularly for women, in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Ireland. Outward signs of wealth became increasingly important for class identity; for example, a woman engaged in heavy agricultural labour was increasingly associated with the poorer classes. Joanna Bourke has emphasized the increased importance placed on housework for Irish women in the second half of the century, placing female work indoors.¹⁰ A prolonged period of girlhood, the span between childhood and marriage, became a determination of social status for the aspiring farming class. In sharp contrast to the early marriages associated with the pre-Famine period, farmers evolved into careful negotiators of their own, and in time, their daughters', matrimonial ambitions, whereby security of tenure and land acquisition trumped romantic ideals.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century marriage was no longer a certainty for Irish girls, reflecting the rapidly changing social patterns of Irish society. By 1911 a quarter of all adults in their forties had never married.¹¹ Maria Luddy points to the striking demographic trends in Ireland in the post-Famine period. In 1871, for example, 43 per cent of all women between fifteen and forty-five were married; by 1911 that had dropped to 36 per cent.¹² Kathleen Vejuoda postulates that the post-Famine taboo about subdivision of land to support numerous families led to a cultural emphasis on delaying or avoiding marriage.¹³ Land acquisition was central to the prosperity of the rising farmer and ensuring shrewd marriages that promised financial security became common.¹⁴ In an economic environment where land procurement and marriage were fundamental to class status, the social expectations on adolescent girls were raised considerably. Marriage, for the tenant farmer, became inextricably linked to economic circumstance and was increasingly defined as a calculated business transaction, a negotiation

of land and wealth. Comerford alludes to the 'unexampled ruthlessness and inflexibility' of the marriage contract in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ The dowry would possibly be the largest financial output that a father would make,¹⁶ substantiating such expectations and placing a new centrality on young women in Irish society. The financial opportunities her potential marriage might bring ensured that the female adolescent embodied the aspirations of an emerging class.

One mark of 'bourgeois' success was the notion of the redundant wife, emphasizing the importance of her domestic and reproductive role, and consequently her roles within the domain of the home. As wives and daughters gradually retreated from heavy agricultural work, the new focus on the role of the woman in reproduction inevitably gave the position of wife and mother new significance. The shrinking and competitive marriage marketplace was juxtaposed with the new emphasis on reproduction and the idealization of the maternal role. Such centrality of motherhood was bolstered by the reorganized and increasingly influential Catholic Church's veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus.¹⁷ The fertility transition that affected much of northern Europe, where birth rates were decreasing dramatically, was delayed in Ireland, where the sharp decline in marriage rates was accompanied by an increase in marital fertility. David Fitzpatrick refers to the pressure on women to reproduce after the Famine, due to the increasingly transactional nature of marriage contracts, where children were regarded as economic assets.¹⁸ Timothy Guinnane also suggests that there was an expectation of high fertility for the married woman who remained in Ireland.¹⁹ Procreation became synonymous with the progress and prosperity of the tenant farmer and, as a result, female adolescence as a period of sexual maturation began to gain new importance.

The marked rise in female literacy at this period also contributed to the cultural and social changes occurring in the lives of young Irish women.²⁰ Thanks to an improved primary curriculum,²¹ girls were better educated, allowing a more literate generation, even if such education prepared a significant proportion for emigration ships.²² If marriage was increasingly unavailable to a young woman, her propensity to gain remunerative employment in Ireland was similarly restricted. The lack of employment opportunities for women can be tracked in the huge numbers of Irish females who emigrated at this period, due to the lack of industrialization and the dwindling textile industries.²³ Increasingly, young Irish women were emigrating, often on their own or with other women, as the decrease of employment opportunities for girls in Ireland contrasted with a rise in demand for female workers in Britain and

North America.²⁴ With emigration came new challenges, both for the women who left and those that stayed behind, be they the demands of making a new life in another country or continent, or of negotiating a match in the dwindling Irish marriage market.

For those who remained behind there were new (if limited) opportunities, particularly for middle-class girls. For example, there were remunerative opportunities for females in the expanding civil service.²⁵ Advertisements in the local and national press appeared for female 'sorterships' for applicants aged fifteen to eighteen and for female clerkships aged eighteen to twenty in the General Post Office in Dublin. Female clerks could earn from £65 to £170 a year.²⁶ Teaching too became a viable career for middle-class girls as the primary education system expanded.²⁷ There were also employment opportunities for girls as servants for the expanding middle classes.²⁸ These developments ensured that adolescent girls in Ireland in the second half of the nineteenth century were to confront challenges, choices and demands that would impact their lives in ways unparalleled by the generations before them.

Concurrent with such social and economic changes in Ireland in this period was the growing authority of the Irish medical profession, with gynaecology becoming an emerging specialism. Basking in the glories of the 'golden era' of Irish medicine in the first half of the nineteenth century, the second half enabled the profession to consolidate and grow in confidence.²⁹ The 1858 Medical Act offered a level of professional security and increasingly physicians and surgeons in Ireland moved in prestigious circles. The establishment of medical journals such as the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science (DJMS)* and the *Dublin Medical Press and Circular (DMPC)* highlights the fact that despite the continued existence of intra-professional rivalry, there was a growing sense of unity in the medical community. The 1851 Medical Charities Act also played an important role in the advance of medical influence in Ireland. The disunity of the philanthropic framework of the medical charity institutions of the early nineteenth century was replaced by an influential and wide-ranging centralized system.

The acceptance of gynaecology as a viable specialism was a relatively new phenomenon in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁰ Previously gynaecologists, or male midwives, had a low status in the hierarchy of medical practice but with the advent of hospitals and with shifting views of femininity influenced by social and economic developments, this was to radically change.³¹ In Ireland in this period, the locus for gynaecological practice can be identified with the four main Dublin hospitals. The Rotunda Hospital, established in 1745, opened

its first gynaecological department in 1835, while the Coombe Lying-in Hospital, established in 1826, opened its first gynaecological ward in 1837. Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital also had a maternity wing, which was established in 1869, while Holles Street opened its doors to women in 1894. These hospitals were also important centres for clinical teaching, both nationally and internationally. The chief object of this chapter is to examine how Irish gynaecologists construed female adolescence and consequently how their subsequent interpretations affected the lives of young women in late nineteenth-century Ireland.

II Medical definitions of adolescence

Attempting to define adolescence is fraught with difficulties, particularly with regard to its cultural concepts and modern interpretation of its terminology. However, we do know that the fate of children was becoming a matter of national concern and, for the advancing middle class, the protection of childhood innocence became a symbol of status. In 1881 the *DMPC* outlined in an editorial: 'The question of children's welfare is of vital importance to the progress of the country, for we cannot forget that "the children of today are the rulers of tomorrow".'³² This new emphasis on children and their protection validated the role of the doctor. The advising role of the practitioner with regard to the development of, and the changes experienced by, children became a precursor to a new interest in adolescence. In 1839 Dr Samuel Fox, an English practitioner postulated in a pamphlet on adolescence that the 'transition from childhood to puberty is distinctly marked, although menstruation may not be present.'³³ Despite such ambiguity regarding the exact timing of its onset, Fox did identify female puberty as a clearly discernible time:

At about the age of puberty ... the whole contour is much altered ... There is also an alteration in the mental powers proceeding at the same time, the mind becomes elevated, the eyes betoken increased intelligence, the blush of modesty suffuses the cheek, the gait and attitudes are much altered – and the female becomes thoughtful, and is no longer amused by the trifling considerations of childhood.³⁴

Fox dreamily described the traits, not of a typical adolescent girl, but one who adheres to the strict moral codes espoused by the medical profession. Irish practitioners reiterated this view of adolescence as a time of great physiological and mental changes. In 1845, Sir Henry

Marsh (1790–1860), Dublin-based physician and surgeon,³⁵ described adolescence as ‘the period of the completion of growth: as this period approaches, the various systems undergo rapid development.’³⁶ William C. Neville, assistant physician to the Coombe Hospital, believed adolescence to occur in girls from the ages of fifteen to seventeen.³⁷ Lombe Atthill (1827–1910), master of the Rotunda Hospital,³⁸ argued that menstruation marked the beginning of female puberty and usually took place ‘in the fourteenth and fifteenth year’.³⁹ Thomas More Madden (1838–1902), obstetrical physician to the Mater Hospital in Dublin, asserted that ‘the commencement of female reproductive capacity ... is generally dated from the first appearance of the catamenia,⁴⁰ which most commonly in this country occurs between the fourteenth and sixteenth years of age.’⁴¹ He examined 494 cases to establish the age when menstruation and female puberty commenced. The majority of the girls in his study menstruated around fifteen or sixteen years of age but he acknowledged the limitations of his sample: the women – More Madden’s hospital patients – were the poor of Dublin.⁴² Commenting on a case of a fourteen-year-old mother in Dublin, he noted that ‘such cases are, here at least, fortunately extremely exceptional.’⁴³ Joan Jacobs Brumberg suggested that menarche was viewed as the onset of sexuality⁴⁴ and certainly, More Madden echoed concerns regarding sex and adolescent girls at a time when marriage was either postponed or never happened at all.

For Irish practitioners, as well as their British and American counterparts, specifically the newly emerging specialists, menarche appeared to be the indicator of the beginning of adolescence. More Madden argued that the ‘chief characteristic of the change from girlhood to puberty is the regular establishment of the periodic function of menstruation.’⁴⁵ In the context of post-Famine Ireland, where not merely was marriage uncertain but girls were leaving home earlier, either through emigration or employment, and as such had more social freedom than before, the concerns of medics regarding the vulnerability of adolescent girls would have a receptive audience.⁴⁶

Fleetwood Churchill (1808–1878), who taught midwifery at many of the Dublin schools of medicine and hospitals,⁴⁷ shared the medical preoccupation and idealization of femininity that historians have identified in Britain and the United States:⁴⁸ ‘A great and rapid change is evident, womanly tastes and womanly feelings have sprung into existence; thought, feeling and reflection are substituted for her formal levity, her expressions are more refined and indicating deeper sentiment.’⁴⁹ Churchill attributed ideal social characteristics of middle-class

femininity to his description of the female adolescent. But such idealization of women by the medical profession suggests an underlying anxiety about the mid-century re-conceptualizing of female puberty, driven partly by an emerging specialism of medicine and partly by the earlier menstruation and later marriage of females in this period. Medical apprehension regarding adolescence was compounded by the lack of understanding of women's physiology. Thus, the transformation from child to woman was viewed as a time of particular mental and physical precariousness.

III Adolescence as vulnerable

By the mid-nineteenth century gynaecologists had identified adolescence as a fragile and at times catastrophic period in the female life cycle, which demanded careful management by parents and by doctors. Research, in British and American contexts, has pointed to changes in the political, economic and social landscape as a rationale for such medical perturbation.⁵⁰ Moreover, there is general agreement among scholars about the remunerative value for English and American gynaecologists in labelling female adolescence as a sickness.⁵¹ Women were increasingly viewed as a new and lucrative customer base for emerging specialisms devoted exclusively to their health.

By the turn of the century practitioners were beginning to ascertain the value of midwifery/obstetrics, which heretofore had featured low down on the medical hierarchy. This can be seen when in 1836 the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland decreed that the Master of the Rotunda could no longer issue diplomas in midwifery to licentiates of the College.⁵² By 1913 Kirkpatrick (1869–1954)⁵³ referred to the position of Master of the Rotunda as 'one of the most lucrative medical appointments' in Dublin.⁵⁴ Moreover, by associating various pathologies with female adolescence, gynaecologists garnered what Digby has described as a 'scientific legitimation'.⁵⁵ The proliferation of literature from Irish gynaecologists in the second half of the nineteenth century suggests a burgeoning interest in women's reproductive health.

Certainly, practitioners in Ireland characterized puberty in girls as inherently sick, warranting medical intervention and supervision. In 1846 Marsh suggested that maladies of adolescence in girls could be hard to detect: 'It is the sudden – often rude – disruption of a long cherished and perhaps concealed attachment which undermines the health [of adolescent girls], prostrates the vital actions and lays the foundations of hopeless and consuming disease.'⁵⁶ Marsh touched on the prevailing

ideologies of femininity that labelled women as emotional but emphasized how mental affliction can give way to serious disease with alarming speed. Similarly, in 1850 Fleetwood Churchill warned against 'this susceptibility of the nervous system, this mental sensitiveness' of the female adolescent period. He added that 'pensiveness may degenerate into sadness and melancholy especially under the influence of any moral cause; or a disturbance of the bodily functions may itself excite the morbid mental condition.'⁵⁷ Twinned with the concern regarding the health of young girls was the underlying fear of their developing sexuality. Both Marsh and Churchill reference 'concealed attachment' or 'moral cause', indicating that middle-class girls at least need to be closely monitored both by parents and by practitioners. Could this indicate a fear of sexual behaviour at a time where sexual maturation was reached but marriage was not imminent? In post-Famine Ireland, where increasingly marriage was negotiated along stringent and economically astute lines, there was no room for romantic love, making references to 'concealed attachment' reason enough for parental concern. Diarmaid Ferriter has asserted that the Famine impacted significantly on Irish sexual behaviour and on marriage and fertility.⁵⁸ New ideas of middle-class respectability emphasized the centrality of marriage and the family, and promoted the importance of the female biological role, which gave further justification to the gynaecologists' role in the life of women at the dawn of their reproductive life. The medical advice was that parental supervision would ensure that the health of the pubescent girl was protected, but also that she adhered to strict moral codes of respectability, important considerations in a marriage contract.

As the century progressed middle-class adolescence was viewed primarily as an extension of childhood, which required the supervision of parents and doctors. Hilary Marland asserts that by the end of the century notions of the physical and mental vulnerability of adolescent girls were reinforced, with British medics depicting the adolescent girl as the victim of her biological system.⁵⁹ This also appears to be the case in Ireland where practitioners were warning parents of the risks of puberty to girls using an increasingly moral tone. The popular *Cassell's people's physician* (described by the DMPC in 1880 as being 'one of the best' domestic medicine manuals⁶⁰) emphasized that parents should be well informed, presumably by the medical profession, as to the 'possibilities and dangers of this period of life.'⁶¹ In 1883 More Madden went further by intimating that 'non-physical or moral causes of mental disorders' could be attributed to 'the misdirected or neglected mental and moral training of female youth.'⁶² The suggestion that girls

needed careful supervision, specifically with regards to their sexuality, would have had resonance with the emerging middle class in Ireland, where girlhood was now extended and marriage of increasing economic importance. Moreover, any championing of parental surveillance of their adolescent daughter's sexuality would have had resonance with the Catholic Church in Ireland.⁶³ In 1897 More Madden warned parents that if they were not vigilant with regard to the 'mental and physical care of girls', the results would be a 'profusion of illnesses in later life.'⁶⁴ More Madden's assertion that adolescent girls were not equipped to cope with the demands of their biology, perhaps the demands of their sexual drive, further validated the need for medical intervention. Henry MacNaughton-Jones went further suggesting that adolescence in girls marked a period of 'weakened inhibitory will power and ineffective nerve control' that, rather alarmingly, enabled 'certain psychopathic tendencies and impulses.'⁶⁵ The clear moral tone had an undercurrent fear of adolescent sexuality, insinuating that without expert restraint and supervision, young girls were capable of succumbing to their sexual instinct or impulse. In such an inhibitory and fraught atmosphere, the daughters of the emerging Irish bourgeoisie, at least, were further drawn indoors, which in turn substantiated not merely the need for the physician, but the accepted cultural concepts of femininity.

IV Adolescents and menstruation

Menstruation was regarded by medics as the onset of puberty in girls and associated with the female's distinctly separate destiny from her male counterparts. As discussed above, menarche also indicated the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood and, explicitly, the start of a girl's sexual life. In an age when expectation of high marital fertility existed,⁶⁶ the suggestion that female fecundity gained new importance in late nineteenth-century Ireland seems a reasonable one. This goes some way towards explaining the new centrality of menstruation in medical discourse and its identification as a period of vulnerability for the adolescent girl in post-Famine Ireland. Brumberg asserts that the prevailing discourse among American gynaecologists at this time was that the onset of menstruation 'made a girl ripe for disease.'⁶⁷ Marland has also identified English practitioners' characterization of menstruation as the 'perils of puberty'.⁶⁸ Certainly, the evidence points to the fact that this was a view shared by their Irish counterparts. For example, More Madden noted that 'I can hardly call to mind a single case of any form of epilepsy in a woman where there was not some

derangement of her ovarian health.⁶⁹ As this section will explore, Irish practitioners viewed menstruation as not merely an illness in itself, but as a principle cause of a plethora of other complaints both physical and psychological.

However, nineteenth-century practitioners knew almost nothing about menstruation, and the menses of women remained a subject of controversy until the 1930s when the hormones that trigger the monthly cycle were fully comprehended.⁷⁰ The medical profession in the second half of the nineteenth century continued to be preoccupied and perplexed by menstrual physiology. More Madden commented in 1886 that the 'physiology and pathology of menstruation having only of late years become understood, the management of its abnormalities was before then, largely empirical.'⁷¹ Humoural theory asserted that the female body contained a set quantity of energy that was directed variously from one organ to another – meaning that one organ or ability could be developed only at the expense of another. Menstruation was viewed as demanding a significant proportion of the energy of the female. In the nineteenth century, ovulation was thought to take place during menstruation and so special care had to be taken at this time.⁷² Such foggy understanding of the female menstrual cycle did not deter the medical profession from defining menstruation as a kind of sickness that seriously impeded a woman, particularly at the onset of puberty.

When reviewing a publication on diseases of the ovaries in 1860, the editor of the *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science* commented that 'the particular function discharged by these organs in the female economy, and their exact relation to menstruation, are matters of recent discovery.'⁷³ This 'recent discovery' was what was generally known as the 'ovular theory' of menstruation, accepted among medical practitioners since the 1850s.⁷⁴ Lombe Atthill stipulated that menstruation 'marks the period of ovulation'.⁷⁵ William C. Neville, senior assistant physician at the Coombe Hospital in Dublin, outlined in 1883 that the 'doctrine of ovarian dominance still holds its own among leading physiologists.'⁷⁶ The ovular theory gave new significance to the ovaries as central to sex and reproduction and thus associated menstruation with the period of 'heat' in animals. The theory appeared to confirm suspicions among medical practitioners that women were controlled by unpredictable reproductive systems and at the mercy of basic animal instinct. Neville corroborated this when he asserted that 'rut in animals and menstruation in women have, with reason, been compared.'⁷⁷ This juxtapositioning of sexual desire and menstruation magnified the perils of adolescence for medics, who outlined the effects of the dominant

ovaries on the frail, female constitution. MacNaughton-Jones referred to 'the psycho-physical, psycho-physiological and psycho-pathological phenomena attendant upon the act of ovulation and its expression in the menstrual discharge.'⁷⁸

According to contemporary scientific theory, the ovaries were stimulated by nervous energy, which in turn produced mental and physical perturbation among women. Thus, vulnerability was intensified during puberty when, it was believed, adolescent girls lost valuable energy during menstruation.⁷⁹ Menstrual blood itself was viewed as pathological, an ominous threat to the already vulnerable young girl. Medical supervision was thus a valid and legitimate action, which was opportune for a branch of practitioners eager to establish themselves. The late nineteenth-century records from the Mater Hospital⁸⁰ in Dublin reveal adolescent patients hospitalized with menstrual complaints, recorded as dysmenhorrea and amenorrhoea, or often simply described as 'menstrual irregularities'. For example, in 1897 Kate, an unmarried eighteen-year-old girl, was admitted suffering from 'menstrual irregularity' and the following year Polly, aged sixteen, entered the Mater suffering from the same affliction.⁸¹ For many of these girls, the sojourns in hospital were short, none any longer than two weeks. Other hospitals admitted similar cases of adolescents with menstrual problems. In the year 1877/78 the Rotunda Hospital admitted cases of adolescents with ambivalent menstrual 'disorders' – one eighteen-year old was recorded as suffering from 'vicarious menstruation' where menstrual blood flowed from the patient's ears. This reinforces not only the scant knowledge regarding the female menstrual cycle but also how medics firmly believed that menstruation affected the entire body. This particular patient was readmitted to the Rotunda on two more occasions in the following year.⁸² The girls appeared to hail from lower middle-class to working-class backgrounds with occupations such as shop girls or servants suggesting that in Ireland the pathology of menstruation was not confined to the middle classes. The general terminology such as 'menstrual irregularity' is sufficiently ambiguous as to disqualify any conclusions but the reoccurrence of adolescent patients with such diagnosis certainly suggests a pathologization of menstruation.

Physical afflictions, however, were to be the least of the adolescents' problems according to leading Irish gynaecologists, who postulated at length on the mental illnesses that preyed on the menstruating girl. By the middle of the nineteenth century Fleetwood Churchill commented that all practitioners 'must be sensible to the influence of menstruation upon the operations of the mind.' He argued that menstruation was in

fact 'the moral and physical barometer of the mind.'⁸³ This view that menstruation was a time of mental precariousness in a female's life was corroborated by other practitioners publishing in the *Lancet*. In 1870 it was asserted that 'the English law courts have apparently admitted the influence of disordered menstruation in producing moral insanity.'⁸⁴ Menstruation, according to many medical sources, rendered young girls susceptible to mental illness, further endorsing the view of the erratic nature of female biology. A seventeen-year-old patient of Fleetwood Churchill exemplifies how medics linked mental aberrations in adolescents with their menstrual condition: 'Her mind gradually became clouded and at length, the prey of the deepest melancholy. She regarded herself as a castaway, spoke of her doom as if fixed forever ... when the menses suddenly appeared after 8–10 months and she immediately recovered her mental health.'⁸⁵

Much later, More Madden, in his half-yearly, 1883 report to the Irish Obstetrical Society referred to 'the greater prevalence of nervous complaints in women than in men ... consequent on the more complex organization of the female reproductive system.'⁸⁶ He reasoned that 'at each succeeding monthly ovulation there is a coincident recurrence of constitutional and nervous disturbance,' ensuring the adolescent girl remained in a more or less constant state of nervous debility. More Madden contended that such neurosis may dissipate over time but 'the earlier catamenial periods ... were always attended with some manifestation of hysteria.'⁸⁷ The Rotunda's gynaecological casebooks of the late-nineteenth century indicate the blurred lines between menstrual complaints and mental illness in adolescents. For example a nineteen-year-old patient was admitted with 'Menorrhagia', with the added note that 'she seems very hysterical and her statements cannot be relied upon.'⁸⁸ This discourse defined adolescence as a time when mental aberrations could not be avoided but could simply be monitored with remedial rather than preventative measures. In the context of Ireland in the second half of the nineteenth century, this suggested a new authority for an emerging specialism of medicine, which not only validated their role but also gave an air of scientific professionalism to gynaecologists. Moreover, in an environment where high marital fertility rates placed new emphasis on matters effecting reproduction, it seems likely that such concerns would have had a receptive ear.

The inextricable link made by Irish gynaecologists between menstrual disorders and mental illness legitimized medical involvement in aspects of femininity that had previously been very private. MacNaughton-Jones pointed to 'derangements of menstruation' such

as amenorrhea as causative factors of mental disorders in adolescents and stated that 'instances of such derangements of mentalisation during adolescence are amongst the most frequent that the gynaecologist meets with.'⁸⁹ He postulated on the prevalence of adolescent girls in mental hospitals:

The years from 18–25, are those that furnish the greater number by far of insane inmates of asylums, amongst whom amenorrhea and dysmenorrhoea are very common complications. It is essential, if we would prevent the more serious developments of morbid mentalisation, that the earlier, and oftentimes subtle warnings should be recognised.⁹⁰

Isaac Ashe, physician to the Donegal Lunatic Asylum,⁹¹ corroborated this view. He asserted that 'it is a commonly observed fact that in females an aggravation of the symptoms [of insanity] occurs at the time of the catamenia.'⁹² The admissions records of the Richmond Lunatic Asylum in Dublin⁹³ reflected gynaecologists' anxieties over menstruating adolescents and their mercurial mental states. The difficulty in creating an accurate picture of girls hospitalized for reasons of disordered menstruation and mental afflictions in which menstruation is indicated to be the main causal factor, is compounded by the sporadic and somewhat piecemeal availability of surviving case records and registers of admissions. The Richmond Lunatic Asylum's register of admissions dating from 1868 to 1877 shows ten cases of adolescent girls suffering from some form of mental disorder linked with menstruation. Two examples are a seventeen-year-old dressmaker from Ranelagh in Dublin, who was admitted in June 1871 with 'epilepsy hysteria caused by menstrual derangements' and an eighteen-year old with no occupation, admitted in February 1877, who spent six days in the asylum suffering with 'mania caused by the catamenia not appearing.'⁹⁴ The admissions register of Sligo Lunatic Asylum⁹⁵ also features adolescent girls, mostly unmarried, entering the hospital with ailments associated with menstruation. For example, one girl, a twenty-year-old servant, entered the hospital in January 1883 registered as suffering from 'chronic melancholia caused by amenorrhoea'.⁹⁶ In 1881 a seventeen-year-old farmer's daughter, was registered as suffering from 'chronic mania caused by catemerial irregularity'.⁹⁷ The scant information in hospital admission records do not reveal the personal and individual stories of these girls but does point to how menstruation in adolescence was employed to explain mental illness.

The surviving late nineteenth-century casebooks from Sligo asylum illustrate further the medically-accepted view of adolescence as being a period of volatility and instability for the mental well-being of young girls. The patients cross class boundaries with servants, farmers' daughters and shop girls featuring in the case records. For example, in 1893 Kate R. was admitted on the grounds that she assaulted her parents and threatened suicide, and it was noted that 'this case is evidently one of the insanity of adolescence.'⁹⁸ In May of 1897 Anne K., an eighteen-year-old servant, was admitted. Her doctor noted that Anne's was 'a case of simple mania or rather a condition of mental exaltation hardly amounting to mania, probably due to the adolescent period.'⁹⁹ In February of the same year Eliza B., an eighteen-year-old, was admitted to the hospital because 'she threatened to drown herself and shoot a clergyman.' Her doctor noted that Eliza's was 'a case of the insanity of adolescence of a melancholic type.' The doctor did note that this patient was 'too excitable'.¹⁰⁰ These individual stories all point to how adolescence and, more specifically, menstruation in pubescent girls was defined as a period of intense vulnerability. Not only were girls liable to physiological illnesses but adolescence was perceived to make them particularly receptive to an alarming range of mental disorders. In an environment of significant cultural and social transformation advancing the notion of female adolescence as a time of momentous and treacherous change may have been propitious. Escalating numbers of emigrating girls with greater options for social freedom than ever before must have instilled a sense of uneasiness and fear not merely among relatives but also among peers that decided to stay at home. These young women faced the possibility of never marrying or, if they did, of facing the prospect of frequent and hazardous pregnancies. It is not difficult to understand how interpretations of adolescence as requiring protection and care might have found resonance in the rapidly changing cultural landscape of the period.

V Conclusion

The cultural construction of femininity and the medicalized female body in the second half of the nineteenth century has attracted much commentary from historians in American and British contexts but little research exists regarding the situation in Ireland. Research on Ireland has concentrated rather on the remarkable demographic shifts that occurred in the period. This includes the emergence of a strong farming middle class, which would become dominant in shaping the

country's economic, social, cultural and political future. The shadow of the Famine had ensured that a class of tenant farmers reorganized and redefined themselves in a way that would ensure financial security. Marriage for them was defined as a business transaction of land acquisition, lending a new distinction to their daughters. It was she who would perpetuate a class status, increasingly moving indoors, an emblem of middle-class progress. Once married, the expectancy was that a wife would have high reproductive potential, placing heightened emphasis on her reproductive role.

For an increasingly self-conscious medical profession, the adolescent girl was representative of an ideal customer base, a valid justification for specialism in a profession anxious to redefine itself in the eyes of the public. The cultural preoccupation with reproduction complemented the emerging 'scientification' of medicine, ensuring that the developing female body remained a thing of fascination and preoccupation for doctors. The need to construct an organic justification and biological rationale for such medical attention ensured that adolescent girls remained perplexing subjects for the medical profession.

As for the adolescent girl herself, beset by diminishing possibilities, a precarious future where marriage was uncertain, emigration a distinct possibility and economic insecurity a reality, the label of sickness may have been a welcome reprieve in her rapidly changing role. The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of transition, both socially and economically, in Ireland. In the midst of such social upheaval was a profession determined to gain respectability and an emerging middle class anxious to avoid the mistakes of the past. The adolescent girl, in one way or another, was to embody and reflect both of these aspirations.

Notes

Henry MacNaughton-Jones (1845–1918), Master of Obstetrics at the Royal University of Ireland, asserted that 'the physiological and psychical influences operating during the developing years of adolescence ... tend ... to such disorders as epilepsy, chorea, suicidal promptings, persecutory delusions, distorted sexual impulses'. See Henry MacNaughton-Jones, *Points of practical interest in gynaecology* (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1901), 81.

1. See Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798–1998: Politics and war* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 69–141.
2. For example: Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Complaints and disorders: The sexual politics of sickness* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1973); John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, *The physician and sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles

- Rosenberg, 'The female animal: Medical and biological views of woman and her role in nineteenth-century America', *Journal of American History*, 60:2 (1973), 332–56; Ornella Moscucci, *Science of woman: Gynaecology and gender in England, 1800–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
3. Most notably in Haller and Haller, *The physician and sexuality in Victorian America*; Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, 'The "sick" women of the upper classes' in John Ehrenreich (ed.), *The cultural crisis of modern medicine* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978); Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg, 'The female animal'; and Charles Rosenberg, 'Sexuality, class and role in 19th century America', *American Quarterly*, 25:2 (1973), 131–54.
 4. Rosenberg, 'Sexuality, class and role in 19th century America', 136.
 5. For example, see Regina Morantz-Sanchez, 'Negotiating power at the bedside: Historical perspectives on nineteenth-century patients and their gynaecologists', *Feminist Studies*, 20:2 (2000), 287–309; Moscucci, *Science of woman*; Crista DeLuzio, *Female adolescence in American scientific thought* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).
 6. For example: Helen King, *The disease of virgins: Green sickness, chlorosis and the problems of puberty* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); Joan Jacob Brumberg, *The body project: An intimate history of American girls* (New York: Random House, 1998); Anne Digby, 'Women's biological straitjacket' in Susan Mendes and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and subordination: Interdisciplinary studies of gender in the nineteenth century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 192–220; Hilary Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain, 1874–1920* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
 7. Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A new economic history, 1780–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 280; F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London: Fontana, 1973), 50–1; K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800. Conflict and conformity* (2nd edn, New York: Longman, 1989), 105; R. V. Comerford, 'Ireland 1850–1870: Post-Famine and mid-Victorian' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland v: Ireland under the Union i, 1801–70* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 279.
 8. H. D. Gribbon, 'Economic and social history, 1850–1921' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland vi: Ireland under the Union ii, 1870–1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 270.
 9. Comerford, 'Ireland 1850–1870', 279–80.
 10. Joanna Bourke, 'Working women: The domestic labour market in rural Ireland 1890–1914', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 21:3 (1991), 479–99.
 11. Timothy W. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish: Households, migration and the rural economy in Ireland, 1850–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 203–4.
 12. Maria Luddy, *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 13–14.
 13. Kathleen Vejvoda, '"Too much knowledge of the other world": Women and 19th-century Irish folktales', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32:1 (2004), 41.
 14. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, 194–5.
 15. Comerford, 'Ireland 1850–1870', 382.
 16. Thomas E. Jordan, 'The quality of life in Victorian Ireland 1831–1901', *New Hibernia Review*, 4:1 (2000), 103–21.
 17. Emmet Larkin, *The consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland 1860–1870* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987), 43–5.

18. David Fitzpatrick, 'Marriage in post-Famine Ireland' in A. Cosgrove (ed.), *Marriage in Ireland* (Dublin: College Press, 1985), 170–1.
19. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, 264.
20. Jordan, 'Quality of life in Victorian Ireland', 107.
21. Deirdre Raftery and Susan M. Parkes, *Female education in Ireland 1700–1900, Minerva or Madonna* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), 38–9.
22. Mary E. Daly, *The famine in Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Historical Association, 1986), 67–9.
23. David Fitzpatrick, 'The modernisation of the Irish female' in Patrick O'Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan (eds), *Rural Ireland, 1600–1900: Modernisation and change*. (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987), 166–80.
24. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, 185.
25. Gribbon, 'Economic and social history', 306–7.
26. *The Irish Schoolmistress and Female Teacher's Assistant*, 28 Feb. 1891.
27. Raftery and Parkes, *Female education in Ireland*, 3–4.
28. Mona Hearn, *Below stairs: Domestic servants remembered in Dublin and beyond 1880–1912* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1993), 9–11.
29. Greta Jones and Elizabeth Malcolm, 'Introduction: An anatomy of Irish medical history' in Greta Jones and Elizabeth Malcolm (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland, 1650–1940* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), 4.
30. Michael J. O'Dowd and Elliot E. Philipp, *The history of obstetrics and gynaecology* (New York: Parthenon Publishing, 1994), 16–17.
31. Moscucci, *Science of woman*, 42.
32. *Dublin Medical Press and Circular* (DMPC), 6 Apr. 1881, 296–7.
33. Samuel Fox, *Observations on the disorder of the general health of females called chlorosis* (London: S. Highley, 1839), 6.
34. *Ibid.*, 7.
35. Sir Henry Marsh (1790–1860) was an Irish physician and surgeon. He established the Park Street Medical School in Dublin in 1822. In 1827, he taught surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He later became a medical doctor for Queen Victoria. See Helen Andrews, 'Marsh, Sir Henry' in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography (DIB)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) (accessed online 20 Oct. 2014).
36. Henry Marsh, 'Remarks on chlorosis and haemorrhage', *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science (DQJMS)*, 2:4 (1846), 303–52, 315.
37. William C. Neville, 'Correlation between ovulation and menstruation', *Dublin Journal of Medical Science (DJMS)*, 76:139 (1883), 47–59, 49.
38. Lombe Atthill (1827–1910) was born in Co. Fermanagh, and graduated in medicine at Trinity College, Dublin. He was Master of the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin and specialized in gynaecology, performing the first successful ovariectomy in Ireland. See Lombe Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (London: Religious Tracts Society, 1911).
39. Lombe Atthill, *Clinical lectures on diseases peculiar to women* (Dublin: Fannin and Co., 1871), 29.
40. Catamenia refers to menstruation.
41. Thomas More Madden, *Clinical gynaecology* (London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1893), 411–12.

42. *Ibid.*, 412. More Madden does not specify which hospital; in 1893 he was Obstetric Physician and Gynaecologist at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Dublin.
43. *Ibid.*, 412.
44. Joan Jacobs Brumberg, '“Something happens to girls”: Menarche and the emergence of the modern American hygienic imperative', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 4:1 (1993), 109.
45. More Madden, *Clinical gynaecology*, 414.
46. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, 172–4; Hearn, *Below stairs*, 9–11.
47. Fleetwood Churchill (1808–1878) also published on obstetrics, gynaecology and paediatrics. See Helen Andrews, 'Churchill, Fleetwood' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 12 Apr. 2013).
48. For example see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, 'Puberty to menopause: The cycle of femininity in 19th Century America', *Feminist Studies*, 1:3/4 (1973), 61; Digby, 'Women's biological strait-jacket', 194; Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain*, 35.
49. Fleetwood Churchill, 'On the mental disorders of pregnancy and childbed', *DQJMS*, 9:17 (1850), 38–63, 39–40.
50. Haller and Haller, *The physician and sexuality in Victorian America*, ix; DeLuzio, *Female adolescence*, 87–8. In an English context, Carol Dyhouse, *Girls growing up in late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981), 137–8; Digby 'Women's biological strait-jacket', 202; Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain*, 35.
51. See Moscucci, *The science of woman*, 102; Janet Oppenheim, *Shattered nerves: Doctors, patients and depression in Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10–12; Digby 'Women's biological strait-jacket', 197–8; Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain*, 18.
52. Robert F. Harrison, 'Medical education at the Rotunda Hospital 1745–1995' in Alan Browne (ed.), *Masters, midwives and ladies-in-waiting: The Rotunda Hospital, 1745–1995* (Dublin: A & A Farmar, 1995), 67–8.
53. Thomas Percy Claude Kirkpatrick began his career as an anaesthetist to Doctor Steevens' Hospital. He acted as visiting physician to both Steevens' Hospital and Westmoreland Locke Hospital. From 1910 to 1954 he served as registrar for the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin. He is renowned for his extensive work on the history of the medical profession in Ireland and published on the subject. See J. B. Lyons, 'Kirkpatrick, Thomas Percy Claude' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 20 Oct. 2014).
54. T. P. Kirkpatrick and T. P. C. Jellet, *The book of the Rotunda Hospital. An illustrated history of the Dublin lying-in hospital from its foundation in 1745 to the present time* (London: Bartholomew Press, 1913), 159.
55. Digby, 'Women's biological strait-jacket', 202–4.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Churchill, 'On the mental disorders of pregnancy and childbed', 40.
58. Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of sin: Sex and society in modern Ireland* (London: Profile Books, 2009), 17.
59. Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain*, 35.
60. *DMPC*, 8 Feb. 1880, 269.
61. *Cassell's people's physician: A book of medicine and of health for everybody* (5 vols. London: The Waverly Book Company, [1900–1915]), v, 144.

62. Thomas More Madden, 'The nervous diseases of women', *DJMS*, 76:140 (1883), 154–7, 156–7.
63. Ferriter, *Occasions of sin*, 19.
64. Thomas More Madden, *Notes on special hygiene of children and youth* (Dublin: Fannin & Co., 1897), 42.
65. MacNaughton-Jones, *Points*, 81.
66. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, 263.
67. Joan Jacobs Brumberg, 'Chlorotic girls 1870–1920: A historical perspective on female adolescence', *Child Development*, 53:6 (1982), 1468–77, 1475.
68. Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain*, 22–3.
69. More Madden, *Clinical gynaecology*, 414.
70. See Chandak Sengoopta, *The most secret quintessence of life: Sex, glands and hormones, 1850–1890* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
71. *DMPC*, 3 Nov. 1886, 372.
72. Joan N. Burstyn, 'Education and sex: The medical case against higher education for women in England, 1870–1900', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 117:2 (1973), 79–89.
73. 'Review of *Chapters on diseases of the ovaries, translated by permission, from Kiwisch's clinical lectures on the special pathology and treatment of the diseases of women* by John Clay (London: Churchill, 1860)', *DQJMS*, 30:59 (1860), 155–62, 156.
74. Moscucci, *Science of woman*, 34.
75. Atthill, *Clinical lectures*, 29.
76. Neville, 'Correlation between ovulation and menstruation', 49.
77. *Ibid.*, 54–5.
78. MacNaughton-Jones, *Points*, 80–1.
79. DeLuzio, *Female adolescence*, 67.
80. The Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Dublin was established in 1861 as a charitable voluntary hospital that would also provide clinical teaching for students and graduates of the Catholic University Medical School. See Tony Farmer, *Mater Private. A history of the Mater Private Hospital, 1986–2006* (Dublin: A & A Farmer, 2006).
81. In the previous month Julia aged eighteen was also admitted with the explanation of 'menstrual irregularation' written in the admission records. In 1898 Mary, a sixteen-year-old schoolgirl, was admitted with the same complaint.
82. Rotunda Hospital, Gynaecological Department Diagnosis and Treatment Book, 1875–79 (National Archives of Ireland (NAI), PRIV 1263/7/26).
83. Churchill, 'On the mental disorders of pregnancy and childbed', 39–40.
84. R. Peel Ritchie, 'On a case of ovarian dropsy', *Lancet*, 95:2425 (1870), 262–4.
85. *Ibid.*, 41–2.
86. More Madden, 'The nervous diseases of women', 154–5.
87. *Ibid.*, 155.
88. Rotunda Hospital, Gynaecological Department Diagnosis and Treatment Book, 1875–79 (NAI, PRIV 1263/7/26).
89. MacNaughton-Jones, *Points*, 85–6.
90. *Ibid.*, 90–1.
91. The Donegal District Lunatic Asylum, now known as St Conal's Psychiatric Hospital, opened in 1866 to accommodate 300 patients. See Mark Finnane, *Insanity and the insane in post-Famine Ireland* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 227.

92. Isaac Ashe, *Insanity: A constitutional disease* (Dublin: Longmans and Co., 1872), 6–7.
93. Richmond Lunatic Asylum later known as St Brendan's Hospital, Grangegorman opened in 1815. From 1830 on it was incorporated into the district Asylum system. See Joseph Reynolds, *Grangegorman: Psychiatric care in Dublin since 1815* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1992).
94. Richmond Lunatic Asylum, Register of Admissions, 1868–77 (NAI, PRIV 1223/3/5).
95. Sligo District Lunatic Asylum opened in 1855 and served counties Sligo and Leitrim. See Finnane, *Insanity and the insane*, 227.
96. St Columba's Mental Hospital, Register of Admissions, 1855–93 (NAI, SL 1184/3/1).
97. *Ibid.*
98. Sligo Mental Hospital, Casebook, 1892–97 (NAI, SL 1184/15).
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Ibid.*

3

The 'Wild Irish Girl' in Selected Novels of L. T. Meade

Sandra McAvoy

I

Though now largely forgotten in Ireland, Elizabeth ('Lillie') Thomasina Meade (1844–1914) was an Irishwoman who became one of the most popular writers for and about adolescent girls at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.¹ She was a Church of Ireland (Anglican) rector's daughter from Co. Cork, born into a gentry class that produced generations of clergy and soldiers.² In her writing, Meade sometimes drew on her own background to create Irish heroines, many of whom were the daughters of Anglo-Irish clergymen and army officers. At the time of her birth, her father was rector of Killowen, near Bandon. In 1856, when she was twelve years old, he was appointed to Templetrine, Ballinspittle, near Kinsale, another Cork parish.³ One of her last novels, *The daughter of a soldier: A colleen of south Ireland* (1914),⁴ contains descriptions of 'Kingsala' – clearly Kinsale – a garrison town where girls 'should have every chance of marrying well and enjoying themselves.'⁵ One scene, involving local girls on a rainy day, may have been drawn from memory:

The girls – and very handsome girls they were – put on their water-proofs and flirted with the officers in the garrison-town, meeting them in a place which was called The Green, and enjoying life to the uttermost. These girls never thought about age. They wanted to have a good time, and they could not possibly tell you what age they were; the subject of age was taboo at Kingsala. The people were good-natured and most neighbourly.⁶

In 1900 Meade wrote that she had always had a gift for storytelling and felt impelled to write professionally despite her family's qualms

about women entering paid employment.⁷ A first novel, *Ashton Morton: Or memories of my life*,⁸ was published anonymously in 1866 but her literary career began in earnest when she moved to London in 1874, something that may have been spurred by a sense of displacement following her mother's death and her father's remarriage.⁹ A second book, *Lettie's last home*,¹⁰ published in 1875, marked the beginning of an independent life and a successful career during which it is estimated that she produced more than 280 books.¹¹

Meade married solicitor Alfred Toulmin Smith in 1879 but continued to write under her maiden name. She was versatile and hugely successful, contributing to a range of genres including adult detective, medical and mystery tales, but was a prolific writer of adolescent fiction and recognized for her role in popularizing the school story. Helen Bittel has pinpointed the importance of her representation of girls' schools as attractive and healthy places, challenging a contemporary medical discourse that suggested education was damaging to the development of female adolescents.¹² In a detailed consideration of Meade's career, Janis Dawson suggests that no other writer of the period 'made a greater contribution to girls' culture and the idea of the "New Girl",¹³ a term used by Sally Mitchell 'to describe a distinctive subculture emerging in the 1880s and 1890s, contemporaneous with (and indeed both driving and driven by) the New Woman movement as well as the increasing recognition of female adolescence as a separate social, cultural, developmental, and economic space.'¹⁴

Critical studies of Meade's work have focused on a number of factors which indicate her consciousness as a New Woman, including the retention of her maiden name as her professional name,¹⁵ and her involvement in the Women Writers' Club and the feminist Pioneer Club, which drew together women of 'advanced views'.¹⁶ Yet Meade was criticized by a number of early scholars of juvenile fiction on the ground that she failed to challenge contemporary gender norms. For example, Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig accepted that she created 'hot blooded heroines', but argued that these girls were ultimately 'moulded into acquiescent personalities'.¹⁷ Kimberley Reynolds, while accepting that Meade was personally involved in feminist activity, read her novels as 'structured so as to underline traditional images of femininity and to undermine the attractions of changes to women's roles.' Reynolds allowed, however, that this might reflect the conservative requirements of the girls' fiction market of the period.¹⁸ This point was also taken up by Sally Mitchell who, while recognizing that 'one of Meade's primary concerns was that girls should do something worthwhile – and

worth money,' suggested her feminism was 'compromised' by factors including a desire to please readers and publishers.¹⁹

Much of the criticism of Meade's treatment of Irish girls in their mid-teens, and especially of the 'wild Irish girl' who often featured in her novels, is complicated by her apparent use of national stereotypes. Carole Dunbar, who was among the first to critique Meade's Irish stories, compares them unfavourably to Sydney Owenson's hugely popular 1806 romantic and nationalistic work, *The wild Irish girl: A national tale*.²⁰ Published in the decade after the Union between Britain and Ireland in 1801, this was directed at an adult English audience, challenging its prejudices about Ireland and presenting a romanticized version of a superior Gaelic, Catholic culture represented by the wild Irish girl heroine, an attractive, exotic and learned young adult, and by her father.²¹ Dunbar focuses on two Meade novels, *Wild Kitty* (1897)²² and *A wild Irish girl* (1910),²³ arguing that Meade's intention was to 'extol English civilisation, contrasting it with a Celtic barbarism,' and that the central theme in these novels involves transforming 'exuberant, demonstrative, garrulous and spontaneous Irish teenage girls from middle-class or landowning families into English ladies,' denigrating Irish culture in the process.²⁴

Sarah Bilston has, however, drawn on Anne Ardis's suggestion that it was not unusual for New Woman texts to 'pull in several directions at once,' reflecting both radical ideas and conservative social positions.²⁵ Both posit that the active reader could identify with some representations and reject those she found unappealing,²⁶ and Bilston applies this premise to adolescent fiction:

Open to numerous interpretations, the girl of the period and the texts in which she stars allow a reader either to celebrate conventional feminine virtues (self-abnegation, compliance and domesticity); or to take pleasure in the adumbration of a modern, active, sporty young heroine; or, indeed, to enjoy the vibrant coexistence of the two.²⁷

Bittel takes up the issues of active readership and the very real constraints experienced by authors in a society in which adolescent girls were considered 'especially vulnerable' and reading material might be regulated by parents concerned about the 'moral and social danger' deriving from transgressive texts. She questions whether such authors did 'simplistically reproduce dominant ideologies (especially with regard to gender) in the same way they endlessly reproduce the same formulae.'²⁸ Looking at selected Meade novels, Bittel acknowledges that

there were points where the author appeared to 'negate or to drastically qualify her support for the New Girl' but she highlights Meade's focus on such issues as 'professional and educational opportunities for women and girls, advocacy for single women, and marriage reform.'²⁹ She further identifies how Meade threaded subtle information into her novels on skills that would aid both independent thought and independent living.³⁰

Sensitive to the constraints on feminist writers of the period, Bittel suggests that work by authors such as Meade should be reappraised as a 'vital part of the cultural histories of adolescence, "first-wave" feminism, and the *Fin-de-Siècle*.'³¹ One problem in assessing Meade's work is that her output was not only huge but spread over some thirty-five years of changing attitudes and fashions in children's and adolescents' literature, factors that make it difficult to provide a comprehensive overview. This chapter is intended to contribute to that reappraisal by drawing from the texts of selected 'wild Irish girl' novels, *Bashful fifteen* (1892),³² *Wild Kitty* (1897), *The rebel of the school* (1902),³³ *A wild Irish girl* (1910) and *Peggy from Kerry* (1912),³⁴ to suggest that Meade wrote sympathetically of Irish heroines who more than stood their own when transplanted to England to begin their formal schooling among high-caste English girls, and that she questioned stereotypical understandings of what becoming a 'lady' might mean for the Irish girl. It focuses primarily on *A wild Irish girl* and *Peggy from Kerry*, because in these novels neither heroine has experienced the privileges brought by wealth and social status.

Before looking at these works, it is useful to point to Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson's argument that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to identify a period of female adolescence was to 'claim what had been a male preserve'³⁵ and that female, as much as male, adolescence was 'depicted as a romantic period in which vitality is combined with idealism.'³⁶ They note key characteristics of fictional heroines that are also recognizable in the Meade novels. These include what might have been considered 'boyish' attributes such as 'pluck, integrity and independence.'³⁷ In keeping with such conventions, Meade's adolescent Irish girls are sporting, active heroines, and sometimes the antithesis of what we might imagine a 'lady' to be. They are the friends and equals of – and admired for their pluck by – brothers, cousins and the brothers of school friends.³⁸ In *Wild Kitty*, at a vital moment in the plot the heroine finds herself in trouble on a number of scores after a teacher spots her out after dark, improperly dressed, without her coat, wearing a bright red blouse that exposes her arms to the elbows and with her friend Fred's boys'-school cap on her head. There

is an innocent explanation for her dress but nothing can excuse its being unladylike – and the exposure of her arms is considered particularly reprehensible.³⁹ More than this, the teacher appears at a comic moment when, outside a public house where 'men considerably the worse for drink were apt to linger about the doors,' Kitty floors a leering youth with an expert punch 'straight from the shoulder.'⁴⁰

In each of the books discussed here the heroines engage in behaviour associated more with boys than 'ladies'. In *Bashful fifteen*, for example, Bridget O'Hara has been raised by her father to shoot, land salmon, manage a pack of hounds, ride bareback or in the saddle, fill his tobacco pipe and cope with a dog showing signs of hydrophobia: all of which she does to perfection.⁴¹ In *A wild Irish girl* Patricia 'was the best swimmer in the whole of the countryside,' she fishes river and sea to feed her impoverished grandfather and she runs, races, rows, dives and climbs.⁴² In *Peggy from Kerry*, Peggy has lived the life of a rural school-leaver, climbs 'with the agility of a young squirrel,'⁴³ has been the 'right hand' of her foster parents and 'practically farmed their land for them,' though she also has more feminine – and adult – attributes, in that she 'milked their cows, and attended their hens, and sold their eggs and butter, and kept their tiny cabin wonderfully clean.'⁴⁴ Yet, a theme of each novel is that, having run free as a boy might in Ireland, its heroine is required to forego some of her accustomed liberties. She must live up to high family standards of honour and survive in an alien English environment in which strict school rules are imposed and adults have expectations that girls will evolve into ladies.

II

For the adolescent audience for whom Meade wrote, the term 'wild Irish girl' conjured up the promise of a heroine who broke adult rules. In *Wild Kitty*, for example, when new pupil Kitty Malone's name is first mentioned and a classmate asks: 'Who in the name of fortune is she?' the casual response is 'Oh, a wild Irish girl!'⁴⁵ The statement and the exclamation mark implying to those who knew the code that a rollicking adventure would follow. Mitchell has pointed out both that Irish girls in English middle-class fiction could be 'adventurous and hard to discipline, even when they are upper class and Anglo-Irish,'⁴⁶ and that Meade's girl could teach her English counterparts 'something about emotions and frankness while she's at it.'⁴⁷ One of Kitty Malone's classmates sums up her difference from her English friends: 'She is wild and daring and eccentric; but she is also the soul of honesty and candour.

She is very affectionate and very generous ... Things we think wrong are not considered wrong by Kitty Malone.⁴⁸ The description might apply to any of the wild Irish girls discussed in this chapter and encapsulated a formula Meade later explained as the one her readers looked for; one involving a heroine who could be 'naughty', 'daring', not 'sly or vindictive,' but 'kind and a faithful friend.'⁴⁹ It was one with which a wild Irish girl stereotype seemed a perfect fit but also reflected contemporary thinking on the Celts, summed up by Matthew Arnold as 'undisciplinable, anarchical, and turbulent by nature' yet 'sentimental', 'romantic and attractive' with 'just the opposite of the Anglo-Saxon temperament.'⁵⁰

More than in other books considered in this chapter, Meade employs Celtic romanticism in *Bashful fifteen* to create an exotic heritage for Bridget ('Biddy') O'Hara, whose Co. Cork family is served by faithful retainers in Castle Mahun, an ancient house, 'large, rambling and in parts tumble-down', that stands in the midst of 'almost primeval trees' and overhangs a lake, known to the locals as 'the Witch's Cauldron'.⁵¹ Drawing on another national stereotype, Biddy is presented as a talented harpist.⁵² Her return from boarding school is described in heroic terms too, as creating 'great excitement at Castle Mahun, for the banished princess, as the people chose to consider Bridget O'Hara, was coming home from foreign parts. Bonfires were lit all along the hills in her welcome.'⁵³ The use of language is interesting; speaking of the 'people' implies the subjects of a ruler or prince (though in Ireland reference to 'your people' may mean one's extended family or clan) as does the designation of Biddy as a 'princess' by the tenants of the estate. Such scenes heighten the romance, echoing the idea of a family still owed ancient allegiance by its followers.⁵⁴ Yet, Meade refers to Biddy's father as the 'squire', a particularly English, rather than an Irish term, one that may have been used to clarify his social position for her non-Irish audience.⁵⁵ England is referred to as 'foreign parts', understood by the tenants, perhaps, as the colonial power but also a device to make the west of Ireland seem a more distant, mysterious place to the young reader. There is antagonism too between Norah Malony, Biddy's old peasant nurse, and the manipulative English girl, Janet May (who holds Biddy in her power because she might disclose that she behaved dishonourably, if innocently), with Norah referring to her as the 'Englisher', an outsider in Ireland just as the Irish girls are 'Other' in England.⁵⁶

In *The rebel of the school* Kathleen O'Hara's⁵⁷ background is similar to Biddy's. She too is a wealthy Irish 'princess' – another landlord's daughter – but readers see her in England where she attends a day

school and boards with a local family, though there is a brief interlude of excitement when her aunt visits, and there are lines that capture something of the vivacity and emotional openness of Meade's Irish girls and, perhaps, of her own pride in her Irishness:

It is good to hear two Irishwomen conversing together, for there is so much action in the conversation – such lifting of brows, such raising of hands, such emphasis in tone, in voice, in manner. Imagery is so freely employed; telling sentences, sharp satire, wit – brilliant, overflowing, spontaneous – all come to the fore. Laughter sometimes checks the eager flow of words. Occasionally, too, if the conversation is sorrowful, tears flow and sobs come from the excited and over-sensitive hearts.⁵⁸

Essentially though, Kathleen's Irishness is played out in a secret society which she forms of the 'foundationers', or scholarship pupils – girls looked down on by some of the wealthy fee payers. She names this group of English girls 'The Wild Irish Girls', is acclaimed their 'Queen', and orders little heart-shaped silver badges, with 'a harp with a bit of trailing shamrock' on each, for the members.⁵⁹ There are moments too that gently reflect the political unrest in Ireland in the late nineteenth century. For example, Kathleen declares that 'it is quite natural' for an Irish girl to join a secret society and explains to her followers, who are 'sat upon and objected to' by the richer girls, that 'the heritage of every Irish girl, handed down to her from a long line of ancestors, is to help the oppressed.'⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, one of her admirers dubs her 'a brick of bricks' who 'will make the most tremendous difference in our lives.'⁶¹ The existence of 'The Wild Irish Girls' and the scrapes they get into – including a madcap, unchaperoned, trip to the theatre in London by night – are, however, looked on by the school as a 'great rebellion', a term with resonance in Ireland.⁶² Potentially facing expulsion, Kathleen declares 'I am a rebel by nature. I believe I shall always be a rebel,' acts nobly in defence of a friend and is supported by fellow pupils, who hoped the governors would excuse 'their queen, just because she was an Irish girl and like no one else.'⁶³

Both *Bashful fifteen* and *The rebel of the school* provide clues, though only in passing, that they are set during the Land War, a late nineteenth-century period of agrarian unrest. In the first, for example, we learn that it was wise to keep one's valuables in a bank in Ireland 'on account of the Land Leaguers.'⁶⁴ In the second, heroine Kathleen O'Hara's father 'is never troubled on account of the Land League or anything else' and, as

a result, Kathleen will have 'lots and lots of money.'⁶⁵ By 1910, however, a series of Irish Land Acts (passed between 1870 and 1903) had begun to change the pattern of land ownership in Ireland. The home rule crisis and the women's suffrage movement were dividing opinion in Ireland and England. Patricia Redgold, in *A wild Irish girl*, and Peggy Desmond, in *Peggy from Kerry*, are orphaned daughters of heroic Irish officers in the British army, rather than Irish 'squires'. They are independent, self-sufficient, central characters. Like Meade, both are Protestant and their fathers are identifiable as Anglo-Irish.⁶⁶

A wild Irish girl, published in 1910, is set in England. There is only a glimpse of Ireland and it is a different place from that described in *Bashful fifteen*, written two decades earlier. When readers first meet Patricia Redgold she is struggling alone to support her grandfather in their once grand but now decaying west Cork home, a big house called Carrigraun. The poverty of the Redgolds is set against the prosperity of Mary Malony, the lower-middle-class wife of a Dublin solicitor, described as a 'very blowsey, somewhat vulgar woman,' a native of Carrigraun village who had once envied the Redgolds and who takes Patricia shopping at 'Brown & Thomas's well known shop' in Grafton Street, Dublin;⁶⁷ an intimation of the rise of the middle class and decline of the landlord. Then the heroine is whisked to her English guardian's fashionable London home to begin her adventures and ordeals. In this novel, Patricia is an Irish daughter of the British Empire, whose Carrigraun-born father was a Rugby-and-Oxford-educated British officer who died of wounds after the Siege of Mafeking (which places his death around 1900). With this representation Meade, who lived in London, may have responded to a political zeitgeist, different from that pertaining in the 1890s, as much as to fashion in children's writing.

III

Typically in Meade's novels an Irish girl arrives in England, aged fourteen or fifteen, having moved in narrow circles in rural Ireland, unconscious of the restraints of class, social mores, dress codes or the requirements of English schools. The plots of all the novels considered here, but particularly those of *A wild Irish girl* and *Peggy from Kerry*, in which the heroines have spent their childhood working hard to survive, involve their negotiation of these systems. Each seems to English adult characters an untamed creature, described by some as like a 'young colt' that needs to be 'broken in' and by others as 'a savage'.⁶⁸ In *Peggy from Kerry* a school bully describes Peggy as 'a sort of raw material,'⁶⁹ and

in *Wild Kitty*, one student looks forward to meeting Kitty because she hopes 'beyond anything to become acquainted with a real aborigine.'⁷⁰ Yet in the course of most of the novels the reader is provided with ample clues to an Irish heroine's nobility, intelligence and educational potential. This latter issue is crucial in Meade's work and, in all the books considered here, she presses home the importance of education, not only for achieving that potential, but as a means of making girls independent and capable of supporting themselves.

In *Peggy from Kerry*, Peggy Desmond is a feisty girl, raised by peasant foster parents. She attended the local Board School to the third standard, delighted to leave when she reached the age of fourteen.⁷¹ When sent to an English boarding school, however, readers learn that she is 'a remarkably smart and clever child' and that her Irish education stood her in good stead:

Her learning was quite sound, she could read fluently, she could recite poetry with a wonderfully pathetic sort of lilt to her voice, she knew her history admirably, she spelt to perfection, her writing was good, her geography and grammar were absolutely up to average, and there was not the slightest doubt that with a little instruction she would be exceedingly musical.⁷²

Bridget O'Hara, in *Bashful fifteen*, is an innocent, described in her first days in her English school as a 'curious mixture of ignorance and knowledge' and as finding her first encounter with organized education stressful. She is 'all on wires, scarcely ever still, laughing one moment, weeping the next.'⁷³ Yet readers are told:

In every sense of the word Bridget was unexpected. She had an extraordinary aptitude for arithmetic, and took a high place in the school on account of her mathematics. The word 'mathematics', however, she had never even heard before. She could gabble French as fluently as a native, but did not know a word of the grammar. She had a perfect ear for music, could sing like a bird, and play any air she once heard, but she could scarcely read music at all, and was refractory and troublesome when asked to learn notes.⁷⁴

Kitty Malone's story is slightly different. In *Wild Kitty*, she attends a school, described as 'one of the best and most thorough colleges of learning in the whole of England',⁷⁵ to please a wealthy father, who saw education as a means of providing a degree of polish and a knowledge

of manners.⁷⁶ She sums herself up as ‘the dunce of dunces’,⁷⁷ cannot comprehend her companions’ interest in learning⁷⁸ and seems a most unlikely scholar. Yet, when she briefly put some effort into her studies she found that hard work made ‘school life ... something roseate and delightful.’⁷⁹ When her headmistress sums up Kitty’s ‘talents’, however, they are her wealth, her ‘bright attractive, loving manner’ and ‘remarkably pretty face.’⁸⁰ Kitty is advised to control her emotions, ‘to keep a *little* back,’⁸¹ but her impetuous behaviour, which sets her apart from her English companions, brings her to the brink of expulsion.⁸² Family honour is preserved when, before he meets with her headmistress and teacher, she persuades her father that she is ‘too wild for England’ and must return home to Ireland. Rather than learning to discipline her emotions, she turns her back on an English schooling, vowing to ‘never, never be a polished lady with manners to the longest day of my life.’⁸³

In *A wild Irish girl*, Patricia has had no formal education. Her guardian, Cora Lovel, reports: ‘She absolutely knows nothing at all with regard to the curriculum of education, although Miss Haste [a governess] does give her credit for being remarkably clever, industrious, and anxious to imbibe knowledge.’⁸⁴ Writing to her grandfather, Patricia acknowledged that ‘[s]he was not at all a good writer, and her spelling left much to be desired,’ but readers learn that ‘the force and fire of the girl’s heart showed itself in her eager words.’⁸⁵ At another moment she tells her new friend Hope de Lacey and Hope’s mother Lady Mary, ‘I’m an ignoramus. You’d put a dunce’s cap on me if you taught me,’ but both remind her of her impressive knowledge of natural history, a knowledge she had not valued.⁸⁶ Patricia’s active, sporty personality could not be more different from her guardian’s clever, but restrained to the point of dull, daughters. When we see these girls given a treat after finishing their schoolwork early, it involves reading the ‘history of the Netherlands’ aloud to their governess. Readers must have appreciated the joke.⁸⁷

IV

In *Peggy from Kerry* and *A wild Irish girl*, neither Peggy Desmond nor Patricia Redgold adapts easily to English middle-class mores – indeed, Patricia speaks of her guardians ‘trying to put me into a mould, and I suppose I’ll squeeze in somehow, but it’ll be a tight fit.’⁸⁸ In each novel, the last letter of the dead father of the heroine asked that she be raised a ‘lady’ and both novels provide insights into what that might

involve in terms of subordinating or maintaining aspects of her feisty character and Irishness. Peggy's father's last letter, for example, hoped she would learn 'to be good and never tell lies, and to put honour first' and to 'learn all those things that ladies ought to know.'⁸⁹ If the novels lay out character traits young readers might aspire to – as much as telling a Cinderella tale – doing what is honourable right and good, regardless of the personal cost are central requirements, just as they might have been in novels for boys.⁹⁰

In each book too, the girls are tasked with living up to the expectations and reputations of their fathers, rather than their mothers. The bar is set high when the nobility of these men has been established by their winning a Victoria Cross or carrying a wounded comrade from a battlefield. There is a moment when, told that she must honour her father's wishes and conform to her guardians' – the Lovel family's – strict rules of conduct, Patricia regrets that girls cannot enlist in the army for she believes being a 'lady' means a future as 'a carpet and curtain soldier, and a rich food soldier, and a stifling hot room soldier, and a fine dress soldier.'⁹¹ Clearly Meade did not intend her 'ladies' to be passive and housebound, and nothing was further from Patricia's father's intention either. In his last letter to Cora Lovel he had not only written that he did not wish his daughter to grow up uneducated and uncivilized, 'like a wild young savage at Carrigraun,' he had also recognized that what being a 'lady' meant was often misunderstood:⁹² 'I want her to be strong in mind, noble in conduct; upright, straight, honourable. I also want her to be a lady in the truest sense of that much-abused word. I want her to be educated, in the true sense of education. ... Tell my little Pat from me that of all things in life I most desire her to follow in your footsteps.'⁹³

Readers know that Cora – once loved by Patricia's father and whom he clearly saw as the model his daughter should follow – has 'strong intellectual tastes, was highly educated, could speak several languages, and knew a little more than most people about literature, painting, and music, she was in all respects fitted to be [her husband's] companion.'⁹⁴ More than this, Meade placed *both* Cora and her politician husband in a social circle that 'more or less moves the world.'⁹⁵ She might have been thinking here of her own London social milieu around 1910, when the novel was published, a period when the women's suffrage movement's hopes were high. If Denis Redgold desired for his daughter the same opportunities for advancement that Cora Lovel had enjoyed, it is clear that intellectual development, independent thought, equality with her male peers and being comfortable in the highest levels

of society are central to achieving them. The Lovel household is too tightly rule-bound for Patricia, however, and she describes her experience of being torn from her Irish roots and placed there as akin to 'a shipwreck ... and I was left stranded on a rock in an awful, wild and angry sea,' a strong metaphor also for her adolescence.⁹⁶

Patricia does, however, fit comfortably with the higher-caste family of her friend Hope de Lacey, Hope's mother, Lady Mary – who knows and loves Ireland – and her big-game hunter uncle, Rupert Guest. They accept her for the person she is, treat her as an equal, do not judge her and are charmed by the unconventional behaviour the Lovels find unacceptable. The de Laceys are numbered among the 'very best set in London society,'⁹⁷ and in this romantic tale, readers are assured that they, rather than the Lovels, will provide for Patricia 'every chance of becoming the kind of woman her father most desired.'⁹⁸ Meade's use of the word 'woman' rather than 'lady' is significant, for there is a moment too when Patricia confides in Rupert Guest that she cannot bear 'ladies' and will never be one. Instead, she hopes she will be 'a woman and a right good sort.'⁹⁹ It is a powerful statement, one that sidesteps the possibility that being a lady involves subordination and suggests that Patricia will retain control of her own destiny.

In *Peggy from Kerry* readers are reminded that one might be a lady by birth, which Peggy was by virtue of her dead father's social standing, and yet be considered 'ill-bred'.¹⁰⁰ On first meeting her, Paul Wyndham, her father's friend from school and Oxford and her new guardian, found that 'her appearance, her dress, her accent, her absolute and complete ignorance of even the rudiments of refined life, appalled him,'¹⁰¹ though readers also learn that, when dressed in acceptable clothes, apart from her sunburned hands, Peggy *looked* like a lady.¹⁰² There is also some hint of Wyndham's understanding of what being a 'lady' means when he details the attributes that, in his eyes, made Peggy's mother one, despite her lowly birth. They include her subordination to Peggy's father, doing 'everything that her husband told her,' a point that in 1912 might be intended to wryly reflect an upper-class male eye, though it is also spoken by Wyndham in an attempt to shame Peggy into changing her patterns of speech:

Your pretty young mother was, it is true, a peasant by birth, but she was well educated in a convent school, and, compared to you, she was a lady. She did everything that her husband told her. I saw her once, Peggy: it was shortly before you were born, and I was touched with her sweetness and gentleness. She would not have dreamed of

saying 'your mightiness', or 'your honour', or 'bedad', or 'wurra', or 'begorra', or any of those words.¹⁰³

The language used by ladies arises, though generally only in passing, in each of the novels. In *Bashful fifteen*, for example, Bridget is admonished for saying 'good gracious' and told 'it's a very ugly way of expressing yourself.'¹⁰⁴ In *A wild Irish girl*, Patricia is told 'you are not to use slang in this house' when she uses the word 'scooted'. Her further explanation that it means 'cleared off' and the use of the term 'honest injun' bring the response that '[l]adies do not speak like that.'¹⁰⁵ Having grown up with her Irish peasant foster family, the issues around Peggy's speech are of a different order. She has a strong Kerry accent and uses words, like those in the quotation above, associated with 'stage' Irishness. In addressing Peggy's retraining to conform to the requirements of her new family, some interesting points are made about Irishness and perhaps about Meade's own early experience in England. Peggy's guardian contrasts her accent with that of another young Irish woman in the novel, Mary Welsh. Like Meade, she is an Irish rector's daughter who has settled in England and she is called on to help train Peggy in the early stages of her new life. Wyndham tells Peggy that Mary 'speaks like a cultivated lady, whereas you talk like a little girl of the people.'¹⁰⁶ Peggy is also gently chastized by a farmer's wife on the Wyndham estate who tells her: 'You must learn fresh words, honey ... In our part of England we don't say the words you use.' Yet, it is this woman too who reassures Peggy that the popular Mary Welsh is 'as Irish as yourself, only she knows just how to manage.'¹⁰⁷

When they meet, Mary tells Peggy that, as an Irish girl in England, she fully understands Peggy's problem because she has to an extent experienced it. She promises to do all she can to help and advise her. When Peggy does not want to speak like an Englishwoman, but like the Irish 'quality',¹⁰⁸ Mary explains what was presumably Meade's understanding, that 'all well-educated people speak somewhat alike, whatever country they stay in,' implying that Peggy must learn certain broad conventions.¹⁰⁹ It is a clear and early statement in the novel that Peggy is being prepared to move in educated society. Importantly, Mary suggests that Peggy should keep her Irish accent: 'I want you to try and speak like a dear little Irish lady. You can't forget all your pretty words at once, and some of them you may say now and then – not quite all, but some – and then, dear, you needn't lose your sweet accent, for it is altogether charming.'¹¹⁰ At boarding

school, however, though the headmistress believes it important not to break Peggy's spirit by pressing too hard for change, she recognizes that during her time in the Lower School the girl will change and lose some of her unique charm. She will 'cast off that curious and yet fascinating sense of humour and peculiarity of language, which kept her apart from the ordinary girls in the new class of life where she was expected to walk.'¹¹¹

In fact, it is Peggy's upbringing, more than her Irishness, that marks her out as different from her schoolfellows, another of whom is a much respected Irish girl.¹¹² Peggy, however, is described as 'an untamed creature in a school of carefully brought up and carefully educated English girls.'¹¹³ Both her Irishness and the class within which she was raised are mocked by a bullying pupil, who calls her a 'common little Irish cabin girl' with 'no right to be at school with ladies.'¹¹⁴ When this girl's gang of *ladies* attacks Peggy with hockey sticks and breaks her leg, there is no doubt about who the 'barbarians' and 'savages' are in this as in the other novels. They are English school bullies and manipulators. Peggy, of course, behaves honourably and, in keeping with schoolgirl convention, refuses to name her attackers. At this moment, by her strict adherence to the schoolgirl code of honour, she demonstrates that she is nobler than her detractors.¹¹⁵

Meade does allow the Irishness of her heroines to make them different, bolder and more challenging than their English friends but they always keep the sympathy of the reader. In fact, one can read their English, upper-middle-class guardians or teachers as stifled by the very conventions they try to impose on their charges, while struggling to get to grips with a young Irish whirlwind and her more romantic but only slightly different culture. Meade imbued them with strength, spirit and quick minds particularly well fitted to the formula to which she wrote. There is fun and adventure, as well as dramatic anxiety, as the girls enter English society unfettered by any understanding of its social rules or restrictions on women. The possibility of the heroine becoming a 'lady' still lies in the future at each novel's end, for the timeframe of Meade's stories is limited and readers are reassured that the girls' spirits are not dented. *A wild Irish girl* and *Peggy from Kerry*, in particular, appear to reflect the author's consciousness of what it was to be a New Woman and to tease out questions about what becoming a 'lady' might imply. The central message for readers is clear. In each tale it is spelt out that education for girls is a vital element in women's advancement towards independence and that it can begin a transformative process, loosening class and cultural barriers and offering entry to new worlds.

Notes

1. Some sources suggest 1854 as Meade's date of birth but the Bandon baptismal records, accessible at www.bandon-genealogy.com/killowen_baptisms.htm, show that 1844 is correct. On Meade's popularity, see Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're a brick, Angela: The girl's story 1839–1985* (1976; Bath: Girls Gone By, 2003), 61; Helen Bittel, 'Required reading for "revolting daughters"?: The New Girl fiction of L. T. Meade', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 2:2 (2006), 5; and Sally Mitchell, 'Children's reading and the culture of girlhood: The case of L. T. Meade', *Browning Institute Studies*, 17 (1989), 55.
2. Meade's family history is accessible by searching under each of the parishes in which family members served, in William Maziere Brady, *Clerical and parochial records of Cork, Cloyne and Ross* (Dublin: Alexander Thom, 1863), vol. 1, (accessible at: <http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/history/bradysclericalandparochialrecords/>) and John Harding Cole, *Church and parish records of the United Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross* (Cork: Guy and Co., 1903) (accessible at <http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/history/coleschurchandparishrecords/>). Relevant parishes include Killowen, Templetrine, Nohoval and Innishannon. See Brady, *Clerical and parochial records*, 126, for example, on her great-grandfather's marriage to a daughter of Baron Kingsale and his soldier sons, including a major general.
3. In 1877 he was also appointed to nearby Nohoval, Co. Cork. See discussion of Meade's background in, Tina O'Toole, *The Irish New Woman* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 45–8.
4. L. T. Meade, *The daughter of a soldier: A colleen from south Ireland* (Cleveland: The Arthur Westbrook Co., 1915, paperback edition). This was published posthumously. It seems unlikely Mrs Meade would have approved the sub-title.
5. *Ibid.*, 5.
6. *Ibid.*, 35.
7. L. T. Meade, 'How I began', *Girls' Realm*, 3 (1900), 58–9.
8. L. T. Meade, *Ashton Morton: Or memories of my life* (London: T. C. Newby, 1866).
9. Meade, 'How I began', 62. She wrote that on her father's remarriage the rectory was 'no longer essentially a home for me.' See also the experience of the rector's ward who had had 'the management of things' at the rectory but was undermined first by a step-aunt and then by delinquent step-cousins in *The daughter of a soldier*, 109 and 117.
10. L. T. Meade, *Lettie's last home* (London: Shaw, 1875). In 'How I began', Meade referred to this as 'a little immature MS' she had rediscovered just before leaving for London and she, or perhaps a secretary to whom the article was dictated, wrote the title as 'Lettie's last home'.
11. Bittel, 'Required reading', 2.
12. *Ibid.*, 12–13. For detail of contemporary debates on girls' health, exercise and education see Hilary Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain, 1874–1920* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
13. Janis Dawson, "'Write a little bit every day": L. T. Meade, self-representation, and the professional woman writer', *Victorian Review*, 35:1 (2009), 132.

14. Bittel, 'Required reading', n.1. See Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' culture in England 1880–1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). See also O'Toole's comments on Meade's 'creation of the "New Girl"' and on her Irish girls in *The Irish New Woman*, 12 and 43–66.
15. Mitchell, *The New Girl*, 11. While the term 'New Woman' dates from 1894, Mitchell drew on Meade's professional life and wider interests, including 'motoring and other outdoor sports' to demonstrate characteristics of this phenomenon, 10.
16. David Rubenstein, *Before the suffragettes: Women's emancipation in the 1890s* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986), 222–3 and Dawson, 'Write a little bit', 144–5.
17. Cadogan and Craig, *You're a brick*, 58–9.
18. Kimberley Reynolds, *Girls only? Gender and popular children's fiction in Britain, 1880–1910* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 115 and 112.
19. Mitchell, *The New Girl*, 13 and 22.
20. Carole Dunbar, 'The wild Irish girls of L. T. Meade and Mrs George De Horne Vaizey' in Celia Keenan and Mary Shine Thompson (eds), *Studies in children's literature, 1500–2000* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 38–43.
21. See Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The wild Irish girl* ed. Kathryn Kirkpatrick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). On Owenson's *The wild Irish girl* and Irish romanticism see Tom Dunne, 'Haunted by history: Irish romantic writing 1800–50' in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds), *Romanticism in national context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 68–91.
22. L. T. Meade, *Wild Kitty* (1897; New York: Hurst & Company, 1900).
23. L. T. Meade, *A wild Irish girl* (London: Chambers, 1910).
24. Dunbar, 'The wild Irish girls', 39. Dunbar makes a number of valid points on the representation of Irishness in Meade that I have not taken up in this chapter.
25. Sarah Bilston, *The awkward age in women's popular fiction, 1850–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 182–4, drawing on Anne Ardis, 'Organising women: New Women writers, New Women readers, and suffrage feminism' in Nicola Diane Thompson (ed.), *Victorian women writers and the woman question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 190.
26. Bilston, *The awkward age*, 183.
27. *Ibid.*, 184.
28. Bittel, 'Required reading', 1–2 and 27.
29. *Ibid.*, 18 and 2.
30. *Ibid.*, 34–6.
31. *Ibid.*, 1.
32. L. T. Meade, *Bashful fifteen* (1892; London: Cassell & Co., 1893).
33. L. T. Meade, *The rebel of the school* (1902; Milton Keynes: Dodo Press, 2009), 55.
34. L. T. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry* (New York: Hurst, 1912).
35. Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson, *Juvenile literature and British society, 1850–1950. The age of adolescence* (New York; Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 12.
36. *Ibid.*, 13. See also 70 and 104–5.
37. *Ibid.*, 11.
38. See, for example, Kitty's relationship with Fred in *Wild Kitty*, Bridget's relationship with Patrick and Gerald in *Bashful fifteen*, and David's admiration of Kathleen in *The rebel of the school*.

39. *Wild Kitty*, 151–157. This is a humorous section of the novel and, at a later point, the fact that Kitty's most ladylike aunt Honora's thin arms are bare to the elbow is pinpointed, contrasting what is acceptable in Ireland and England, 214.
40. Meade, *Wild Kitty*, 154–5.
41. Meade, *Bashful fifteen*, 29.
42. Meade, *Wild Irish girl*, 48–9 and 74.
43. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 80.
44. *Ibid.*, 9.
45. Meade, *Wild Kitty*, 11.
46. Mitchell, *The New Girl*, 95.
47. *Ibid.*, 16.
48. Meade, *Wild Kitty*, 175–6.
49. Mitchell, *The New Girl*, 21.
50. Matthew Arnold, *On the study of Celtic literature and other essays* (1867; London: Dent, 1916), 86.
51. Meade, *Bashful fifteen*, 186–7.
52. *Ibid.*, 261.
53. *Ibid.*, 187.
54. See also *Wild Kitty*, 213–14 where the family retainers are described as fifth and sixth cousins, implying clan membership.
55. In *Wild Kitty*, for example, Kitty's father is also known as 'Squire' Malone.
56. Meade, *Bashful fifteen*, 251–3.
57. Meade often repeated names in different books.
58. Meade, *The rebel of the school*, 174. See also comments in O'Toole, *The New Irish Woman*, 55.
59. Meade, *The rebel of the school*, 88.
60. *Ibid.*, 85, 55 and 101.
61. *Ibid.*, 55.
62. *Ibid.*, 289–90 and the theatre trip, 262–5.
63. *Ibid.*, 289.
64. Meade, *Bashful fifteen*, 12. The Irish National Land League, founded in 1879, sought reforms, including fair rents and additional tenant rights. Their methods included boycotting and resisting attempts by landlords to evict tenants but more extreme groups were involved in violence.
65. Meade, *The rebel of the school*, 2–3. The implication is that her father was a fair landlord.
66. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 9. Although her mother was Catholic, Peggy has been raised as a member of the Church of Ireland (Anglican). In *A wild Irish girl*, Patricia recognizes the words of the Anglican catechism when her guardian speaks of a training to 'take your place in any station in life in which it may please God to call you', 173–4. In *Wild Kitty*, Kitty's bible reading and discussion with the headmistress imply that she is Protestant, 127.
67. Meade, *A wild Irish girl*, 24–6.
68. The term 'savage' reflects the Rousseauian sense of the word but also echoes the term 'street savage' applied to poor or destitute children. The term 'wild colt' is frequently used, e.g. *Peggy from Kerry*, 96; *A wild Irish girl*, 176. In *Bashful fifteen* the title of chapter five is 'Breaking in a wild colt', 45–53.
69. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 111.

70. Meade, *Wild Kitty*, 12.
71. 'Board school' refers to the national or primary school system. Requirements at third standard are set out in Áine Hyland and Kenneth Mylne, (eds), *Irish educational documents. Volume 1. A selection of extracts from documents relating to the history of Irish education from the earliest times to 1922* (Dublin: Church of Ireland College of Education, 1987–1995), 152–4. At this level, pupils were required to read set texts 'with ease, directness of articulation, correctness, and intelligence.' The arithmetic curriculum included mental arithmetic, decimals, measurements, weights, fluid measurements, pounds, shillings and pence and the calendar, 152–3. The system was intended to provide for the 'average' pupil but also to allow 'a child of above average intelligence the opportunity of developing it to the best advantage,' 149. In addition, cookery, laundry and needlework were compulsory for girls if a suitable teacher was available, 151.
72. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 145–6.
73. Meade, *Bashful fifteen*, 31–2.
74. *Ibid.*, 31.
75. Meade, *Wild Kitty*, 100.
76. *Ibid.*, 59 and 74.
77. *Ibid.*, 126.
78. *Ibid.*, 52–5, for example.
79. *Ibid.*, 131.
80. *Ibid.*, 128–9.
81. *Ibid.*, 130.
82. *Ibid.*, 334. Though she faces expulsion, the headmistress seems inclined not to punish her, 332. See also 235 and 253 where Kitty hopes to be expelled.
83. *Ibid.*, 334.
84. Meade, *A wild Irish girl*, 217.
85. *Ibid.*, 97.
86. *Ibid.*, 132.
87. *Ibid.*, 274.
88. *Ibid.*, 158.
89. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 63.
90. See, for example, Ferrall and Jackson, *Juvenile literature and British society*, for discussion of duty and self-sacrifice in English boys' fiction and the convention that, by a story's end, the conduct of heroes would define them as 'English gentlemen', 31–8 and 45.
91. Meade, *A wild Irish girl*, 84.
92. *Ibid.*, 68.
93. *Ibid.*, 76–7.
94. *Ibid.*, 67.
95. *Ibid.*
96. *Ibid.*, 407.
97. *Ibid.*, 134.
98. *Ibid.*, 420.
99. *Ibid.*, 413.
100. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 4.
101. *Ibid.*, 11.
102. *Ibid.*, 83.

103. Ibid., 65.
104. Meade, *Bashful fifteen*, 28.
105. Meade, *A wild Irish girl*, 366.
106. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 66.
107. Ibid., 76.
108. Ibid., 85.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid., 91.
111. Ibid., 98–9.
112. Bridget O'Donnell, a popular Irish girl in the senior school who did suffer some bullying in the lower school.
113. Meade, *Peggy from Kerry*, 171–2.
114. Ibid., 149.
115. Ibid., 169.

4

‘The Most Dangerous, Reckless, Passionate ... Period of Their Lives’: The Irish Borstal Offender, 1906–1921

Conor Reidy

When Clonmel borstal opened as a small penal experiment in 1906, its purpose was very clear. The system operating in the institution was established to both punish and reform habitual juvenile male offenders with the aim of cutting short what was perceived to be their potential lifetime career in criminality. This was to be achieved by subjecting these sixteen- to twenty-one-year-old offenders to an institutional regime of hard work, education and intensive physical training. Corporal punishment was forbidden under the rules of borstal treatment. A particular emphasis was placed on providing borstal inmates with a good nutritional diet, as research from Britain had shown that this class of offender was typically smaller and more under-nourished than boys of their age outside the criminal justice system.¹

This chapter considers the young Irish male offender within the borstal system between 1906 and 1921. It asks the questions, was there a typical Irish ‘borstal boy’ and, if so, who was he? In order to capture an accurate sense of ‘borstal identity’ it is necessary to approach this cohort of offender from such viewpoints as geographical origins, religion, social class and criminality. 1906 is selected as the start date for this analysis because it was the year in which borstal commenced in Ireland. 1921 is selected as the end date for the chapter because this was the period in which Ireland arguably experienced its greatest turmoil as it approached independence from Britain. The annual prison system reports were reduced to an almost useless state, while the borstal institution’s records were severely depleted. The research draws upon a range of sources from the General Prisons Board (GPB), the agency charged with operating the prison and borstal system in Ireland. One of the most valuable sources is the *Register of inmates*, which provides a list of all of the inmates along with their basic identifying details, including age, address, next-of-kin,

occupation, physical markings, religion, education and their offences. It is important to remember that some of this information was self-reported by the inmates on the day of their admission to the institution and so, for instance, when a seventeen-year-old boy claims his occupation to be a jeweller, we must consider this with a sceptical eye. This individual may have exaggerated his occupational status and more likely worked as an apprentice or shop-clerk.

The literature on the history of criminality, as well as judicial statistics, implies that crime was a male sphere during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This chapter differs from previous work by this author in that it offers an in-depth focus on the identity, rather than the institutional treatment, of boys. Clive Emsley argues that the differing facets of criminal behaviour, such as aggression, competitiveness and initiative, were all adopted as central to 'normal' masculine conduct.² In essence these behaviours became strongly identified with masculinity. Peter King points out that the status of young adults in society during the eighteenth century made them particularly likely to commit offences and open to apprehension.³ This was due largely to their low socio-economic status, their perceived need to commit criminal acts for physical survival and, of course, their lack of skills or education. None of this had necessarily changed much by the early twentieth century. History and popular culture have tended to portray the male criminal as brazen and shrewd. Martin Wiener supports this idea by arguing that at this time problems of violence, ideas of gender and the operation of the law all took a more prominent position in culture and consciousness. They converged on one specific issue, that of controlling male violence, particularly that directed towards women.⁴

Historically the young male criminal has been portrayed as audacious and astute. The criminologists Leon Radzinowicz and Roger Hood contend that the young offender was a Victorian creation. Prior to the nineteenth century, no age differentiation existed in the trial process, punishments or the methods by which they were imposed.⁵ Yet, as Heather Shore points out, European institutions dealing with unruly young people dated back to at least the fifteenth century. The various categories of criminal, including criminal children, the impoverished and the orphaned were cared for mostly at a local level in establishments organized by religious and civic bodies.⁶ The penal reformatory that resulted from late-nineteenth century reforms could be seen as a distant descendant of those medieval innovations. By the opening of the twentieth century, the language of the penal system came to depict offenders, particularly juveniles, in ways that made them subject to new

modes of reform. The habitual juvenile offender was represented as the poster-child of societal and domestic decay.⁷

There was one final significant move towards addressing some of the many problems that remained in the British and, by extension, the Irish penal system at the close of the nineteenth century. In 1894, the British Departmental Committee on Prisons, headed by Herbert Gladstone, carried out a wide-ranging investigation into the government-managed network of prisons. The committee's report, published the following year, contained three conclusions relating to juvenile offenders. Firstly, it reported that 16,000 prison sentences had been imposed upon those below the age of twenty-one years during the preceding twelve months. Secondly, it was claimed that the average boy was worse in character and disposition after serving such a sentence. The third conclusion prompted the most debate and presented the authorities with something of a dilemma. In effect it declared that the habitual career criminal was born between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. One of the key recommendations of the Gladstone committee was the establishment of a penal reformatory for the punishment and reform of such boys.⁸ The criterion for such an establishment was not specified but was instead left to the penal authorities to devise. In Britain this was the Prison Commissioners for England and Wales, the agency charged with running the penal system. In Ireland the GPB, based at Dublin Castle, managed the system from its establishment in 1877 until 1928.

I Establishing the borstal in Britain and Ireland

Between 1895 and 1900 Evelyn John Ruggles-Brise, the new chairman of the Prison Commissioners for England and Wales, took a leading role in both researching and implementing the recommendation of the Gladstone committee. Before any decisions were taken he took a number of steps to identify problems, devise potential solutions and examine international best practice. His efforts included a personal research visit to the Elmira State Reformatory in New York in 1897.⁹ First among the new chairman's concerns was the need to understand the nature and make-up of the proposed occupants of a penal reformatory, as recommended by the committee for the treatment of this category of young male offenders. Ruggles-Brise turned to a range of medical men for advice.¹⁰ Many of their findings related to the physiological make-up of young male offenders and it was because of this evidence that the system that Ruggles-Brise ultimately devised placed so much emphasis on physical activity such as drill instruction and gymnastics. Ruggles-Brise's

researches suggested that the human body was not fully developed until it reached the age of twenty-one years and, therefore, that the brain would not yet gain full maturity until that time. The result, he claimed, was that character was intrinsically linked with physical development, meaning that the personality and mentality of an average man would not be fully developed before that age. Ruggles-Brise went on to argue that children of the poorer classes developed much later, some as late as twenty-five or twenty-six years of age.¹¹

He explained his thinking years later at the International Penitentiary Congress – a gathering of prison administrators and philanthropists from around the world to consider questions on a range of key penal issues held in Washington, DC, on 2–8 October 1910. The rationale behind Ruggles-Brise's selection of twenty-one as the upper age limit for borstal admission was that despite the evidence of continued development at the ages of twenty-five or twenty-six he felt that setting an age higher than twenty-one as the upper limit for what was essentially a juvenile institution would not be acceptable to public opinion. On the same occasion, Ruggles-Brise noted his conviction that that physical neglect and malnourishment were some of the key problems to be addressed among borstal inmates, citing evidence from a study carried out upon young men discharged from Pentonville prison in 1888. This class of offender was two and a half inches shorter in height, and weighed approximately fourteen pounds less than his peers in the general population. Twenty-six per cent had some form of disease or physical deformity. Most of these offenders were from the same cohort of criminals that underwent repeated short prison sentences.¹² The constant use of the short prison sentence by the judiciary, both in Britain and Ireland, was widely and harshly criticized by penal authorities over several decades as it was believed to desensitize offenders to the threat and experience of imprisonment.

In Britain the first experiment of the penal reformatory idea took place in 1900 when eight young male convicts from gaols in and around London were transferred to Bedford prison. There they were detained in absolute separation from what was understood to be the potentially more corrupting adult prison population and 'made subject to a special system of discipline calculated to influence this very tough material.'¹³ After a number of months the programme at Bedford was deemed a success by the Home Office and the Prison Commissioners, although it is not clear by what set of criteria this conclusion was reached. Ruggles-Brise and his colleagues were now faced with the problem of finding a definition for the class of offender that would be the subject

of the emerging reform process. At sixteen to twenty-one years old these boys could hardly be called juveniles; at the same time the medical research supported the view that they were not adults either. Following lengthy and protracted discussion between the Prison Commissioners, the government and penal reformers, it was decided to establish a new class of criminal that would be added to the penal lexicon. It was agreed that the inmates of the penal reformatory would be known as 'juvenile-adult' offenders. At the beginning of 1901, a further group of young male convicts, once more selected from gaols within the London area, arrived in chains at a small convict prison near the village of Borstal in Kent.¹⁴ This was the place that would give its name to the network of institutions that would arguably come to dominate the British juvenile penal system for the greater part of the twentieth century.

Four basic tenets were devised by the prison commissioners to govern the borstal system. First, inmates were subjected to strict classification. They were divided into three classes – penal, ordinary and special grades. New inmates were automatically entered to the ordinary grade where they lived a fairly regular existence with little by way of privileges but no harsher than the normal prison routine. Boys were demoted to the penal grade if they digressed from the rules of the institution, were persistently lazy or were involved in any form of violence. Here there were no privileges such as additions to the menu or frequent letters from home. Those in the special grade were accorded the highest privileges based upon their good behaviour, attention to work and training as well as any other positive factors that may work in their favour. A type of 'zero tolerance' approach applied to the special grade, however, with exceptional conduct expected at all times. If a boy did not reach special grade standards he was immediately demoted to the penal grade. He could be promoted to the ordinary or special grades based on the number of merit marks he accrued for his performance at work, training or for general good behaviour.

The second tenet of borstal treatment was that the institution was regulated by a rigid code of discipline. Third, the inmates were engaged in hard work. The final, and arguably the most significant, principle dictated that inmates were subjected to a period of strict supervision upon their discharge.¹⁵ Apart from this final aspect, none of these ideas may seem very different or new. After all, prisons were always strict in their approach to controlling their inmates and hard work was not unheard of for those in detention. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, such ideas had never been tested on juvenile offenders in one institution at the same time and therein lay the novelty of the

experiment. As one commentator noted a decade after the first borstal opened, the institution gave boys a choice of trades whereby 'many of them will be saved for life from the evil courses into which weakness, indolence, misfortune, or perversity has driven them.'¹⁶ Based on broader research on this subject it could be argued that many of those drawbacks did of course emerge from within the family environment.¹⁷

At some uncertain point around 1904 or 1905, discussion began within the Irish administrative and penal system on the possibility of copying the British experiment. During this period there were no public statements or dialogue on the need for a borstal in Ireland and for this reason it is only possible to speculate on the motivations for the subsequent decisions. The annual judicial statistics reveal that Ireland experienced similar problems of habitual offending to Britain during this time. Out of 29,259 people detained in the prison system during 1905, 22,205 had at least one previous conviction. This meant that over three quarters of inmates could be deemed as being habitual offenders.¹⁸ Of the number of juvenile-adult age offenders committed during 1905, 1,948 out of a total of 2,607 were male.¹⁹ This represented around 75 per cent overall. The long-held view of those working in the penal system, from GPB officials to governors and warders, was that repeated short prison sentences desensitized inmates to life within penal institutions. This was seen as effectively diminishing the prison sentence as punishment for criminal behaviour and therefore reducing the fear of returning. It was decided by the Irish authorities that the British penal reformatory option should be copied.

The country's first and only borstal institution opened in May 1906 in the former women's section of the county gaol in Clonmel in Co. Tipperary. A male wing of the gaol remained operational during the early years of the borstal, with the inmates of both sections detained in complete physical separation. It has never been clear why Clonmel was selected as the site for the institution, although there was some suggestion of lobbying by a prominent local landlord and political figure, Richard Bagwell. An older prison, known within the system as the 'number two', had been out of commission for the past twenty years and was refitted to accommodate fifty-four boys.

The selection of inmates for the Irish institution was based on a similar set of criteria to that of the British system. When male inmates of the juvenile-adult age category were sent to prison, governors were expected to establish their suitability for borstal treatment. This would include consulting with local police, prison medical officers and others to ascertain a sense of the boy's character and physical condition.

A report on the individual was sent to the GPB where it was processed and passed on to the relevant sentencing court.²⁰ This was essentially a process which allowed individual judges to make sentencing decisions. While it was important that the penal authorities had a clear sense of exactly which offenders they should be seeking to reform with the borstal system, a set of directions was laid down as to which ones were unsuitable and should be excluded. In this regard the GPB adopted the rules of the British system. Offenders who were of previous good character but might be damaged by exposure to 'recidivists and hooligans' were deemed unlikely to benefit from the training and educative aspects of the process. In other words, they should be excluded from the system. There is something of a contradiction here because the only other detention option for such individuals was the adult prison. It was also decided that boys in poor health or lacking a strong physique would be unable to withstand the gruelling regime of work and physical drill, and so they too were excluded. Finally, boys who had already had the opportunity to reform themselves in some other form of state-managed training school or reformatory were excluded, as borstal was not to be used as a second chance. Nor should offenders be given a second separate sentence in a borstal institution as they had had their chance to reform themselves and had 'failed to profit by it.'²¹

The fledgling Clonmel borstal remained on an experimental basis, with the juveniles held in separation from the adult convicts for the next four years. The passage of the Prevention of Crime Act in 1908 altered the penal landscape to some extent and placed the borstal on a statutory footing in both Britain and Ireland. Having undergone a successful experiment in Kent, the borstal was now a formal institution of the prison system, with voluntary aftercare bodies legally empowered to control the post-release supervision of the boys. The Borstal Association of Ireland (BAI), which provided aftercare to the inmates, was a non-denominational body and both serving chaplains of the institution were automatically appointed to its committee. The association was founded as the Clonmel Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society in Clonmel Town Hall in May 1906. This essentially transferred an important, expensive and often unwieldy function away from government and into private hands, for the post-release phase only. The juvenile-adult was now also formalized as a category of offender. Shore correctly argues this was a process of distinguishing juvenile delinquency 'as a distinct social problem.' It was only when it came to be recognized and controlled in distinct new ways through specialized

legislation in 'juvenile-specific institutions' that the problem was seen as a unique issue. This was consolidated by specialized external intervention in the domestic sphere of 'deprived and disorderly' young people. As she points out, this was essentially a product of the nineteenth century.²² The borstal was another phase in this process. In 1910, after the Irish borstal experiment was deemed to be succeeding, the remaining adult prisoners were removed to gaols in surrounding counties. This came about as a direct result of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908. The remainder of the complex was refitted and merged with the old 'number two' section to create a full-scale borstal institution. With some interruptions during both world wars and the Irish Civil War (1922–23), Clonmel borstal remained in use until 1956, when the system was transferred to Dublin where it reopened as St Patrick's Institution on the North Circular Road.

II Geography

Official institutional records including the GPB's register of inmates show that between 1910 and 1921, 516 inmates were detained in Clonmel borstal institution. Of this number, 160 had a last recorded address in Belfast.²³ This accounted for 31 per cent of the overall inmate population during that time. Effectively, Belfast contributed a larger number of inmates than any other region during the entire period under discussion. 150 juvenile-adult offenders in Clonmel came from Dublin city, representing a figure of 29 per cent. There was a stark difference between that and the third most represented area, which was Cork city and county. Just twenty-six inmates originated from Cork, representing a figure of just over 5 per cent. Twenty-two other counties or cities had inmates detained in the borstal but the majority of these were in single-digit figures.²⁴ The reality was that Clonmel borstal was dominated first and foremost by Belfast and Dublin accents during these years. It can be argued that, to some extent, the geographical construction and socio-economic state of the borstal population reflected that of the wider island of Ireland at the time.

The 1911 Census of Ireland reports a population of 386,947 in Belfast and 304,802 in Dublin city. Cork city came far behind as the third largest urban centre with a population of just 76,673.²⁵ In population terms it is clear that at the upper end of the scale at least, the national trend was replicated in the borstal institution. The majority of boys emerged from the locations which provided the best and most frequent opportunities for offending, namely the major urban centres. As will

be shown later, the majority of borstal crime was property-related and the country's largest sprawling city slums appeared to be a breeding-ground for such criminality. Given that the borstal population had a higher proportion of urban dwellers, it can be taken that there was a greater concentration of juvenile-adult offending in these areas, although it could be argued that these areas were subject to higher levels of policing. The highest contributor of inmates, Belfast, had significant levels of urban decay and substandard living conditions during this time, though perhaps not as bad as those in Cork or Limerick. According to F. S. L. Lyons, industrialization brought with it a type of 'precarious prosperity' to Belfast, which displayed typical patterns of intensive labour, poor housing, malnutrition and disease. This should all be measured, however, against the reality that in the late nineteenth century, Belfast experienced a revival that was unparalleled anywhere else in Ireland during the period. Swift population growth usually meant that the majority of housing was new and purpose-built, but the city did suffer a high mortality rate while larger families tended to experience the same effects of over-crowding as the wider working-class populations of southern Irish cities.²⁶

The situation in Dublin, the other major contributor to the borstal population, was arguably worse. A large proportion of the city's population occupied accommodation that was scarcely suitable for habitation. In 1911 about 60 per cent of Dublin's 128,000 working-class residents lived in unsatisfactory housing conditions; 118,000 occupied 5,000 tenement houses.²⁷ According to Cormac Ó Gráda, the inhabitants of Dublin endured the worst slums in the British Isles, or even north-western Europe, during the first twenty years of the century.²⁸ The city's juvenile-adult male offenders emerged from conditions where diseases such as typhoid and tuberculosis were commonplace. Poor wages and a lack of earning opportunities meant that slum dwellers were subject to the additional problem of malnutrition. The majority of those working in Dublin in 1901, for example, worked in unskilled and low-paid labouring occupations. From an overall male labour force of 40,000, just one quarter was employed in skilled professions such as printing, engineering, leatherwork or clothing. Over 7,000 were messengers and approximately 23,000 were labourers.²⁹ As we shall see later, this is another trend that was largely reflected among the borstal population, where many of the boys were messengers and unskilled labourers. It could of course be argued that more inmates came from such locations merely by virtue of the higher population density and, by extension, a greater police presence.

III Occupation

The inmates of the borstal claimed to have been employed in a variety of careers at the time of their conviction. The GPB and penal reformers tended to refer to the inmates as 'unemployed' or 'lazy', but the majority of boys in Clonmel claimed to have held some sort of position within the workforce. The most common reported occupation was that of labourer although of course this carried a very broad definition in early-twentieth century Ireland, including agriculture, construction and the retail sector, among others. The outstanding feature of labouring was that, of all of the borstal occupations, it was the one that required the least skill and paid the lowest wages. According to Catriona Clear, by 1911 the workforce of Belfast was dominated by those employed in factories and shipyards. In Dublin it was mainly artisans and unskilled labourers that were fortunate enough to be among the ranks of the employed.³⁰ Among the overall inmate population the number of labourers was 259 boys. Messengers accounted for sixty-four inmates. The third most commonly reported occupation was that of news vendor or newsboy, with forty inmates.³¹ Again these were positions that required little skill and paid low wages.

Such statistics confirm a number of safe assumptions about juvenile criminality, particularly among males. It appears more likely that there was a greater inclination for juvenile-adult criminality among those from the low-paid and unskilled occupations. That argument could be reinforced by the fact that many of these occupations provided ample opportunity for the kind of offending that was common among borstal offenders. While employed as messengers or labourers in a major urban centre, the opportunities for such young men to experience further encounters with the law were many. Just three occupations among the top ten at Clonmel borstal could be described as requiring some measure of skill. There were eleven painters, eight carpenters and seven shoemakers.³² Again, it should be remembered that the extent of their qualifications or experience in these trades is unreported.

IV Religion

Religious instruction was linked to moral guidance and effectively written into the legislation governing the borstal system as being key to the reform of the juvenile-adult male offender. At Clonmel borstal there were two chaplains; one provided for the spiritual needs of the Roman Catholic inmates and the other for those who were members of

the Church of Ireland. The function of borstal chaplains was closer to the model of the local prison than that of the industrial or reformatory school. The clergy did not have any managerial functions within the borstal institution but were on hand to provide, apart from their regular chaplaincy services, spiritual instruction and assistance in the aftercare process. Members of the clergy and religious orders had no input into the development of institutional policy or disciplinary matters. During the first year of the experimental phase of the institution in Ireland there were twenty-seven inmates in detention. Of that number, eighteen were Roman Catholic, eight were Episcopalian and one was Presbyterian.³³ Essentially, from the opening of the institution until the end of British administration a sizeable majority of inmates at Clonmel were Roman Catholic. A number of other religious faiths were represented among the inmate population; these included the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches. No more than three to four inmates in any given year during this period were not Roman Catholic.³⁴ The high numbers of Catholic inmates is not necessarily representative of any class division between them and the other faiths. Protestants typically suffered the same poor living conditions as those of Catholics, most notably in the squalid environment. The statistics merely underlined the reality that Catholics in Ireland far outnumbered those from the other churches and this was reflected in the borstal population.

V Criminality

Though location and economic status may have been influential in patterns of committal to the Clonmel borstal, it was, ultimately, the direct actions of the boys themselves that brought about their detention. One of the features of the borstal system was that it was not intended for faint-hearted first-time offenders. The institution was intended for the detention of those who were regarded as being already on a path to self-destruction through a descent into criminal activity. Essentially, it was devised for boys who showed evidence of a long-term career in crime through prior offending. Most of the inmates would have already served some form of prison sentence. Borstal was for boys seen as being already at an advanced state of their criminal career.³⁵ This was in line with the original ideals of the Gladstone committee and endorsed by Ruggles-Brise, his fellow Prison Commissioners and later the GPB.

Larceny was by far the most common reason for borstal detention, with 352 convictions in Clonmel. Under Sir Robert Peel's 1827 Larceny Act,

the definition of larceny included the theft of very minor property, such as apples, dogs or fish. However, the offence more often than not involved the theft of items of a much higher value, such as money, jewels or cattle. On the register of inmates, a conviction for larceny was often accompanied by one for breaking and entering, or for receiving. The number of inmates convicted for breaking and entering was 114, the second highest offence. This was followed by the similar crime of housebreaking, for which fifty-eight were convicted.³⁶ The high instance of these three offences underlines the scenario of opportunistic crime outlined earlier. Certain environmental factors presented ample opportunity for offending. The scope for committing all three crimes was much higher in major urban centres, such as Belfast and Dublin, than in lesser-populated rural areas.

VI Who were the borstal boys?

As the cases mentioned in this section will show, a great number of the juvenile-adults displayed the characteristics and confidence of experienced adult criminals. Those from major urban centres possessed particular skill and tenacity. Three such individuals received borstal sentences in January 1914 at Belfast City Sessions. John E. and James B. were seventeen years old and their occupations were listed as 'catch boy'. A third boy, Michael H., a labourer, was sixteen.³⁷ All three pleaded guilty to breaking and entering no fewer than three domestic and commercial premises. During the previous September, they stole seven clocks, twenty-two knives, four pens, six brooches and three rings from the property of William Navey. Just over a week before the court sitting, they broke into the shop of William Stanfield. On an unspecified date, they stole 'a quantity of liquors' from the shop of W. A. Gilbey. The presiding judge, Walker Craig, declared that the boys showed an 'amount of precocity which really startled one.' He sympathized with the parents of the boys but pointed out that his public duty must take precedence. He argued that their criminal careers must be stopped because 'God only knows what they would come to,' and therefore, the best option for the boys, their parents and society was to sentence them to two years each in Clonmel borstal institution.³⁸

In October 1910 J. S. Gibbons, the chairman of the GPB, presented the following examples of juvenile-adult offenders from Clonmel borstal to the International Penitentiary Congress in Washington, DC. This is intended to give some sense of the diversity of the inmate population in Clonmel borstal, not necessarily in terms of age but rather in their

backgrounds, occupations and offences. It should be remembered that the examples provided here are only of inmates who had apparently been successfully 'reformed' at the institution. Gibbons did not provide examples of those whose incarceration was seen as having failed and very few examples have been recorded anywhere.

Thomas R. was aged seventeen years when he entered Clonmel borstal. He held three prior convictions for larceny and shopbreaking. He had previously spent time in an industrial school but absconded after just four days. After being re-arrested he was sent to a reformatory for three and a half years. In 1906 he was sentenced to twelve months in Clonmel for shopbreaking and was released on licence in December of the same year. In June 1907 the BAI reported that Thomas was working as a painter's improver and was 'earning his living honestly.' By September 1908 he was married and employed at the same occupation. In December 1909 he was reported as working as a painter, living with his wife and child and 'doing well'. By January 1910 he was enlisted in the army.³⁹ Thomas was obviously put forward by Gibbons as the model of what the borstal wanted to achieve. As an offender he fitted all the criteria, including multiple prior convictions and a history of institutional detention. By successfully turning his life around, gaining honest employment, starting a family and taking the ultimate step towards an honourable lifestyle by joining the army, Thomas proved to be everything the GPB could hope for in a discharged borstal inmate.

Another example Gibbons presented to the Congress was Donald M., who had a history of violence when he was sentenced to borstal treatment at the age of seventeen. He had already served three terms in gaol as a result of nine convictions for assaulting police and larceny. According to Gibbon's report, his parents lived in 'constant fear' of their son and he had been discharged from the army for bad conduct. In 1906 Donald was sentenced to nine months in Clonmel for assaulting police and he was discharged in May 1907. We are not told how many police officers were involved. It appears that this offender may have had a problem with alcohol; in all of their future reports on his progress, the BAI made reference to his relationship with drink. In March 1908 he was described as 'strictly temperate', working with a farmer and well behaved since his discharge. He received a similar report in February 1909. In December 1909 the association reported that Donald had been convicted of drunkenness 'after the races' but had not come to the attention of the authorities since.⁴⁰ As indicated earlier, the majority of borstal inmates were property offenders rather than violent and so while Donald could not be described as an exception, the extent of his

aggression coupled with his drinking set him apart from most of his contemporaries in the institution.

Drunkenness also played a role in the early downfall of Albert C. By the age of eighteen years this inmate had been convicted three times for alcohol-related criminal activity. Since returning from the United States two years earlier, his behaviour went into decline. Albert's parents were described by Gibbons as 'degraded people' who kept a 'low-lodging house' and they repeatedly complained that he assaulted them. In 1907 he was sentenced to a year in Clonmel borstal for attempted unlawful carnal knowledge. All of the post-discharge reports on Albert were positive. Following his discharge in 1908 he returned to live with his parents, where he remained 'strictly temperate' and worked whenever he could find employment.⁴¹ Albert was one of many inmates in the early history of Clonmel borstal whose parents claimed to be physically threatened by him. In some instances, parents took the extraordinary step of appearing before a judge and pleading for some form of reformatory measure to be imposed on their sons as they felt they had lost control.

Robert P. was one of the exceptions to a rule that no borstal inmate should be a first offender. At nineteen years of age he held no previous convictions, despite being sentenced to fifteen calendar months in Clonmel borstal. He was described by Gibbons as being 'of a roving disposition', untruthful, illiterate and 'of weak intellect'. He apparently spent a lot of time going to fairs. Robert was from a rural background and so his offence, cattle-stealing, was typical of the opportunistic nature of offending that often prevailed among borstal boys and reflected the urban-rural division of categories of crime. Robert was released from Clonmel in October 1907 and by March of the following year was reported to be in employment and showing no signs of repeat offending. Up to the time of his final report from the BAI in December 1909, he remained in full employment and had been promoted to a better position.⁴² It is difficult to speculate as to why the courts and GPB decided to admit an inmate with no prior convictions to an institution whose criteria clearly stated that only the habitual offender was admissible. The most likely scenario in this case is that Robert, with his 'weak intellect' and illiteracy was seen as a good candidate for the educational and training opportunities that would be provided by the institution.

There is scant evidence available of the attitudes of inmates to the borstal while they served their sentences. One letter survives from an inmate, George T.; George was eighteen years old when he was convicted of a 'felony' at Mullingar Assizes in March 1915. No further information

on the offence itself was provided. He was sentenced to three years in Clonmel borstal and was discharged from the institution in December of the same year. At the time of his detention George was a factory labourer from Athlone and lived with his parents.⁴³ No explanation was given for George's extremely early discharge but during this period many borstal inmates were discharged, with their own consent, to join the British armed forces during the First World War. In October 1915, just two months prior to his discharge, George wrote to his mother and although it is not clear why his letter remains in the GPB archives, it does reveal something of his attitudes to his detention, his fellow inmates and the world outside. The letter opens with an expression of concern for his mother and he questions how she can survive during 'those times with everything so high.' He assures her that his behaviour in the institution has been good and that he looks forward to his freedom as he will be able to return home to provide for her again. In his most telling statement on the institution itself, George declares, 'I hope the rest of my time goes by so quick, not that this place is bad, it is fine. I hope a few fellows I know were here for a time, it would make men of them as it has of me.'⁴⁴ This comment could suggest that George embraced the ideals of the borstal and the reform efforts it was seeking to achieve with him. Nonetheless, it must be noted that inmates would almost certainly have been aware that institutional staff vetted their letters and therefore felt the need to make a good impression in order to enhance their longer-term prospects and improve their conditions. George's letter also expressed his hope that 'the Germans are getting a great licking.' Inmates were informed about the progress of the Great War by way of newspaper extracts posted on the recreation room wall on a daily basis. There was of course, a constant flow of new inmates bringing news of the conflict. George thanked his mother for giving her consent to his joining the army when he was discharged and wished he was already on the frontline of the battle 'giving the Tommys a hand.'⁴⁵

This letter does reflect something of the curiosity that borstal inmates had for military matters, particularly around the daily drama of war. The archives of the GPB detail many occasions between 1914 and 1918 when they were shown slides and films depicting images from battlefields or lectured to by military personnel and other well-informed individuals. This activity could be seen as a propaganda exercise by the British authorities in Ireland seeking to encourage impressionable young Irish men and boys to identify themselves with crown forces against a common enemy. It was also a useful army recruitment tool. For the boys themselves, it offered a way to legally escape the confines

of borstal and their sentence into a job that would bring a wage, a military training and a sense of honour. From the comparatively safer surroundings of borstal it also promised these boys in their late teens a life of excitement and drama.

One of the obvious questions surrounding the borstal is that of the ultimate fate of offenders when they left the institution. A number of random and sketchy examples have survived, although a full set of after-histories of inmates was not recorded by either the GPB or the BAI. The long-term progress of at least one boy is known, however, and this is due to his own initiative in updating the institution on his progress. Thomas P. was sentenced to three years in the borstal in December 1910 for 'serious and wilful breaches of the rules of Phillipstown Reformatory.' Thomas was born in Monaghan and gave his last known address as Phillipstown reformatory and his next-of-kin as his brother, Patrick. We immediately get some sense of a rather tragic start in life for this young man. Thomas was discharged from Clonmel on 29 June 1912. His fate was revealed in a letter received at Clonmel borstal in July 1913, from an address in Queensland, Australia. In the letter, addressed to the now former governor, John Connor, Thomas provided what amounted to a full progress report on his activities since being discharged from his sentence. Following the expiration of his discharge licence (known today as parole) he remained in Ireland for a few months before moving to Glasgow, where he worked to earn the cost of his fare to Australia. Following his arrival in Australia he obtained work as a carpenter earning thirteen shillings per day. In his letter he urged the governor to use his story as a positive example to those inmates who remained in the institution. He entreated the governor to give the same advice to the boys in detention as he had to him, giving them to understand that perseverance with their training in a trade would bring benefits when they were released. He conveyed his regards to various warders and hoped that the boys would 'gather some sense and learn now while they have the chance to become decent and respectable to those who are in charge of them.'⁴⁶

Thomas's words were affectionate and clearly the sentiments of an ex-inmate with fond recollections of his time in Clonmel. In the absence of letters from other inmates, it is impossible to ascertain whether Thomas was an exception but there was real evidence of the depth of his gratitude in his final message to Governor John Connor; 'I hope you live to see all the boys grow up good men. God Bless You Sir for your kind advice for it has made a man of me now.'⁴⁷ It is clear that the reason this letter survived within the vast bureaucracy of the GPB and borstal

is that it portrays the institution in the best possible light. The words carry even greater weight because they come from one who is perhaps the leading authority on the effectiveness of borstal treatment, a former inmate. There is no questioning the authenticity of the letter or indeed the level of emotion it conveys but it probably should not be taken as representative of the views of all former inmates of Clonmel borstal.

The First World War had a considerable impact on Clonmel borstal. Firstly, the size of the institution's population was depleted through premature discharges of inmates joining the British armed forces. Indeed the war had the effect of 'emptying' the prisons of Ireland and Britain.⁴⁸ It is estimated that some 424 Irish borstal inmates were engaged in military service as part of the British armed forces between 1914 and 1918. According to Justice Thomas Moloney, addressing the spring assizes in Clonmel in March 1919, seventy of those boys made 'the supreme sacrifice'.⁴⁹ Secondly, it appears that the conflict affected the mood of day-to-day life in the institution as the boys sought a greater understanding of the drama of the events unfolding in Europe and beyond. As inmates gradually left the borstal to join the war, institutional records claim there came a longing among those left behind to do their part in the service of this noble battle against a common enemy. As film footage was shown to them by the BAI in the borstal they were reported by the association and staff to have developed a sense of the heroism of their former fellow inmates who were now in the trenches. The borstal governor was also updated on the fate of those who had departed for war through the occasional letters to the institution either from the boys themselves or from their bereaved parents.

One boy who corresponded was Michael S. who was sentenced to three years in the borstal for larceny. Michael was from Longford and was eighteen years old when he began his sentence in April 1912.⁵⁰ Michael maintained contact with the institution long after his discharge in late 1914 when it appears he joined the British army. In a letter to the borstal in August 1917 he described his life following his discharge from the army due to the loss of an eye. He was now working at a government munitions factory in Cheshire, earning three pounds and eight shillings per week; he was also in receipt of an army pension of thirteen shillings per week for life. He revealed that while on military service in France he had encountered a number of his 'old play friends' from Clonmel borstal, many of whom were still on the battlefields. Michael reminisced about his time in the borstal making enquiries about boys who were there during 1914. He also passed on 'best respects' to two named warders and longed for his days in the 'garden and field where

I spent my good times.⁵¹ In a note written on the back of the letter, the institution's governor William Dobbin gave his analysis of the 'miracle' that was Michael's transformation. He described him as 'a typical juvenile class corner boy known as "The Slinger" who was undoubtedly on the road to become one of the regular prison community for life.' He pointed out that his time in Clonmel had probably saved Michael's own life but also provided a service to the community and his country. Dobbin speculated that during his life prior to borstal, Michael had not earned what he was now earning in a single week between work and pension.⁵² It is necessary to re-state that letters such as these survive in institutional archives for the very good reason that they are wholly positive and project the establishment in the best possible light. The surviving archive does contain a number of these letters, however, as well as a number from the parents of boys who lost their lives in the war. Such letters clearly reflect that for some the borstal experience did represent a turnaround in the character of their authors and there was a particular sense of pride among those who took the ultimate step of actually going to war.

VII Conclusion

Though the borstal accommodated inmates from almost every part of Ireland, the majority were from the city of Belfast, followed closely by Dublin. Inmates had been engaged in a wide range of occupations before conviction but the overwhelming majority were employed in jobs that required little skill and provided low pay. All the indications suggest that inmates may well have emerged from backgrounds marked by poverty and violence. Many were raised in what contemporaries regarded as troubled and often disordered family settings, where it was believed criminality and immorality were normal. This should not be taken as a sweeping generalization for all borstal inmates, however, as the evidence does not suggest that this was the environment from which all the boys emerged. Perhaps the best summary of the Clonmel borstal offender is one that may appear simple but is in fact far more complex. If a typical Irish borstal inmate existed, he could be described as urban, under-skilled and under-educated. He was most likely a Roman Catholic from the poorer classes, someone whose very existence epitomized the dire economic conditions of the city in early twentieth-century Ireland. This definition raises one final question to which a definitive answer is not yet possible. To what extent was the Irish borstal offender representative of other juvenile-adult age criminals not detained within the

institution? The likelihood is that they were probably more representative than one might imagine. Clonmel borstal was at times limited in space and so there was not always room to accommodate every such offender that may come before the courts. In addition, not all members of the judiciary were personally invested in the idea of borstal treatment. Some showed greater interest in its operation than others and a number even took the trouble to tour the facility at Clonmel. Others merely saw the project as a form of 'mollycoddling' and used the conventional prison system instead. For this latter section of the judiciary, the male borstal offender was merely a 'city corner-boy', an idle and uncivilized youth whose very presence on the streets was an offence to polite society. The GPB, the BAI and indeed the government invested much time and effort trying to convince these judges otherwise.

Notes

The title of this chapter is taken from the founder of the borstal system, Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, speaking at the International Penitentiary Congress in Washington D.C. in 1910. Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, *Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the proceedings of the eighth international penitentiary congress, held at Washington, October, 1910* [Cd. 5593], H.C. 1911, 36. For further reading on the Irish borstal system see Conor Reidy, *Ireland's 'moral hospital': The Irish borstal system 1906–1956* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009) and Nial Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland: Custodial provision for the young adult offender, 1906–1974* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1975); for the British system see Shane Leslie, *Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise: A memoir of the founder of borstal* (London: J. Murray, 1938). For a useful general history of the international penal system see Norval Morris and David Rothman (eds), *The Oxford history of the prison: The practice of punishment in western society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

1. A study of young men discharged from Pentonville prison in 1888 and later cited by the Chairman of the Prison Commissioners for England and Wales, Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, found that children of the poorer classes developed much later, some as late as twenty-five or twenty-six. Ruggles-Brise, *Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department*, 38.
2. Clive Emsley, *Crime and society in modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 92.
3. Peter King, *Crime, justice and discretion in England, 1740–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 176.
4. Martin Joel Wiener, *Men of blood: Violence, manliness and criminal justice in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9.
5. Leon Radzinowicz and Roger Hood, *A history of English criminal law and its administration from 1750* (London: Clarendon Press, 1986), 454.
6. Heather Shore, 'Inventing the juvenile delinquent in nineteenth-century Europe' in B. Godfrey, C. Emsley and G. Dunstall (eds), *Comparative histories of crime* (Cullompton: Willan, 2003), 116.

7. *Ibid.*, 114.
8. *Report from the Departmental Committee on Prisons* [C. 7702], H.C. 1895. The committee was concerned with several other aspects of the prison system but these are not of relevance to this chapter.
9. Osborough, *Borstal in Ireland*, 3.
10. Ruggles-Brise did not subsequently name the ‘medical men’ with whom he consulted.
11. Ruggles-Brise, *Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department*, 38.
12. *Ibid.*, 39.
13. Roger Hood, *Borstal reassessed* (London: Heinemann, 1965), 15.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 2 Jan. 1911.
17. For an expanded discussion on this question see Reidy, *Ireland’s ‘moral hospital’*, Chapter 4.
18. *Judicial statistics for Ireland* [Cd. 2632], H.C. 1905, 41.
19. *Ibid.*
20. ‘Memorandum on the borstal system’ (National Archives of Ireland (NAI), General Prisons Board (GPB), Correspondence Register 1877–1922 (CR), GPB/1832/1911).
21. *Ibid.*
22. Shore, ‘Inventing the juvenile delinquent’, 111.
23. *Register of inmates, Clonmel prison and borstal institution, 1903–23* (hereafter *Prison register*) (NAI, GPB/1/7/14).
24. *Ibid.*
25. W. E. Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics: Population, 1821–1971* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1976), 28–36. The figure for Dublin is exclusive of the city’s suburbs.
26. F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland since the famine* (London: Fontana Press, 1985), 259.
27. Diarmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland, 1900–2000* (London: Profile Books, 2004), 52.
28. Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A new economic history: 1780–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 241.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Caitriona Clear, *Social change and everyday life in Ireland, 1850–1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 26–7.
31. *Prison register* (NAI, GPB/1/7/14).
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Twenty-eighth report of the General Prisons Board, Ireland 1905–1906* [Cd.3103], H.C. 1906, 149.
34. *Prison register* (NAI, GPB/1/7/14).
35. Wider research shows, however, that first offenders were indeed incarcerated at Clonmel borstal. This was not explained by either the sentencing judiciary or the GPB. For example, in a three and a half year period to 31 Dec. 1909, forty-one inmates with no previous convictions were committed to Clonmel borstal. *Thirty-second report of the General Prisons Board, Ireland 1909–10* [Cd. 5286], H.C. 1910, 40. This was in contravention of the directive that the borstal was not intended for first-offenders and is an anomaly.
36. *Prison register* (NAI, GPB/1/7/14).

37. Ibid.
38. *Belfast Newsletter*, 14 Jan. 1914.
39. Ruggles-Brise, *Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department*, 56.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 57.
42. Ibid., 58.
43. *Prison register* (NAI, GPB/1/7/14).
44. George T. to his mother (nd) (NAI, GPB CR, GPB/1195/1915).
45. Ibid.
46. Thomas P. to Governor (nd) (NAI, GPB CR, GPB/4832/1913).
47. Ibid.
48. Edith Abbott, 'Crime and the war', *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 9:1 (May 1918), 32–45, 34.
49. Justice Moloney to GPB, 31 Mar. 1919 (NAI, GPB CR, GPB/4879/1919).
50. *Prison register* (NAI, GPB/1/7/14).
51. Michael S. to Governor Dobbin (nd) (NAI, GPB CR, GPB/4879/1919).
52. Governor Dobbin on Michael S. (nd) (NAI, GPB CR, GPB/4879/1919).

5

An Irish Nationalist Adolescence: Na Fianna Éireann, 1909–1923

Marnie Hay

In 1909 two Irish Protestant nationalist activists, Constance, Countess Markievicz (1868–1927) and Bulmer Hobson (1883–1969), established a nationalist youth organization called Na Fianna Éireann, or the Irish National Boy Scouts.¹ It was designed to be an Irish nationalist antidote to Robert Baden-Powell's pro-British Boy Scout movement, which had spread to Ireland in 1908.² For some members, participation in the Fianna merely served a social function, while for others it served as a recruitment and training ground for their future roles in the struggle for Irish independence. Although the Fianna was initially open to all Irish boys (and some girls) between the ages of eight and eighteen, membership was later limited to boys aged between twelve and eighteen. This restriction of membership to adolescent males was possibly a reflection of the increasingly militant activities of the organization, particularly from 1916 onwards.

Irish historians have increasingly referred to a series of events that took place over the course of the decade 1913–23 as the 'Irish revolution', though this term and the exact time frame involved remain contentious.³ These events include the 1916 Easter Rising, a week-long rebellion against British rule in Ireland organized by the Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB); the War of Independence (or Anglo-Irish War; 1919–21), a guerrilla war that was fought between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and British crown forces; and the Irish Civil War (1922–23). This chapter will explore the involvement of adolescents in Na Fianna Éireann during the period of the Irish revolution, with particular emphasis on the organization's philosophy and membership in the years 1909–23. It will draw on sources including contemporary Fianna print propaganda, Bureau of Military History witness statements and entries in the *Dictionary of Irish biography (DIB)* relating to a sample

of thirty-seven notable former Fianna members born between 1888 and 1912⁴ in order to address the following questions: what kind of philosophy did the Fianna promote; who joined the organization; how did it influence its adolescent members; and what was it like to be a young Irish nationalist during the years of the Irish revolution?

I The advent of uniformed youth groups – and adolescence

Na Fianna Éireann was officially founded on 16 August 1909 at a meeting held in a hall at 34 Lower Camden Street in Dublin, at which an initial executive council was elected. The first Fianna troop, *An Cead Sluagh*, was born out of this inaugural meeting. The youth group offered members a combination of military training, outdoor pursuits and Irish cultural activities.

Schoolmasters, family members, friends, and notices in nationalist newspapers encouraged youths to join the Fianna. For example Eamon Martin attended the first public meeting of the Fianna at the urging of his former schoolmaster William O'Neill of St Andrew's National School on what is now Pearse Street in Dublin.⁵ Markievicz had contacted O'Neill about her plans to start a nationalist youth group, asking him to recommend suitable boys, which he duly did.⁶ After Liam Mellows joined the Fianna in 1911 he also brought his brothers Barney and Fred into the organization. Garry Holohan was recruited into the Fianna by his friend Joe Connolly, who belonged to the first 'Irish-Ireland family' that Holohan had ever met.⁷ (Irish-Irelanders like the Connollys advocated an Irish cultural nationalism grounded on Catholic and Gaelic values.) Seamus MacCaisin attended the inaugural meeting of the Fianna after he spotted an announcement of the event in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the newspaper of the Gaelic League, an organization founded in 1893 to revive the Irish language.⁸ Other potential recruits may have been intrigued by the flag-wielding Fianna boy who stood outside the organization's main hall on Dublin's Camden Street, ready to answer queries about it and to direct boys inside.⁹

Over the coming months and years more troops were formed in Dublin and in other Irish cities and towns, such as Belfast, Waterford and Cork, as well as in Glasgow, London and Liverpool, where sizeable Irish emigrant communities existed. In response to this growth, the Fianna soon developed a formal organizational structure. It consisted of an executive, an *ard-fheis* (national convention), an *ard-choisde* (central council), district councils and *sluaigh* (troops).¹⁰

The foundation of the Fianna was an Irish nationalist manifestation of the proliferation of 'pseudo-military youth groups' that occurred in many western countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These groups were not only part of the cult of discipline, training and manliness that grew out of the increasing anticipation of a coming war in Europe,¹¹ but were also a reaction to a widely-perceived *fin-de-siècle* decadence. In the early years of the twentieth century, many Germans worried that 'middle-class boys were effeminate' and 'the country lacked virile soldiers.'¹² Similarly, the British Army's poor performance against a force of South African farmers during the Boer War (1899–1902) had provoked much concern that Britain was in a state of decline. Fearing that they were losing their competitive edge in industrial and military affairs and that their populations were deteriorating both physically and morally, western countries like Britain and Germany began 'to look to the health, education and moral welfare of the rising generation.'¹³ The establishment of uniformed youth groups was one way of dealing with the perceived problem.

The best-known of these was the international Boy Scout movement founded by Baden-Powell in 1908. A British army officer, Baden-Powell was responding to the interest that boys had shown in his 1899 army training manual *Aids to scouting*. He was also inspired by the model of the Boys' Brigade, which was launched by William Alexander Smith in 1883 in Glasgow.¹⁴ Smith was a businessman and an officer in the Volunteers, a British part-time military force that was later replaced by the Territorial Army.¹⁵ He had used military drill and discipline as a way of providing guidance to the boys who attended his Scottish Free Church Sunday School.¹⁶ Though Smith 'constantly stressed the inter-denominationalism of his Brigade,' his example inspired the formation of other boys' brigades aimed at specific religious denominations, such as the Church Lads' Brigade for Anglicans, the Jewish Lads' Brigade and the Catholic Boys' Brigade.¹⁷ Baden-Powell, in contrast with Smith, put less *overt* emphasis on militarism. Instead he focused on outdoor activities and personal development in order not only to counter what he saw as the moral and physical decline of the upcoming generation, but also to train boys to be better citizens.¹⁸

The impetus for the outdoor element of scouting came from the American-based naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton and his Woodcraft movement, which promoted outdoor life and the lore of Native American tribes. Baden-Powell and Seton met in 1906, sharing their respective ideas on youth groups. Seton co-founded the Boy Scouts of America, subsuming his own Woodcraft movement into the new group;

however, he objected to the Scout movement's emphasis on patriotism and was forced out of the American organization in 1915.¹⁹ Whether Baden-Powell's main concern prior to 1920 was training future citizens or soldiers has sparked much scholarly debate.²⁰ Tensions within the early Scout movement, as exemplified by Seton and others, suggest that Baden-Powell initially sought to train both.

British uniformed youth groups soon established themselves in Ireland. Although the Boys' Brigade came to Ireland first, the Boy Scout movement spread more quickly. The first Irish companies of Smith's Boys' Brigade were founded in Belfast in 1888 and Dublin in 1891.²¹ Boy Scout troops were in existence in Bray, Co. Wicklow, Dublin city and county, and Belfast from early 1908. Members of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, such as the 12th Earl of Meath, supported Baden-Powell's new youth movement from the beginning, often providing leadership and camping facilities on their estates.²²

Irish nationalists viewed the various boys' brigades and the Boy Scouts as British imports but also a threat that could be turned into an opportunity. In 1903 Arthur Griffith, the founder of the Sinn Féin ('Ourselves') movement, condemned the Catholic Boys' Brigades in Ireland as a recruiting ground for the British Army, but recognized that if 'properly conducted,' boys' brigades could be turned into 'a great national force,' contributing to 'the intellectual and physical good of the young.'²³ Griffith saw such potential in what might be seen as the first incarnation of Na Fianna Éireann.

This was a boys' hurling club, also called Na Fianna Éireann, founded by Bulmer Hobson in Belfast in 1902.²⁴ The excitement surrounding the club's inaugural meeting convinced Hobson that the fledgling organization was something that could be moulded 'into a strong force to help in the liberation of Ireland.'²⁵ The first Belfast Fianna held inter-club hurling competitions as well as classes on Irish language and history, later expanding its activities to include Gaelic football and possibly drama.²⁶ The organization's activities were designed to build up the boys' physical strength and fitness through participation in sport and to develop their sense of an Irish nationalist identity through a focus on aspects of traditional Irish culture, such as Gaelic games, the Irish language and Irish history from a nationalist perspective. Hobson sought to mould the bodies and minds of what he hoped would be the future 'liberators' of Ireland. But due to lack of money and the pressures of his various cultural and political commitments, the Belfast organization lapsed before it could live up to this dream.²⁷

Spurred on by Markievicz's desire to counteract the growing popularity and influence of Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts, Hobson joined Markievicz in establishing a new version of Na Fianna Éireann in 1909 in Dublin as an Irish nationalist alternative. They were not the only Irish nationalists to recognize the value and appeal of uniformed youth groups in the early twentieth century. For instance, May Kelly and her sister Elizabeth²⁸ established the Clann na Gael Girl Scouts in Dublin, circa 1910–11. This group catered for girls between the ages of eight and sixteen years, offering its members such activities as camping trips and military training.²⁹ The Kelly sisters may have been inspired by the foundation of the female equivalent of scouting, the Girl Guides Association, by Agnes Baden-Powell in 1910 and the subsequent formation of Ireland's first official Girl Guide company in Harold's Cross in Dublin in 1911.³⁰ Alternatively, they may have wanted to establish a girls' counterpart to the Fianna, as the Dublin Fianna did not accept female members, though a girls' *sluagh* existed in Belfast from 1911. The Clann na Gael Girl Scouts shared a meeting hall at 28 North Frederick Street in Dublin with the Hibernian Rifles, the militia wing of the Irish-American Alliance. This was the more radical, less sectarian section of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a Catholic friendly society that supported home rule for Ireland.³¹ The Ancient Order of Hibernians also established its own youth organization, the Hibernian Boys' Brigade, around 1912.³² The Fianna, however, are the best known and most historically significant of these Irish nationalist manifestations of the 'pseudo-military' youth group.

Many of the youth groups formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were designed to keep young working-class boys off the streets and provide them with a leisure-time activity that promoted order and discipline. The Boys' Brigade is a good example. Its founder, Smith, 'reasoned that a new uniformed organisation appealing to a boy's sense of patriotism and martial spirit would serve as a useful instrument for a primarily religious end.'³³ One early Brigade member recognized the important function that the organization served for his age cohort:

When we reached thirteen most of us felt we were too big for the Sunday School, and there was a gap of a few years until we were able to join the YMCA at seventeen. To fill this gap period, many working-class boys ran wild, became hooligans and street-corner loafers. What else was there for them, in those days, to do?³⁴

Many teenage boys, like the Boys' Brigade member quoted above, welcomed the advent of uniformed youth groups because they gave them something enjoyable and constructive to do with their free time. The 'uniformed' aspect of such youth groups chimed with the romantic view of the military prevalent in the years prior to the First World War.

An underlying adult view of youth, particularly working-class youth, as a problem that required a solution also can be seen in the foundation of the Boy Scout movement. Influenced by his experience of the Boer War, Baden-Powell's decision to start the Boy Scouts reflected his fears for the moral and physical 'degeneration of the young and for the survival of the British Empire which they would have to maintain.'³⁵ One anonymous fan of the new movement argued that 'in the next generation there should be no overgrown lads standing idly and foolishly at the street corners, gaping after they know not what, smoking cigarettes ... there will be a new race of boys in England when the Scouts of today have little Scouts of their own.'³⁶

Thus, uniformed youth groups were seen as an important tool in the renewal of British society. As John Springhall has noted, 'the development of "character" and "esprit de corps" found in the [British] public schools was to be extended to the "lower ranks" in society through the agencies of the various boys' brigades and, later, the Boy Scouts.'³⁷ Such youth groups would transmit middle-class values of order and discipline to working-class boys.

Markievicz in particular recognized the value and appeal of the activities offered by the boys' brigades and the Boy Scouts, but wanted to provide Irish boys with an Irish nationalist alternative to what she viewed as British imperialist bodies. In essence, she was less interested in keeping Irish boys off the streets than in keeping them out of the meeting halls of the boys' brigades and the Boy Scouts. Where Baden-Powell and other British youth leaders saw boys as a potential resource for the British Army and for the maintenance of the British Empire, she and Hobson saw them as a potential resource for the Irish nationalist movement. The Fianna would provide members with the military training and nationalist nurturing to enable them to play an important role in the struggle for Irish independence.

The timing of the Fianna's foundation in the early twentieth century not only coincided with the advent of uniformed youth groups, but also with the contested 'discovery' of adolescence as a distinct stage of life. This modern view of adolescence was mainly the creation of American psychology scholar G. Stanley Hall and his associates at Clark University in Massachusetts. His influential two-volume *Adolescence: Its psychology*

and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education, which appeared in 1904, ‘transform[ed] earlier ideas of “youth” into the modern concept of “adolescence” and brought the term ‘adolescence’ into common parlance.’³⁸

Historians have debated how far back an awareness of adolescence can be traced, with some citing ‘a number of institutions, nearly all of them male, that fulfilled in the [more distant] past at least some of the functions – mainly violence and mayhem – that we now attribute to adolescence.’³⁹ Such institutions served to channel such violence and mayhem, helping not only to reinforce order, but also to propose alternatives to the existing order.⁴⁰ The Fianna promoted order through its provision of training, education and discipline for nationalist youth, but in advocating a new political order in Ireland many members, particularly adolescents, experienced both violence and mayhem in the years 1909–23. Mayhem came in the form of aggressive behaviour towards the Royal Irish Constabulary and attacks on Baden-Powell Boy Scouts or members of the Boys’ Brigade who carried Union Jacks.⁴¹ During a raid on a boy scout camp in Crumlin in Dublin, the Fianna captured flags and military equipment and ordered the scouts back home to Liverpool.⁴² This was mere youthful high jinks in comparison to what was to come during the Irish revolution, when many Fianna members were witnesses, victims and perpetrators of political violence.

II The philosophy of the Fianna

The willingness of Fianna members to participate in the events of the Irish revolution can be linked to the philosophy promoted by the organization in its early years. The Fianna sought to mould the minds – and bodies – of nationalist youth through such conduits as education and training initiatives, print propaganda, cultural activities and informal social contacts.

Inherent in the foundation of the Fianna was the recognition that youths were the future of the Irish nationalist movement. Therefore, the organization was designed to provide young people with the education and training necessary to enable them to assume their place within that movement. The Fianna undertook this task through regular activities, such as weekly meetings, route marches and camping trips, and through print propaganda published in the 1914 *Fianna handbook* and in articles in advanced nationalist newspapers, including *Bean na hÉireann* (1908–11), *Irish Freedom* (1910–14) and the *Irish Volunteer* (1914–16).⁴³

Fianna members were taught Irish language and history, as well as military drill, marksmanship, first aid and other skills necessary for scouting and camping. Passing tests on these subjects enabled members to move up within the ranks of the Fianna.⁴⁴ The Fianna used lectures, newspaper articles, and chapters in its handbook to educate its members about Irish history (from an Irish nationalist perspective) and folklore in order to teach them about their own unique heritage, to familiarize them with the nationalist vision of Ireland's long struggle against British rule, and to introduce them to Irish heroes that the organization deemed worthy of emulation. Practical instruction on topics such as signalling, map reading, topography, military strategy, handling weapons and first aid was provided at weekly meetings, on camping trips, and in the handbook and articles included in the *Irish Volunteer* newspaper. Members also learned how to govern themselves by being responsible for the running of the organization, preparing them for citizenship, possibly even leadership, in an independent Ireland.

Two members in their late teens, Percy Reynolds and Patsy O'Connor, took the initiative to produce a one-off Christmas annual entitled *Nodlaig na bhFiann* in 1914 and then a monthly newspaper called *Fianna*. The paper, which initially appeared from February 1915 until shortly before the Easter Rising, was not an official Fianna publication, but did have sanction from headquarters. In producing these publications, the pair demonstrated that Fianna membership could help youths to develop the ability and self-confidence to communicate the message of Irish nationalism and separatism to their own age cohort.

Fianna members were also encouraged to participate in the Irish cultural revival in the areas of language, sport, theatre and music. They were expected to learn Irish and play Gaelic games. Members with the requisite talent and inclination had opportunities to display their dramatic and musical abilities. Examples include a drama group called the Fianna Players, which performed Irish plays including Padraic Colum's *The Saxon shilling*,⁴⁵ and fundraising events, such as the Lang Benefit Concert held in early 1915 at which members were among the performers of Irish songs, dances, recitations and sketches.⁴⁶ Participation in such cultural activities helped members to cultivate a sense of a separate Irish national identity.

In addition to providing an Irish nationalist education and military training, the Fianna endorsed suitable role models for Irish boys, particularly through its print propaganda. In general, it promoted an idealized image of Irish nationalist youth that emphasized the importance of patriotism and morality. A Fianna member was to learn

'all about his country, its history and language, its resources and industries, and his one aim in life [was] to serve it to the best of his ability.' He should also keep his body and mind 'clean and pure'.⁴⁷ Robert Holland recalled that Fianna leader Con Colbert 'often lectured boys on how they should keep their bodies. He used to tell them that they should wash their feet as often as they washed their face.'⁴⁸ Fianna propaganda also urged members never to 'do anything that would bring discredit upon Ireland or upon the Fianna.'⁴⁹

According to the Fianna Code of Honour, which was developed in 1921, members were to embody the following twelve traits: patriotism, reliability, diligence, kindness, obedience, cheerfulness, thrift, bravery, cleanliness, humility, temperance and punctuality.⁵⁰ Such qualities were similar to those promoted by Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts, which included self-discipline, obedience, loyalty, sobriety and cleanliness.⁵¹ Despite these obvious parallels, however, advanced nationalist propaganda from this period highlighted a moral dichotomy between Ireland and Britain, criticizing the alleged 'degenerate and debased nature of British and pro-British people.'⁵²

As part of this idealized image of nationalist youth, Fianna members were to be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice to attain Irish independence. In her introduction to the 1914 *Fianna handbook*, Markievicz predicted that members of the Fianna would not 'flinch' if the 'path to freedom' led to their death, as it had for the Irish republican heroes Theobald Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet.⁵³ Those current or former members of the organization who died as a result of their involvement in the Easter Rising, the War of Independence or the Civil War were not only praised in post-1916 Fianna propaganda, but promoted as worthy role models for future generations.⁵⁴ For instance, a 1922 Easter Week commemoration souvenir programme declared that Fianna officers Seán Heuston and Con Colbert, who were executed for their roles in the 1916 Rising, 'met their deaths, happy that it was for Ireland, sure of the heaven that awaited them. In boyish simplicity and purity, and with manly courage, they faced the firing squad.'⁵⁵

Future Fianna propaganda continued to glorify martyrs to the cause, with a Fianna Roll of Honour listing the names of 54 members 'who gave their lives for Ireland's freedom' between 1915 and 1981.⁵⁶ The first name on the list is former *Fianna* editor Patsy O'Connor, whose death in 1915 at the age of eighteen was believed to have resulted from a head injury that he received when he was batoned by the police while administering first aid to a worker during the 1913 Lockout in Dublin.⁵⁷ However, the record of his interment in Glasnevin

Cemetery in Dublin indicates that the alleged cause of his death was pneumonia.⁵⁸

The formal education and training initiatives, print propaganda and cultural activities provided by the Fianna were not the only ways in which the organization could influence its young members. Informal social contacts were also important. For instance, Garry Holohan often spent weekends at Hobson's cottage at Balroddery near Tallaght in Co. Dublin with Hobson and fellow Fianna members Pádraic Ó Riain and Frank Reynolds. It was during these weekends away that Holohan first read the poetry of Ethna Carbery (the pseudonym of Anna Johnston MacManus). He later reported that:

I can assure you they did much to fan the fires of patriotism to white heat. From now on my outlook on life was completely changed. The Fianna was no longer a mere pastime or social function. It became a sacred duty, and I started to bend my every effort towards the freeing of Ireland. No task was too great or time too long.⁵⁹

Carbery herself had influenced Hobson in his youth, helping to lay the foundations for his future career as a nationalist.⁶⁰

Membership in the Fianna enabled adolescents to become part of a nationalist social network of like-minded individuals. Older members were often recruited into another nationalist network: the IRB, a secret society committed to the establishment of an Irish republic, through physical force if necessary. The Fianna's increasingly militant stance coincided with the recruitment of selected senior members into the IRB when they had reached the age of seventeen. Pádraic Ó Riain and Con Colbert joined at an early stage. Eamon Martin and Patrick Ward became members of the IRB in 1911, while Liam Mellows, Michael Loneragan and Garry Holohan were sworn in the following year. Martin claimed that by 1913 practically every senior Fianna officer throughout the country had become a member of the IRB. The annual Fianna *ard-fheis* often served to endorse decisions already made at meetings of the Fianna circle of the IRB held the night before.⁶¹

An alternative social network revolved around Markievicz, who disapproved of secret societies like the IRB.⁶² A small group of Fianna members, who regularly gathered at her home on Leinster Road in Rathmines in Dublin, became known as 'Madam's Boys' or 'the Surrey House clique'. According to Seamus Pouch, the group consisted of himself, Patsy O'Connor, Harry Walpole, Jack Shallow, Eddie Murray and Andy Dunne. Although Pouch chose not to join the IRB on

conscientious grounds, he was no less militaristic than his Fianna colleagues who belonged to the secret society. He served at Jacob's Biscuit Factory during the Easter Rising, later recalling that after the surrender 'I dumped my gun with the rest and it was the saddest parting I can remember.'⁶³

Through its education and training initiatives, print propaganda, cultural activities and social networks, the Fianna sought to create a future army for Ireland. The adolescent male members of the Fianna were expected to be physically and mentally fit to fight for – even die for – Irish independence. They were exposed to a philosophy that valued and promoted Irish (as opposed to British) culture, military preparation, a separatist brand of nationalism and a willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for one's country. In many ways Seán Heuston exemplified this philosophy with the following words: 'Whatever I have done as a soldier of Ireland is what I believe to be my country's best interest. I have, thank God, no vain regrets.'⁶⁴

III The Fianna during the Irish revolution

In the summer of 1913, at the instigation of Hobson, a leading member of the IRB, Dublin members of the secret society began training in military drill in anticipation of the formation of an Irish nationalist paramilitary body in response to the formal establishment of the Ulster Volunteer Force in January of that year.⁶⁵ The Ulster Volunteers were formed as part of the Ulster unionist campaign to oppose the impending implementation of home rule in Ireland. Home rule would entail the creation of a Dublin-based parliament to deal with Irish domestic matters, while maintaining Ireland's political connection with Britain. Unionists opposed any change to the current constitutional relationship between the two islands, fearing that home rule would not only be disadvantageous to their economic and cultural interests, but would lead to full Irish independence. It was against the backdrop of these political tensions between unionists and home rulers that Fianna officers began to put their military training to work and served as drill instructors for the IRB.

When Hobson helped to form the Irish Volunteers in November 1913, he recruited five senior members of the Fianna to the provisional committee of the new national paramilitary body: Pádraic Ó Riain, Con Colbert, Eamon Martin, Michael Loneragan and Liam Mellows. These young men visited various halls in the evenings, instructing the Volunteer officers and directing the course of training. Not surprisingly,

most of these officers were IRB members who had received training from these Fianna officers prior to the formation of the Volunteers.⁶⁶

In addition to providing officers and instructors to the new paramilitary body, the Fianna contributed numerous rank-and-file Irish Volunteers. The Fianna introduced a new rule in which members who had reached the age of eighteen but had not achieved the rank of lieutenant were automatically transferred to the Volunteers.⁶⁷ This provided the Irish Volunteers with a crop of ready-trained recruits, such as Patrick Ward who was instructed to leave the Fianna and join the Volunteers shortly after the establishment of the latter body.⁶⁸ Among the thirty-seven ex-Fianna members in the *DIB* sample, twenty-seven are listed as joining the Irish Volunteers or their successor the IRA and two Cumann na mBan (the League of Women) which was founded in 1914 as a women's auxiliary to the Volunteers.⁶⁹ For some Fianna members, their foremost loyalty was to the labour movement rather than the nationalist movement. Instead of the Irish Volunteers, they chose to join the Irish Citizen Army, which was formed in November 1913 to protect protesting workers during the Dublin Lockout. Examples include Andy Dunne and Joe Connolly.⁷⁰

The Fianna played a supporting role in many of the major events of the revolutionary period. They also appear to have viewed only adolescent males as suitable for active military service. This was the case during the Howth gunrunning in July 1914, when only Fianna boys over the age of twelve were mobilized to assist the Irish Volunteers in landing a consignment of 1,500 rifles and 45,000 rounds of ammunition at Howth harbour.⁷¹ While the adolescent boys were helping to unload the cargo from a yacht named the *Asgard*, filling their trek-cart with ammunition and taking it back to Dublin, Markievicz was supervising a camp in the Dublin Mountains attended by Belfast Fianna girls and the younger boys. Ina Connolly, the daughter of labour leader and 1916 insurrectionist James Connolly, was angry and disappointed that the girls were excluded, recalling that 'it really looked as if we were not trusted ... Had I been a boy I would not have been overlooked.'⁷² Ina and her sister Nora, who were then aged eighteen and twenty-one respectively, were later delighted to be asked to smuggle guns to Belfast.⁷³ Efforts were also made to keep younger boys out of action by organizing a camp for the 1916 Easter weekend.

Many individuals associated with the Fianna served as leaders, combatants, scouts and messengers during the 1916 Easter Rising. For instance, older Fianna members played a prominent role in the attack on the Magazine Fort in Dublin's Phoenix Park that was meant to launch

the insurrection. After kicking a football around in front of the fort, the young men rushed the sentry at the entrance, disarmed the guards in the guardroom, seized their rifles and bayonets, and blew up an ammunition store. The Fianna's twenty-two-year-old quartermaster Garry Holohan shot the fort commandant's eldest son as he ran to alert a policeman to the attack.⁷⁴ The youth died the next day.⁷⁵ As a result of their involvement in the rebellion, nine current and former Fianna members died, including Con Colbert and Seán Heuston, who were executed for their roles in the rebellion at the respective ages of twenty-seven and twenty-five.

In the wake of the executions, the Fianna is reputed to have attracted an all-time high of over 30,000 members by June 1917;⁷⁶ however, contemporary police reports, though flawed, recorded only 359 members outside of Dublin city in that month, suggesting that the Fianna's figure is inflated.⁷⁷ It is also important to note that not all Fianna members were militarily active and that the organization's membership only represented a fraction of the adolescent males in Ireland during the revolutionary period, and indeed only a fraction of those with advanced nationalist or republican views.

Fianna activism continued during the War of Independence and the Civil War, with twenty-one current and former members losing their lives between 1919 and 1922.⁷⁸ During the War of Independence, Cork Fianna boys, for example, not only volunteered as scouts and dispatch carriers for the IRA, but also raided private homes for arms, destroyed the stores of crown forces and attacked individuals whom they deemed 'enemy personnel'.⁷⁹ The targets of such activities probably viewed the boys as juvenile delinquents rather than young freedom fighters.

Even members of the IRA occasionally expressed disquiet about the Fianna's activities during the revolutionary period. A representative of the North Louth Battalion wrote to the IRA's headquarters in Dublin on 3 July 1920 complaining about the impact of the Dundalk Fianna's independent arms raids on the local community.⁸⁰ Recognition of the potentially dangerous consequences of overlapping arms raids by the two organizations, which had occurred in the autumn of 1920, was among the issues that resulted in negotiations between Dáil Éireann's Ministry of Defence⁸¹ and Fianna headquarters. A formal link between the Fianna and the IRA was finally forged in early 1921 to facilitate cooperation and a degree of control on the part of the IRA.⁸²

The 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty established an Irish Free State with dominion status within the British Commonwealth rather than a completely independent republic. This distinction contributed to a slide

into civil war between former nationalist comrades. In June 1922, the month in which the Civil War broke out, Fianna membership was reported as 26,000, though this may be an inflated figure.⁸³ The Fianna as an organization opposed the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and supported the anti-Treaty side during the Civil War. Individual members who accepted the Treaty appear quietly to have left the organization, many to join the Irish Free State army.⁸⁴ Of the *DIB* sample, twenty former Fianna members are identified as anti-Treaty and six as pro-Treaty.⁸⁵

After the triumph of the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War, the Fianna were keen to emphasize their educational, rather than military, value within the republican movement, whose supporters maintained varying degrees of hostility toward the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. The June 1926 issue of the organization's paper *Fianna* highlighted the perceived continuing need for the republican youth group alleging that there were 50,000 Freemasons and 36,000 Boy Scouts in Ireland, who represented 'the Vanguard of British imperialism in this country.'⁸⁶ Such membership figures, especially in relation to the Baden-Powell Scouts, were based more on perception than reality.⁸⁷ The subsequent history of the Fianna has tended to reflect the fortunes of (and splits within) the republican movement in Ireland.⁸⁸ For instance, the Fianna aligned themselves with the Provisional IRA during the Troubles, the period of political violence in Northern Ireland that lasted from 1969 until the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.⁸⁹ More recently, the organization has promoted itself as an 'independent republican youth movement'.⁹⁰

IV An analysis of Fianna membership

The focus will now shift to the membership of the Fianna in order to provide a general sense of who was welcome to join the organization and who actually joined between 1909 and 1923. The Fianna initially purported to be a national organization open to all Irish boys between the ages of eight and eighteen, no matter 'what class, creed, or party that they or their fathers belong[ed] to.'⁹¹ Issues of gender, age, political affiliation, religion and occupational background had varying degrees of impact on the Fianna's membership over the period in question.

Although the Fianna were officially for boys, some girls did get involved in certain parts of the country for limited periods. Prior to 1916, there was a girls' *sluagh* in Belfast, in which James Connolly's daughters Nora and Ina played an active role. The question of whether to admit girls to the organization nationally was a source of controversy because many boys felt that there should be a separate organization

for girls. A 1912 *ard-fheis* decision to establish girls' troops, in which Markievicz cast the deciding vote, was quickly reversed after the *ard-choisde* held a plebiscite in which the majority of *sluaighte* voted in favour of changing the constitution back to its original boys-only condition.⁹² Girls remained involved even if they had no official representation at the national level.⁹³

For instance, between late 1916 and early 1918 girls under the age of eighteen belonged to the Fianna in Waterford where Cumann na mBan and the Fianna shared premises. When Mrs Roche had established the Waterford Cumann na mBan branch in July 1916, novelist and nationalist activist Rosamond Jacob had predicted that she would 'boss the girls like a mother'⁹⁴ and it appears she did just that, much to the girls' annoyance. In October 1916 Jacob reported that 'all the little girls had resigned (from Cumann na mBan) and decided to join the Fianna instead – thinking I suppose that they'd get dancing and drill every night with no work and no Mrs Roche to order them about.'⁹⁵ In early 1918 Fianna headquarters in Dublin informed the Waterford girls that they should join the Clann na Gael Girl Scouts instead.⁹⁶

A competition in the June 1922 edition of the newsletter *Fianna* betrayed the organization's continuing chauvinistic attitude towards the role of females in the nationalist movement, despite Markievicz's position as Chief of the Fianna and the notable contributions made by women to the Irish revolution. The premise of the competition was that Kathleen, 'a good Irish cailín [girl]', needed help in choosing a husband. Her decision was to be based on the answers provided by her suitors Kevin, Lorcan and Brendan to the question 'Why did you become a soldier of the IRA?' Entrants were to write an essay on which soldier gave the best answer to the question and by extension which man Kathleen should marry.⁹⁷ The competition depicted young women as potential marriage partners with republican loyalties rather than activists in their own right, echoing the Fianna's unwillingness to include girls among its ranks.

The age range of Fianna members did not remain static throughout the period in question, nor was it as precise as the organization's rules stipulated. The Fianna was initially aimed at boys aged between eight and eighteen. Apparently the parents of the younger members were willing to allow their sons to enrol in the youth group because they found the presence of a woman in the leadership reassuring.⁹⁸ By June 1922 only boys aged between twelve and eighteen were eligible for membership.⁹⁹ The restriction of membership to adolescents in the later years of the Irish revolution probably reflected the expectation after the experience of the 1916 Rising that Fianna members could

or would be combatants. Furthermore, some of the officers remained in the organization into their twenties, even though the official age limit for Fianna membership was eighteen. For instance, the Fianna members who attacked the Magazine Fort in Dublin's Phoenix Park at the beginning of the Easter Rising were in their late teens and early twenties.¹⁰⁰ There was also some overlap between the older members of the Fianna and the Volunteers. An example is Patrick O'Daly who was already a member of the Volunteers when he moved to Tuam, Co. Galway in his mid-twenties. There he found that the local Fianna *sluagh* was more actively engaged in military training than the Volunteers, so he joined the youth group and remained a member when he returned to Dublin.¹⁰¹ Overlapping membership between the Fianna and adult organizations was also the case in Belfast where Fianna member Nora Connolly helped to establish Cumann na mBan.

Members of the Fianna tended to be products of families with nationalist sentiments of various degrees. Áine Ceannt, wife of 1916 insurrectionist Éamonn Ceannt, recalled that 'only the most extreme families had enrolled their sons in the Fianna.'¹⁰² The youth group may have attracted members from a wider nationalist spectrum after the establishment of the Irish Volunteers in November 1913 because many sons of Volunteers joined.¹⁰³ Prior to the split in the organization in September 1914 between those who supported and those who opposed Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond's call for Volunteers to fight in the First World War, the Irish Volunteers included home rulers as well as republicans and Sinn Féiners. Of the thirty-seven former Fianna members in the *DIB* sample, eight definitely came from Fenian or republican families and three had fathers who supported home rule.¹⁰⁴ Occasionally, boys joined the Fianna despite parental opposition. For instance, Austin Hogan's father, a Royal Irish Constabulary pensioner, disapproved of republicanism.¹⁰⁵

Unlike other youth groups of the period, such as the various boys' brigades, religion played no official part in the Fianna, probably because its Protestant founders not only recognized how politically divisive religion was in Ireland, but also did not want Catholic parents to fear proselytism. As nationalism tended to be associated with Catholicism, the majority of Fianna members came from Catholic families, but nationalists of other religions also joined the organization. For instance, the *DIB* sample includes Archie Heron, who was Presbyterian, George and James Plant, whose specific Protestant denomination is not stipulated, and Robert Briscoe, who was Jewish.¹⁰⁶ The religion of other former Fianna members in the *DIB* sample is either stated or implied as being Catholic.

A family commitment to advanced nationalism or republicanism was often reinforced by the schools and clubs that Fianna boys attended. Seventeen members of the *DIB* group attended Christian Brothers' schools, while three others went to St. Enda's School set up by Patrick Pearse, the writer and progressive educator who was one of the leaders of the Easter Rising.¹⁰⁷ These schools were notable for their emphasis on providing an overtly Irish education for students, particularly through the teaching of history, geography and the Irish language. Many Fianna members, such as Eamon Martin and Patrick Ward, were also involved with cultural nationalist organizations such as the Gaelic League and hurling clubs.¹⁰⁸

Some members of the Fianna had already left school and were earning a living. This is not surprising given that in 1911 almost 19 per cent of the total workforce in the United Kingdom consisted of those aged between ten and twenty.¹⁰⁹ Over the course of his Fianna membership Patsy O'Connor made the transition from twelve-year-old schoolboy to eighteen-year-old electrician.¹¹⁰ Séamus Kavanagh had just left school and started working as an 'apprentice cash-boy' in a drapery shop on Camden Street when he joined the Fianna in his early teens.¹¹¹ Among the older members were Con Colbert and Seán Heuston, who were employed as clerks at Kennedy's Bakery and the Great Southern and Western Railway Company respectively, and carpenter Patrick O'Daly.¹¹² Colbert and Heuston were aged twenty and nineteen when they first joined the Fianna, while O'Daly was in his mid-twenties.

The occupational backgrounds of members' fathers varied. Examples of fathers include labour leader and 1916 insurrectionist James Connolly, journalist W. P. Ryan, university professor Eoin MacNeill and Harold's Cross builder George Walsh, who, like MacNeill, was a member of the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers.¹¹³ Atypically, the fathers of Alfie White and Patrick O'Daly were members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, one an inspector and the other a constable.¹¹⁴ Another unusual case was that of the Mellows brothers whose father and paternal grandfather were soldiers in the British Army. Despite being educated at military schools, Liam Mellows 'disappointed his father's wish that he join the [British] army' and instead became a clerk.¹¹⁵ Any military impulses fostered by his upbringing were directed towards Irish paramilitary organizations.

Many former Fianna members who joined the youth group during the years of the Irish revolution went on to have notable careers after independence. Of the *DIB* sample, ten became deputies in Dáil Éireann, two for Sinn Féin, six for Fianna Fáil, and two for the Labour Party.¹¹⁶

Fianna Fáilers Thomas Derrig and John Ormonde held cabinet portfolios.¹¹⁷ Four of the group became senators.¹¹⁸ Seven were active in the labour movement, including – not surprisingly – Nora Connolly O’Brien.¹¹⁹ Four joined the Irish Free State army or the Defence Forces. For instance, Michael Brennan served as Army Chief of Staff between 1931 and 1940 and Hugo McNeill retired as a major-general.¹²⁰ In contrast, George Plant remained a member of the IRA and was executed by the Irish state in 1942 for the murder of a fellow IRA associate.¹²¹ Six became journalists, another five became businessmen and two others were teachers.¹²² Dan Dowd and Martin Walton promoted Irish traditional music both as musicians and as an uilleann pipe-maker and the owner of several music businesses respectively.¹²³ John Joe ‘Purty’ Landers and John Joe Sheehy distinguished themselves as Gaelic footballers.¹²⁴ One former member, Maurice MacGonigal, went on to become a celebrated artist and is buried in Roundstone, Connemara next to Hobson, who was responsible for encouraging him to join the youth group.¹²⁵

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, adolescents who already harboured advanced nationalist or republican views were attracted to the Fianna in the years 1909–23. But it would be surprising if involvement in the organization did not reinforce or intensify these views. The preceding section suggests that membership of the Fianna and exposure to the philosophy it promoted helped to generate active participants in the struggle for Irish independence. In the longer term former Fianna members grew up to become political, military and business leaders as well as individuals who were in a position to shape public opinion through their employment in journalism and education. Others contributed to the cultural life of the country. Involvement in the Fianna surely left an imprint on those other former members whose achievements did not merit inclusion in the *DIB*.

Examining the history of Na Fianna Éireann in the years between 1909 and 1923 provides some insight into what it was like to be an Irish nationalist adolescent during the years of the Irish revolution. The evenings and weekends of Fianna members were filled with meetings, camping trips, route marches, shooting practice, hurling matches, concerts, and occasional skirmishes with policemen and members of pro-British youth groups. Members might be called upon to administer first aid to protesting workers, guard a trek-cart full of ammunition, smuggle arms up north, carry despatches between garrisons or attack the Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park. They might even be called upon to kill or be killed.

Notes

I would like to acknowledge the receipt of funding from the former Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences which made some of the research for this chapter possible.

1. For more in-depth discussion of the Fianna, see J. Anthony Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland* (Dublin: Kingdom Books, 2006), 33–77; Marnie Hay, 'The foundation and development of Na Fianna Éireann, 1909–16', *Irish Historical Studies*, 36:141 (2008), 53–71; Damian Lawlor, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish revolution, 1909 to 1923* (Rhode, Co. Offaly: Caoilte Books, 2009); and John R. Watts, 'Na Fianna Éireann: A case study of a political youth organisation' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1981).
2. Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland*, 5.
3. Joost Augusteijn (ed.), *The Irish Revolution, 1913–1923* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), viii.
4. James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) (accessed online 7–8 Feb. 2011). A search of the online version of the *Dictionary of Irish biography (DIB)* generated a list of the following former Fianna members born between 1888 and 1912 who joined during the years of the Irish revolution: Seán Brady (1890–1969), Michael Brennan (1896–1986), Robert Briscoe (1894–1969), Basil Clancy (1907–96), Con Colbert (1888–1916), Thomas Derrig (1897–1956), Dan Dowd (1903–89), Joe Groome (c. 1908–77), Stephen Hayes (1902–74), Archie Heron (1894–1971), Ina Connolly Heron (1896–1980), Seán Heuston (1891–1916), Austin Hogan (né Dilloughery) (1906–74), Paddy Holohan (1897–1946), Garry Holohan (1894–1967), John Joe 'Purty' Landers (1907–2001), John McCann (1905–80), Maurice MacGonigal (1900–79), Hugo McNeill (1900–63), Liam Mellows (1892–1922), Thomas Mullins (1903–78), Nora Connolly O'Brien (1893–1981), Tommy O'Brien (1905–88), Peter O'Connor (1912–99), Patrick O'Daly (1888–1957), John Ormonde (1905–81), Cathal O'Shannon (1890–1969), George Plant (1904–42), James Plant (born c. 1903), Augustus 'Percy' Reynolds (1895–1983), Séamus Robinson (1890–1961), Desmond Ryan (1893–1964), Eugene Sheehan (1903–86), John Joe Sheehy (1897–1980), Joseph Walsh (1905–92), John Walsh (born c. 1900) and Martin Walton (1901–81). Please note: (1) some of these individuals do not have *DIB* entries of their own but are included in a sibling's entry; (2) *DIB* entries were written by different authors who had access to varying amounts of source material, so they do not always allow for a comprehensive comparison of the backgrounds of former members; (3) there may be other former Fianna members included in the *DIB*, but their membership is not mentioned in their entry; and (4) the entry for Joseph Walsh is unclear as to whether he was indeed a member of the Fianna. As his father promoted the youth group in Waterford and his older brother John was a Fianna captain, his membership is likely.
5. Eamon Martin, witness statement, 1 Oct. 1951 (National Archives of Ireland (NAI), Bureau of Military History (BMH), WS 591).
6. Anne Marreco, *The rebel countess* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), 114; Sean McGarry, witness statement, 15 Apr. 1950 (NAI, BMH, WS 368).
7. Garry Holohan, witness statement, 7 Dec. 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 328).

8. Seamus MacCaisín, witness statement, 8 June 1947 (NAI, BMH, WS 8).
9. Seamus Pouch, witness statement, 15 June 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 267).
10. Hay, 'Foundation and development', 56–9.
11. David Fitzpatrick, ' Militarism in Ireland, 1900–1922' in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey (eds), *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 382–3.
12. Andrew Donson, *Youth in the fatherless land: War pedagogy, nationalism and authority in Germany, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 49.
13. Colin Heywood, *A history of childhood: Children and childhood in the west from medieval to modern times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 29–30.
14. Richard A. Smith, 'Robert Baden-Powell' in John Cannon (ed.), *The Oxford companion to British history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 72; Robert A. Smith, 'Boy Scouts' and 'Boys' Brigade' in Cannon, *Oxford companion*, 119.
15. John Springhall, *Coming of age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860–1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), 39.
16. Smith, 'Boys' Brigade' in Cannon (ed.), *Oxford companion*, 119.
17. Paul Wilkinson, 'English youth movements, 1908–30', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4:2 (1969), 6. In addition, see Richard A. Voeltz, "'...A Good Jew and a Good Englishman": The Jewish Lads' Brigade, 1894–1922', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23:1 (1988), 119–27.
18. Smith, 'Boys' Brigade' in Cannon (ed.), *Oxford companion*, 119; Henry Collis, Fred Hurl and Rex Hazlewood, *B.-P.'s Scouts: An official history of the Boy Scouts Association* (London: Collins Press, 1961), 48, 55.
19. Brian Morris, 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the origins of the Woodcraft movement', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5:2 (1970), 185, 187–8.
20. See Michael Rosenthal, 'Knights and retainers: The earliest version of Baden-Powell's Boy Scout scheme', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 15:4 (1980), 603–17; Allen Warren, 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout movement and citizen training in Great Britain, 1900–1920', *English Historical Review*, 101:399 (1986), 376–98; John Springhall, 'Baden-Powell and the Scout movement before 1920: Citizen training or soldiers of the future?', *English Historical Review*, 102:405 (1987), 934–42; Anne Summers, 'Scouts, Guides and VADs: A note in reply to Allen Warren', *Ibid.*, 943–7; Allen Warren, 'Baden-Powell: A final comment', *Ibid.*, 948–50.
21. Donald M. McFarlan, *First for boys: The story of the Boys' Brigade, 1883–1983*, 14, 19–20, available at <http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/first-for-boys.htm> (accessed online 15 May 2014).
22. Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland*, 5–8.
23. *United Irishman*, 24 Jan. 1903, 1.
24. Among the members of the first incarnation of the Fianna was Séamus Robinson, a future member of the IRA, a Sinn Féin deputy in Dáil Éireann in 1921–2, and a senator in the Irish Free State Senate between 1928 and 1935. See Marie Coleman, 'Robinson, Séamus' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 8 Feb. 2011).
25. Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland yesterday and tomorrow* (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1968), 15.
26. For a discussion of Hobson's early Belfast Fianna, see Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the nationalist movement in twentieth-century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 28–9.

27. For discussion of Hobson's activities as an advanced nationalist activist, see Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the nationalist movement in twentieth-century Ireland*.
28. According to the 1911 Irish census, May and Elizabeth Kelly were scholars aged twelve and fourteen respectively. Originally from Co. Cork, the Kelly family resided at 40 Elizabeth Street in Drumcondra, Dublin. Their father Thomas was listed as an unemployed carpenter. See http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Dublin/Drumcondra/Elizabeth_Street/249321/ (accessed online 28 May 2014).
29. Ann Matthews, *Renegades: Irish republican women, 1900–22* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010), 109; Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, 'A short history of the Hibernian Rifles, 1912–1916', 31 March 2013, available at <http://www.theirishstory.com/2013/03/31/a-short-history-of-the-hibernian-rifles-1912-1916/#.UjHVCNKOSul> (accessed online 14 Aug. 2013); Mary McLoughlin, witness statement, c. Feb. 1954 (Military Archives (MA), BMH, WS 934). In some contemporary documents, the organization's name is spelled Clan na Gael and its members are called Girl Guides. Although Joseph E. A. Connell, Jr, states that Markievicz joined the Kelly sisters in forming the Clann na Gael Girl Scouts, I have found no contemporary reference to Markievicz's involvement in the endeavour. See Joseph E. A. Connell, 'Inghinidhe na hÉireann / Daughters of Ireland, Clan na nGaedheal / Girl Scouts of Ireland', *History Ireland*, 19:5 (Sept./Oct. 2011), 66.
30. Irish Girl Guides, 'History of Irish Girl Guides', 2009, available at <http://www.irishgirlguides.ie/index.php/history-of-irish-girl-guides> (accessed online 14 May 2014).
31. Ó Ruairc, 'A short history of the Hibernians Rifles'.
32. The earliest contemporary references that I have found for the Hibernian Boys' Brigade are from 1912. For instance, a notice in the *Freeman's Journal* requested members of the Glasnevin branch to take part in the funeral of a member who accidentally drowned in the Tolka river in north Dublin. See 'Hibernian Boys' Brigade (Glasnevin Co.)', *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Sept. 1912, 2.
33. John Springhall, *Youth, empire and society* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1977), 24.
34. William Wylie cited in *ibid.*, 24.
35. *Ibid.*, 56.
36. M. W. quoted in *ibid.*, 56.
37. Springhall, *Coming of age*, 64.
38. *Ibid.*, 13, 28.
39. Heywood, *A history of childhood*, 28.
40. Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The reasons of misrule: Youth groups and charivaris in sixteenth-century France', *Past and Present*, 1:1 (1971), 74.
41. Elizabeth Colbert, witness statement, 8 June 1953 (NAI, BMH, WS 856); Garry Holohan, witness statement, 7 Dec. 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 328).
42. Seamus Pouch, witness statement, 15 June 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 267).
43. For more on the Fianna's print propaganda, see Marnie Hay, 'This treasured island: Irish nationalist propaganda aimed at children and youth' in Mary Shine Thompson and Celia Keenan (eds), *Treasure islands: Studies in children's literature* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 33–42; Hay, 'The propaganda of Na Fianna Éireann, 1909–26' in Mary Shine Thompson (ed.), *Young Irelands: Studies in children's literature* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 47–56; and Hay, 'What did advanced nationalists tell Irish children in the early

- twentieth century?' in Ciara Ní Bhroin and Patricia Kennon (eds), *What do we tell the children?* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 148–62.
44. See Pádraic Ó Riain (ed.), *Fianna handbook* (Dublin: Central Council of Na Fianna Éireann, 1914), 17–21.
 45. Seamus MacCaisín, witness statement, 8 June 1947 (NAI, BMH, WS 8). A writer associated with the Irish literary revival, Pádraic Colum's play *The Saxon shilling* had been rejected previously by the Irish National Theatre Society, a forerunner of the Abbey Theatre, on the grounds that it was merely anti-military recruitment propaganda (Robert Welch (ed.), *The concise Oxford companion to Irish literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 64–5). The play's message was in keeping with the promise made by Fianna members 'never to join England's armed forces' ('Na Fianna Éireann', *Irish Freedom*, Sept. 1912, 6).
 46. Photocopy of Lang benefit concert programme (MA, BMH, James FitzGerald Collection, CD 91/5).
 47. Fianna Code of Honour (1929) (National Library of Ireland (NLI), MS 10,910).
 48. Robert Holland, witness statement, 18 July 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 280).
 49. Ó Riain (ed.), *Fianna handbook*, 14.
 50. Fianna Code of Honour (1929) (NLI, MS 10,910).
 51. Lieut. General R. S. S. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for boys: A handbook for instruction in good citizenship*, fifth impression (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1908), 266.
 52. Ben Novick, *Conceiving revolution: Irish nationalist propaganda during the First World War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 169.
 53. Markievicz, 'Introduction' in Ó Riain (ed.), *Fianna handbook*, 8. Tone and Emmet were both members of the radical Society of United Irishmen. Generally viewed as one of the fathers of modern Irish republicanism, Tone died of self-inflicted wounds in prison after he was captured with a French force off the Irish coast during the 1798 rebellion. Emmet was executed for his leading role in the 1803 rebellion.
 54. See Fianna Éireann Dublin Brigade, *Easter Week 1916–1922 Commemoration Aeridheacht souvenir programme, 23 April 1922* (Dublin: Fianna Éireann Dublin Brigade, 1922), and Cathal O'Shannon (ed.), *Souvenir of the golden jubilee of Fianna Éireann, Aug. 16, 1909–Aug. 16, 1959* (Dublin: Na Fianna Éireann, 1959).
 55. *Easter Week 1916–1922 Commemoration Aeridheacht souvenir programme*, 7.
 56. 'Fianna Roll of Honour' in Robert Holland, *A short history of Fianna Éireann*, 25–6 (NLI, MS 35,455/3/12A). Although Holland's memoir was written in 1949, the Fianna published this photocopied booklet no earlier than 1981.
 57. Willie Nelson [Pádraic Ó Riain], 'Na Fianna Éireann', *Irish Volunteer*, 26 June 1915, 8; Pádraig Mac Fhloinn, 'The history and tradition of Fianna Éireann' in *Fianna Éireann handbook* (Dublin: Fianna Éireann, 1988), 10.
 58. Interment record for Patrick O'Connor, died 15 June 1915, Glasnevin Cemetery, available at <http://www.glasnevintrust.ie/genealogy/> (accessed online 22 Mar. 2014).
 59. Garry Holohan, witness statement, 7 Dec. 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 328).
 60. Hobson, *Ireland yesterday and tomorrow*, 2–3.
 61. Eamon Martin, witness statement, 1 Oct. 1951 (NAI, BMH, WS 591); Patrick Ward, witness statement, 30 Mar. 1955 (NAI, BMH, WS 1,140); Garry Holohan, witness statement, 7 Dec. 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 328).

62. Jacqueline Van Voris, *Constance de Markievicz in the cause of Ireland* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1967), 89–90.
63. Seamus Pouch, witness statement, 15 June 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 267).
64. *Easter week commemoration programme*, 1932, 12 (MA, BMH, Kathleen Clarke Collection, CD 163/4).
65. Hobson, *Ireland yesterday and tomorrow*, 43.
66. Eamon Martin, witness statement, 1 Oct. 1951 (NAI, BMH, WS 591).
67. *Ibid.*
68. Patrick Ward, witness statement, 30 Mar. 1955 (NAI, BMH, WS 1,140).
69. The *DIB* lists the following former Fianna members as having joined either the Irish Volunteers or the IRA: Seán Brady, Michael Brennan, Robert Briscoe, Con Colbert, Thomas Derrig, Joe Groome, Stephen Hayes, Archie Heron, Seán Heuston, the Holohan brothers, John Joe 'Purty' Landers, Maurice MacGonigal, Hugo McNeill, Liam Mellows, Thomas Mullins, Tommy O'Brien, Peter O'Connor, Patrick O'Daly, Cathal O'Shannon, the Plant brothers, Séamus Robinson, Desmond Ryan, Eugene Sheehan, John Joe Sheehy and Martin Walton. Nora and Ina Connolly joined Cumann na mBan.
70. Séamus Kavanagh, witness statement, 9 Sept. 1957 (MA, BMH, WS 1,670). Dunne and Connolly served in St Stephen's Green during the 1916 Rising.
71. Robert Holland, witness statement, 18 July 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 280).
72. Ina Connolly Heron, witness statement, 25 Jan. 1954 (NAI, BMH, WS 919).
73. Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable revolutionaries: Women and Irish nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1989, 1995), 105–6.
74. Garry Holohan, statement regarding Easter Week 1916 (MA, BMH, John F. Shouldice Collection, CD 20/8).
75. Shane Hegarty and Fintan O'Toole, *The Irish Times book of the 1916 Rising* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006), 44.
76. Mac Fhloinn, 'The history and tradition of Fianna Éireann', 14.
77. County Inspectors' confidential reports, June 1917 (The National Archives, CO 904/103).
78. 'Fianna Roll of Honour' in Holland, *A short history*, 25–6 (NLI, MS 35,455/3/12A).
79. Charles Meaney, witness statement, 11 June 1957 (MA, BMH, WS 1,631).
80. North Louth Battalion IRA to Adjutant General, 3 July 1920 (MA, Collins Collection, A/0472/27).
81. The Dáil first met on 21 Jan. 1919 and consisted of the 73 Sinn Féin candidates elected in the 1918 general election. They abstained from taking their seats in the Westminster parliament and instead established their own legislative assembly in Dublin. This new Irish parliament initially consisted of a unicameral assembly and a ministry (or cabinet) headed by a president. Defence was one of the departments within the ministry. Despite being proscribed by the British government in Sept. 1919, the Dáil continued to function throughout the War of Independence. See Deirdre McMahon, 'Dáil Éireann' in S. J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 133–4.
82. Fianna GHQ Dublin to Fianna officers, Feb. 1921 (MA, BMH, Michael Kilmartin Collection, CD 144/1/20); Joseph Reynolds, witness statement, 31 Jan. 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 191).

83. 'Report of the Fianna convention', *Fianna*, June 1922, 5.
84. Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland*, 57.
85. The anti-Treatyites were: Seán Brady, Robert Briscoe, Thomas Derrig, Dan Dowd, Joe Groome, Stephen Hayes, the Holohan brothers, John Joe Landers, Liam Mellows, Thomas Mullins, Nora Connolly O'Brien, Peter O'Connor, John Ormonde, the Plant brothers, Séamus Robinson, Eugene Sheehan, John Joe Sheehy and Martin Walton. The pro-Treatyites were: Michael Brennan, Archie Heron, Hugo McNeill, Patrick O'Daly, Cathal O'Shannon and Desmond Ryan.
86. 'Editorial', *Fianna*, June 1926, 1.
87. I would like to thank Dr Margaret Scanlon for pointing out the inflation of the figures for Boy Scout membership.
88. For an overview of the Fianna's history from the Civil War to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, see Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland*, 55–74.
89. Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland*, 68.
90. Fianna poster viewed on Dame Street, Dublin, 15 Mar. 2011 (photo in possession of Marnie Hay).
91. Ó Riain (ed.), *Fianna handbook*, 23.
92. For more detail on the gender controversy, see Hay, 'Foundation and development', 60–1.
93. It would be many years before girls could join the Fianna on an equal footing with the boys. In the early 1930s Cumann na mBan established Cumann na gCailíní, the Irish National Girl Scouts, which still served as the female counterpart to the Fianna in 1964. (See Na Fianna Éireann, *The young guard of Erin: Iris-leabhair na bhFiann: The Fianna handbook* (3rd edn, Dublin: Na Fianna Éireann, 1964), 145). The Fianna finally accepted girls in 1968–69. (See Watts, 'Na Fianna Éireann: A case study of a political youth organisation', 295–6). A statement from the leadership of the republican movement published in the 1988 *Fianna Éireann handbook* hailed one of the most welcome and progressive moves within the Fianna as the opening of the organization to young women and girls, remarking that 'there could not be a more appropriate memorial to your founder, Constance Markievicz' (*Fianna Éireann handbook*, 1–2).
94. Rosamond Jacob's diary, 6 July 1916 (NLI, Rosamond Jacob Papers, MS 32,582 (30)). I would like to thank Dr Clara Cullen for the references from Jacob's diary.
95. Jacob's diary, 10 Oct. 1916 (NLI, Jacob Papers, MS 32,582 (30)).
96. Leeann Lane, *Rosamond Jacob: Third person singular* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2010), 123.
97. 'Fianna-tion', *Fianna*, June 1922, 10.
98. Helena Molony, witness statement, 19 May 1950 (NAI, BMH, WS 391).
99. 'HQ Notes and Orders', *Fianna*, June 1922, 2.
100. Patrick O'Daly, witness statement, 6 Apr. 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 220).
101. *Ibid.*
102. Áine Ceannt, witness statement, 27 May 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 264).
103. Holland, *A short history*, 19 (NLI, MS 35,455/3/12A).
104. Michael Brennan, Con Colbert, the Connolly sisters, Joe Groome, Peter O'Connor, Séamus Robinson and Martin Walton are listed as coming from families with Fenian/republican sympathies. The fathers of Robert Briscoe

and the Walsh brothers were supporters of home rule. The political persuasion of the subject's family is not always included in *DIB* entries.

105. See Lawrence William White, 'Hogan (Dilloughery), Austin' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 7 Feb. 2011).
106. See Lawrence William White, 'Briscoe, Robert Emmet', Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Heron, Archibald ('Archie')', and Lawrence William White, 'Plant, George' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 7–8 Feb. 2011).
107. The following former Fianna members attended Christian Brothers' schools: Seán Brady, Con Colbert, Thomas Derrig, Joe Groome, Stephen Hayes, Seán Heuston, Austin Hogan, John Joe 'Purty' Landers, John McCann, Maurice MacGonigal, Tommy O'Brien, Peter O'Connor, John Ormonde, Percy Reynolds, Séamus Robinson, Desmond Ryan and John Joe Sheehy. The ex-St Enda's pupils were Hugo McNeill, Thomas Mullins and Desmond Ryan.
108. Eamon Martin, witness statement, 1 Oct. 1951 (NAI, BMH, WS 591).
109. Springhall, *Coming of age*, 65.
110. Willie Nelson [Pádraic Ó Riain], 'Fianna Éireann', *Irish Volunteer*, 26 June 1915, 8; Interment record for Patrick O'Connor, died 15 June 1915, Glasnevin Cemetery.
111. Séamus Kavanagh, witness statement, 9 Sept. 1957 (MA, BMH, WS 1,670).
112. Robert Holland, witness statement, 18 July 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 280); Patrick O'Daly, witness statement, 6 Apr. 1949 (NAI, BMH, WS 220); David Murphy, 'Heuston, Seán (John J.)' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 7 Feb. 2011).
113. Eamon Martin, witness statement, 1 Oct. 1951 (NAI, BMH, WS 591).
114. Holland, *A short history*, 10 (NLI, MS 35,455/3/12A); Lawrence William White, 'O'Daly (Daly), Patrick' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 8 Feb. 2011).
115. Marie Coleman and William Murphy, 'Mellows, William Joseph ('Liam')' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 7 Feb. 2011).
116. The following former Fianna members became deputies of Dáil Éireann: Seán Brady (Fianna Fáil), Robert Briscoe (Fianna Fáil), Thomas Derrig (Fianna Fáil), Archie Heron (Labour), John McCann (Fianna Fáil), Liam Mellows (Sinn Féin), Thomas Mullins (Fianna Fáil), John Ormonde (Fianna Fáil), Cathal O'Shannon (Labour) and Séamus Robinson (Sinn Féin).
117. Pauric J. Dempsey, 'Derrig, Thomas (Ó Deirig, Tomás)' and Anne Dolan, 'Ormonde, John Michael' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 7–8 Feb. 2011). Derrig served as Minister for Education, Lands, and Posts and Telegraphs, while Ormonde also held the latter portfolio.
118. The senators were Thomas Mullins, Nora Connolly O'Brien, John Ormonde and Séamus Robinson.
119. The following are listed as labour activists: Archie Heron, Austin Hogan, Paddy Holohan, Nora Connolly O'Brien, Peter O'Connor, Cathal O'Shannon and Desmond Ryan.
120. The following individuals served in the Free State Army or the Defence Forces: Michael Brennan, Paddy Holohan, Hugo McNeill and Patrick O'Daly. See James Quinn, 'Brennan, Michael' and Patrick Long, 'McNeill, Hugh Hyacinth ('Hugo')' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 7–8 Feb. 2011).

121. See Lawrence William White, 'Plant, George' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 8 Feb. 2011).
122. The journalists were Basil Clancy, John McCann, Tommy O'Brien, Cathal O'Shannon, Desmond Ryan and Joseph Walsh. The businessmen were Seán Brady, Robert Briscoe, Joe Groome, Percy Reynolds and Martin Walton, while Thomas Derrig and John Ormonde were teachers before entering politics.
123. Paul Rouse, 'Dowd (O'Dowd), Dan' and Lawrence William White, 'Walton, Martin' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 7–8 Feb. 2011).
124. Sean Kearns, 'Landers, John Joe ('Purty')' and Marie Coleman, 'Sheehy, John Joe' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 8 Feb. 2011).
125. Carmel Doyle and Lawrence William White, 'MacGonigal, Maurice Joseph' in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (accessed online 8 Feb. 2011); email from Ciarán MacGonigal to Ivar McGrath, 17 Nov. 2009 (in possession of Marnie Hay).

6

'Storm and Stress': Richard Devane, Adolescent Psychology and the Politics of Protective Legislation 1922–1935

Susannah Riordan

I

Between 1922 and 1935 successive Irish governments came under pressure from an alliance of feminist, religious and social work organizations to introduce legislation that would give greater protection to children, girls and women from sexual exploitation.¹ Throughout this chapter, these organizations and the individuals who supported them are referred to as the 'protectionist' or 'social work' lobby. Their campaign had its origins in nineteenth-century efforts to address the sexual double standard – the ethical system which condemned female lapses from chastity as unforgiveable while simultaneously regarding male incontinence as being natural and venial.² The campaign reflected connected discourses around unmarried motherhood and prostitution. To synopsise crudely, while campaigners had little sympathy with older women who were deemed to have embraced a life of immorality – the mothers of more than one illegitimate child, married women who became pregnant by men other than their husbands, and women who were sometimes called 'deliberate prostitutes' – they sought to establish the fundamental innocence, victimhood and amenability to moral reclamation of the sexually-compromised adolescent. Their preferred narrative was one of seduction and betrayal, in which a girl, often a domestic servant, was impregnated by an older and more powerful man, perhaps her employer. Ostracized by society and unable to support herself or her child, she drifted into prostitution.

While social workers applied themselves to rescue work, they also lobbied for legislative reform to discourage the would-be seducer and to give the unmarried mother recourse to options other than prostitution. This campaign resulted in the passage of two pieces of legislation which

are the subjects of this chapter. The first was the Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Act, 1930 which made it possible for the mothers of illegitimate children to apply to the courts to establish paternity and oblige the putative father to contribute towards the maintenance of the child. This was a government measure, introduced by Cumann na nGaedheal Minister for Justice James Fitzgerald-Kenney but, when the minister was tardy in responding to demands to raise the age of consent, Fianna Fáil's P. J. Little introduced a private member's bill. Little's Criminal Law Amendment bill, the second piece of legislation with which this chapter is concerned, proposed to raise the age of consent from sixteen to eighteen but was introduced primarily to force Fitzgerald-Kenney to initiate an expert investigation into the question of whether the age of consent ought to be raised and by how much. The result was the establishment of the Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Acts (1880–85) and Juvenile Prostitution – better known as the Carrigan committee – and ultimately the passage of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1935 which, among other things, raised the age of consent to seventeen and prohibited men charged with unlawful carnal knowledge from using the defence of having made a reasonable mistake about the girl's age.³ Crucially, the parliamentary debates on the Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Act and Little's Criminal Law Amendment bill occurred simultaneously in late 1929 and early 1930, with Little effectively acting as a self-appointed representative of the protectionist lobby throughout.⁴

Sandra McAvoy has rightly argued that the passage of protective legislation brings into focus the larger question of women's political agency in the Irish Free State.⁵ While feminist activists had little success in defending their right to equal citizenship during the 1920s and 1930s,⁶ a study of the passage of the two key pieces of legislation which addressed the concerns of the protectionist lobby suggests that some legislators were remarkably open to the idea of making radical amendments to the law to reflect the perceived superior understanding of women in a number of areas, particularly with regard to the welfare of children, adolescents and 'fallen women'. This chapter argues that what persuaded many legislators was the effective rebranding of maternalistic feminism as a form of scientific expertise; the understanding of adolescent psychology. The process was initiated by the Jesuit priest Richard Devane (1876–1951).

By 1922 Devane was director of a Jesuit retreat house at Rathfarnham Castle in Dublin and in that year he began to assist Frank Duff of the Legion of Mary in his attempts to shut down Dublin's 'Monto' brothel

district.⁷ Unlike many social workers Devane had, therefore, experience of working both with 'respectable' boys at Rathfarnham Castle and with prostituted women and girls. Devane's opinions were frequently sought by successive governments on moral questions and his influence on the development of the Censorship of Publications Act, 1929 has been recognized.⁸ The significance of his involvement with the campaign for protective legislation has not been adequately acknowledged.⁹

In January and February 1924 Devane published articles in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* which set out detailed arguments in favour of such legislation.¹⁰ These demonstrated an encyclopaedic knowledge of international law and of the debates that informed it in a variety of jurisdictions. In common with the feminist and social work organizations, he argued that such legislation would be enlightened and progressive. This chapter is primarily concerned, however, with another aspect of Devane's campaign: his efforts to promote the related concepts of the adolescent girl as psychologically abnormal and of the social worker as the authority on her condition. Firstly, it charts how and why discussions about adolescent female psychology featured in the debate on the Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Act. Secondly, it discusses Devane's own writings on the subject. Thirdly, it examines the extent to which his views were shared by witnesses appearing before the Carrigan committee. It argues that Devane contributed to establishing psychological expertise as a necessary prerequisite for framing legislation but that what this meant in practice was the privileging of the views of lay and religious female social workers over those of male legal and medical professionals.

II

In the context of the Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Act, it should be noted, of course, that not all unmarried mothers were adolescents. However, it was the very young mother who primarily interested campaigners and legislators alike. Campaigners were convinced that the majority of girls who 'fell' sexually did so during their teen years and that such young girls could be 'saved' through early social and moral intervention. It may also have been of tactical value for campaigners to discuss 'girls' rather than 'women' in order to establish the victimhood of the unmarried mother. One noticeable aspect of the passage of the act was the near-complete absence of references to child welfare. Indeed, the question of *maternal* welfare was not embraced in any positive sense. Rather, affiliation orders were advocated as a means of

compensating the mother for the loss of employment, family support, respect and marriage prospects which would inevitably follow from her disgrace. They were also seen as a punishment for, and a deterrent to, unmarried fatherhood. As Lindsey Earner-Byrne has noted, 'these debates revealed a perception of sex outside marriage as a crime that both men and women were responsible for and one that both would and should be punished by their community.'¹¹

Devane, for example, had contrasted the desperate predicament of the mother with the lack of consequences for the father, asking of the latter: 'supposing the blush could be brought to his hard face in a court of justice; supposing he were saddled with the upkeep of his child ... it would keep his head low and would be a bar to further villainy.'¹² In its 1927 *Report*, the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor had taken a similar approach, recommending a procedure for making affiliation orders as a form of 'redress' for the unmarried mother while criticising the existing law for giving the man 'every loophole for escape from the shame and dishonour that is cast upon the woman.'¹³ These themes were prevalent during the parliamentary debates on the 1930 bill, to the annoyance of Labour Senator John O'Farrell – one of only two contributors who referred to child welfare in his speech. He insisted that the bill's merit lay in the fact that it protected children, rather than:

In the protection it extends, actual or sentimental, to the mothers of these children. We have heard mentioned here to-day the expression 'poor girl', and so on. From what one has heard one would imagine that all those mothers of illegitimate children are saints or martyrs of some kind, and that the only charge that can be laid is against the other side. As a matter of fact, more often the charge, if it is a charge, could be laid against the mother.¹⁴

However, neither O'Farrell nor any other member of the Oireachtas opposed the bill on principle; disagreement arose from points of procedure but it was precisely the tenor of these discussions that gave rise to O'Farrell's frustration with the champions of 'poor girls'.

In 1924 Devane had argued that affiliation order cases ought not to be tried in the manner of other cases but, firstly, that a committee of social workers should be constituted in each locality as legal guardians of all illegitimate children and empowered to help the mother, attempt to arrange a marriage or maintenance with the father, and initiate a court case if these efforts failed. Leaving aside the aggressively paternalistic

tendencies of his first suggestion and the distasteful image of state-appointed shotgun matchmakers, Devane's desire to establish panels of legal guardians amounted to a suggestion that social work organizations should have a quasi-legal role.

Several of those who contributed to the debate on the Affiliation Orders bill made suggestions of a comparable nature. Senator Jennie Wyse Power, the spearhead of the protectionist movement and a member of the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, proposed that 'when the mother is young and friendless the district justice should have power to arrange for a suitable woman to accompany her to court and remain with her while she gives evidence.'¹⁵ More radically, Fianna Fáil TD (parliamentary deputy) Frank Fahy proposed that social workers should organize panels of 'woman assessor[s]' to aid the court in evaluating the testimony of plaintiffs and hence the paternity of children. Fahy's argument was based on gender rather than experience of social work: 'I have great faith in the intuition of women in such cases as these.' Nonetheless, his claim that the minister had already received representations on this matter may indicate that the proposal originated within the social work lobby.¹⁶

Fitzgerald-Kenney dismissed the suggestion that a woman should be 'brought in to act as a species of judge' as 'novel'.¹⁷ However, far from being deterred by the suggestion that their proposals ran contrary to established legal principles and procedures, those who supported protective legislation were actively seeking to innovate. Devane had written in terms of a tension between English legal tradition and Irish (Catholic) self-realization, warning that 'the conservative legal mind ... may be unconsciously too much bound by the legal traditions of the past.'¹⁸ With Fitzgerald-Kenney leading the legal traditionalists, Little – whose Criminal Law Amendment bill was now before the Dáil – was happy to take up the role of progressive and he proposed a number of radical amendments to the minister's bill.

One such amendment was to the effect that where the mother of a child 'has died or is an idiot or person of unsound mind,' the child's guardian might apply for an affiliation order.¹⁹ Little's amendment might have been inspired by the salutary wish not to deprive a child in such circumstances of maintenance – or by the desire not to allow the father of such a child to escape either his responsibilities or due opprobrium. However, in the absence of scientific means of determining paternity, it was questionable whether a court could award an affiliation order against a man without hearing the evidence of the mother. Little flew in the face of the established rules of evidence by suggesting,

ultimately unsuccessfully, that where the mother was dead, 'the information may be made by any person who has actual knowledge of the facts stated therein and may include evidence of a dying declaration.'²⁰ However, the greatest part of the debate on this bill was taken up by consideration of another, equally radical, Little amendment, this time moved jointly with Cumann na nGaedheal TD Hugh Law. This was to the affect that affiliation order hearings should be held *in camera*. This method of proceeding had been recommended by Devane and endorsed by the *Report of the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, including the Insane Poor*.²¹ It had been actively lobbied for in the press but a deputation of social workers, including Wyse Power and almost certainly lead by Devane, had failed to convince Fitzgerald-Kenney that it was necessary or proper.²²

The day before the Dáil was due to debate the amendment, Devane published a letter in the *Irish Times* with the avowed aim of aiding deputies in their deliberations. Disingenuously opening with an assertion that 'a priori reasoning in this matter by the mere man is worthless, and that he ought honestly to admit his inability to fathom the elusive and abnormal psychology of the "girl in trouble",' Devane insisted that 'we must fall back on experienced women to understand this problem, and must be largely guided by them in making the law for the protection of the younger members of their sex.' He now supplemented the known views of female social workers with the opinions he had canvassed from Good Shepherd nuns involved in running Magdalene asylums, institutions intended for the rehabilitation of prostitutes and sexually-compromised women and girls. These were women, Devane asserted, 'whose wide experience, based on many years of personal daily contact with such girls in question, must give them unique opportunity for knowing their peculiar psychology.' They all agreed with his view that, 'owing to our peculiar national attitude to the unmarried mother, and her special psychology – or modesty – call it what you will,' girls would not be willing to bring suit in open court and all insisted that *in camera* hearings would not result in blackmail.²³

The reference to blackmail resulted from the fear, expressed by several politicians, that if precautions were not taken to prevent it some unmarried mothers would successfully bring suit against innocent men or would use the threat of court action and consequent social ruin to coerce such men into supporting their children. The ubiquitous image of the 'blackmailing juvenile seductress' has served to convey the impression that 'the legislature

was more concerned with protecting male interests than serving women's.²⁴ However, although this was certainly the perspective of some legislators, it was not universal. Disagreements over whether innovations such as holding hearings *in camera* would facilitate blackmail reflected diverging views about the character of unmarried mothers and, as all such discussion was necessarily speculative, it promoted competition as to who could speak about the subject with authority.

When the bill was first introduced, Fianna Fáil's Conn Ward, a medical practitioner from Co. Monaghan who would later become a reforming but controversial Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, explained that his concerns about blackmail were based on his experience 'of studying these people in the course of my professional work in institutions where these people are treated.' He contrasted this with the lack of comparable expertise of the 'many people [who] will assist in passing the Bill who know little or nothing of the psychology of the mother in such cases.'²⁵ One of Devane's most significant contributions to the debate was the manner in which he re-appropriated this branch of knowledge from medical professionals like Ward and legal professionals like Fitzgerald-Kenney to female social workers.

Devane's repeated use of the word 'psychology' in his letter to the *Irish Times* associated these social workers and nuns with science, modernity and professionalism – what Regina G. Kunzel has described as a 'masculinizing linguistic turn'.²⁶ The association rested on very shaky foundations, as in the late 1920s social work in Ireland remained untrained and voluntary.²⁷ Nonetheless, the references to psychology served to disguise the fact that Devane was suggesting legislators should formulate law on the basis of female intuition and empathy. What is remarkable about this strategy is its initial success. Introducing his '*in camera*' amendment, Little scarcely troubled to develop arguments of his own but rather offered a rambling synopsis of Devane's letter. The amendment, he claimed, 'has created a good deal of interest amongst people who have a real experience of institutions where these women are looked after.' Such experts were convinced that it was 'only the hardened sinners, people who have completely lost their self-respect, who will come into a public court in cases like this' and the Dáil ought to give weight to the views of 'people who know the psychology of these people ... I think that the facts they have put before us should weigh very heavily with the Dáil.'²⁸ Hugh Law, the co-sponsor of the amendment, argued that:

Neither the Minister nor I can be regarded as the best judge in these matters. The people who are the best judges of the psychology of the unmarried mother are surely the people whose duties bring them into contact with them, such as social workers, the clergy and certain religious orders like nuns.²⁹

Opponents of the amendment argued from the perspective of the right of the defendant to have a case heard in public and, if the case should be dismissed, to have that fact publicized. However, attempts to counter the social workers' position through an appeal to legal precedent appeared to establish no more than that, as Little put it, 'there is no one who can be so inhuman as a legal theorist.'³⁰ His party colleague Michael Kennedy attempted to undermine the expertise of the social workers and nuns by claiming that they came into contact largely with 'middle-class mothers' and were unfamiliar with the 'vast majority of mothers of illegitimate children' who were to be found in county homes and who included a number 'who themselves are illegitimate, who come of an illegitimate stock, and who observe no moral code whatever, but are bred in the art of blackmail,' but this was a unique contribution.³¹ A third member of Fianna Fáil, Seán MacEntee, summed up the debate as follows: 'on the one side, you have heard the lawyers, practically unanimous, against the amendment, while on the other side I think you have social workers, practically unanimous, in favour of the amendment.' He suggested that if the Dáil was to be guided by experts, the social workers were the more appropriate.³²

In the end the Fianna Fáil party voted as a block in favour of the amendment which was duly passed. This did not necessarily mean universal sympathy with the belief that the unmarried mother was, as Law put it, typically a 'decent girl'.³³ Many senators supported the amendment because they were persuaded that lack of publicity would actually be to the advantage of the male defendant. Some members of the Fianna Fáil party clearly subordinated their opinions to the political goal of embarrassing Fitzgerald-Kenney. However, the impression was given that the Oireachtas had been convinced by argument, the forces of legal conservatism defeated, the character of the young unmarried mother vindicated and the social worker established as an expert in practical psychology whose views should predominate over those of politicians and lawyers in matters of this kind. This set the stage for Little's Criminal Law Amendment bill, which had its second-stage reading in the Dáil six weeks after its sponsor's amendment to the Affiliation Orders bill had successfully been passed in that house.

III

Little's bill was intended to set the age of consent at eighteen and to restrict the reasonable mistake defence to men under twenty-three years of age.³⁴ However, he presented the bill to the Dáil as a document which was intended to facilitate discussion rather than as an ideal piece of legislation. This position lent itself to another short, vague and derivative speech. Claiming that the only issue of controversy was whether the age of consent should be raised to seventeen or eighteen, Little told the Dáil that this was 'a question of psychology' and that the views of experts should be sought since 'apparently there is an unbalanced condition psychologically up to the age of seventeen or eighteen.'³⁵

Fitzgerald-Kenney was less concerned about the psychology of the adolescent girl than with the opportunities for blackmail that might be offered to prostitutes under the age of consent.³⁶ This was reflected in the terms of reference issued to the Carrigan committee, which required members to consider whether the statutes which regulated the age of consent required amendment and 'whether any new legislation is feasible to deal in a suitable manner with the problem of juvenile prostitution (*i.e.*, prostitutes under the age of 21).'³⁷ However, as historians of the committee have pointed out, these terms were ambiguous and lent themselves to broad interpretation.³⁸ Many witnesses, and perhaps the committee members themselves, seem to have regarded Little's comments as supplementary instructions and to have regarded an exploration of adolescent psychology as being crucial to their deliberations.

While the debate on the Affiliation Orders bill had served to establish the study of psychology as essential to the formation of protective legislation, references to it had been superficial and arguably disingenuous. It has been suggested above that Devane used the word strategically to invest the views of the social workers and nuns who agreed with him with an aura of professional authority superior to that of the medical and legal professions. In doing so, he gave a modern gloss to the maternalistic feminist position that socially-engaged middle-class women were the people best suited to formulate strategies for the protection and rehabilitation of working-class girls. However, although his early writings on protective legislation made no reference to the subject, by 1930 Devane had become an enthusiastic student of adolescent psychology. His belief that 'we must fall back on experienced women' to understand the mind of the sexually-compromised girl was not strategic merely but reflected three sincerely held beliefs. Firstly, that

the scientific study of psychology had revealed that adolescence was an abnormal period in the development of the individual, marked by profound impulses towards both good and evil; secondly, that the study of adolescent psychology had been culpably neglected in Ireland; thirdly, that the psychology of adolescent girls was more complicated than that of boys, and even less understood.

The written evidence which Devane provided to the Carrigan committee in June 1930 was informed by these concerns. Here, he attributed the Irish state's continued acquiescence in the prostitution of sixteen-year-old girls to national apathy, lack of social sense and social conscience, an unusually entrenched sexual double standard, and biases 'arising from want of personal practical knowledge or study and from the conservatism of holding on to ideas and shibboleths abandoned by more advanced people.' There was, he argued, a 'complete absence of any attempt at the Scientific Study of adolescence in this country' and 'the administration as well as legislation is completely in the hands of men who view things from the "male" point of view and have no adequate appreciation of female psychology in matters involving morality.'³⁹

The following month he published an article in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* on the apparently unrelated question of 'Adolescence and the Vocational Education bill'. Here, too, he made an appeal for a sympathetic and scientific understanding of Irish adolescence and he gave an overview of the state of the art as he understood it. Devane emerges from this article – and from the extended version which formed the introduction of his full-length 1942 work *Challenge from youth: A documented study of youth in modern youth movements* – as a student of the work of Granville Stanley Hall and his disciples, emphasising in particular both their insistence that adolescent psychology was a 'vast and complex theme' and that adolescence was a period of 'storm and stress'.⁴⁰ In a passage worth quoting at length, Devane described adolescence as follows:

It is the period of the disintegration of the old personality and the making of the new. It is pre-eminently the period of conflict. It is the age of mental exploration and empiricism; of questioning, indecision and doubt. Egotism and independence struggle side by side against the conviction of the need for guidance and dependence. Idealism and enthusiasm rub shoulders with materialism and pessimism. Violent temptation and noble aspiration to virtue are inextricably entangled. Intense religion and doubts about the very fundamentals

of religion are found hopelessly mixed up. Pious practices and personal devotion may dwell with sordid sin. Intellect and emotion are in riot and rebellion with each other. Sensibility and sensitiveness may be mated to a strange harshness and even cruelty. It is the age of excitement and morbid depression; of crude and obtrusive self-expression; of painful self-centred silence; of unintelligible selfishness and of the most generous self-denial.⁴¹

However, Devane's researches into scientific psychology produced few arguments that could be wielded in the cause of protective legislation. In 1942 he would complain that 'while the boy has been the subject of much investigation, the girl has found few to adventure the difficult task of studying her very complex and highly emotional nature.'⁴² Additionally, women had written little on the subject of adolescence, 'and that little has been lacking the scientific approach.'⁴³ By this stage Mary Chadwick's *Adolescent girlhood* had been published and Devane found much in it to recommend.⁴⁴ In 1930 he had no such weapons in his arsenal and his writings remained largely reliant on Hall, who was primarily a student of the adolescent male. Although Devane promised the Carrigan committee that when giving oral evidence he would cite 'experienced Sociologists, Criminologists, Social Workers and Lawyers' to support the argument that the age of consent should be set at eighteen, he did not refer to psychologists but rather to 'sisters of very wide experience of adolescents' in whose view the age between sixteen to eighteen was the period 'when a girl's sexual passion is most assertive and her will weakest.'⁴⁵ It is not least in this context that his recourse to the testimony of 'experienced women' should be viewed. When such women testified to the vulnerability of the adolescent girl, to the fundamental decency of the young unmarried mother and the juvenile prostitute, to the delicate balance between redemption and damnation, they displayed an instinctive grasp of scientific truths which students of psychology had suggested but had yet to demonstrate.

In January 1931, as the Carrigan committee was engaged in compiling its report, Devane published another article on 'The legal protection of girls' in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, which included a section on 'Psychological and physiological reasons for raising the age [of consent]'. Here he argued that 'the intelligent understanding of the mental and physical nature of the growing girl ought to precede the consideration of the age of protection and help in determining it.' As usual, in his writings on this subject, Devane quoted Hall:

To my mind the psyche of the budding girl has seemed the most unknown of all the domains of psychology. We do know something ... about the crisis in a boy's life, but the corresponding changes in the soul of the young woman are far more hidden, not only to herself but others.⁴⁶

Devane failed to source the quotation, which in fact came from Hall's introduction to Phyllis Blanchard's *The adolescent girl*.⁴⁷ In 1942 he provided a hint to explain the omission when he wrote that Blanchard's book 'is not to be recommended, owing to its Freudian ideas.'⁴⁸ Devane's untypical lapse in failing to provide bibliographical details for his quotation in 1931 demonstrates, of course, the unsurprising selectivity of his attitude to psychology and the potential dangers of bringing psychological insights to bear on debates about adolescent behaviour. However, the passage may provide a new prism through which to view the evidence given to the Carrigan committee.

Kunzel has argued that as social work was professionalized in the United States in the early twentieth century:

Few social workers considered unmarried mothers their 'unfortunate sisters' and fewer still harboured any missionary impulse to 'save' them. Turning from the nineteenth-century tradition of female reform to the legitimizing rhetoric of science, they cast themselves not as social housekeepers, moral guardians, or home missionaries but as experts.⁴⁹

What this meant in effect was that social workers tended increasingly to reject the concept of a gender-based empathy with sexually-compromised girls and to portray them as moral delinquents rather than victims of the sexual double standard. In Ireland, by contrast, social work was as yet unprofessionalized and Devane appears to have been developing a hybrid understanding of the relationship between social worker and 'fallen girl', drawing on the new science of psychology and the more traditional elements of female benevolence and maternalistic feminism only as and when these supported a sympathetic perception of the girl at issue. Other witnesses appearing before the Carrigan committee followed Devane's lead.⁵⁰

Many were determined to demonstrate that the juvenile prostitute – and indeed the sexually active girl who was portrayed as a 'potential' prostitute – constituted a special class, different from and more sympathetic than the older women involved in the sex trade. Kathleen

Kirwan, a social worker at the Legion of Mary's hostel in Dublin, divided prostitutes into three classes: the mentally deficient and morally delinquent 'deliberate prostitute'; the 'semi-prostitute' who might be driven into the trade by circumstances ('seduction, bad wages, etc.') and 'the juvenile or potential prostitute, who through bad upbringing or prurient curiosity drifts to the trade, [who] is the most hopeful and necessary reclamation.' She proposed an elaborate system of containment of her own devising, based on existing Magdalene asylums and the League of Mary's home, which would be strictly segregated between 'probationers', 'relapsed cases' and 'chronics'.⁵¹ Garda Commissioner Eoin O'Duffy also suggested that the courts be empowered to commit prostitutes under twenty-one years of age to reformatory institutions, such as those run by the Good Shepherd sisters.⁵² The representatives of the Irish Women Citizens and Local Government Association (IWCLGA) went further, arguing that prostitutes under eighteen ought not to be liable to arrest but should be sought out by women police and training officers and persuaded into voluntary training centres under the control of the Department of Education.⁵³

Here, as in the debate on the Affiliation Orders bill, there is a suggestion that social workers, religious or lay, ought to have a quasi-legal role in dealing with sexually-compromised girls. In the context of the state's relationship with offenders the argument takes on a somewhat sinister connotation, bearing in mind James Smith's research into the manner in which courts would indeed come to use the Magdalene asylum as an alternative to prison in a variety of circumstances, although the legality of doing so was at best dubious.⁵⁴ However, the impetus behind the suggestions made by witnesses was to decriminalize girls who were seen to be the victims of a combination of social, economic and psychological factors.

In the Carrigan committee's report considerable emphasis was placed on the *cultural* factors that might give rise to adolescent sexual activity, in particular to the evidence given by clerical witnesses about the sexual dangers of dance halls, cinemas and the motor car.⁵⁵ However, the majority of witnesses concentrated on more traditional social evils. O'Duffy suggested that there was nothing inherently bad about most Irish girls who drifted into the 'unfortunate class'. Rather, the cause was 'wretched housing conditions', overcrowding, lack of privacy and the tradition of sending girls into service at thirteen.⁵⁶ As has been suggested, social workers saw young girls working outside their home, and particularly in the homes of their employers, as particularly vulnerable. Margaret Gavan Duffy, giving evidence as a visitor to the

Westmoreland Lock Hospital which treated women suffering from venereal diseases, proposed that where there was a sexual relationship between employer and employee, the age of consent should be at least twenty-one and preferably twenty-five. She was also one of a number of witnesses who were critical of institutions like industrial schools, which sent girls into service at the age of sixteen, claiming that such girls were 'easy prey' for men.⁵⁷

Given that much of the recent historiography of the Carrigan committee has concentrated on the evidence it elicited, largely from O'Duffy, about the prevalence of rape, sexual assault and the sexual abuse of children, it is essential to realize that the majority of witnesses were concerned about the vulnerability of adolescent girls to seduction, not rape.⁵⁸ Witnesses generally understood adolescent girls as giving sexual consent willingly. They did not regard the Irish girl as being sexually passive but as highly sexualized and victimized as much by her own desires as by either men or her environment. As early as 1924 the IWCLGA had based their arguments in favour of raising the age of consent on the belief 'that it is unjust to hold young persons entirely responsible for their own moral conduct until they have passed out of the chaotic stages of adolescence and the period of curiosity.'⁵⁹ Others who gave evidence to the Carrigan committee agreed. Again, O'Duffy was the most explicit, arguing that character was formed between the ages of thirteen and eighteen and that sexual passions predominated during that period. Adolescent females had neither the strength of will 'to resist suggestions which so strongly appeal to their senses, nor have they the understanding to appreciate the consequences. They become an easy prey for those so inclined, and, having fallen at this impressionable age, there is little hope that their career can be anything but depraved.'⁶⁰

Others agreed. The Rev. M. Fitzpatrick, a Limerick priest, argued that 'sex curiosity and sex impulses are very active – and in many cases violent – during those years.'⁶¹ Gavan Duffy's evidence is perhaps the most interesting as she differed from the majority of witnesses in claiming authority on this subject not on the basis of her social work experience but because she was the mother of a sixteen-year-old girl. She believed that girls of that age were 'physically, mentally and emotionally at a dangerous period in their lives.'⁶² This would seem to indicate that this witness, at least, regarded the 'abnormal' psychology of the adolescent girl to be undetermined by class.

Witness statements to the effect that the teenage girl was 'more irresponsible and forward in manner than the boy' and that such girls

were 'wayward at that age and ignorantly run into trouble' require nuanced analysis. These qualities were not seen as being innate and blameworthy characteristics of *some* young girls but temporary characteristics of *all* young girls, potentially harmful insofar as they undermined the girl's ability to defend herself against sexual predators. The concept of female adolescence as a period of 'miniature insanity' was, of course, well established in Victorian medical literature.⁶³ However, many witnesses also regarded the Irish girl as being more than usually immature and sexually ignorant. Devane, Gavan Duffy, Mary Kettle of the Dublin Union Committee and Drs Delia Moclair Horne and Dorothy Stopford Price representing a Committee of Medical Women all made a point of arguing that Irish girls were less sophisticated than English girls of equal age and needed protection for longer.⁶⁴ The doctors attributed this in part to a 'remarkable' ignorance of sexual matters.⁶⁵ Gavan Duffy agreed that 'girls leaving school were ignorant of physical facts' – a comment that appears, again, to make no distinction of class.⁶⁶ These witnesses clearly regarded such ignorance as a source of danger, not a preserver of sexual innocence. They were also persuaded that Irish girls were of a more trusting nature than English girls and therefore frequently seduced by false promises of marriage and, in a fascinating local psychological twist, the doctors argued that the 'Celtic temperament was much more gravely affected by adolescence than was the phlegmatic English temperament.'⁶⁷

Witnesses also argued that there were a variety of social, physiological and psychological factors which contributed, unjustly, to the successful use of the 'reasonable cause to believe' defence, which ought therefore to be abolished. It was not right, they argued, for men to escape punishment because the girl had, for example, lied about her age in order to secure employment or because she used makeup which made her appear older than her years. Nor should the appearance of a girl in court be held against her since often 'the injured girl looks older than her years owing to her horrible experience and by this older appearance actually lends support to the accused.'⁶⁸ Some witnesses were concerned that the defence removed legal protection from those girls who were most in need of it. Moclair Horne and Stopford Price argued that 'a girl's physical development was frequently at the expense of her moral and mental development and such a girl was the more in need of a higher Age of Consent unqualified by any such proviso.'⁶⁹ The IWCLGA agreed: 'the precocious girl is even more in need of protection than other girls.'⁷⁰

In his article 'The legal protection of girls' Devane included a lengthy account by 'an expert'.⁷¹ This woman described herself as having many

years' experience both of preparing girls of the educated classes for university exams and of social work among working-class girls. In general, she argued, 'the average girl is imbalanced' between the ages of fifteen and twenty as the result of physical changes which tried her nervous system. The emotional side of her nature was dominant, giving rise to wild mood changes. By the late teens, the girl was open to the influence of anything that appealed to her imagination and feelings, and her emotions were 'too strong for moral principles alone to hold in check' and 'if this is the case with the girl of the leisured classes how much more so with the working girl.' The Irish girl was in particular danger due to lack of conventional social control, the fact that she was 'softer and more emotional' than the 'latins', and ill-equipped for life by a national education system which failed to develop 'strength of character or depth of thought.'⁷²

Taking it together with the witness evidence, this testimony suggests that historians may be posed a challenge in analyzing discourses surrounding sexuality in Ireland. Despite their maternalism (or paternalism), witnesses were far from creating simple dichotomies of purity and impurity. Adolescent girls, apparently regardless of class, were seen as being highly-sexualized beings, who might initiate sex and who frequently consented to it because they thought they might enjoy it. This was a wrong course of action because it was sinful and because it gave rise to horrific consequences for the girl, and ultimately for society. Such views were typical of late nineteenth-century discourses about sexuality and the age of consent. However, by the time the Carrigan committee took evidence, much of the discussion about working-class adolescent sexuality in the United Kingdom and the United States had moved towards a discourse of delinquency, which emphasized class difference, sexual autonomy and the exchange of sexual favours for 'treats'.⁷³ The Carrigan committee's witnesses adhered to the older understanding of adolescent female sexuality and were keen to absolve the fallen girl from guilt. Responsibility lay rather with the predatory male and a society that maintained the sexual double standard; failed to give girls adequate social and educational, as well as legal and moral, protection; and neglected the scientific study of the female adolescent. While witnesses found the solutions to these problems in terms of containment and religious discipline, they did so because of a belief that the nun, like the social worker, had an intrinsic understanding of and sympathy for the 'girl in trouble' that was not shared by the male-dominated institutions of the state. Essentially, theirs was a feminist argument, though one based on gender difference, rather than on equality.

IV

This chapter has traced the short-lived but remarkable support this argument received within the Oireachtas in the late 1920s and has suggested that it rested on the associated assertions that young unmarried motherhood, and female adolescence in general, were marked by abnormal psychologies, impenetrable to a mere man, whether doctor, lawyer or politician. Politicians who supported this view were not only open to allowing social workers to dictate the forms of legislation but to departing significantly from legal precedent and procedure in order to do so and, in some cases, to envisage a quasi-judicial role for these self-constituted experts. It is, of course, open to question to what extent these attitudes reflected unusual political circumstances and the willingness of some politicians to make a virtue of their ignorance of distasteful subjects. Certainly the promise of radical change suggested by the establishment of the Carrigan committee was to be disappointed.

The social worker witnesses who appeared before the Carrigan committee cannot have seen the committee's report officially and it is unlikely that they did so unofficially. Had they done so they would have discovered that, although the committee had adopted many of their recommendations, it had chosen not to incorporate much of the evidence on which these recommendations were based. As Smith writes, the report ignored Devane's 'sociological observations' and privileged 'those elements of the cleric's testimony that were loudly echoed by his fellow priests, in particular, a seeming obsession with the dangers associated with popular amusements, especially the dance hall.'⁷⁴ Indeed, many of the other clerics were more sociologically aware than the report suggests. The more challenging observations and recommendations of the women witnesses were also suppressed.⁷⁵ The committee's reasons for doing so remain unclear. Smith's suggestion that the committee's agenda was different from, and more political than, that of its witnesses is difficult to sustain given the close association of some of its members with the social work lobby.⁷⁶ It may be that the committee simply saw no need to restate well-known social work evidence, opting instead for the more sensational evidence of clerical witnesses, or that the committee decided to omit evidence that highlighted the sexual agency of the adolescent girl, preferring to emphasize the wickedness of men and the dangers of the modern world.

It is regrettable that social workers were not in a position to respond to the treatment of their evidence. However, their dissatisfaction with the shape of what would eventually emerge as the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1935 was palpable. While the act abolished the

reasonable mistake defence, it raised the age of consent only to seventeen and failed to deliver other key demands. In March 1935 delegates from a number of women's organizations met in Dublin under the chairmanship of Mary Kettle to consider what action they ought to take to improve the act.⁷⁷ This meeting gave rise to the establishment of the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers (JCWSSW), an umbrella group which began by policing the courts in cases that came under the auspices of the act and lobbying for the appointment of women police officers. It would go on, for fifty-eight years, to promote a wider variety of women's and children's rights and to highlight social as well as legal inequities. The importance of the JCWSSW cannot be reduced to advocacy of protective legislation but the context of its formation is significant, as it bears witness not only to the determination of the social work lobby but also to the waning of its early influence – real and potential – on the legal system of the Irish Free State.

Notes

1. These organizations included the Irish Women Citizens' Association, the Dublin Christian Citizenship Council, the Dublin Council of Women, the Infant Aid Society, the Irish Christian Fellowship, the Irish Women Workers' Union, the Nursery Rescue and Protestant Aid Society and the Union of Christian Churches. Sandra McAvoy, 'Sexual crime and Irish women's campaign for a Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1912–1935' in Maryann Gialanella Valiulis (ed.), *Gender and power in Irish history* (Dublin & Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 94.
2. See Lucy Bland, *Banishing the beast: English feminism and sexual morality, 1885–1914* (London: Penguin, 1995); Anne Summers, *Female lives, moral states: Women, religion and public life, 1800–1930* (Newbury: Threshold Press, 2000), 127–9; Lesley Hall, 'Hauling down the double standard: Feminism, social purity and sexual science in late nineteenth-century Britain', *Gender and History*, 16:1 (2004), 36–56.
3. The convoluted history of the Carrigan committee and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1935 has been the subject of several scholarly studies. See Finola Kennedy, 'The suppression of the Carrigan report: A historical perspective on child abuse', *Studies*, 89:356 (2000), 354–63; Mark Finnane, 'The Carrigan committee of 1930–31 and the "moral condition of the Saorstát"', *Irish Historical Studies*, 32:128 (2001), 519–36; James M. Smith, 'The politics of sexual knowledge: The origins of Ireland's containment culture and the Carrigan report (1931)', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 13:2 (2004), 208–33; Moira J. Maguire, 'The Carrigan committee and child sexual abuse in twentieth-century Ireland', *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua*, 11:2 (2006), 79–100; Susannah Riordan, '"A reasonable cause": The age of consent and the debate on gender and justice in the Irish Free State, 1922–35', *Irish Historical Studies*, 37:147 (2011), 427–46.

4. A third, less controversial, measure supported by the social work lobby was also debated at this time – Little's Legitimacy Act, 1931 which made provision for the legitimisation of illegitimate children whose parents subsequently married.
5. McAvoy, 'Sexual crime and Irish women's campaign for a Criminal Law Amendment Act', 97.
6. See, for example, Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, 'Defining their role in the new state: Irishwomen's protest against the Juries Act of 1927', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 18:1 (1992), 43–60 and Maria Luddy, 'A "sinister and retrogressive" proposal: Irish women's opposition to the 1937 draft constitution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 15 (2005), 175–95.
7. Frank Duff, *Miracles on tap* (New York: Montfort, 1961), 6.
8. For example, in Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish experience* (Dublin: Scepter Press, 1968) and Peter Martin, *Censorship in the two Irelands 1922–1939* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).
9. One significant exception to this general comment is Eoin O'Sullivan, "'This otherwise delicate subject": Child sexual abuse in early twentieth-century Ireland' in Paul O'Mahony (ed.), *Criminal justice in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2002), 176–201.
10. R. S. Devane, 'The unmarried mother: Some legal aspects of the problem: I', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 23 (1924), 55–68 and 'The unmarried mother: Some legal aspects of the problem: II', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 23 (1924), 172–88.
11. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, 'Reinforcing the family: The role of gender, morality and sexuality in Irish welfare policy, 1922–1944', *History of the Family*, 13:4 (2008), 360–9, 364.
12. Devane, 'The unmarried mother: Some legal aspects of the problem: II', 173.
13. *Report of the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, including the Insane Poor* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1927), 72.
14. *Seanad Éireann deb.*, 13, 704–5 (19 Mar. 1930). The other reference to child welfare was made by Séan MacEntee. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 33, 192 (13 Feb. 1930).
15. *Seanad Éireann deb.*, 13, 695 (19 Mar. 1930).
16. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 32, 525 (30 Oct. 1929).
17. *Ibid.*
18. Devane, 'The unmarried mother: Some legal aspects of the problem: I', 58.
19. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 33, 124 (12 Feb. 1930).
20. *Ibid.*, 126.
21. Devane, 'The unmarried mother: Some legal aspects of the problem: II', 178; *Report of the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor*, 72. Devane and others who proposed that cases should be heard *in camera* meant that the public and the press should be excluded from the court. As Fitzgerald-Kenney did not tire of pointing out, this was not a strictly accurate definition and it gave rise to ambiguities with regard to, for example, how cases should be reported.
22. Fitzgerald-Kenney referred to the deputation as having been 'headed by a very well-known priest [and] composed of other well-known persons', *Seanad Éireann deb.*, 13, 706 (19 Mar. 1930); Wyse Power indicated that she had been a member of this deputation. *Ibid.*, 710.
23. *Irish Times*, 12 Feb. 1930.

24. McAvoy, 'Sexual crime and Irish women's campaign for a Criminal Law Amendment Act', 95.
25. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 32, 524 (30 Oct. 1929).
26. Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen women; problem girls: Unmarried mothers and the professionalization of social work, 1890–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 47.
27. Caroline Skehill, 'An examination of the transition from philanthropy to professional social work in Ireland', *Research on Social Work Practice*, 10:6 (2000), 688–704.
28. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 33, 176 (13 Feb. 1930).
29. *Ibid.*, 183–4.
30. *Ibid.*, 176.
31. *Ibid.*, 184.
32. *Ibid.*, 193–4.
33. *Ibid.*, 183.
34. The proposal to restrict the reasonable mistake defence was based on the (British) Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1922 which limited the defence to men of twenty-three years of age or under charged with a first offence.
35. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 34, 276 and 257 (27 Mar. 1930).
36. *Ibid.*, 260–1.
37. *Report of the Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Acts (1880–85), and Juvenile Prostitution* (Dublin, [1931]) (National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DT S5998), 4.
38. Finnane, 'The Carrigan committee', 520; Smith, 'The politics of sexual knowledge', 213.
39. Summary of evidence of R. S. Devane SJ (NAI, Jus. 90/4/7).
40. R. S. Devane, 'Adolescence and the Vocational Education bill', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 36 (1930), 26. The Vocational Education Act, 1930 established a secular system of technical and continuation education. Devane regarded the absence of moral education in the vocational schools as a missed opportunity to mould Irish youth.
41. *Ibid.*, 25.
42. Richard S. Devane, *Challenge from youth: A documented study of youth in modern youth movements* (Dublin: Brown and Nolan Ltd., 1942), 14.
43. *Ibid.*, 33.
44. *Ibid.* *Adolescent girlhood* was published in London in 1932.
45. Summary of evidence of R. S. Devane SJ (NAI, Jus. 90/4/7).
46. R. S. Devane, 'The legal protection of girls', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 37 (1931), 20–40, 33–4.
47. G. S. Hall, 'Preface' in Phyllis Blanchard, *The adolescent girl* (New York: Moffat Yard, 1920), vi.
48. Devane, *Challenge from youth*, 9. For other contemporary Irish enthusiasts for adolescent psychology and their battle with the spectre of Freud, see Tom Feeney, 'Church, state and family: The advent of child guidance clinics in independent Ireland', *Social History of Medicine*, 25:4 (2012), 848–62.
49. Kunzel, *Fallen women; problem girls*, 37.
50. They may have been literally following his lead, as much of the evidence presented to the Carrigan committee was co-ordinated by the social work organizations. See Riordan, "'A reasonable cause'".

51. Summary of evidence of Kathleen Kirwan, 16 Nov. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/22).
52. Eoin O'Duffy memo, 30 Oct. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 247/41 A).
53. Summary of evidence of representatives of the Irish Women Citizens and Local Government Association, 15 July 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/19).
54. James M. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalene laundries and the nation's architecture of containment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 44–84.
55. *Report of the Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Acts (1880–85), and Juvenile Prostitution* (NAI, DT S5998), 12–13.
56. Eoin O'Duffy memo, 30 Oct. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 247/41 A).
57. Minute of meeting of 15 Jan. 1931 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2).
58. See note 2 above.
59. Irish Women Citizens and Local Government Association to Attorney General's office, 11 Jan. 1924, cited in Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of sin: Sex and society in modern Ireland* (London: Profile Books, 2009), 135.
60. Eoin O'Duffy memo, 30 Oct. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 247/41 A).
61. Summary of evidence of Rev. M. Fitzpatrick, 6 Nov. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/13).
62. Minute of meeting of 15 Jan. 1931 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2).
63. Edward J. Tilt, *The change of life in health and disease* (2nd edn, London, 1857), 265, cited in Elaine Showalter, 'Victorian women and insanity', *Victorian Studies*, 23:2 (1980), 157–81. See also Ann Daly's chapter in this volume.
64. Minutes of meetings of 1 July 1930, 17 Oct. 1930, 20 Nov. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2).
65. Minute of meeting of 20 Nov. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2). The implied argument that girls in other societies were comparatively well-informed about sex does not necessarily hold. As Hera Cook has noted, in England in 1949 'a survey undertaken by Mass Observation ... found sexual ignorance, including ignorance of reproduction, to have been common.' Hera Cook, *The long sexual revolution: English women, sex and contraception, 1800–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 168.
66. Minute of meeting of 15 Jan. 1931 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2).
67. Minute of meeting of 20 Nov. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2). The witnesses may have been drawing on a tradition of ascribing high rates of mental illness in Ireland in part to the 'Celtic temperament'.
68. Minute of meeting of 20 Nov. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2) (Mrs C. P. Carron and Mrs Hobson of Saor an Leabhaigh Organization); Minute of meeting of 18 July 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2) (Miss I. Dodd and Dr Angela Russell of the IWCLGA).
69. Minute of meeting of 20 Nov. 1930 (NAI, Jus. 90/4/2).
70. Summary of evidence of the IWCLGA (NAI, Jus. 90/4/19).
71. Internal evidence suggests that this expert was Mary Hayden, first Professor of Modern Irish History at University College Dublin and active rescue worker. See Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Hayden, Mary Teresa', in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) (accessed online 7 June 2011).
72. Devane, 'The legal protection of girls', 35. It is unclear why the expert singled out 'the latins' as less soft and emotional than the Irish girl but the repetition of racial arguments here is noteworthy.
73. See, for example, Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent daughters: Protecting and policing adolescent female sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill,

- NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995) and Elizabeth Lunbeck, “‘A new generation of women’: Progressive psychiatrists and the hypersexual female’, *Feminist Studies* 13:3 (1987), 513–43.
74. Smith, ‘The politics of sexual knowledge’, 211.
75. *Ibid.*, 225.
76. Riordan, “‘A reasonable cause’”, 436.
77. Minute of meeting 12 Mar. 1935 (NAI, 98/14/5/1). This first meeting was attended by representatives of the Women’s National Health Association, the Women Citizens’ Association, the Irish Women Workers’ Union, the National Council of Women, the Mothers’ Union, the Irish Schoolmistresses’ Association, the Women Graduates’ Association, the Irish Countrywomens’ Association and the Irish Save the Children Fund. Other organizations affiliated and disaffiliated over time.

7

'How Will We Kill the Evening?': 'Degeneracy' and 'Second Generation' Male Adolescence in Independent Ireland

Bryce Evans

Writing in 1905, the young Cork nationalist Liam de Róiste wondered whether 'an objective change of affairs, or of general ideas' had taken place in the Ireland of his teenage years or whether the transition was merely due to 'the inevitable change from boyhood to youth, from youth to manhood' in him.¹ After his generation's subsequent achievement of independence, the answer became clearer: it was the former. For de Róiste was a member of the 'revolutionary generation' in Ireland, a group of young men and women determined to differentiate themselves from their parents' world; a collective who would go on to become, to use an appropriately gendered and generational term, the 'founding fathers' of the independent Ireland achieved between 1916 and 1922.²

A similar tension between revolutionary and bodily impulse recurs in Brendan Behan's 1958 memoir *Borstal boy*. The book opens with a swash-buckling passage describing Behan's arrest in Liverpool in 1939, a sixteen-year-old on a self-appointed mission to blow up British warships. Despite very little of the action actually taking place in Ireland, *Borstal boy* has become the most famous account of Irish male adolescence of its era. The early writings of de Róiste and Behan contain many similarities but also some critical differences. Class and geography aside, the key marker of difference between these two young men was generational. Ireland's 'founding fathers' (those of de Róiste's generation) tended to exclude latecomers and women from their narrative of national resurgence.³ Behan, in short, was simply born too late. Instead, Behan belonged to what is referred to in this chapter as the 'second generation' of males in independent Ireland.⁴ This was the generation born to the exalted men of 1916, 1919–21, and indeed 1922–23, after they had put down their guns, swapping a life of safe houses for conventional domesticity. Many boys of this generation did not have a father who had been

politically active during the revolutionary period. Yet the weight of the previous generation's achievement of independence bore down on them regardless.

This weight was a discursive one, with its roots in the 'cult of youth' which had particular significance in Europe around the time of the First World War and after. This pan-national phenomenon had two distinct characteristics. Firstly, it coded youth as masculine. Secondly, it looked on society as generational.⁵ The term 'adolescence', which came into vogue in this period, shared these assumptions, idealizing this stage of human development as one of boyish potency.⁶ To the educationalist and revolutionary P. H. Pearse (1879–1916) – leader of the 1916 Rising, posthumous poster-boy of the national revolution, and familiar to every boy schooled in independent Ireland – the fight for freedom was a *generational* duty. As an educationalist, Pearse venerated 'men of action', be they the mythical Cúchulainn or the romantic Robert Emmet (the hero of the abortive 1803 rising against British rule) as suitable role models for Irish male youth. 'If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a better deed' declared Pearse at his court-martial after the 1916 Rising.⁷

This was the generational inheritance of those who went through the heady experience of adolescence in the Ireland of the 1930s and 1940s. Few, of course, tried to carry out Pearse's 'better deed' (and, if they did, refrained from describing it in the sassy language of a detective novel). Behan, in fact, was atypical – emphatically so – spending most of his time between 1938 and 1946 in prison in England. But if *Borstal boy* cannot be justifiably invoked as an archetype for the 'second generation' of male adolescents in independent Ireland, the strength of Behan's narrative lies in its authenticity: despite and also *because of* its embellishments, it resounds as an account of working-class adolescence yelled out from the ranks of the 'second generation'.

While such 'bottom up' accounts of adolescence are rare, there is plenty of evidence about how young men were viewed by the political and religious establishment of the day. In 1942, the Fianna Fáil government announced the opening of a series of youth training centres, named 'Brugh na nÓg', under a new youth welfare scheme.⁸ The object of the project was 'to fill the serious need for control and discipline amongst adolescent youths (14–18).'⁹ The initiative was described in a series of lectures by members of its organising committee, most of whom were priests or Catholic volunteers. These addresses exemplified contemporary anxieties about Irish youth in no uncertain terms. There was no discussion of adolescent gender relations. Unequivocally, 'the

Boy problem' was the issue.¹⁰ Their flock was the 'weakest section of Irish youth', the 'flotsam and jetsam'. In other words, male adolescents from urban working-class backgrounds.¹¹ The condition of Irish male youth was conceived of as a national-spiritual issue. Problematic boys may have come in various types – 'backward', 'evil-minded', 'proud' and 'disinterested' – but their common failing was susceptibility to the corrupting 'false ideologies' of other countries.¹² Adolescent leisure time was dominated by 'false ideals'. While exposure to material of a sexual nature was implicit in this criticism, the perceived nihilism of 'amusements' was identified as a particular problem: 'a general attitude best expressed by their own expression "How will we kill the evening?"'¹³

What distinguishes official narratives about male adolescence in this period, of which the above is a good example, is the idiom of degeneracy. Across Europe, an influential cultural opinion had it that the inter-war generation, drunk on jazz music, had collectively degenerated.¹⁴ As well as moral concerns, the lecture series also discussed the employability of male youth, finance, housing and crime. Yet even these most material of considerations were wrapped up within the discursive battle against a seemingly pervasive generational degeneracy. The 'revolutionary generation' had themselves been the objects of such scorn from *their* parents, but in forging the national resurgence had managed to turn this accusation on its head. For the 'revolutionary generation', as Roy Foster claims, their 'degenerate' parents were often the perceived enemy every bit as much as the British government.¹⁵ And later on, if confronted by such accusations from *their own* children ('the second generation') they could always fall back on their generational achievement: 'free' Ireland.

On the one hand, therefore, this chapter is framed by this very anxiety about the supposed degeneracy of 'second generation' male adolescents in independent Ireland. On the other hand, the paucity of academic work specifically dealing with the Irish male adolescent condition in the 1930s and 1940s raises the question of what ordinary life was actually like for the majority of teenage boys at this time. Did they really feast at the trough of degeneracy, as alleged by their elders?¹⁶ In answering this question, this chapter seeks to reconcile top-down and bottom-up by exploring the experience of the 'second generation' of adolescent males in independent Ireland in four of the most fretted-over aspects of their lives: the worlds of sex, crime, leisure and work. These themes have been chosen because they represent a comprehensive cross-section of both homosocial and private adolescent experience at the time. This is reflected in both contemporary publications and memoir accounts of adolescence, which form the basis of this chapter.

I Sex: *The News of the World* and other taboos

According to their parents' generation, Irish adolescents of the 1930s and 40s had degenerated physically as well as morally. An influential proponent of this theory was former Garda Commissioner and later Blueshirt leader Eoin O'Duffy, one of the witnesses called to give evidence to the Carrigan committee. Set up by the Cumann na nGaedheal government in 1930, Carrigan's chief concern was the sexual protection of teenage girls.¹⁷ O'Duffy, however, also pointed to the increase in sexual crimes against teenage boys.¹⁸ Far from the alcoholic buffoon of later caricature, O'Duffy was a respected and experienced authority at this point. When he drew attention to pederasty, contextualizing it as part of a general decline whereby the 'morally depraved' were now seen as 'clever and interesting'¹⁹ by Ireland's young people, the committee members took notice. The Carrigan committee eventually recommended that the age of consent for heterosexual acts be raised to eighteen and contraceptives banned 'except under exceptional conditions'; Sandra McAvoy has contended that after these recommendations informed the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1935, societal concern about public morality deepened.²⁰ If so, was the sexual behaviour of Ireland's teenage boys affected? And was O'Duffy correct in perceiving that sexual degeneracy could be traced back to the chain-smoking corner boy who had replaced the noble, disciplined youth of the national struggle?²¹

The increase in sexual crime against male adolescents in interwar Ireland, alleged by O'Duffy, can only be scrutinized against wider social patterns. Unsurprisingly, there are few accounts of male adolescent sex from this period. O'Duffy's attitude to the topic, typical amongst his contemporaries, was influenced by the interwar ideal of manliness in Europe and its particular cultural expression in independent Ireland.²² The decisions of the state censor of films during the 1930s, James Montgomery, sum up this attitude neatly. Montgomery, Diarmaid Ferriter has written, gave the impression that the revolutionary generation did not indulge in sex during the national struggle.²³

With such ostensibly pure forbears, adolescent boys inevitably failed to live up to the same moral standards. In terms of the homosexual activity O'Duffy identified, teenage boys were both perpetrators and victims. Examination of Dublin Garda documents from the period show that the crime of 'sodomy' was recorded on a regular basis in the city in the 1930s and 1940s. Allegations tended to centre on the young acting set of the Gate Theatre and their entourage and suggest that the

involvement in homosexual activity of boys in their late teenage years was often consensual.²⁴

As Ferriter's study of district court records has established, there seems to have been little consistency in the sentencing of such activities in the 1930s – even when they were clearly abusive. One young man who had sexually assaulted a boy of thirteen was sent to the borstal in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, for three years; another, who had carried out a similar offence, was deemed an unsuitable case for treatment at borstal because of the nature of his crime.²⁵ These conceptual inconsistencies concerning the role of institutions help to explain their persistence as arenas of abuse. O'Duffy's concern, as with most of his crusades, was with public immorality. Unlike the 'indecent' taking place in Ireland's parks, fields and alleyways, sex with teenage boys in institutions was hidden. It is now clear that the extent of abuse suffered by adolescent boys in Christian Brothers schools and residential institutions was frequently determined by their class background. Complaints of sexual abuse from working-class boys were taken less seriously.²⁶

This murky world was a far cry from the Ireland documented by the English writer H. V. Morton. The jaunty travel writings of Morton, who had first achieved fame reporting on the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1923, were widely published and popular amongst the reading public of the day. For Morton, gaily motoring around Ireland in his car, the sexual segregation of adolescents in rural Ireland was one of the most striking features of the country. Describing a visit to Killarney, Co. Kerry, in his *In search of Ireland* (1930), he wrote 'the girls go about together and the boys loiter in glum groups at street corners or at the end of lanes.'²⁷ He came across a group of male adolescents – 'shy as colts' – carrying musical instruments. But there was no dancing at the crossroads for Morton's benefit that evening. A group of girls appeared only to pass aloofly by without exchanging a word. Morton, who thought this 'remarkable', was left with 'nothing to do but lean over the bridge and watch the trout rising.'²⁸ Were these young men doomed to progress from adolescence to middle-aged adulthood as 'chastitutes', the term Kerry publican, playwright and novelist John B. Keane used to describe certain Irish country males? Unfortunate in growing up in a land 'where free-range sex and sexual discussion were absolutely taboo,' Keane documented the unhealthily large proportion of boys of his generation destined to remain celibate adolescents in perpetuity, to 'stand around the headlands of the hall, hands in their pockets scratching and adjusting their under-worked undercarriages when they aren't picking their noses or scouring their ear-drums for deposits of wax.'²⁹

The public sexual segregation of adolescents at the time was created by the wider cultural anxiety over sexual contact. Public prudishness and clandestine sexual abuse were not exclusively Catholic preserves,³⁰ but Catholics were in the vanguard of campaigns against sexual immorality and obscenity in independent Ireland.³¹ With the arrival of commercial ballrooms in the late 1930s and 1940s, Catholic bishops regularly warned of the 'deplorable consequences' of late dances in small towns and villages, a concern which had been a firm point the clerical radar since the 1920s.³² Irish music and dances were 'elevating' for adolescents; foreign influences such as jazz, however, lent themselves to the 'mesmeric rhythm of sensuality.'³³ According to the Catholic hierarchy, the *foreign* print media bore much of the responsibility for corrupting young boys because it was full of 'indecent', 'pernicious propaganda'.³⁴ A number of influential Catholic lay movements acted to reinforce the bishops' condemnation of such 'obscene' foreign material.

Yet not all adolescent males of the 'second generation' were condemned by censorship to a life without sexual stimulation. Reacting to the conservatism of the Irish press and the banning of books considered 'indecent or obscene' by the Censorship Board, influential memoirs of male adolescence in the period reveal a reversion to more salacious 'foreign' reading matter. Irish-American memoirist Frank McCourt – aged thirteen and living in Limerick – 'can't stop interfering with myself.' Symbolically defiling the nation, McCourt claimed to have regularly climbed to the summit of a nearby Norman castle 'and wanked all over Limerick and the county beyond.'³⁵ By sixteen, frustrated by the sexlessness of Irish society, McCourt was masturbating over pictures of women in banned English publications such as the *News of the World*.³⁶

Reputedly, Brendan Behan derided Patrick Kavanagh for his account of auto-eroticism in his great account of male loneliness – *The great hunger* (1942) – by addressing him from across a bar as 'the Monaghan Wanker'. Yet in his own account of adolescence, the bisexual Dublin writer makes similar mention of struggling with his faith aged thirteen because of his discovery of masturbation.³⁷ A republican with a much greater affinity to Ireland than the American-born McCourt, Behan nonetheless tells how (aged fifteen) he attempted to force himself on an IRA comrade's female cousin – 'up the canal, against a telegraph pole' – as they made their way to her aunt's house with the news that her son had been imprisoned in England. Rebuffed on that occasion and, finding himself incarcerated for long periods in England, Behan satisfied his urges by making similar use of the *News of the World*: a publication 'mostly about *that*' which he had seldom come across in Dublin.³⁸ Alternative

home-grown temptations for the sexually frustrated rural adolescent were available. The engagement of teenage boys in rural areas in bestiality is hinted at in the historical record. Frank McCourt recalled being asked by a priest in confession if this was the nature of the sexual sin he was finding it hard to divulge;³⁹ while former Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald described a lecture at Gormanston army camp, when he was a Local Defence Force recruit of fifteen, on the health risks attached to intercourse with cows.⁴⁰

These reminiscences, although colourful, are not proof of the sexual degeneracy of the 'second generation'. The binary attitudes towards youth and sex of the liberal literati, on the one hand, and conservative clericals, on the other, resulted in a tendency to overstate the tameness of Irish media and society in the period. Both camps, arguably the most vocal sections of society on the issue, exaggerated the lack of sex in the Irish popular press in order to drive home their conflicting points.⁴¹ Unlike Britain, discussion of sexual matters was relatively absent from the country's newsprint. Yet sexually frustrated Irish adolescent boys – if so inclined – were not starved of visual matter featuring relatively scantily-clad, pretty young women in Irish newspapers.⁴² These ranged from advertisements for slimming 'bile beans'⁴³ to Brown Thomas corsets for the stout-chested lady.⁴⁴ Neither did public sexual segregation and censorship equate to a wholesale degeneration to illicit sexual practices due to a lack of avenues considered more legitimate for sexual expression.⁴⁵ The often shocking accounts of sexual crime against adolescents from the period overshadow the existence of love and companionship between teenagers at this time.⁴⁶ Even Montgomery, the film censor, displayed an awareness of the reality of sexual dynamics between adolescents, justifying cuts to a 1939 film by disdainfully referring to 'the unmarried young girl sitting and holding hands with her ... boyfriend in the darkest part of the cinema.'⁴⁷

More significantly, H. V. Morton's account of bashful young Kerry men clashes with the unique voice of an adolescent 'outsider' in Ireland at this time: Robert Weil, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany. Born to a middle-class family in Berlin in 1924, Weil came to Ireland in 1939, at the age of fifteen. In 1940, whilst attending a Quaker school in Waterford, he wrote a long essay entitled 'Why I Love Ireland'. 'Before I came here I would not have dared to call a girl by her Christian name. Girls were taboo (by the way I have not got the foggiest idea what "taboo" means, but I once heard it and it sounds quite suitable).'⁴⁸ Weil's boyish impressions are tainted by the brutality of the regime he had escaped from; whereas his parents were to die in a concentration

camp, he perceived only tolerance between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Nonetheless, his comments demonstrate that the strained relationship between adolescents of the opposite sex in Ireland was perhaps not as 'remarkable' as Morton thought.

II Crime: 'Lumpish youths' and other animals

Concerns over the moral degeneracy of male adolescents were not just sexual. The young men of the heroic generation spent much time in prison; for their successors, however, confinement in jail was no longer a valiant national deed. The adolescent Behan relished his role as a youthful republican revolutionary, invoking Roger Casement, Tom Clarke and the Manchester Martyrs in *Borstal boy*. His folly was a logical product of the official political culture of postcolonial Ireland, even if Behan's derision of Catholic piety was idiosyncratic. But Behan was, as noted, an exception, his high-minded rebelliousness, although influential, as atypical as Peter Somerville-Large's altogether more sedate memoirs of a wealthy Anglo-Irish adolescence in this period.⁴⁹

Most juvenile offending was not political. As such, it provided a consistent moral panic in Ireland of the late 1930s and early 1940s. As an *Irish Times* report from 1943 contended, 'children have a natural, if regrettable, tendency to break things [but] the regular *saboteur* of public property in Dublin is not the child of eight or nine years, but the lumpish youth of seventeen.'⁵⁰ Such delinquency and crime were chiefly a male preserve. Of the nearly 2,000 offenders aged twelve to sixteen who appeared before sittings of the Dublin District Court between 1933 and 1937, 94 per cent were male.⁵¹ Naturally, such trends were not uniquely Irish. Across the world, men were more likely to appear in front of courts. The influence of cinema, alcohol and the laxity of parental control were most commonly blamed for these trends, particularly by clerics. Other commentators pointed to harsh sentencing at the juvenile courts, arguing that the intention of punishment or reform in reformatories often had 'an opposite effect.'⁵² This argument was shared by a 'boy criminal' writing in the radical literary magazine *The Bell* in 1940, who described borstal as overcrowded, uncomfortable and quite at odds with the goal of youth rehabilitation.⁵³

As the 1930s became the 1940s, there was a consensus in the Irish press that juvenile crime had increased.⁵⁴ Statistical records do indeed indicate an increase in crime under Emergency controls. 1945's *Statistical abstract* noted that 'criminal proceedings have shown a very serious increase generally since the outbreak of war.'⁵⁵ Convictions for

theft in neutral Ireland trebled from 1,160 in 1939 to 3,395 by 1943.⁵⁶ It is clear that these criminal trends were a consequence of material hardships caused by the restrictions on consumption and distribution during the Emergency. In early 1943 Minister for Justice Gerald Boland expressed concern at the increase in theft linked to the wartime black market. Lamenting the rise in convictions, he went on to explain that 'people are short of commodities and I am afraid our morality is not as deep-seated as it ought to be.'⁵⁷ The Irish bishops, in their Lenten pastorals, agreed.⁵⁸ Yet, once again, the emphasis was placed on moral shortcomings at a time of scarcity.

A consistent subject of press alarm was organized urban gang crime in the 1930s and 1940s. This variety of youthful male deviance preceded the material hardships of the Emergency and went beyond wanton destruction by 'lumpish youths'. Garda evidence suggests that most gang members 'joined up' at fourteen, after leaving school with their classmates.⁵⁹ Without assistance from any public body, many male adolescents from deprived backgrounds failed to secure employment, and some turned to crime instead. Newspaper records demonstrate that most violent episodes, as the bishops were keen to point out, did indeed occur outside dance halls and picture houses. In the 1930s the area around Seán McDermott Street, in Dublin's north inner city, was plagued by gang warfare. Most notorious was the 'Animal Gang', a group of teenage boys who robbed or beat their victims while emitting bestial cries. In 1934 three young men from North Cumberland Street were sentenced to a month's hard labour. The first two, members of the 'Animal Gang', were imprisoned for assaulting a third man with an iron bar; the third man was punished for having vandalized their houses in retaliation.⁶⁰ A week later the parents of the reputed leader of the 'Animal Gang' Peter McAuley (his age listed only as 'junior') appeared in court accused of rescuing him from police custody. Two Gardaí had entered the McAuleys' corporation flat and arrested the young gangster but McAuley's parents had wrestled their son out of their control and delivered him in to the arms of a sympathetic mob outside the window.⁶¹

By 1935 there was a new 'commander' of the 'Animal Gang', one Herbert Genockey (aged nineteen), appearing in court on an assault charge with nine young acolytes, most aged between seventeen and eighteen.⁶² The lengthiest sentences handed down to members of the 'Animal Gang' were for those who had, by their mid-twenties, failed to mend their ways.⁶³ These men – Dublin's older, hardened gangsters – became the heroes of younger adolescents. In 1942 it was reported that a group of seven boys in Navan, Co. Meath, were put under curfew by a

judge at the Children's Court. Calling themselves the 'Animal Gang' they had stolen cakes, jam, fruit, tea and eggs, killed hens, and stolen from the local dispensary.⁶⁴ For these youths, the allure of membership of the boys' club run by the morally upstanding 'Captain Mac' – the extremely popular fictional crime-fighting sailor in the *Irish Press* – had evidently worn off, replaced by more dubious role models in the form of the 'Animal Gang'. Vices such as petty theft and excessive alcohol consumption were carried out across age and class groups. But thanks to the antics of groups like the 'Animal Gang' they came to be commonly associated with gangs of young male 'corner boys' who, in the popular imagination, congregated in cinema foyers and made a living from crime.⁶⁵

While attitudes towards criminal degeneracy were informed by moral hysteria, the material link between slum decrepitude and urban crime was not ignored. In this period, the authorities carried out the mass relocation of inner city Dublin families to new settlements like Crumlin and Drimnagh. Although amenities were lacking, sanitary conditions were generally better than the sentimentalized slums. After Frank McCourt's grim memoir *Angela's ashes* (1996), by the turn of the twenty-first century recounting the extremities of urban deprivation in Ireland during the 1930s and 1940s had become somewhat hackneyed.⁶⁶ Poverty, nonetheless, was undoubtedly the underlying cause of much adolescent crime in urban areas. In 1943 the actress and writer Sheila May rebutted de Valera's claim that 'there is no one who is not getting proper food in this country'⁶⁷ in *The Bell*. Following the Taoiseach's speech, May visited two 'slums' on either side of the Liffey in Dublin. In the first she found adolescents who had never eaten fresh fruit or vegetables and in the second she observed that when inhabitants defecated it was from a third floor window into the street below.⁶⁸ Young men 'grew up' less quickly in the new estates than in the tenements. As Behan's mother wistfully observed, 'children learned more about the facts of life in a hallway than than they ever would out on the foot of the Dublin mountains' (where some of the new estates were located).⁶⁹ For many, though, this was no bad thing. Whether they were resident in urban or rural areas, public health among Irish teenagers and young people was scarred by the most lamented disease of the period: tuberculosis. As with other diseases that thrived at the time, poverty and a lack of adequate nutrition compounded Ireland's tuberculosis problem. Tuberculosis was most common in young people and independent Ireland experienced a marked upward trend in mortality between the mid-1930s and 1943.⁷⁰

Relocation did not guarantee better social conditions, however. The dislocation that followed the slum exodus has been well documented.⁷¹

The uprooting of people between 1932 and 1939 and their mass relocation to large estates located in new suburbs such as Marino and Crumlin did not eliminate adolescent vandalism, as Dublin Corporation had hoped. The new areas concentrated 'swarming juvenile life', as an *Irish Times* correspondent put it, describing the 'high-pitched, undulating noise, rising and falling like the sound of a giant dynamo' of thousands of children and teenagers leaving school each day.⁷² Writing in the Jesuit journal *Studies* in 1945, medical professor and anti-tuberculosis campaigner T. W. T. Dillon bemoaned the absence of social amenities available to re-housed working-class communities. To Dillon, building 'row upon row of houses' offered only slight material improvement; the urban poor remained 'the last to be employed, and the first to be discharged ... they leave school at 14 in a state of incredible ignorance ... dressed in rags, inarticulate, dirty and often dishonest they drift into the street corner gangs which are the despair of social workers and the police.'⁷³

While the working-class urban environment remained the chief cause for middle-class concern, young male deviance was witnessed in rural areas too. In Ireland's border region, male adolescents were involved heavily in the illegal smuggling trade. For much of the 1930s prices in the Free State and Northern Ireland diverged considerably and during the decade an extensive smuggling trade in cattle developed.⁷⁴ During the Emergency the smuggling of livestock was accompanied, in the words of the Royal Ulster Constabulary Chief Inspector, by a 'new form of smuggling'.⁷⁵ Separate rationing schemes were introduced on either side of the border, leading to demand for consumer items and small food-stuffs more readily available in the opposite territory. Chiefly associated with the urban environment, the 'Spiv' character – young, male, brash and suave – was also a fixture of cross-border black market exchanges. In Co. Down 'Smart Boys' would row across Carlingford Lough to Co. Louth to trade tea for butter. The appearance of Customs men on the opposite bank resulted in many a load of butter being jettisoned, slowly floating out to sea.⁷⁶ The black market trade at Carlingford Lough was noted in a Garda report of 1941, which provides evidence that an established 'system of barter' had developed between adolescent males on both sides.⁷⁷ Observing the shores of Lough Erne in Co. Fermanagh at night, RUC men were able to detect these young smugglers through the disturbance of swans by their boats and dinghies.⁷⁸

On first glance, the revolutionary generation's disdain for the criminal 'degeneracy' of 'second generation' Irish male youth appears hypocritical. After all, to be active in the IRA between 1919 and 1923 was to join a gang of young men, to be one of 'the boys', to slander

others with intolerant rhetoric, to engage in violent acts, to break the law. The 'revolutionary generation' may have been intent on building a world apart from the collaborationist and materialist world of their parents – the Home Rule generation – but many of the old structures remained intact after independence.⁷⁹ The post-independence retention of the Clonmel borstal institution, and the absence of any significant overhaul of its structure and practices, reinforces this impression.⁸⁰ Popular sentiment against 'corner boys' rested on the sanctimoniousness, rural essentialism and anti-materialism noticeable in both church and state thinking on public morality in this period. There was a penchant in Irish social and political culture for an agrarian idyll, one dismissive of modern urban life which shared the communitarian tenets of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*.⁸¹ At the same time, the narrative of youth degeneracy was essentially class-based and in this regard it had firmer foundations. The IRA of the revolutionary generation did not enrol 'corner boys', 'spivs' or 'smart boys' and, as Peter Hart reminds us, was not as 'proletarian' as was often imagined.⁸² The conservatism of the revolutionary generation, encapsulated famously by Kevin O'Higgins, first Minister for Justice of the Irish Free State, would frustrate his more radical contemporaries but impact most forcibly upon the 'second generation'.⁸³

III Leisure: Granny's corner and the picture house

Supposed adolescent deviance was a far cry from the depiction of Irish life in Maura Laverty's *Never no more*, a best-selling narrative of youthful innocence and plentiful country kitchens published in 1942. Instead of an Englishman inspecting the fish to avoid the social embarrassment of adolescence – as found in H. V. Morton's account of rural Ireland – Laverty offered a land where 'the boys and girls danced half sets and reels to the music of a fiddle and melodeon'.⁸⁴ Laverty's novel was not 'above all a novel of escapism'⁸⁵ containing, as it did, a vivid description of the slow death of a teenage boy, Andy Flaherty; the once athletic youth's tubercular decline, an all too familiar reality at the time, 'heartbreakingly pathetic to watch ... straining against a wasted body and losing his lungs cough by cough'.⁸⁶ But it did present an alternative to denunciations of youthful degeneracy found in other contemporary media.

If the reality of the leisure life of Irish male adolescents was closer to Morton's description of boys lounging in all-male groups, the content in Irish national newspapers of the period helps to explain why. Illustrating the awkward status of adolescence, sandwiched messily

between childhood and adulthood, the *Irish Times*' 'Junior Pictorial' supplement was dominated by 'Granny's Corner', a very mild agony-aunt column in which 'Granny' received letters from her 'children'. Most letters to 'Granny' were from those younger than twelve and correspondence was restricted to pre-pubescent matters such as squirrels with injured feet nursed lovingly back to health;⁸⁷ family picnics in Kingstown;⁸⁸ and different types of cake at children's parties.⁸⁹ And yet the 'Junior Pictorial' also featured a freehand drawing competition open to anyone under the age of twenty, and a notice of civil service examinations with age limits of '18-25'.⁹⁰

But if this example is illustrative of the conflation of the infant and the juvenile in the press of the time, then what of the contemporary adolescent folk devil, the corner boy? As mentioned, the cinema was the alleged habitat of this rowdy youth of the 'second generation'. By 1940 there were over 150 cinemas in Ireland, collectively accommodating 100,000 people at capacity.⁹¹ Riské material *inside* the picture house, though, was diligently censored by the state. The Irish film censor of the period was notable for his antipathetic attitude towards the urban, modern values of commercial cinema.⁹² During the Emergency an additional censorship apparatus intended to reflect the state's neutrality meant that newsreels were purged of images of combatant fighter planes, destroyers and soldiers; instead zoo and animal scenes, like those described by the child contributors to 'Granny's Corner', made up a large proportion of content. The image of the menacing woodbine-smoking corner boy is diluted further by the fact that most Irish adolescent males, across class boundaries, smoked at a precocious age. Garret FitzGerald, who had a very comfortable upbringing, described regularly spending his entire weekly pocket money on five Players cigarettes (until he discovered chocolate, aged fourteen).⁹³ Indeed, during the Emergency, the 'Step Together!' ethic of collective national effort practically overrode some of the negative stereotyping of male youth witnessed in the pre-war period.

Despite the widespread concerns about the decline in youthful duty and athleticism, many 'second generation' male adolescents were involved in leisure pursuits aspiring to these ideals. An Óige, the Irish youth hostel association, was founded in Dublin in 1931 by a group of thirty-seven enthusiastic young middle-class rambblers.⁹⁴ The low priced accommodation and special bus and rail concessions for members were intended to encourage apprentices and young manual workers from urban backgrounds to join as well. The Fianna Fáil government's promotion of Irish tourism and introduction of statutory holidays with pay

(1936) enabled a greater cross-section of Irish young men to appreciate the countryside.⁹⁵ In 1938 An Óige even collaborated with its English counterpart, the Youth Hostel Association, in recruiting the voluntary labour of adolescents to carry out improvements to a village on the edge of Loch Swilly in Co. Donegal: the first An Óige ‘work party’.⁹⁶

Irish youth hostelling was a mixed sex venture and young women were prominent in its activities. In the Ireland of the time, however, there was a higher cultural premium on *male* athleticism.⁹⁷ The majority of male adolescents experienced competitive team sport at school; through membership of their local Gaelic Athletic Association club; or as part of bodies such as the National Athletic and Cycling Association, which O’Duffy headed from 1931 onwards.⁹⁸ As well as playing sport, adolescents of the ‘second generation’ could listen to it. One notable difference between the adolescent leisure experience in this period, compared to the previous generation, was radio listenership. Following the opening of the Athlone transmitter in 1933, radio reached a much greater audience. If the advent of radio brought with it concerns from members of the revolutionary generation that ‘foreign’ music and culture was in danger of subsuming Irish nationalism,⁹⁹ it also intensified engagement with Gaelic physical culture. A generation of teenage boys now tuned in to the Gaelic games commentary of Mícheál Ó hEithir, the famous Gaelic games and horse racing commentator who became the ‘voice of sport’ for many Irish young men of this generation. As a young teenager the Leitrim writer John McGahern recalled the intense youthful excitement surrounding inter-county clashes: ‘I was always torn between the need to know how the match was going and the desire to escape the painful excitement.’¹⁰⁰

Although sport dominated leisure activities, the ‘second generation’ grew up against sharp political dichotomies both inherited (the Irish Civil War) and experienced (the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War). There were male youth projects across the political spectrum: the Fianna Éireann republican boy scouts; Aicéin, the youth wing of Córás na Poblachta; or the Blueshirts, with their emphasis on a ‘League of Youth’.¹⁰¹ There was even a Zionist Youth movement active in Dublin.¹⁰² The young members of Fianna Éireann, the IRA, and a number of far-left and far-right groups were kept under Garda surveillance.¹⁰³ The main political parties had their youth wings too. Labour Youth was interpreted by British commentators, writing in 1944, as an attempt to divert male adolescents from joining the fascist Ailtirí na hAiséirghe, who aped their continental equivalents by emphasising youthful regeneration.¹⁰⁴

Moreover, newsreel content during the Emergency was not exclusively confined to baby squirrels and tea parties. Reports on the activity of the Pope were interspersed with propagandistic pieces about the work of the Irish Army and the auxiliary Local Defence Force (LDF).¹⁰⁵ Access to war reports through English newspapers and foreign radio programmes was also available. Garret FitzGerald, like many young adolescents of his generation, enjoyed the bloodthirstiness of the British *Boys' Own Paper* and joined the LDF for a taste of battle.¹⁰⁶ Ireland, then, was not immune from the international encroachment of militarism on contemporary male adolescent recreation. As Edward Daly Doyle, later Irish Army officer and military correspondent of the *Irish Times*, recalled of his teenage years 'all Europe seemed in uniform and in a vague, inchoate way we also seemed headed for this.'¹⁰⁷ And with the coming of the Second World War, Daly Doyle and many of his generation marched into the Irish Defence Forces and its auxiliaries; many others joined the British war effort. One 'cure' for male adolescent 'degeneracy', it seems, was stepping out of the cinema foyer and into a uniform.

IV Work: Factories and Turf Camps

For many young men, recruitment was not an ideological choice but a monetary one. Most adolescent boys of the 'second generation' were working by the age of fourteen, if not before. H. V. Morton described teenagers employed in the Dublin breweries 'working in a pungent smell of burning oak chips' and the affinity of Curragh stable-boys for the horses they had 'looked after since they were foaled.'¹⁰⁸ John McGahern 'was often kept from school' to carry out backbreaking work digging turf on the bog.¹⁰⁹ The memoirist Thomas Ludlow, in his account of a poor rural upbringing in Co. Meath, started work aged ten 'thinning' turnips and gathering potatoes. Although the Gardaí often called to complain to Ludlow's mother of her sons' absences from school, he and his male siblings continued to work until they were old enough to be hired by a farmer, aged fourteen, and to begin 'proper' work.¹¹⁰

Under the terms of the 1930 Vocational Education Act, boys' schooling was segregated. Those who entered post-primary education through vocational schools learnt hands-on skills but did not take the Leaving Certificate, driving a social wedge between them and their scholarly peers. And when they entered work, there was a wage gulf between juvenile labourers and their adult counterparts. In a 1935 Dáil debate Labour deputy William Norton claimed that in a factory in his constituency adolescents of seventeen were earning five shillings a week,

whereas adult males were on thirty-three shillings – almost seven times the wage for similar work and hardly a ‘Christian rate of wages’.¹¹¹ Both the employment and unemployment of youths attracted political concern at the time, but calls for reform made little headway. In 1936 an Inter-departmental committee appointed by Minister for Education Tom Derrig concluded that there was no case for raising the school leaving age to fifteen or sixteen. The committee found that young people were not ‘too immature’ to work at fourteen, and that adult employment in industry and agriculture would not be increased by removing juveniles from the workforce.¹¹² In early 1943 Minister for Industry and Commerce Seán Lemass set up the Commission on Youth Unemployment, under the chairmanship of Catholic Archbishop of Dublin John Charles McQuaid; however, this body did not conclude its enquiries until 1949. By the late 1930s juvenile employment in Irish industry was slowly declining. While it was estimated that earlier in the decade adolescent labour had made up to 25 per cent of the industrial workforce, by 1939 it had declined to 15 per cent.¹¹³ For some parents, the ‘tyrannical’ amount of homework their adolescent sons had to complete was of greater concern than the issue of juvenile labour.¹¹⁴

Nonetheless, political and economic conditions accelerated adolescent employment during the Emergency. Due to emigration to the British war economy, there was a decline in numbers in the adult male workforce. With Ireland’s food supply at the mercy of maritime warfare, greater production of wheat became an urgent necessity. The government introduced ‘compulsory tillage’ in 1940. This scheme imposed tillage quotas on farmers, forcing them to grow more wheat. Those who did not comply were either fined or dispossessed. One consequence of this measure was a noticeable decline in school attendances in rural areas.¹¹⁵

During the war, the gender balance of emigration also shifted.¹¹⁶ Attracted by the high wages of the British war economy, the number of young men emigrating to England increased sharply. The expansion of the Irish security forces during the Second World War absorbed many male adolescents. The LDF took recruits as young as fourteen or fifteen. Most notably, the ‘Construction Corps’ – a brainchild of Seán Lemass – operated as an adolescent labour battalion attached to the Irish army. Its noble foundation myths masked its workaday function as the army’s dogsbody battalion. Urban youths were coerced into it through the threatened withdrawal of dole payments. Its teenage members lived and worked in often squalid conditions, under army discipline, and frequently stationed to remote bogs. Some recruits found the Corps to be ‘the making’ of them; others complained of bullying

and depression. Living conditions were compared to a 'concentration camp' by the father of one member who complained of mistreatment; the Irish army's own history of the short-lived project claims that it was distinguished by the highest instance of homosexuality in the history of the Irish defence forces.¹¹⁷

Given the lengthy confinement of these pubescent boys to remote turf camps, such sexual activity is unsurprising. In any case, the healthy nutrition, exercise and camaraderie experienced as part of army life was, in many ways, favourable to the conditions endured by young men sentenced to detention in the industrial schools run by the Christian Brothers in Artane in Dublin or Letterfrack in Co. Galway. Although most adolescent boys of this generation would have accepted or experienced minor physical punishment as a part of school life, the beatings administered in industrial schools were noted for their harshness.¹¹⁸ As mentioned, class background often determined the severity of such assault.

The strong ruralist trait in Irish political and social discourse of the time also masked the fact that class distinction prevailed in the Irish countryside. Most people walked, cycled, or travelled by horse and cart. The only three cars at mass were likely to be those of the priest, the schoolteacher and the large farmer.¹¹⁹ Far from the common table of moral economic lore, one account details how at mealtimes on large estates farmers and their sons would be shown to the parlour and the servant class and their sons to the back kitchen.¹²⁰ That this sort of social division was typical at the time is supported by oral accounts of dinner time on the farm, as recalled by both farmers' and workmen's sons.¹²¹

The Ireland in which 'second generation' male adolescents grew up was distinguished by the primacy of the local and the diversity of place, marked by distinct communities, the isolation of each enhanced by the absence of electricity and adequate transport links. The economic war of the 1930s had brought increasing prosperity to urban centres, and particularly the cities, where cheaper food and better job prospects won Fianna Fáil much working-class support.¹²² The dietary standards of Ireland's urban population also improved during the 1930s.¹²³ Yet the Emergency marked a clear break with this trend as prices and unemployment rose and food supplies waned. Amidst fuel shortages child and adolescent labour was a fact of life. Children and teenage boys were often sent to collect fuel from corporation depots and in Autumn 1942 a young boy was tragically buried alive in Inchicore, one of the hundreds of child fuel scavengers in Ireland's towns and cities.¹²⁴ A Waterford man, recalling collecting turf from corporation depots as a child, remembered that the queues could last for hours and were mostly

composed of children and young teenagers.¹²⁵ That adolescent males of this era, in Ireland and elsewhere, often undertook hard manual labour provides another indication that their 'degeneracy' was more imagined than real.¹²⁶

V Conclusion: Degenerates?

By the end of the Emergency, the 'second generation' of male adolescents in independent Ireland were emerging into adulthood. General O'Duffy, chief assailer of their supposed indolence, was dead; his last manly venture in the public sphere was a 'new Dublin movement' against bicycle thefts in 1942, an attempt to curb urban crime which has more than a hint of Flann O'Brienesque farce to it.¹²⁷ Unlike O'Duffy's generation, few male adolescents of the 'second generation' had experienced national political struggle. Instead, their experiences in the realms of sex, crime, leisure and work display more workaday struggles and pleasures. Constantly weighed down by the achievements of their fathers' generation, arguably the most famous popular political action of the 'second generation' in adolescence was also its parting shot as its members emerged into adulthood. On 7 May 1945, after the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany, a group of young men took umbrage at the positioning of the tricolour below the Union flag on the Trinity College flagpole. This group – some armed with Irish and Vatican flags – charged the gates and later smashed the windows of an up-market Dublin hotel and restaurant to the strains of 'The Soldier's Song'.¹²⁸

The older generation's anxiety over male youth in 1930s and 1940s Ireland comprised concerns about physical 'degeneration', tied in with a deep cultural suspicion of 'foreign' media influences and jazz music. If generations are capable of collective rebuttal of negative paternalistic labelling, then the Trinity flagpole incident was just such an occasion. Yet the anxiety over media role models for male adolescents persisted after the 'second generation' had come of age, as illustrated by a vignette about Superman and future Taoiseach Seán Lemass. Lemass was appointed managing director of the *Irish Press*, Fianna Fáil's press organ, in 1948, and in 1949 helped establish its sister paper, the *Sunday Press*. His most bizarre executive decision was to axe the popular Superman comic strip from the paper's pages. This action was less idiosyncratic than it first appears. Lemass's dislike of Superman's ostentatious crime-fighting swagger was shared by a broad cross-section of middle-aged people in 1930s and 1940s Ireland. As well as Metropolis's fictional criminal fraternity, Superman also had enemies in the shape of the shadowy yet influential

Catholic secret society, the Knights of Colomanus, and the writer Patrick Kavanagh.¹²⁹ Kavanagh, for his part, saw Superman as an egregious example of American celebrities with 'genitals that hardly conformed to the Greek canon and Nietzschean heroes who have a pane of glass for a diaphragm.'¹³⁰ Lemass, too, thought Superman silly and dropped him in favour of home-grown Irish cartoons such as the awful 'Monster of Shandon Hill', in which a man and his two adolescent nephews strive to avoid dinosaurs marauding inexplicably across the Irish countryside, and 'Éire Ar Aghaidh', a cartoon strip telling the story of Irish independence through the eyes of a steadfast young Fianna Éireann recruit.

To the fathers of the 'second generation', the scrawny yet suave 'corner boy' of the cinema foyer was an unpalatable role model for Irish male adolescents. But so too, it seems, was a muscle-bound young dogooder, if too foreign and flashy. This reflects the fact that the cultural parameters of Irish-Ireland ring-fenced male adolescence in the 1930s and 1940s. Teenage sexual expression was therefore sometimes confined to the private sphere and Catholic concerns over morality permeated the public sphere. In such an atmosphere, symptomatic of the economic protectionism and national exclusivism witnessed across Europe during the 1930s, the rhetoric of degeneracy was powerful. Yet poverty, hormones and boredom – rather than a perceptible degeneracy – bred youthful deviance in rural and urban environments. Leisure activities for adolescent males centred on supposedly 'corrupting' film and print media, but also sport and collective endeavour outdoors. Militating against a culture of delinquency was the fact that most male adolescents experienced work young and quickly became caught up in the renewed militarism of the age.

In recounting the experience of 'second generation' Irish male adolescents in the fields of sex, crime, leisure and work it is evident that class was the greatest determinant of difference. Although a commonality of adolescent male experience is perceptible, the narrative of collective generational degeneracy was heavily nuanced by class prejudice. Concern that working-class youths were intellectually unable to maintain a critical distance from corrupting foreign influences underpinned the rhetoric of degeneracy. Finally, it is evident that the 'second generation' of male adolescents in independent Ireland were involved in a collective yet unspoken negotiation between their activities and those of their illustrious forebears. And, as many who have made the transition from adolescence to adulthood have found, many came to realize that although they could never live up to the expectations of the revolutionary generation, these paternalistic idols often had feet of clay.¹³¹

Notes

1. Liam de Róiste, cited in R. F. Foster, *Vivid faces: The revolutionary generation in Ireland, 1890–1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 6.
2. Foster's *Vivid faces* explores the concept of a 'revolutionary generation' in more detail.
3. See Foster, *Vivid Faces*, 327–332.
4. This article takes Foster's conception of the 'revolutionary generation' and extends it to those who came after – in other words, the 'second generation'.
5. Elizabeth Harvey, 'The cult of youth' in Gordon Martel (ed.), *A companion to Europe, 1900–1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 66–81.
6. Contemporary use of the term can be traced back to American psychologist G. Stanley Hall's two volume *Adolescence* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1904).
7. See Joost Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse: The making of a revolutionary* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 320, 209.
8. The initiative for the scheme was the Department of Education's. In implementing the scheme, it worked alongside the Dublin Vocational Education Committee and a number of city voluntary societies such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Belvedere Newsboys' Club, the Mount Street Club and the Don Bosco Society. The movement's organizing committee was named Comhairle le Leas Óige (National Archives of Ireland (NAI), DT 97/9/271).
9. Comhairle le Leas Óige memorandum, Sept. 1942 (NAI, DT 97/9/271).
10. 'Notes of Father Devane's Lecture on 18 May 1942' (NAI, DT 97/9/271). This reflected thinking at policy-making level. Although the issue was considered, a female borstal was never opened in Ireland. See Conor Reidy, *Ireland's 'moral hospital': The Irish borstal system, 1906–1956* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 212–13.
11. 'Notes of Father Devane's Lecture on 18 May 1942' (NAI, DT 97/9/271).
12. 'Notes of Father Vaughan's Lecture on 28 May 1942' in 'Methods of Inculcating Ideals' (NAI, DT 97/9/271).
13. 'Mr O'Farrell's Lecture on Employment Conditions, 7 May 1942' (NAI, DT 97/9/271).
14. See Leif Jerram, *Streetlife: The untold history of Europe's twentieth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Eric Hobsbawm (ed.), *Uncommon people: Resistance, rebellion and jazz* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998).
15. Foster, *Vivid Faces*, xxi.
16. Apart from memoirs, which are discussed in this chapter, the best survey accounts of the adolescent experience of 'second generation' independent Irishmen are to be found in the relevant sections of Diarmaid Ferriter's *The transformation of Ireland, 1900–2000* (Dublin: Profile Books, 2005) and *Occasions of sin: Sex and society in modern Ireland* (Dublin: Profile Books, 2009). For the social and religious backdrop to this chapter see J. H. Whyte, *Church and state in modern Ireland, 1923–1979* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980). For the political and theoretical context see Tom Garvin, *Preventing the future: Why was Ireland so poor for so long?* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2004). For the cultural parameters see Terence Brown, *Ireland: A social and cultural history, 1922–1985* (London: Fontana, 1985). For an introduction to

the economic situation see Cormac Ó Gráda, *A rocky road: The Irish economy since the 1920s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

17. Carrigan is discussed by Mark Finnane in 'The Carrigan committee of 1930–31 and the "moral condition of the Saorstát"', *Irish Historical Studies* 32:128 (2001), 519–36.
18. Cited in Ferriter, *Occasions of sin*, 161.
19. Cited in *ibid.*, 137.
20. Sandra L. McAvoy, 'The regulation of sexuality in the Irish Free State, 1929–1935' in Greta Jones and Elizabeth Malcolm (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland, 1650–1940* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), 263. The Carrigan committee recommended that the age of consent be raised to 18, though the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1935 only raised it to 17 and contraceptives were banned entirely in 1935, despite the Carrigan recommendation.
21. Ironically, O'Duffy's IRA comrades of the War of Independence were often themselves depicted as youthful degenerates by their enemies. Supporters of the IRA and Sinn Féin, by contrast, emphasized the valour of the revolutionary generation, even claiming superiority in manhood over the preceding generation. See Chapter 8, 'Youth and rebellion', in Peter Hart, *The IRA and its enemies: Violence and community in Cork, 1916–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 165–83.
22. See Fearghal McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy: A self-made hero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
23. Ferriter, *Occasions of sin*, 212. Montgomery, claims Kevin Rockett, was 'hostile to anything which deviated from traditional Catholic teaching on family and society.' Rockett, *Irish film censorship: A cultural journey from silent cinema to internet pornography* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 76.
24. Dublin Garda 'Index to Special Files', 1929–1945, in the possession of Tom Clonan. For Gate Theatre miscreants see, for example, files 131 (12/3/40); 131 (12/3/40); 197 (23/6/43). The files themselves do not exist. The extensive index (which summarizes file content) is in private possession and, significantly, includes records of accusations of crime from members of the public which did not reach court. Parenthetically, there has been speculation that O'Duffy himself partook in Dublin's gay cruising scene at the time, and even that he enjoyed a sexual relationship with Micheál Mac Liamóir, the Gate theatre's founder. O'Duffy's sexuality is explored further in McGarry, *O'Duffy*.
25. Ferriter, *Occasions of sin*, 113–14.
26. *Ibid.*, 325.
27. H. V. Morton, *In search of Ireland* (London: Methuen, 1930), 141.
28. *Ibid.*, 142.
29. John B. Keane [b. 1928], *Letters of a love-hungry farmer* (London: Roberts Rinehart, 1993) [1st ed. 1974], 4.
30. See Ferriter, *Occasions of sin*, *passim*.
31. See Peter Martin, *Censorship in the two Irelands* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), 76.
32. Cardinal MacRory, cited in *Weekly Irish Times*, 29 Feb. 1939.
33. Archbishop Gilmartin of Tuam, cited in *Connacht Tribune*, 23 May 1936.

34. Bishop of Elphin Edward Doorly, cited in *Irish Independent*, 28 Feb. 1938.
35. Frank McCourt [b. 1930], *Angela's ashes: A memoir of a childhood* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 402.
36. *Ibid.*, 406.
37. Behan, *Borstal boy*, 52.
38. *Ibid.*, 74.
39. McCourt, *Angela's ashes*, 400.
40. Garret FitzGerald [b. 1926], *All in a life, an autobiography* (Dublin and London: Gill and Macmillan, 1991), 28.
41. Peter Martin argues that Ireland's censorship regime was far from unique, even in the English-speaking world, in its preoccupation with sexual morality, modernism and popular culture. See Martin, *Censorship*, 224–29.
42. Images of scantily-clad women were resolutely opposed on screen and in theatres by Montgomery and his successor Richard Hayes. See Rockett, *Irish film censorship*, 87–124.
43. *Irish Independent*, 18 Aug. 1939.
44. *Irish Independent*, 27 Oct. 1941.
45. Ferriter, *Occasions of sin*, 242.
46. The concentration on criminal sexuality, compared to physical love, in Ferriter's *Occasions of sin* is somewhat disproportionate.
47. See Kevin Rockett, 'Protecting the family and the nation: The official censorship of American cinema in Ireland, 1923–1954', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 20:3 (2000), 288.
48. Cited in Colin Walker, 'Robert Weil' [b. 1924] in Gisela Holfter (ed.), *German-speaking exiles in Ireland 1933–1945* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), 133–47.
49. See Peter Somerville-Large [b. 1928], *An Irish childhood* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2002).
50. *Irish Times*, 17 Sept. 1943.
51. *Irish Times*, 14 Feb. 1938.
52. *Irish Times*, 19 Apr. 1937. In 1939 Fine Gael deputy James Dillon alleged 'children are being literally rail-roaded to jail in the Dublin District Court area.' *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 75, 165 (29 Mar. 1939).
53. E. Fahy, 'The boy criminal', *The Bell*, 1: 2 (1940), 46–7.
54. See, for example, *Irish Independent*, 23 Feb. 1940, 27 Mar. 1941; *Irish Times*, 13 Oct. 1939, 3 Mar. 1941.
55. *Statistical abstract* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1945), 162.
56. *Irish Times*, 6 Feb. 1943.
57. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 89, 1,834 (8 Apr. 1943).
58. *Irish Independent*, 8 Mar. 1943.
59. *Irish Times*, 20 May 1937.
60. *Irish Times*, 9 Oct. 1934.
61. *Irish Times*, 16 Oct. 1934.
62. *Irish Times*, 11 Apr. 1935.
63. See, for instance, *Irish Press*, 28 Feb. 1939.
64. *Anglo-Celt*, 7 Feb. 1942.
65. Bryce Evans, 'The Construction Corps, 1940–48', *Saothar*, 32 (2007), 19–31.
66. See some of the criticism levelled at Frank McCourt's *Angela's ashes* as summarised in Ferriter, *Transformation*, 361.

67. *Irish Times*, 7 June 1943.
68. Sheila May, 'Two Dublin slums', *The Bell*, 7:4 (1944), 351–6.
69. Kathleen Behan, *Mother of all the Behans* (London: Hutchinson, 1984), 93.
70. Department of Local Government and Public Health, *Report 1943–1944* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1944), 44–8.
71. For a mature take on the Dublin Corporation housing schemes of this period see Ruth McManus, *Dublin, 1910–1940, shaping the city and suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002), 162–234.
72. *Irish Times*, 17 Oct. 1944.
73. T. W. T. Dillon, 'Slum clearance: Past and future', *Studies*, 34: 133 (1945), 13–20.
74. See David S. Johnson, 'Cattle smuggling on the Irish border, 1932–38', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 6 (1979), 41–63. Johnson explains the nature of smuggling in the 1930s with reference to the divergence of store and fat cattle prices.
75. C. G. Wickham to W. A. B. Iliff, 18 Oct. 1941 (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland CAB/9/CD/4/4).
76. Tony Canavan, *Frontier town: An illustrated history of Newry* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1989), 209.
77. Garda Report, 8 Aug. 1941 (NAI, DFA, P 305/1).
78. *Anglo-Celt*, 4 Jan. 1941.
79. See Foster, *Vivid Faces*, 280.
80. Reidy, *Ireland's 'moral hospital'*, 237–43.
81. Turf Controller Hugo Flinn, for example, had a cloying admiration for the Nazi *Arbeitsdienst* as a means of moral rehabilitation. This compulsory six-month educational and military programme for young men had resulted, he wrote, in 'the disappearance of physical and moral slovenliness,' 'order, punctuality, cleanliness, obedience' and 'a sense of honour and duty to the Nation.' Hugo Flinn to de Valera, 9 Dec. 1938 (NAI, DT S10927).
82. Hart, *The IRA and its enemies*, 164.
83. Foster, *Vivid Faces*, 25.
84. Maura Laverty, *Never no more, a novel* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1942), 81.
85. Clair Wills, *That neutral island, a cultural history of Ireland during the Second World War* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007), 297.
86. Laverty, *Never no more*, 227.
87. See *Times Pictorial*, 30 May 1942.
88. *Weekly Irish Times*, 20 Nov. 1937.
89. *Weekly Irish Times*, 25 Feb. 1939.
90. See, for instance, *Times Pictorial*, 11 July 1942.
91. Wills, *Neutral island*, 270.
92. Rockett, *Irish film censorship*, 73–5. Film censor James Montgomery, writing in 1941, thought that Ireland's distinctive national character could not withstand the 'bombardment' of 'vulgar and sensational' Hollywood themes. See Rockett, 'Protecting the family and the nation', 283.
93. Fitzgerald, *All in a life*, 14.
94. Terry Trench, *Fifty years young: The story of An Óige* (Dublin: An Óige, Irish Youth Hostel Association, 1981), 10.
95. *Ibid.*, 23.
96. *Ibid.*, 30.

97. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, 'The heroic importance of sport: The GAA in the 1930s', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25:10 (2008), 1326–37, examines Gaelic Athletic Association publications and committee minutes, illustrating the dominance of the contemporary paradigm of Irish male athletic heroism.
98. McGarry, *O'Duffy*, 152.
99. For the campaign against jazz on Irish radio in the 1930s and 1940s see Martin McLoone, 'Music Hall dope and British propaganda? Cultural identity and early broadcasting in Ireland', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 20:3 (2000), 308–11.
100. John McGahern [b. 1934], *Memoir* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005), 164.
101. For Aicéin see R. M. Douglas, *Architects of the Resurrection: Ailtirí na hAiséiríge and the fascist 'New Order' in Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 80. On Na Fianna Éireann, see Marnie Hay's chapter in this volume.
102. Dermot Keogh, *Jews in twentieth-century Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 91.
103. Dublin Garda 'Index to Special Files', 1929–1945, in the possession of Tom Clonan.
104. Douglas, *Architects of the Resurrection*, 174. In fact, Labour Youth emerged in 1937 during the Spanish civil war, only to be wound up by a communist-party Labour party hierarchy. See Niamh Puirseil, *The Irish Labour Party, 1922–73* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007), 68.
105. Wills, *Neutral island*, 272.
106. FitzGerald, *All in a life*, 14.
107. Edward Daly Doyle [b. 1919] cited in A. Norman Jeffares and Anthony Kamm (eds), *An Irish childhood: An anthology* (London: Collins, 1987), 303.
108. Morton, *In search*, 37, 52.
109. McGahern, *Memoir*, 162.
110. Thomas Ludlow [b. 1920], *The bacon box* (London: Minerva, 2000), 23–53.
111. *Irish Times*, 22 Mar. 1935. See also *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 54, 231 (15 Nov. 1934).
112. *Irish Times*, 1 Feb. 1936.
113. *Irish Times*, 29 Mar. 1939.
114. 'Do Ministers work as long as schoolchildren?', *The Standard*, 6 Oct. 1944.
115. *Southern Star*, 10 May 1941.
116. Wills, *Neutral island*, 316.
117. See Evans, 'The Construction Corps', 19–31.
118. See Eoin O'Sullivan and Mary Raftery, *Suffer the little children: The inside story of Ireland's industrial schools* (London: Continuum, 2002).
119. Interview with Jack Magill [b. 1927], Saul, Co. Down, 16 Apr. 2000 (Mary Immaculate Oral Archive (MIOA)), 7.
120. Liam O'Donnell [b. 1921], *The days of the servant boy* (Cork: Mercer Press, 1997), 90–5.
121. See, for instance, the account of meal time by the son of a large farmer based in Co. Down in interview with Jack Magill (MIOA), 10.
122. Peter Neary and Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Protection, economic war and structural change: the 1930s in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, 27:107 (1991), 255.
123. David Johnson, *The interwar economy in Ireland* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1989), 41.

124. Gerald Fee, 'The effects of World War II on Dublin's low-income families, 1939–1945' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 1996), 133.
125. Interview with Christy Hennessy [b. 1932] Waterford City, 8 Apr. 2000 (MIOA), 8.
126. For the British case see John Field, *Working men's bodies: Work camps in Britain, 1880–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 132–36.
127. *Irish Times*, 13 May 1942.
128. *Irish Times*, 8 May 1945.
129. See Bryce Evans, *Seán Lemass: Democratic dictator* (Cork: Collins Press, 2011).
130. See *Kavanagh's Weekly*, 19 Apr. 1952.
131. For an examination of the 'second generation's' celebration of their fathers' achievements and the impact of this on *their* children see Carole Holohan, 'Every generation has its task: Irish youth in the sixties' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 2009).

8

A Powerful Antidote? Catholic Youth Clubs in the Sixties

Carole Holohan

In 1966 Radió Telefís Éireann, the Irish national public service television station, broadcast a programme about teenagers entitled *The Young Ones*. Hosted by investigative journalist Michael Viney,¹ the programme addressed youth clubs and featured a teenager named Tina:

Tina is just sixteen – a slim ... pretty girl who is used to working in back-lane factories, who lives with her mother in a Corporation flat and dreams about the Beatles. Twice a week she goes dancing at St. Dominic's Girls' club – and wishes there were more 'fellas' to make the club even better. We adopted Tina as a guide to the life and surroundings of the 'young ones' who grow up in the heart of commercial Dublin. Through her eyes, we began to see just how grey and dispiriting the back streets of the capital could be ... we began to realise just what a youth club could mean in these anonymous – and often very ugly wilds of central Dublin.²

In the sixties³ youth clubs, and youth welfare work more generally, received significant media attention. This reflected growing concerns about how Irish youths spent their leisure time; in particular their interaction with an international and commercial youth culture that was associated with juvenile delinquency and sexual permissiveness. Such concerns were not new. Youth clubs that emphasized leisure had first emerged in the West in the nineteenth century and represented a reaction to commercialized socializing in urban areas, which had a different quality to that of more traditional village life. Bars, dance halls, cinemas and fairgrounds, provided by the market, warranted a call for an alternative and more appropriate infrastructure.⁴ The youth club was considered an appropriate space, supervised by adults and often

attached to a church, where young people could spend their leisure time engaging in wholesome activities.⁵ Thus the provision of leisure pursuits sanctioned and supervised by adults, as an alternative to those that were not, formed the basis of this kind of youth welfare work. This work was often bound up with the concept of adolescence, another nineteenth-century invention. This life stage implied a biological vulnerability, which characterized youths as psychologically and emotionally unstable as a result of puberty, ultimately allowing for both the perfectibility of youth and its dissension into delinquency.⁶

In the sixties adult anxieties about adolescents appeared to reach new heights in the West, as they were fuelled by the supposed disruptive impact of the Second World War and the negative effects of an expanding commercial market for youth products. The post-war era saw mass production, mass consumption and mass media facilitate, and intersect with, an international youth culture, resulting in young people setting new cultural standards which appeared to challenge and threaten the status quo.⁷ Increased demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour in these years led to the economic enfranchisement of many working-class youths. This facilitated the further expansion of a market-driven youth culture, which was seen as detrimental to young people themselves and to the future of society as a whole. In the print media youth subcultures were defined as a problem, eliciting moral panics, and in these discourses youth was viewed as both a victim of the market and a danger to society.

The idea of dangerous youths was often bound up with issues of class. Since the nineteenth century concerns relating to young people had traditionally focused on urban industrialized youths, those unsupervised and with access to commercialized forms of socialising. The middle classes were largely excluded from these concerns, as their longer years of schooling implied longer years of adult supervision and the absence of wages, both of which curbed their involvement with commercialized forms of youth culture.⁸ While the politicization of primarily middle-class youths in the universities, and the emergence of the so-called 'counter-culture', resulted in a shift in academic and public concern in the late sixties, in the 1950s and early 1960s it was working-class youths that generated unease. Youth clubs were therefore often run by middle-class adults for working-class youths.⁹

While young people were afforded a new nomenclature in the form of the 'teenager', a new market actor in the 1940s and 1950s, nineteenth-century ideas of youth as a vulnerable stage in the life cycle survived. The concept of adolescence continued to underlie that of the teenager,

provoking concerns that young people would be manipulated by the market. These concerns provoked a flurry of activity in youth welfare work and by the sixties, even with a very limited war experience and limited affluence, these developments penetrated the Republic of Ireland. Despite the absence of an immediate post-war economic boom, the Irish economy grew significantly in the early 1960s as increased levels of industrialization and the expansion of the service and commercial sectors heralded a stay in chronic emigration. This made for a more youthful population, as the numbers in the age group fourteen to twenty-four years rose by 91,861 or 20.4 per cent in the period 1961 to 1971.¹⁰ Migration to urban areas combined with a proliferation of dancehalls, beat clubs and pubs, which served as spaces for youths to socialize, made this an increasingly visible subsection of society. This chapter will outline how discourses on youth culture and leisure time intersected with those on youth welfare work in Ireland.¹¹ It will then demonstrate the impact of international developments in youth welfare work on events in Ireland by focusing on a local study. In analyzing a new initiative involving youth clubs in the Catholic archdiocese of Dublin, this study reveals the centrality of class in framing responses to different groups of young people, despite the universality of the experience of adolescence. The brainchild of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid (1940–1972), this scheme demonstrated how he viewed youth clubs as a tool that would help maintain both social order and the class structure at a time when youth, on the international stage, was becoming synonymous with the erosion of both.

I

In the sixties the term ‘teenager’ usually referred to those in their teenage years and those in their early twenties. In 1959 Mark Abrams produced highly influential market research, published in *The teenage consumer*, which described British teenagers as unmarried young people aged between fifteen and twenty-five years.¹² Similarly, in Ireland, the social category of youth implied those in their teens and twenties, although this was a slightly broader cohort given the lower school leaving age of fourteen years and the slightly older, though falling, average marriage age.¹³ Irish youths encompassed young employees, school pupils, relatives assisting on the farm and third-level students. This subsection of society increasingly became a subject of concern and study but also a self-identifying social group, united by their cultural choices.

While the increased prominence of young people in society often created a sense of optimism about the future of the nation, a plethora of developments in the field of youth welfare work revealed adults' concerns.¹⁴ Delinquency and sexual permissiveness were the chief concerns of adults. In a series of articles on juvenile delinquency for the *Evening Herald* in 1959, Liam Shine argued that while young people had always desired independence and adult amusement, what was new about the market by the late 1950s was 'the way in which lavishly financed ... commercial interests' tried to 'pervert the energies of youth.' 'Sex,' wrote Shine, 'is the challenge of our age.'¹⁵ Sex had always been the challenge of a society which, under the strong influence of the Catholic church, tried to uphold an image of moral purity. However, while the church had long held the ability to control the language and discourses associated with sexual relationships, during the sixties the market and the media emerged as increasingly powerful purveyors of lifestyle choices.

Post-war economic booms had transformed popular culture internationally and new developments in mass communications meant that more and more young people experienced their youth collectively. The emergence of the youth-driven music industry, with its focus on rock 'n' roll, was difficult to control given the development of the transistor radio, and the sexual themes adults believed inherent in this new genre generated concern. At the same time a new type of teen-oriented film increased the workload of the Irish censor, who cut scenes which featured the pelvic gyrations of Elvis in the 1958 film *King Creole*. The censor, Liam O'Hora, remarked: 'This picture is a tough one for me, particularly so because it features the controversial Presley who has such an appeal for uneducated adolescents.'¹⁶

Such sentiments had long-established origins. In 1928 a previous film censor, James Montgomery, expressed his concerns about the effect 'gangster films' had on working-class youths. He described how when dealing with these films he had in his mind 'the memory of a crowd of children from the neighbouring slums attending the Picture House in Pearse St [Dublin].'¹⁷ The morals of working-class youths had long been a cause of concern. Due to their longer years of schooling and more secure career structure, middle-class youths were considered less troublesome, and it was their working-class counterparts who provoked controversy and anxiety.¹⁸

While at an international level both media coverage and increased levels of surveillance undoubtedly accounted for the perceived increase in delinquency levels after the war, juvenile delinquency was often presented as both a new problem and a universal phenomenon in

the sixties. In Britain, the impact of the war and increased affluence were cited as contributory factors, and a perceived increase in lawlessness among young people was often perceived as 'a new "wave" in delinquency'.¹⁹ A study of delinquency in West Berlin revealed the occurrence of 108 riots involving gangs of youths of more than ten members between July 1955 and December 1956. These included riots associated with certain films and so-called 'hot music'. Similarly in 1957 in New York, disturbances were caused by youths at screenings of *Don't Knock Rock* and in England in 1956 at screenings of *Rock Around the Clock*.²⁰ In Britain the Teddy Boy, typified by a slicked-back hair cut, Edwardian-style clothing, a fondness of rock 'n' roll and an apparent penchant for knife crime, emerged from the working-class and appeared to confirm the existence of a new form of youth subculture that was both troubled and troublesome.²¹ Some argued that delinquent behaviour was the result of a gap between aspirations and actual possibilities in a modern consumer society; hence the apparent prevalence of delinquency amongst those from deprived areas.²²

The dissemination of rock 'n' roll music, and its accompanying fashions, via the airwaves and the cinema, meant the Teddy Boy had counterparts all over the world. The disturbances in cinemas which accompanied the film *Rock Around the Clock* (1956), the first film 'to successfully target teenagers to the exclusion of adults,' served as confirmation that rock 'n' roll had a subversive influence.²³ In September 1956 the film was removed from the Abbey Cinema in Drogheda, Co. Louth, following the breaking of a showcase by the horde of young people who had packed the venue to see the film. Queues had gathered outside the cinema two hours prior to the showing and extra Gardaí were placed on patrol in the town for fear of disorder.²⁴ In November, police were called to the Mary Street Cinema in Dublin when 'a young audience got out of hand.' The 'disturbances' consisted of 'dancing, shouting and some fighting' in the aisles. Thirty-five seats were damaged and a window was broken. Police gathered outside the cinema and it was reported that 'a knife was thrown at them.'²⁵

However, despite these incidents the phenomenon of a 'teddy boy international' appeared to have relatively weak roots in Irish society.²⁶ In 1959 a 'special correspondent' for the *Irish Times* commented that 'most of the teddy-boys seen around Dublin are harmless jaspers, imitating in dress only their British counterparts.'²⁷ Other commentators noted that the Teddy Boy problem in Ireland was not what it was elsewhere, including a senior Garda Officer who asserted that 'taking them by and large teddy boys have not really been a problem for us; very often they

are the scapegoats rather than the offenders.²⁸ In 1959 the *Evening Herald* reported on its front page the case of a youth, 'dressed in an expensive looking Teddy boy suit,' charged with 'breaking china in his own home.'²⁹ Given the type of offence described, this is perhaps a prime example of the excessive publicity which was given to juvenile delinquency as a news item in the late 1950s. Fr Dermot O'Neill, who worked in various youth clubs in Dublin's city centre, wrote about the frequent misperception of Teddy Boys as violent delinquents:

If by Teddy Boy we mean those who wear strange clothes, drain-pipe trousers, boot lace ties, crepe sole shoes, red socks, and padded shoulders, then I think it is quite wrong to assume that such a boy is a delinquent and a menace to society. I have found a strange thing. That since the Teddy Boy clothes came some years ago, the boys of the poorer class are taking far more trouble with their appearance than they used. The Teddy Boy outfit has led to a better standard all round in the appearance of these lads. Some Teddy Boys would be delinquents in any case and the clothes simply draw more attention to them as a group.³⁰

While in the sixties it was recognized that all youths had the potential to become delinquent, responses to the perceived problem usually focused on urban and working-class males. In his *Evening Herald* series, Shine had not neglected to mention that delinquency occurred in 'good homes and schools', but he noted that these cases were not usually seen in courts or in crime statistics as the parents could afford to pay for the damage caused.³¹ Internationally, this was described as 'hidden' delinquency.³² Delinquents were generally considered to be three things: urban, working class and male. The *Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment* (1951) considered that the young person in a city 'with nothing to do and all day to do it' was in much greater moral danger than his country counterpart, given the absence of supervision by the local community.³³ In 1968 approximately 44 per cent of males housed in reformatories were stated to be from Dublin city and county, while Dublin male youths comprised just 24 per cent of the male youth population.³⁴ In his study of working-class Dublin families in the 1950s, Alexander J. Humphreys differentiated between different strata within the working-class. His interviews with artisan families (skilled workers in the trades and 'the lowest echelons of administrators') and labouring-class families (semi-skilled and unskilled workers) suggested to Humphreys that the degree of parental control was relatively

less amongst the labouring-class families. He found that truancy was quite common amongst boys and male youths and that while 'artisan parents are mainly worried about their sons causing property damage out of innocent exuberance, labouring class parents are hounded by the fear of thievery, delinquency and the reform schools.'³⁵

The idea that boys and young men posed a more overt problem than their female counterparts aligned with the notion that young males had a natural inclination for mischief and wrong-doing, as well as 'a lust for adventure'.³⁶ This perception was reflected in crime statistics. For the year 1968/1969 ninety-seven of 103 committals to reformatories were of male youths.³⁷ Notions of masculine adolescence implied vandalism, violence and, above all, gangs. Rather than behavioural deviants, girls were viewed as possible sexual deviants.³⁸

Youth clubs were often viewed as essential to prevention, as juvenile crime was sometimes perceived as a 'leisure time activity'.³⁹ In response to an article in *Hibernia*, a current affairs and arts magazine, which referred to the leisure hours of youth as 'dangerous hours', Eddie Daly, who worked in an inner-city youth centre, described the work being done by many boys' clubs in the city:

In the club of which I have personal experience such things as Woodwork, Arts and Crafts and Boot repairing are taught ... We are catering for potential delinquents, almost two hundred normal, likeable boys, who are exposed every day of their lives to the unprecedented temptations of our materialistic age.⁴⁰

Daly's letter inferred that any working-class children not provided for by a youth club could turn delinquent.

II

In the sixties youth clubs and youth welfare work came to the fore as various agents attempted to provide for the leisure time of young people in the hope that more suitable outlets would counteract the influence of the market.⁴¹ In Britain this led to significant investment in the Youth Service, which focused on the training of professional youth workers. In Ireland the churches rather than the state were the chief providers of youth services. By the 1950s the Catholic church held a near-monopoly in this sphere as it ministered to the majority Catholic population, and its activity in this field focused primarily on the spiritual and moral formation of adolescents. Catholic youth clubs often catered for what

was termed 'out-of-school youth', mostly those aged fourteen and older, and had spiritual, charitable, training and leisure elements. The circumstances of Irish youths were significantly different to those of their British counterparts in the immediate post-war period as affluence, and therefore leisure time, was not the primary concern of those involved with youth welfare work. However, during the 1960s the delayed post-war economic boom relegated the charitable and training element of youth services, simultaneously propelling the leisure element.

Traditionally, youth welfare work was funded and run by members of the middle classes under the auspices of a spiritual director, often a priest. This was the case in the youth clubs organized by the Society of St John Bosco, the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the Legion of Mary.⁴² The Society of St John Bosco originated in 1937 when a group of laymen came together in order to provide school books for needy children in Dublin. This endeavour drew their attention to the absence of facilities for those children who finished school at fourteen years of age and, with the approval of parish priests, they established clubs to provide a leisure outlet for boys leaving national school.⁴³ For the Society of St Vincent de Paul, youth welfare work was an extension of the charity work they were already engaged in. The society provided families with food, clothes, and employment and social insurance advice.⁴⁴ In 1939 the second annual report of the St Brigid's Boys' Club in Limerick, run by the Society of St Vincent de Paul, illustrated the merging of more general charity with youth welfare work. The work undertaken at St Brigid's Boys' Club was typical of Catholic youth clubs. Prayers were said at the end of every evening and clothes, in particular outfits for Confirmation,⁴⁵ were distributed. Boot-repairing and sewing classes were provided as forms of employment training, while football, boxing, films, quizzes and day trips comprised the leisure element.⁴⁶

In 1942 Fianna Fáil Minister for Education Thomas Derrig established An Comhairle le Leas Óige (CLÓ), a new youth body that assisted existing youth organizations and established youth training centres.⁴⁷ The appointment of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin's nominee, Fr Dennis Vaughan, to the position of chairman demonstrated the dominance of the Catholic Church in this field and confirmed the state's acceptance of this status quo. Vaughan described how youth clubs and CLÓ's associated youth centres attracted boys away from the cinema, dance hall and billiard saloon, and helped youths with their intellectual and moral development. However, he stressed that CLÓ did not have ambitions to become a state-funded youth movement or act as a site of state intervention into the family:

Youth clubs and centres are in the unhappy condition that some people regard them as affecting the family adversely ... club life can distract boys from their homes and parents. In a club, a boy can meet his pal so often and under such favourable circumstances that he quickly forgets that "a boy's best friend is his mother".⁴⁸

Vaughan's comments reflected the unease state involvement in youth affairs provoked in certain circles. This included the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid. Presiding as he did over a highly clericalist system, McQuaid maintained that youth welfare work should be voluntary, denominational and take place at parish level. McQuaid was determined that this model would direct the future of youth welfare work in his diocese and not one which implied the secularization of this field.

McQuaid's obituary in the *Irish Times* in 1973 described how the archbishop 'did not wait for problems to hit him, but sought them out and anticipated them.'⁴⁹ In the spheres of mental health, emigrant welfare and drug addiction, McQuaid's response was often well developed before these issues hit the secular press.⁵⁰ He was similarly speedy in his response to new youth issues in the 1950s. Within his own archdiocese, McQuaid had created the Catholic Social Services Conference (CSSC) in 1941, which saw the amalgamation of the efforts of nearly forty Catholic Action organizations under his auspices.⁵¹ McQuaid maintained that welfare services should reflect Catholic social teaching and therefore provide assistance based on need, rather than on legal right.⁵² From the mid-1940s the CSSC annual report carried a section under the heading 'Youth Welfare', most likely a response to the formation of CLÓ.⁵³ This was followed by the formation of the Catholic Youth Council (CYC) in 1947, a body representative of Catholic youth clubs in the archdiocese that essentially undercut much of the work undertaken by CLÓ.

A Catholic educationalist, McQuaid had long displayed a strong interest in youth formation. In 1956 he sent a circular letter to his parish priests:

The ignorance revealed in the continuation and Technical Schools, the lapses in sexual morality, the appearance of youth gangs (a feature which, however, must not be exaggerated) and the entire absence of any instruction for tens of thousands who go to Sunday Mass – are all factors which oblige me to take special notice of the facilities afforded youth by the Clergy.⁵⁴

Those 'in the continuation and technical schools' referred to working-class teenagers receiving second-level education, whilst 'the absence of instruction for tens of thousands' referred to the majority of Dublin teenagers who only received a primary school education. McQuaid proposed the formation of religious guilds, known as sodalities, specifically for those aged fourteen to eighteen years, which would enable the parish priest to have a conference with young people on a monthly basis.⁵⁵ That he was anxious that the parish priest would have direct contact with teenagers reflected his belief that the priest was the appropriate person to guide young people with regards to the sensitive issues surrounding sexual morality.⁵⁶

However, McQuaid's proposal was not viable. He had envisaged a system of sodalities that would incorporate all youths from the same parish. However, middle-class youths often attended secondary schools outside the parish and were therefore removed from it, while priests complained that sodality meetings, which traditionally took place on Friday evenings, coincided with the day working youths collected their wages, resulting in poor attendance. Unable to attract young people to sodalities many parish priests had turned solely to clubs and the purveyance of leisure in terms of providing for teenagers.⁵⁷ While clubs focused on the recreational rather than on the spiritual, there was some crossover as most had a chaplain. A plethora of Catholic youth clubs were established in this period, undoubtedly a response to media coverage of juvenile delinquency. In 1957 Monsignor John F. Stokes opened and blessed the new Oliver Plunkett Boys' Club in Drogheda, Co. Louth describing it as 'a powerful antidote to juvenile delinquency which even in provincial towns [displayed] an upward trend.'⁵⁸

At an international level there was somewhat of a revolution in the field of youth welfare work. Council of Europe forums discussed the best way to provide for the problems of modern youth and ultimately focused on the provision of youth leaders and youth leadership courses.⁵⁹ Given the failure of youth sodalities, McQuaid adopted a similar approach to youth welfare work and in 1960 appointed Monsignor Cecil Barrett, director of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau (CSWB), as chairman of the CYC.⁶⁰ The Bureau's chief concern had been caring for the needs of emigrants and as emigration had absorbed much of Irish youth in the 1950s it seems in many ways fitting that Barrett received this appointment in 1960. Barrett had a long history of working as McQuaid's right hand man on many social issues and, with Barrett by his side, McQuaid was ready to pursue a new course in the field of youth work and determined to take the lead in this sphere as it pertained to young Catholics in his archdiocese.

The introduction of training courses for youth leaders represented a turning point in developments in youth work internationally. Invitations to Council of Europe symposia on the subject filtered their way through the Department of Education to McQuaid and ultimately to Barrett, who was clearly inspired by these developments.⁶¹ By October 1961 Barrett had organized a youth leadership course, which was held in the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology.⁶² The previous August he had submitted his ideas to McQuaid. The aim of the course was to raise the standards of the existing club leaders, whilst the further long-term aim was to use the course as a means of recruiting new leaders from what he referred to as 'the best sources available'.⁶³ The course had four elements: principles of youth club work, club organization and method, youth guidance, and club activities.⁶⁴

The introduction of a new type of leader into the clubs was seen as a way to raise the standard of youth work overall. In order to recruit leaders from the aforementioned 'best sources available', Barrett contended that 'naturally' they should turn to the secondary schools and 'try to contact the most promising boys and girls before they leave school.'⁶⁵ Post-primary education was provided by secondary schools and vocational schools. The secondary schools were private denominational institutions with significant fees attached and the curriculum corresponded generally to that of grammar schools or gymnasia in other European countries, while vocational schools demanded only a nominal fee and offered a technical education.⁶⁶ While in much of Europe the post-war period had witnessed dramatic growth in the numbers attending university, in Ireland it was the second-level sector that witnessed the most change, as free second-level schooling was only introduced in 1967. Prior to this, secondary school education was dominated by the middle classes, and while some working-class youths attended vocational schools, many left education at fourteen years of age having completed the Primary Certificate.

The machinery to procure the 'most promising' boys from the secondary schools to act as youth leaders was already in existence through the recently organized Archbishop's Volunteer Corps. The Corps was formed as a type of praetorian guard for McQuaid at the Patrician Congress in 1961.⁶⁷ After the congress McQuaid decided not to disband the Corps and instead aimed to establish within it a trained group of young men who would be the leaders in the 'social works' of the parishes of the diocese.⁶⁸ Renamed the Colleges Volunteer Corps (CVC), this organization divided Dublin's secondary schools into four administrative areas. All secondary school boys and former pupils between the

ages of sixteen and twenty-one years were eligible to join, once they received their parent's permission, a reference from a school superior and were accepted by an interview board.⁶⁹ Members were available to the archbishop 'for any work, particularly of a social nature, which he may call on [them] to do,' and they soon became active as leaders in youth clubs in the archdiocese.⁷⁰

The appointment of Barrett had marked a new departure, as youth work was formalized with the introduction of training courses. However, Barrett also represented continuity. The CSWB, and the CSSC it was associated with, had been established with a view to providing welfare services for Dublin's Catholic poor, based on the principle of need. But the acceptance that appropriate use of leisure time was the means through which youth issues could be tackled drew these bodies into uncharted territory. The apparatus of the CSSC had been used to provide charity for poor families not leisure opportunities for working-class teenagers. McQuaid's attempt to train secondary school youths as leaders for youth clubs reeked of an earlier time when the CSSC channelled funds from better off to poorer Catholics.⁷¹ Compared to other developments in the sphere of youth welfare work, at home and abroad, McQuaid's vision of middle-class volunteers as representatives of the Church, maintaining their leadership role in a changing society by providing leadership for working-class youths, appeared anachronistic. In 1960 Rev. Dermott O'Neill described how separate clubs for working youths aged thirteen to fifteen years, and those aged fifteen to seventeen years, provided games, educational facilities and 'an opportunity for companionship' for those considered not as fortunate as their peers attending secondary and technical schools.⁷² He described how the 'girls' had factory jobs while the 'boys' worked as messenger boys, pump attendants and lorry helpers. He considered what he termed 'unemployable' youths 'different to the modern club member who is materially well provided for,' indicating that the charitable function clubs had traditionally comprised was becoming less significant.⁷³

Concerns regarding teenagers' leisure time often reflected the unease some felt as the working classes gained relative affluence, while voluntary organizations had traditionally embraced the idea that the middle classes would show their working-class counterparts how to behave.⁷⁴ This idea was not only evident in the leadership role assigned to members of McQuaid's CVC. In 1963 Angela Macnamara, who began her career as an agony aunt by teaching girls in convent schools about 'company keeping [and] the essential differences between the sexes,' informed *Hibernia* magazine that she had found the secondary school

girls at the convents where she lectured to be particularly willing to engage in charity with a view to helping their working-class peers: 'When I spoke to some groups of girls on the subject of the responsibility of educated people to help those less well educated and less fortunate, the immediate reaction of the girls was "What can we do, we'd love to help if we knew how".'⁷⁵

A group of girls from the Dominican Convent at Sion Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin had written a letter to Macnamara expressing their desire to form a youth club. They were aware of the delicate nature of providing a club for working-class youths of a similar age but had no doubt about their entitlement to lead:

In the modern world conditions have changed considerably for the working class ... Nowadays the increased emphasis on a shorter working week and bigger pay packets presents new problems in society – the proper use of leisure. Approximately 50 per cent of young people leave school at 14 years. They haven't had sufficient education to awaken their interest in anything beyond their immediate needs and environment. Their failure to use their leisure time constructively is ultimately demoralising.⁷⁶

These attitudes demonstrate how the moralism and paternalism that had infused charitable endeavour in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries continued to characterize initiatives in youth welfare work in the sixties. The approach of the students from Sion Hill was little different to those involved in the Alexandra College Guild, who established a junior club for factory girls in 1903.⁷⁷ Desmond Bell has rightly bemoaned the fact that Irish youth culture tends to be represented as a 'classless cosmopolitan phenomenon'.⁷⁸ However, in the sixties the significance of class divisions amongst young people are particularly striking when one analyzes youth welfare work.

As McQuaid attempted to reinvigorate youth work in his archdiocese it was obvious that for him youth as a social category did not transcend class barriers; in fact his vision of youth work involved using class difference as a policy-directing tool. The members of the CVC helped organize boys' and girls' clubs in the archdiocese. In 1962 McQuaid outlined their role:

The attractiveness of our clubs depends also on a variety of occupations. In the past we have tended to be only football groups. It has proved a very useful thing, but there is surely a wider range of

interests on which we can call. And in this aspect, I look greatly to the help of the boys of the Volunteer Corps, who are themselves full of varied interests and anxious to share these interests with others.⁷⁹

It seems that McQuaid hoped that the leisure opportunities afforded to secondary school boys could filter down to the less advantaged. He informed the members of the Corps that he looked upon them as a group of 'handpicked young men', and in order to maintain standards he encouraged them to be selective when choosing members from their own school:

Be quite definite about the type of man you want ... be quite firm in setting aside those who you believe will not measure up to the requirement of a Corps that is devoted, courageous, considerate and dedicated to Our Lady ... So many are just kids. I don't want them. They are bent on their own selves.⁸⁰

Thus the type of adolescent or teenager found in the CVC was supposed to be different to those found in youth clubs or more generally in society. The archbishop wanted them to be relatively more mature and responsible. 'You are going to imitate Him,' McQuaid informed the young members:

You are being given the grace of devoting yourselves in the Clubs ... Look at your chance: family, education. Now you will share your gift. You will work for the good of these boys. Though you never mention it. You are working to keep them like yourselves, in grace.⁸¹

A report of the Corps' activities in 1963 reveals the extent of the work they undertook. The boys took care of the day-to-day running of Our Lady's Hostel for Boys. The aim of the hostel was to provide boys who had been released from remand homes or industrial schools with clean and comfortable accommodation, while Corps members were to make personal contact and act as a good example to them, so that they might lead 'good lives'.⁸² Members bolstered the ongoing work of members of the Legion of Mary who visited youths detained in St Patrick's Institution, a borstal located in Mountjoy prison in Dublin. The compilers of the report asserted that working in the youth clubs seemed to be the most attractive option to their members. The club work was co-ordinated by a special committee composed of representatives from all the schools that met every month. This committee heard reports on

the work undertaken by each group and then dealt with requests for assistance from clubs. In 1963 there were over seventy Corps members actively engaged in club work.⁸³ The Corps leadership was conscious of the fact that the 'Youth Movement in the Diocese' expected from their ranks an ever-increasing injection of new leaders each year. To that end corps leaders were encouraged to send as many members as possible to the training courses at the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology.

By 1966 twelve members of the Corps were actively engaged in the running of St Stanislaus Boys Club in Mountjoy Square, which catered for boys and young men aged between twelve and twenty-five years from the North Inner City.⁸⁴ The club had almost closed down due to a lack of leaders so the Corps could take credit for its survival. The main activity of the Volunteer Corps at Oatlands College became the running of St Theresa's Boys Club in Mount Merrion, while members also assisted the work of the Belvedere Newsboys Club.⁸⁵ Members from Synge St became engaged in the activities of St Agnes' Club in Crumlin and St Bernadette's in Ballyfermot, two parish clubs, as well as two clubs run by the Society of St Vincent de Paul and one by the Legion of Mary.⁸⁶

McQuaid described youth work as 'serving the less favoured young people' and in this way it was an extension of the charitable work undertaken by numerous organizations in his archdiocese.⁸⁷ In one way it could be viewed as farsighted of McQuaid to realise the benefits of having young people engaged in youth work, as it undermined the negative effects of a perceived generation gap. In the 1960s, leadership courses for young people, which enabled them to act as leaders within their own youth organizations, became an integral component of youth work internationally. However, placing members of the CVC, a group of male youths privileged by virtue of their education and socio-economic background, in a position of authority over youths who had no such privileges, whilst simultaneously advancing a paternalistic approach to youth affairs, created difficulties.

Young people were not unaffected by or unaware of class divisions within their peer group. Rev. Liam Ryan's 1965/6 survey of 100 young people aged between fourteen and sixteen years, from a working-class housing estate in Limerick, covered 200 families from which only one had succeeded in sending a child to secondary school and very few had children attending full-time vocational courses. Ryan found that the girls who had left school or were attending the 'one-day-a-week' continuation schools had a negative attitude towards 'college girls', those girls attending a secondary school:

They feel inferior to them and refer to them as 'snobs'. They consider these girls to be immoral in a sly way. Their attitude to 'college boys' is quite the opposite. They look up to these, and at dances they pretend to these boys that they are attending secondary school themselves. They look down on the boys attending the 'one-day' schools.⁸⁸

It is apparent that young people themselves were infused not only with a sense of the prevailing social order but also an understanding of gender hierarchies. Ryan's study made it clear that McQuaid's assumption that middle-class youths would be relatively more mature was groundless. Although the working-class youths he interviewed might not have been formally educated at school, Ryan described how many of the young people he met were educated by the experience of meeting adult problems at an early age.⁸⁹

By 1965 the CVC had 290 members. In November of that year one member wrote to the archbishop detailing difficulties the CVC members were having in St Agnes' Boys' Club in Crumlin, which at that stage had 500 members. This work was being interfered with by 'some wilder boys of the district':

At first we refused admission to these boys, but in September we started a new class for them, ages 16–21. In this class we find ourselves with many boys who have been barred from dance-halls and picture houses throughout Dublin. We spent quite a lot of money in equipping this class to their requirements. No effort was spared to make them feel welcome.⁹⁰

The author of the letter was subsequently assaulted one evening – a chair was thrown at him by one of these boys. He continued:

I subsequently reported the whole matter to the police and requested that charges be pressed against them. Their names were well known to me. However, on learning that a large gang was being organised from the Crumlin and Dolphins Barn districts, whose purpose was to 'declare war' on the club and on all church property in Crumlin, I asked that the charges be withdrawn.⁹¹

This incident is reminiscent of attacks on youth clubs by British Teddy Boys who, according to Tony Jefferson, may have been seeking revenge on those clubs who banned them.⁹² In this case, once in the club the authority of members of the CVC was clearly not always respected by their less advantaged peers, and in fact class division may have contributed to this disrespect.

Kenneth Roberts describes how throughout the 1950s in Britain grammar-school pupils remained 'protected, or they were marooned by families, schools and youth organisations,' while other young people entered employment and used their wages to 'sample commercial recreation.'⁹³ A similar gulf existed between working- and middle-class youths in Dublin, making the latter even less suitable as youth leaders. Members of the CVC were propelled into leadership positions unsuited to them. McQuaid felt that their middle-class status afforded them greater maturity, enabling them almost to bypass their own adolescence. The CVC ultimately found it difficult to retain members and the situation in 1969 was described as not being a 'happy one', with some branches closing completely and no groups making 'significant progress'.⁹⁴ The executive noted that progress depended on members themselves and that 'no amount of pushing will do it for them.'⁹⁵ The fall in numbers suggests that middle-class youths were not necessarily attracted to the leadership positions they were expected to fill.

McQuaid's attempt to provide an elite group of secondary school pupils who could work in youth clubs in socially disadvantaged Dublin parishes reflected an effort to develop charity work in a new sphere. By having members of the CVC act as leaders in youth clubs, McQuaid hoped that middle-class values could filter down to working-class adolescents. This reflected the charitable nature of much of youth welfare work since the nineteenth century, and the way in which adolescents of different classes received different treatment. Voluntary effort was more likely to embody the idea of benevolence and charity rather than right, and while Ryan described voluntary societies as 'doing a good job,' he also stated that 'the manner of their "charities" hasn't changed for centuries.'⁹⁶ McQuaid feared the professionalization of youth work or the development of a 'youth service' similar to that found in the UK, and attempted to provide an alternative by allowing Barrett organize training courses for Catholic youth leaders in the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology. This manoeuvre was part of a wider policy of the archbishop, who had previously sought to ensure that Catholic welfare provision was 'sufficient to ward off any Protestant or multi-denominational competition' in other spheres.⁹⁷

In attempting to deal with a group whose main concern was their leisure time, the Catholic church found itself in uncharted seas, seas in which other organizations could swim. While the church had hitherto acted as a major agent of socialization for young people, this position was undermined by the market and also by new secular and lay initiatives. Devotional organizations, like sodalities, went into decline

in the late 1950s. In 1971 McQuaid described how the confraternities and sodalities had 'melted away' and that 'nothing can restore [them]... in our time.'⁹⁸ Similarly Catholic youth clubs which did not incorporate new methods of youth welfare work also suffered. In 1968 the Society of St John Bosco clubs were described as being on the verge of extinction and McQuaid agreed that they should be dissolved, without publicity.⁹⁹ Problems in youth work were, however, not confined to Catholic youth clubs. Bill Osgerby explains how despite the expansion of the Youth Service in Britain, young people often used its amenities but were unaffected by the 'guidance' being provided: "Tainted by the stigma of stuffy church halls and dreary middle-class convention, the agencies of official and semi-official youth provision simply could not compete against the excitement of dance halls and rock 'n' roll."¹⁰⁰ Similarly in Ireland, the social and economic change witnessed in the sixties had undermined the ability of long-established organizations and approaches, traditionally led by members of the clergy and organized by the middle class for the benefit of the poor, to reach a new generation of young people.

Notes

1. Michael Viney wrote for the *The Irish Times* and produced a number of series on social issues in the 1960s and 1970s, including mental health, unmarried mothers, marriage breakdown and the institutionalization of children. For examples see John Horgan (ed.), *Great Irish reportage* (Dublin: Penguin Ireland, 2014); Michael Viney, *The broken marriage: A study in depth of a growing Irish social problem* (Dublin: Irish Times, 1970); Michael Viney, *Mental illness: An inquiry* (Dublin: Irish Times, 1971).
2. *RTV Guide*, 4 Feb. 1966.
3. For most historians the sixties, as a period of significant socio-economic and cultural change, begins in the late 1950s and ends in the early 1970s. In this study it refers to the years 1956–1971. The '1960s' refers to the ten years of the decade itself.
4. Michael Mitterauer, *A history of youth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 209–2.
5. Kenneth Roberts, *Youth and leisure* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983), 11.
6. Christine Griffin, *Representations of youth: The study of youth and adolescence in Britain and America* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 11; Jon Savage, *Teenage: The creation of youth, 1875–1945* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2007), 66–73.
7. Rosemary Wakeman, 'European mass culture in the media age' in Rosemary Wakeman (ed.), *Themes in modern European history since 1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 150.
8. Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 26–7.
9. Roberts, *Youth and leisure*, 11.
10. See *Census of population of Ireland, 1961, volume ii* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1963); *Census of population of Ireland, 1971, volume ii* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1973).

11. For a fuller discussion of youth welfare work and its development in Ireland at national level see Chapter 4, Carole Holohan, *Reframing Irish youth in the sixties* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, forthcoming).
12. Arthur Marwick, *The sixties: Cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958–c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 43.
13. The minimum school leaving age was fourteen years while the average marriage age declined throughout the decade. Paul Ryan describes how the mean age of marriage fell from 30.6 to 27.2 years for men and from 26.9 to 24.8 years for women during the period 1961 to 1973. See Paul Ryan, *Asking Angela Macnamara: An intimate history of Irish lives* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012), 17.
14. For more on the significance of youth as representing the future of the nation in this period see Carole Holohan, 'More than a revival of memories? 1960s youth and the 1916 Rising' in Mary Daly and Margaret O'Callaghan (eds), *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007).
15. *Evening Herald survey of crime and juvenile delinquency, reprint of articles by Liam Shine, July and November 1959* (Dublin: Independent Newspapers, 1959), 10.
16. Kevin Rockett, *Irish film censorship: A cultural journey from silent cinema to internet pornography* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004), 149.
17. Peter Martin, *Censorship in the two Irelands, 1922–1939* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), 48.
18. Roberts, *Youth and leisure*, 20–1.
19. T. R. Fyvel, *The insecure offenders: Rebellious youth in the welfare state* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), 27.
20. *Second United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, London 8–20 Aug. 1960: New forms of juvenile delinquency: Their origin, prevention and treatment, general report by Wolf Middendorf, Judge, Federal Republic of Germany* (New York: United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, 1960), 37.
21. Tony Jefferson, 'Cultural responses of the Teds' in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds), *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (London: Routledge, 2006), 67–70.
22. William S. Bush, *Who gets a childhood? Race and juvenile justice in twentieth-century Texas* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 138.
23. Rockett, *Irish film censorship*, 146–7.
24. *Irish Times*, 1 Sept. 1956.
25. *Irish Times*, 16 Nov. 1956.
26. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, 10.
27. *Irish Times*, 2 Mar. 1959.
28. *Evening Herald survey of crime and juvenile delinquency*, 19.
29. *Evening Herald*, 2 Jan. 1959.
30. Rev. Dermott O'Neill, 'Urban youth problems', *Christus Rex*, 14:4 (1960), 267–74, 273–4.
31. *Evening Herald survey of crime and juvenile delinquency*, 9.
32. William Kvaraceus, *Juvenile delinquency: A problem for the modern world* (Paris: UNESCO, 1964), 18–19.
33. *Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment, 1951* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1952), 4.

34. In this case the male youth population represents those aged between thirteen and eighteen years. See *Report of the Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems, 1970* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1970), 11; *Census of population of Ireland, volume ii* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1968).
35. Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish family* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 202–3.
36. Voluntary Organisations' Joint Committee, *Vandalism and juvenile delinquency: Report of joint committee appointed at the request of the Lord Mayor of Dublin* (Dublin: n.p., 1958), 6.
37. *Report of the Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems*, 11.
38. Hilary Pilkington, *Russia's youth and its culture: A nation's constructors and constructed* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 38–9.
39. This observation was made during the 1966 annual general meeting of the Civics Institute. See *Hibernia*, Apr. 1966.
40. *Hibernia*, 30 Oct. 1959.
41. While this chapter focuses on a new initiative within the Catholic archdiocese of Dublin, in the sixties many new initiatives in youth welfare work were undertaken by the Protestant churches and by secular organizations such as Macra na Tuaithe. For more details on these developments see Carole Holohan, "'Every generation has its task': Attitudes to Irish youth in the sixties' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 2009).
42. *Comhairle le Leas Óige, Seachtain na n-Óg, souvenir and programme of Youth Week, 11–18 June 1944* (Dublin: CLÓ, 1944).
43. In 1939 the organization received the approval of the hierarchy to become a national society. *Ibid.*
44. Eamonn Dunne, 'Action and reaction: Catholic lay organisations in Dublin in the 1920s and 1930s', *Archivium Hibernicum, Irish Historical Records*, 48 (1994), 107–18, 115.
45. "Confirmation" here refers to the Catholic sacrament usually administered to children in their final year of primary education.
46. *St Brigid's Boys' Club, Limerick, second annual report* (Limerick: Limerick Leader, 1939).
47. An Comhairle le Leas Óige was a sub-committee of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee.
48. *Comhairle le Leas Óige, Seachtain na n-Óg, souvenir and programme of Youth Week, 11–18 June 1944*.
49. Deirdre Mc Mahon, 'John Charles McQuaid: Archbishop of Dublin, 1940–72' in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), 353.
50. John Feeney, *John Charles McQuaid: The man and the mask* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1974), 43, 77.
51. Maurice Curtis, *A challenge to democracy: Militant Catholicism in modern Ireland* (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2010) 161–4.
52. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, *Mother and child: Maternity and child welfare in Dublin, 1922–60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 92–3, 123.
53. Mary Purcell, *Catholic Social Service Conference, golden jubilee, 1941–1991* (Dublin: Catholic Social Service Conference, 1991), 12–24.
54. McQuaid instructed that this circular letter be sent to all parish priests in the Dublin archdiocese on 12 Mar. 1956 (Dublin Diocesan Archive (DDA), McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).

55. Traditionally, members of a sodality were of about the same 'age, sex, occupation and condition in life' resulting in separate sodalities composed of women, students, working men etc. This helped the spiritual director adapt his instructions to the needs of the sodalists. Hymns were sung and announcements of church events were made at the monthly or weekly sodality meeting. This was followed by a short conference on subjects touching the spiritual progress of the sodality. See T. I. Mulcahy, *The sodality manual: Official manual for the sodality of Our Lady in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Messenger, 1934).
56. For more details on McQuaid's attempt to foster a system of youth sodalities in his archdiocese see Carole Holohan, 'John Charles McQuaid and the failure of youth sodalities, 1956–61' in Colm Lennon (ed.), *Honouring God and community: Confraternities and sodalities in modern Ireland* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2012), 126–47.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Irish Catholic directory, 1957* (Dublin: Veritas, 1957), 654.
59. See Carole Holohan, 'A conduit to a baneful modernity? Church responses to youth culture, 1956–73' *History Review*, 15, (2005), 73–86.
60. Handwritten memorandum, 19 Jan. 1960 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/B/XXVIII).
61. Holohan, 'A conduit to a baneful modernity?', 76.
62. The Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology was located first in Gardiner Street and later in Eccles Street in Dublin's north inner city. Established by McQuaid in 1950 the institute provided adult education courses on the church's social teachings. See Brian Conway, 'Foreigners, faith and fatherland: The historical origins, development and present status of Irish sociology' in *Sociological Origins*, Special Supplement to Volume 5:1 (2006) 5–36, 16.
63. 'Memorandum on the proposed training course for youth club leaders', 14 Aug. 1961 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XIX/53).
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Investment in education, report of the survey team appointed by the Minister for Education in October, 1962* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1966) 10–11, 176.
67. The Patrician Congress marked the fifteenth centenary of the death of Ireland's patron saint, St Patrick.
68. McQuaid to Fr C. P. Crean, 10 Jan. 1963 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
69. Although it was suggested that the Diocesan Girl Guides might be able to supply some suitable female recruits to work in girls clubs, this does not appear to have materialized in any formal capacity, although girls were admitted to the ranks of the Corps in 1972. See Fr Fehilly to McQuaid, 30 Mar. 1962 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII); J. Anthony Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland* (Dublin: Currach Press, 2006), 125.
70. These schools were divided into the following four area groups: Christian Brothers College Monkstown Park, Blackrock College and Oatlands College; Christian Brothers School Westland Row, Marino College Secondary School, Gonzaga College and St Mary's College Rathmines; Terenure College, Walkinstown (Drimnagh Castle), St James' Christian Brothers School (CBS)

- Ballyfermot, De La Salle College Churchtown, Christian Brothers School Synge Street; and Belvedere College, O'Connell's School, St Paul's Christian Brothers School Brunswick Street and St Vincent's CBS. See 'Archbishop's Volunteer Corps, Temporary Constitution, January 1963' (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
71. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, "'In respect of motherhood": Maternity policy and provision in Dublin city, 1922–59' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 2001), 92.
 72. O'Neill, 'Urban youth problems', 270.
 73. *Ibid.*, 269, 273.
 74. John R. Gillis, *Youth and history: Tradition and change in European age relations, 1770–present* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1974), 140; Roberts, *Youth and leisure*, 11.
 75. *Hibernia*, Jan. 1963; May 1963.
 76. *Hibernia*, May 1963.
 77. Anne V. O'Connor and Susan M. Parkes, *Gladly learn and gladly teach: Alexandra College and School, 1866–1966* (Dublin: Blackwater, 1984), 75.
 78. Desmond Bell, *Acts of union: Youth culture and sectarianism in Northern Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Education, 1990), 37.
 79. McQuaid's handwritten speech dated 18 Mar. 1962 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 80. Members were also trained in manoeuvres by the Gardaí. In 1963 McQuaid thanked the Garda Authorities for having 'imparted a spirit of firmness that has matured the youth in virile responsibility.' See 'Youth Leadership Congress, Clonliffe, 3 March 1962' (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XIX/53); McQuaid's handwritten notes, 5 Apr. 1963 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 81. McQuaid's handwritten speech, delivered to members of the CVC on a retreat at Clonliffe College, 7 Jan. 1962 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 82. Colleges Volunteer Corps, Annual General Meeting report, 30 June 1964 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 83. *Ibid.*
 84. Colleges Volunteer Corps, Annual General Meeting report, 1966 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 85. Colleges Volunteer Corps, Oatlands College Group report, n.d., (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 86. 'Report on the work carried out by members of the Synge Street Group of the Colleges Volunteer Corps', n.d., (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 87. McQuaid's handwritten notes dated 4 Nov. 1966 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 88. Rev. Liam Ryan, 'Social dynamite: A study of early school leavers', *Christus Rex*, 21:1 (1967), 7–44, 7–8, 34–5.
 89. *Ibid.*
 90. Member of the Colleges Volunteer Corps to McQuaid, 9 Nov. 1965 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
 91. *Ibid.*
 92. Jefferson, 'Cultural responses of the Teds', 83.
 93. Roberts, *Youth and leisure*, 16.

94. Colleges Volunteer Corps, Annual General Meeting report 1968–69, 10 Oct. 1969 (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXVIII).
95. Ibid.
96. Ryan, 'Social dynamite', 43.
97. Earner-Byrne, *Mother and child*, 223.
98. Holohan, 'John Charles McQuaid and the failure of youth sodalities', 147.
99. 'Don Bosco Society', J. A. MacMahon, 1 November 1968, (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/B/XXVIII); 'Memorandum of meeting with Mr. Dan Gallagher, President of the Society of St John Bosco, on 28th October 1968' (DDA, McQuaid Papers, AB8/b/XXI/122/10).
100. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, 144–5.

9

The Emergence of an Irish Adolescence: 1920s to 1970s

Mary E. Daly

Adolescence is a period when, as Granville Stanley Hall described, there is a moratorium on adulthood and young people are permitted to enjoy a 'freedom that leans a little toward licence' while retaining an element of 'shelter and protection' provided by parents or teachers.¹ This chapter sets out to determine when adolescence came to be an experience enjoyed by a majority of young Irish men and women. The focus is on socio-economic aspects, such as work, schooling, contribution to the family, and dependence and subjection to the needs and dictates of the birth family. Psychology, sexuality and the private lives of adolescents do not come within the remit of this study. The central argument that the chapter will develop is that the demographic and socio-economic conditions of Ireland in the late-nineteenth and the early- and even mid-twentieth centuries – especially though not exclusively in rural Ireland – meant that a significant proportion of Irish men and women either found themselves taking on the premature responsibilities of adulthood – by having to support their family or survive independently as an emigrant – whereas for others a quasi-childhood type of dependency persisted into middle age and sometimes even longer.

The frustrations and deprivations of such a life are captured by the poet Patrick Kavanagh, the son of a small farmer and cobbler: 'Oh stony grey soil of Monaghan, You burgled my bank of youth!'² For Kavanagh, and for many other young men and women, there was no adolescent space; adolescence was experienced only by a privileged minority of young women and men, from middle- and upper-class families. It was only in the 1960s as a consequence of economic growth, an extension of schooling and the development of a more urban, non-industrial society, that adolescence came to be viewed as a distinct phase in the life cycle – with its freedom, distinct leisure and consumer markets.

Furthermore the social and economic circumstances that combined to create space for adolescence tended to be decried by powerful elements in Irish society, including the Catholic church. The following sections outline the factors that distinguished the lives of young Irish men and women, and which served to exclude them from experiencing a modern adolescence, and how these gradually changed.

I

Superficially the history of youth and/or adolescence in Ireland follows a broadly similar path to other European societies; thus the twentieth century saw the introduction and enforcement of compulsory schooling; a gradual but steady rise in the proportion of young people remaining at school until their mid- and late teens, and a corresponding decline in the economic and personal contribution made by children and young people to their family of birth. However, on closer examination Ireland is distinctive in several ways. One is timing: the absence of an industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, in what was to become the Irish Free State of the 1920s, coupled with the introduction of peasant proprietorship in the decades before the Great War, meant that a significant proportion of young Irish people continued to live and work within a pre-industrial family economy.³ Furthermore, the slow pace of economic growth meant that life in rural Ireland continued to be dominated by the socio-economic practices of the family farm until the second half of the twentieth century.

Another distinction, worth noting, is the absence of major disruption to that society as a consequence of war or revolution. Philippe Ariès regarded military conscription as a key definer of adolescence; he claimed that adolescence became a European phenomenon after World War I when 'troops at the front were solidly opposed to the older generations in the rear.'⁴ In Ireland the years from 1914 to the end of the Civil War in 1923 undoubtedly gave young men, and some young women, a degree of freedom and life experience that would otherwise have escaped them, but when this ended, the Irish Free State and the Catholic church went to considerable efforts to reverse what they regarded as the unwelcome consequences of this relaxation of social constraints. From 1923 onwards Ireland was not touched by major social disruptions such as the Second World War, and Irish male adolescents did not experience compulsory military service – whether in peace or in wartime – which was a very significant rite of passage, and age-specific identifier, for male adolescents throughout much of Europe.

Ireland's remarkable demographic history, which included a century of sustained population decline, late marriages, a high rate of permanent celibacy, large families and sustained and significant emigration, was also critical in shaping the lives of Irish youth.⁵ According to US ethnographers Conrad Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, who carried out fieldwork in Co. Clare – in the less economically-developed west of Ireland – during the 1930s, Ireland was an old person's country. The emigration of between one-third and one-quarter of young men and women meant that the elderly constituted a higher share of total population than elsewhere in Western Europe, and young adults a correspondingly smaller share.⁶ While it would be an exaggeration to say that Ireland was unique in any of these respects,⁷ the cumulative impact of these demographic features, and the fact that they persisted into the second half of the twentieth century, made Ireland a special case. Irish men and women married at later ages than the people of any other country in Western Europe – late twenties and early thirties for women, and mid-thirties for men – and the proportion of adults who remained permanently single – up to one-quarter of those remaining in Ireland – was also exceptional.

A late age of marriage, which postponed the obligations and responsibilities associated with marriage, household formation and parenthood, might have resulted in an extended period of quasi-adolescence, but this was not so. Many of these middle-aged, unmarried men and women continued to live and work on a family farm or a family business, which left them in a condition of dependency or subservience to either parent(s) or a more privileged adult sibling who had inherited the family enterprise. Arensberg and Kimball described how, 'even at forty-five, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm [transferred ownership to their heir], the countryman remains a "boy" in respect to farm work and in the vocabulary' – subservient to parental instructions on the farm. They then go on to quote (though without giving the precise reference) a TD (parliamentary deputy) who spoke of "boys" of forty-five and older with no prospects other than to wait for their father's farm.⁸ The US sociologist Alexander Humphreys SJ, writing in the 1950s, noted that 'because Irish rural life involves much collective face-to-face activity and restricts the time the children can spend individually outside the parental orbit, parental control is strong, specific and detailed while it lasts – in rural Ireland, a very long time indeed.' Humphreys wrote of 'prolonged parental control'. He described the transfer of farm ownership and the marriage of the inheriting son as the attainment of 'full social adulthood'⁹ – an event often delayed until sons were in their mid-thirties, and sometimes never happening at all.

Assisting relatives within the family economy had little personal or financial independence. In 1943 a Church of Ireland clergyman in Co. Waterford described men who at the age of twenty-five had to ask their father or mother for money to go a dance or the cinema.¹⁰ Parental authority over their children was considerably enhanced by two factors: the lack of alternative jobs in rural Ireland capable of supporting a family, and large families. In 1946 couples married for over thirty years had an average of five children and marital fertility declined at a much slower pace than in other European countries.¹¹ This meant that Irish adolescents, male and female, had less bargaining power vis-à-vis a parent, and less freedom to determine their future, than would have been the case if families were smaller or the economy was more dynamic. Parents commonly determined who inherited the farm; the timing of marriage, perhaps even the marriage partner; emigration and other life choices. Irish farms passed undivided to one son – and neither law nor custom determined which son should inherit; a would-be heir therefore had to retain parental goodwill, otherwise he might be supplanted; likewise a daughter hoping to marry locally had to secure a dowry, and again this was dependent on parental goodwill and their approval of her choice of husband. Humphreys described rural Ireland as ‘a gerontocracy’; he suggested that the:

Pronounced glorification and veneration of the aged, especially of the authority of the father and the affection and devotion of the mother ... the sanctioned expectation of prolonged celibacy, subordination to parental control and, in special circumstances, of the sacrifice of individual achievement through marriage in the interests of family welfare ... has resulted in the creation of a process of socialization of the children which instils in them a deep sense of inferiority, of submissiveness and many other notable juvenile traits.¹²

Submissiveness is not a characteristic normally associated with adolescence, yet it was undoubtedly the lot of many young people in rural (and some urban) Irish households, whether borne with resignation or resentment.

There were of course alternatives to remaining on a family farm in a subservient status, and many young people left home and Ireland in their mid-teens and sometimes earlier. While this might be seen as opening up an independence lacking at home, it also deprived them of an adolescent phase, by forcing them to take on premature adult responsibilities. The sense of independence deriving from emigration

must also be qualified, because many young people left Ireland at the behest of their parents. While multiple explanations were cited for emigration, the overwhelming majority left for economic reasons. Young men and women were encouraged to emigrate by parents in order to supplement family income and they continued to support their families through emigrants' remittances and by assisting younger siblings to join them.¹³ In 1950 and 1951, 60 per cent of male emigrants to Britain and 75 per cent of female emigrants were under twenty-five years of age.¹⁴ A survey of recent emigrants carried out by the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau in 1959 showed that one-quarter of women, and almost the same proportion of men, were under eighteen years of age.¹⁵ Ireland was unusual in the high proportion of young female emigrants. Rural Ireland offered some limited paid employment for teenage boys – generally in the form of casual labour on farms or in construction – but there were no comparable paid opportunities for girls. Domestic service, whether in Irish cities and towns or in the cities and towns of Britain and the US, offered the best economic prospect for most daughters of small farmers. The imbalance in the number of young women and men was already evident in rural Ireland by the 1930s: in 1936 there were 112 single men aged twenty-five to twenty-nine for every 100 single women aged twenty to twenty-four in rural Ireland; by 1951 the ratio had deteriorated to 136 single men per 100 single women.¹⁶

From the 1930s most emigrants – male and female – went to Britain rather than the US, and whereas immigration to the US was controlled by visas and immigration officials, restrictions on movement across the Irish Sea only applied from the outbreak of war in 1939 until 1948; restrictions on female emigrants were lifted in July 1946.¹⁷ It was not uncommon in the 1950s for fourteen- or fifteen-year-old girls to leave Ireland for Britain to take up positions as domestic servants, or service workers in hospitals, hotels and other institutions, without the Irish employment agency which had recruited them providing the young emigrant or her family with their British address. Other teenagers travelled to Britain without having made any prior arrangement for work or a place to stay. Many adolescent boys also emigrated, but employment regulations, the physical requirements of work on building sites, and the fact that some work was available for them locally, however transient or badly paid, meant that they tended to leave home at a slightly later age. The majority of adolescent emigrants left Ireland with the knowledge and approval of their parents; indeed some would have come under pressure to emigrate, and there was an expectation that they would send money home to help support their families.¹⁸

The lives of young Irish people growing up in larger cities and towns share some similarities with those in rural Ireland, however there are differences, and it is probable that a degree of adolescent freedom and distinct adolescent socialization emerged at an earlier period than in the countryside. Adolescents in Irish cities were less likely to emigrate – though it was not uncommon – and less likely to work within the family economy, though many would have found themselves handing over their earnings to support their families. Large families were common to both rural and urban Ireland. By the 1930s the highest fertility was found in farming families and the families of unskilled labourers, and the relationship between social class and fertility became more pronounced in the post-war years. In 1955, 28 per cent of the children born to Dublin unskilled labourers were the sixth or subsequent child, compared with 6 per cent of the children of higher professionals. Large families, late marriages, the low standard of living enjoyed by working-class households, and inadequate provisions for pensions and welfare payments meant that older children commonly found themselves assuming quasi-parental roles, with teenage boys or girls becoming the major breadwinner for a widowed mother and younger siblings, or a teenage daughter taking on the task of running the home. In 1926 81,000 children aged under fifteen, almost 8 per cent of the total, were being supported by somebody other than a parent.¹⁹ While the demands placed on premature breadwinners declined in time with the introduction of basic means-tested widows' pensions in the mid-1930s, and improved life expectancy, the rate of change was slower than in other western countries, because of the slower rate of economic growth, the persistence of large families and the late age of marriage.

For young people growing up in Irish cities, as in the countryside, educational and job prospects were determined by family circumstances – most especially whether a family could afford to dispense with a teenager's earnings. Family connections were also critical in securing entry to many jobs; it was common for apprenticeships to be open only to those with close relatives in that particular trade and many jobs were also filled on the basis of family networks, with firms such as Guinness Brewery giving preference to the children of Guinness employees.²⁰ Such networks served to maintain adult oversight for young men and women in a manner not dissimilar to the servanthood experienced in early modern Europe.²¹ Young women and men in working-class city families were expected to make a substantial contribution to family income, however Humphreys, who carried out fieldwork in Dublin in the years 1949–51, emphasized that by this time younger Dubliners

from the artisan class were being given much greater choice about staying in school, or the type of education or career that they wished to follow, than their parents had enjoyed.²² Young Dubliners also enjoyed greater personal freedom than their rural cousins. Working in a factory, building site or office offered a more impersonal working environment, with physical separation between work and leisure or private life. Working hours and holidays were regulated and predetermined, and the worker earned a regular wage. Humphreys noted that young Dubliners were less subject to informal supervision by relatives and neighbours than their rural counterparts and, perhaps most importantly, 'neither the young men themselves nor the community at large consider that they are "boys" until they are thirty.'²³ This would suggest that the sense of adolescence with its freedoms and distinct rights existed in Dublin, though perhaps in a muted form, by the early 1950s.

II

The increased personal and economic autonomy associated with living and working in an urban environment was viewed as posing a threat to parental authority, and the morals of young persons. When two members of the Commission on Emigration²⁴ – both government officials – visited the town of Drogheda in 1949 they reported that jobs were readily available for young girls in local factories and in the nearby Butlins Holiday Camp, but they warned that parental control and authority was being undermined in homes where the collective earnings of adolescent daughters was greater than that of their fathers: in one case they cited three daughters working in a local boot factory who collectively earned almost four times the weekly wage of their labourer father.²⁵ Their apprehension reflected a wider concern within Irish society that cities and towns were detrimental to the morals of young people, and parental ability to maintain control over their working-age children.

While Humphreys presented a relatively positive account of family life in Dublin, emphasizing that Dublin families were no less assiduous than their rural counterparts in their practice of religion, and that the families he examined in detail were exemplary instances of inter-generational harmony and respect, his optimism about life in Irish cities was not necessarily shared by others. Catholic social teaching affirmed the superior merits of the rural, family economy, and this was reiterated in countless speeches and statements from politicians, church leaders

and social commentators.²⁶ It was also reflected in government policies with respect to school attendance and the employment and working conditions of adolescents, with a rural, agrarian environment largely immune from oversight, whereas urban school children and industrial workers were viewed as needing protection or policing. The 1926 School Attendance Act made school attendance compulsory between the ages of six and fourteen, supplanting legislation dating from 1890, which had only applied in cities, and had required minimal attendance. Tony Fahey suggests that the 1926 Act had a significant impact on the approximately one-third of children who were regularly absent from school in the 1920s; 15 to 20 per cent of parents may have been visited by a policeman or a school attendance officer.²⁷ However the impact of the new Act appears to have been concentrated on urban households. A provision enabling farmers' children to work on the family farm during busy periods in the agricultural calendar, made it possible to adopt a lenient approach towards absence from school in rural areas; the majority of children committed to industrial schools for non-attendance at school came from Dublin.²⁸

A similar contrast is evident with respect to government oversight and regulation of young workers in industrial employment and the apparent lack of concern for their counterparts in agriculture or domestic service. There was a strong groundswell of opinion in Ireland in the 1930s which believed that factory jobs should be reserved for adult males. In response to popular pressure, in 1935 the Minister for Industry and Commerce introduced legislation regulating the working hours and conditions of young people under eighteen, and all women, in manufacturing plants; in the event the legislation had no significant impact on the gender or age-composition of the factory workforce.²⁹ This rush to control and restrict young people working in factories contrasts with the absence of any comparable regulation applying to domestic service – which was the largest single employer of teenage women until the 1960s – or young farm workers. The 1936 Agricultural Wages Act set rates of pay for agricultural labourers, but workers under eighteen years were given no special protection with respect to working hours – though they received lower wages – and, as most women in paid jobs on farms were classified as domestic workers, they did not even benefit from government-determined wage rates.³⁰

The contrasting representations of young people in cities and those in the countryside were articulated most clearly in the report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment, which was established in 1943 by the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Seán Lemass, and chaired

by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid. Given that combination it does not appear far-fetched to see the report of the Commission as a synthesis of the views of church and state.³¹ The terms of reference were to report on the causes of unemployment among young people from school-leaving age to twenty years; to recommend measures to prevent youth unemployment; to guide young people with respect to 'their choice of a vocation' and how to secure the most appropriate forms of training; to make recommendations regarding the conditions of employment for young people and measures designed to promote their religious, intellectual and physical development.³² Although established in 1943, the Commission did not report until 1951, and it is difficult to see any clear outcomes emerging from its work. For the historian, however, the report provides succinct evidence of the gender, class and urban/rural distinctions that were applied to Irish adolescents – and more specifically 'problem' adolescents – in the mid-twentieth century.

The Commission regarded youth unemployment as primarily a city problem. Although the incidence of unemployment in the major cities was 'not preponderantly greater ... than in the remainder of the country,' they concluded that 'the young person in a city "with nothing to do and all day to do it" is in very much greater moral danger than his country counterpart.' Young people in country districts might be 'technically unoccupied' but for each there would always be:

Some form of occupation that will, at least, keep him employable. And because of environment and the fact that he is personally known to a substantial proportion of residents, the probability of his getting into trouble is less than that of the young person in a city. The bigger the city the larger is the number of such young persons and the greater their moral danger.³³

Figures in the 1946 census of population show that the majority of young people recorded as unemployed – 18,981 out of a total of 33,751 – had never been in employment. Two-thirds of these were women. Yet young unemployed women were not viewed as giving cause for concern, because the Commission decided that they probably belonged to families 'whose circumstances are such that it is not imperative for the girls to seek employment.'³⁴ So the problem of youth unemployment and problem youth more generally, was believed to be specific to young urban working-class males: 'The kernel of the problem of unoccupied youth is in the County Borough of Dublin.'³⁵

The Commission recommended 'special measures to safeguard [Dublin] youth from the dangers attendant on idleness,' which would involve the Vocational Guidance Service providing 'a scheme of occupational education and recreational facilities for unoccupied youth.'³⁶ It was also suggested that extending the period of compulsory full-time schooling to sixteen would bring a substantial reduction in the number of young persons who were unoccupied; moreover, a more extended period of schooling would protect young people against adverse modern influences, though the Commission acknowledged that this would put enormous pressure on school facilities in the city of Dublin. Apart from unemployment the Commission expressed a vague, unspecified disquiet about young, urban males – a disquiet that included a brief reference to juvenile delinquency, though there was no evidence that this was a particularly serious issue, or that the problem was growing. Of the 2,500 to 3,000 persons aged under eighteen years charged with indictable offences, mainly minor larceny, house-breaking and malicious damage, 40 per cent lived in the Dublin metropolitan area. The Commission recommended if possible that these young delinquents should be removed from industrial schools and boarded out with families where they should be given opportunities for training in agricultural and non-agricultural work.³⁷

This report did not result in any legislative or administrative changes; the long delay in publication guaranteed a loss of momentum, and it was also an indication of the difficulties involved in reaching a consensus; indeed the report is characterized by a distinct lack of agreement as to whether youth unemployment was a social, economic or moral problem. The lack of action suggests that Irish youth was not seen as a major cause for concern. This may well be because mass emigration continued to remove significant numbers of disadvantaged young people from Ireland to Britain throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed it was the actual or potential problems relating to adolescent emigrants that tended to bring Irish adolescents to the attention of church and state. In 1960 a controversial unpublished report by Anthony Spencer on behalf of the Newman Demographic Survey – a network of English Catholic university graduates with an interest and training in social research – noted that:

Ireland is not only losing by emigration to Britain her most valuable sons and daughters, her university graduates and professional men, and the enterprising, go-ahead men who find no scope for them at home. She is also exporting her social failures; just as Britain exported her ne'er-do-wells and men-on-the-run, her shiftless and her black

sheep, to her colonies in the nineteenth century; so Ireland sends hers to Britain in the twentieth. She also sends her moral failures – unmarried pregnant girls seeking anonymity in a British hospital, and husbands deserting their families. It is these social and moral failures who do so much harm to Ireland and to Catholicism in Britain and constitute an almost impossible task for the church there.³⁸

Many of these ‘social and moral failures’ were adolescents. Irish judges commonly remitted fines imposed on young, single men for minor offences, provided that the offender emigrated.³⁹ Inmates of industrial schools frequently emigrated to Britain when they were discharged on their sixteenth birthday. Spencer was highly critical of the low educational standard of many young emigrants, who left Ireland with only primary schooling. He claimed that their upbringing left them ill-equipped to deal with the religious, moral and personal challenges that they faced in England, citing a psychiatric social worker based in Dublin on the lack of sex education given to young people.⁴⁰ Spencer’s report was subjected to vehement criticism by Rev. Cecil Barrett, the chairman of the Dublin Catholic Archdiocese’s Social Services Council, who appears to have taken comfort in the fact that young Irish people would have grown up ‘without significant exposure to the naturalistic theories of sex education which permeate the popular press in a country where the moral standards and attitudes of natives no longer reflect traditional Christian teachings.’ Barrett acknowledged ‘an extreme reticence, both in public media of communication and in private conversation, in relation to sex,’ and he conceded that ‘migration to a non-Catholic country will bring many shocks in this field to a young Irish boy or girl.’⁴¹ Although Spencer, Barrett and Catholic welfare groups such as the Legion of Mary were primarily concerned with the moral dangers associated with emigration, and the lapse in religious practice, they were the only entities – other than the British social services – who showed any serious concern for the wellbeing of young Irish emigrants; the Irish government refused to provide any welfare services through the London embassy.

III

In the decades following the end of the Second World War, the pace of economic change in Ireland was decidedly slower than in other Western European countries, yet by the mid-1960s the lives of young Irish people, whether living in the country or the city, were significantly different to those of their parents’ generation. Domestic service was still the most

common occupation for young women in 1961, and farming (overwhelmingly as relatives assisting) was the most common occupation for young men (fourteen- to nineteen-year-olds). However, the numbers of young people entering both occupations fell sharply throughout that decade. Farmers' sons were less willing to stay on the farm without a regular payment or guaranteed leisure time in the hope that they might inherit the farm. Older farmers increasingly found themselves with less choice as to an heir. By 1966 there were thirty assisting sons or sons-in-law aged fourteen or older per 100 farmers, compared with seventy in 1926.⁴² Reduced competition for the family farm between siblings gave adolescents who remained on the land greater freedom and negotiating power vis-à-vis their parents, including greater financial autonomy, more leisure opportunities and the capacity to marry at an earlier age.⁴³ Nevertheless in other respects the son, or the increasingly rare daughter, who remained on the farm continued to have a different relationship with their parents than siblings who followed other careers. French rural sociologist Henri Mendras noted that 'their father teaches them their trade both in his capacity of father and in that of master of apprentices, with the result that the child never knows if a reprimand, a piece of advice, or a set of instructions belongs to everyday or professional life.'⁴⁴ Sons destined for the farm generally received less formal education than their siblings, because farmers preferred not to be challenged as to farming practices, hence according to the Limerick Rural Survey, which drew on field work carried out in the early 1960s, farmers were not simply indifferent whether their son had an agricultural education; they positively resented it. Yet young men and women living and working on the land were increasingly involved in rural youth organizations – which gave them the confidence to challenge traditional practices and assert their independence from their parents.⁴⁵

The decline in the number of young people in farming and domestic service was part of an overall decline in the number of young people in the workforce. In 1926 the majority of sixteen-year-olds were gainfully employed; at that time fourteen was commonly seen as the appropriate age for starting work. Despite economic stagnation (or perhaps because the economy was stagnant), the period after the Second World War saw a steady rise in the numbers remaining at school, although the school-leaving age remained at fourteen. In contrast to Britain and Northern Ireland, no measures were introduced to encourage prolonged schooling – such as free post-primary education – until the late 1960s. Yet by the early 1960s, 51.5 per cent of fifteen-year-olds, and 36.8 of those aged sixteen, were in full-time schooling, compared with 39 per cent

and 22 per cent in Northern Ireland, and 42 per cent and 22 per cent in England and Wales, though France and Norway had higher percentages of young people at school than Ireland.⁴⁶ Parents were increasingly conscious that extending the years of adolescent education and the type of education could determine the life opportunities of their adolescent children; provincial towns were campaigning for the establishment of secondary or vocational schools in their communities.⁴⁷ But social class, geography and gender continued to determine the lifestyle of adolescents – most especially whether they would remain at school, and the type of school attended. Children of unskilled and semi-skilled workers tended to leave school when they reached their fourteenth birthday; if they continued at school beyond national (primary) school they were more likely to attend a vocational school. By contrast the children of middling and larger farmers and the urban middle class attended more academic secondary schools, regardless of intellectual ability. In some rural areas, notably the Ulster counties of Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal, a lack of school places meant that the proportion of young people remaining in school was well below the national average.⁴⁸ The Irish state belatedly responded to parental and community demands. Beginning in the early 1960s, a series of options for comprehensive and other schools were explored; in September 1967 universal free secondary schooling was first provided; the following years saw a major extension in advanced technological education and increased access to university education.⁴⁹

Decisions as to which type of schooling and future careers continued to be heavily influenced by parental preferences. A 1960 study of rural families in the neighbourhood of the Shannon industrial estate in Co. Clare found that most parents aspired to have their children in white-collar jobs,⁵⁰ despite the fact that the industrial estate was hiring significant numbers of workers. As the decade wore on, however, factory work came to be regarded as more acceptable for farmers' sons, especially if it offered an alternative to emigrating – in many instances it provided opportunities for young men to continue to help out on the farm. But Irish families – particularly rural families – continued to view factory work less favourably for their daughters. Such hostility was reinforced by single-sex convent schooling, which continued to articulate a value system that was hostile to factory work. Working in a factory was widely seen as not respectable and parents, and indeed their daughters, often feared that it might damage their marriage prospects. Damien Hannan, who surveyed adolescents in Co. Cavan in 1965 and again three years later, reported that 'factory girls' had less promising

marriage prospects, and in some instances local boys were reported as refusing to dance with them.⁵¹ This attitude was not unique to Ireland; French farmers kept their daughters at school longer than sons also, and hoped that they would leave the land.⁵²

The other significant changes in the 1960s include earlier marriages, a higher rate of marriage and a sharp fall in the numbers emigrating, which combined to give younger people a greater voice in Irish society. Earlier marriages and the final disappearance of match-making brought a more relaxed attitude towards the social lives of adolescents and encounters with the opposite sex. This is evident in the spread of commercial dancehalls throughout provincial Ireland; the more liberal regime was facilitated by the rising numbers with motor cars and motor cycles, which enabled young people to enjoy themselves away from the censorious scrutiny of neighbours and parents. The Limerick Rural Survey commented that young men preferred to attend dances in more distant dance halls, because 'you could let your hair down,' though the fact that rural dances were attended by women aged from sixteen to thirty-five and by men aged from sixteen years into their forties and even older, suggests that the formation of a distinct adolescence group was not yet complete.⁵³ The social tolerance – indeed welcome – for earlier marriages helped to shorten the gap between childhood and 'social adulthood'. Although the obligations imposed on young Irish people to support parents or siblings had not disappeared, they had declined.

Emigration continued to provide a bleaker side to the story of Irish adolescents, though the number of emigrants in early and mid-teens fell sharply during the 1960s. However in its report for 1969–70, the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau expressed concerns that:

Improving employment opportunities within the country can substantially reduce the outflow of the more stable elements in the community without having at all [sic] as much effect on the level of emigration of those who, because of lack of skills or other inadequacies of temperament or character, stand most in need of help and guidance and often least realise their need.⁵⁴

The Irish Centre in London – which was run by the Catholic church – reported that it was becoming more difficult for those without skills or education to find work in Britain; a growing number of young people under the age of eighteen who were unable to find work in Britain, were contacting the Centre's employment agency. The Centre was also receiving many letters from young men and woman in Ireland (again under

eighteen years) who wanted to emigrate and were under the impression that they could earn large wages in England – they were advised that their prospects were poor, and encouraged to stay at school or learn a trade.⁵⁵

In 1973 Ireland became a full member of the European Economic Community (EEC) and in the same year eighteen- to twenty-year-olds were given the right to vote. By then the lives of Irish adolescents were not noticeably dissimilar from those of adolescents in other EEC member states. Adolescence was increasingly spent at school not at work; the burden of economic responsibilities towards their family and premature adulthood had largely disappeared because of improvements in living standards, social services and life expectancy. Parental control had become more attenuated, partly as a consequence of external cultural forces, and adolescents were increasingly identifiable as a distinct market for consumer goods and leisure activities.

Notes

Unless otherwise stated 'Ireland' and 'Irish' in this chapter refer to the Republic of Ireland.

1. Dorothy Ross, *G. Stanley Hall: The psychologist as prophet* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 327–8.
2. Patrick Kavanagh, 'Stony grey soil', idem, *Collected poems* (London: Martin Brian and O'Keefe, 1972), 82.
3. In 1926 over 20 per cent of those at work in Ireland worked within the family (the definition of those at work excluded all wives in family businesses), compared with 12 per cent in France and 6.6 per cent in Denmark. Peter Flora, *State, economy and society in Western Europe, 1815–1975: A data handbook, ii, The growth of industrial societies*, (Frankfurt and London: Campus and Macmillan Press, 1983), Section ix, 'Labour force, sectors and status'. The proportion of young people working within the family would have been significantly higher.
4. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of childhood* (trans.) Robert Baldick (London: Random House, 1996) [1st ed. 1962], 28, 316.
5. Robert E. Kennedy, Jr, *The Irish: Emigration, marriage and fertility* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1973); Timothy Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish: Households, migration, and the rural economy in Ireland, 1950–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
6. Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and community in Ireland* (2nd ed., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 170–2.
7. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, 27–9.
8. Arensberg and Kimball, *Family and community in Ireland*, 55.
9. A. J. Humphreys, 'Migration to Dublin: Its social effects', *Christus Rex*, 9:3 (1955), 192–9.
10. 'Second homes on family farms', Rev. McFall to Éamon de Valera [1943] (National Archives of Ireland, DT S13431).

11. Kennedy, *The Irish*, 178.
12. A. J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners: Urbanization and the Irish family* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 22–3.
13. Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland, 1920–1973* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 164–72.
14. *Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1948–54, reports* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1954). Statistical appendix, Table 33, 324.
15. Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, survey of Irish emigrant cases, 1959 (Dublin Diocesan Archives, McQuaid Papers, AB8/B/XIXg).
16. Kennedy, *The Irish*, table 18, 73.
17. For details, see Daly, *Slow failure*, 145–56.
18. Daly, *Slow failure*, 292–6. Employment agencies refused to give the addresses of future employers lest the emigrant would refuse to take up the position if it was in a remote area, as opposed to a large city.
19. See *Census of population 1926, volume 10, general report* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1934), 143.
20. Humphreys, *New Dubliners*, 92–109.
21. John R. Gillis, *Youth and history: Tradition and change in European age relations 1770–present* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1974), 1–35; Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, (eds), *Household and family in past time* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972).
22. Humphreys, *New Dubliners*, 238–9.
23. *Ibid.*
24. The Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems was appointed in Feb. 1948 by the Minister for Social Welfare to investigate trends in Irish population and ‘to consider what measures, if any, should be taken in the national interest to influence the trend in population’. Warrant of appointment, *Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1948–54, reports*, xi.
25. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Emigration and Other Population Problems: rural survey reports (Byrne and O’Leary evidence) (Trinity College Dublin, Arnold Marsh Papers, MS 8,306).
26. Daly, *Slow failure*, 21–74. Maurice Curtis, *The splendid cause: The Catholic Action movement in Ireland in the twentieth century* (Dublin: Original Writing Ltd., 2008), 72; Rev. Dr. C Lucey, ‘Minority Report’, *Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1948–54, reports*, 335–63.
27. Tony Fahey, ‘State, family and compulsory schooling in Ireland’, *Economic and Social Review*, 23:4 (1992), 375–8.
28. Industrial schools were initially established in the mid-nineteenth century as residential institutions providing industrial training for children and young people from necessitous families who were unable to provide for them; by the mid-twentieth century their training role had almost disappeared, and they had become custodial institutions for children who were confined there because of truancy, illegitimacy, parental poverty, neglect or family breakdown. For statistics for committals to industrial schools and the reasons for committals see Department of Education, *Reports* (Dublin: Stationary Office), *passim*.
29. Mary E. Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity, 1922–39* (Syracuse, NY and Dublin: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 122–7.
30. *Commission on Youth Unemployment, report* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1952), 36.

31. Membership of the Commission included four representatives of government departments; two Catholic priests, and representatives of employers, trade unions. For list of members see Warrant of Appointment, 26 May 1943, *Commission on Youth Unemployment, report*, vii–viii.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Commission on Youth Unemployment, report*, 4.
34. *Ibid.*, 7.
35. *Ibid.*, 13.
36. *Ibid.*. This service was run by the Dublin Vocational Education Committee.
37. *Commission on Youth Unemployment, report*, 39–40.
38. A. E. C. W. Spencer, *Arrangements for the integration of Irish immigrants in England and Wales* (ed. Mary E. Daly) (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2012), 15.
39. Daly, *Slow failure*, 313.
40. Spencer, *Arrangements*, 21–2.
41. Catholic Social Welfare Bureau Dublin, ‘Comments on first draft of report by Newman Demographic Survey on “The religious arrangements for the integration of Irish Catholic immigrants in England and Wales”’, reproduced in Spencer, *Arrangements*, 124.
42. Kennedy, *The Irish*, table 33, 105.
43. A survey of farming in West Cork in the 1960s showed that practically all the farmers who had inherited land before the age of thirty-five were either the only son, or a younger son whose older brother(s) had left home. Daly, *Slow failure*, 235–6.
44. Henri Mendras, *The vanishing peasant: Innovation and change in French agriculture*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970), 76.
45. Jeremiah Newman (ed.), *The Limerick rural survey, 1958–64* (Tipperary: Muintir na Tire, 1964), 213–14; Robert Cresswell, *Une communauté rurale de l’Irlande* (Paris: Institut d’Ethnologie, 1969), 527.
46. Department of Education, *Investment in education: Report of the survey team appointed by the Minister for Education in October, 1962* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965), table 1.5, 20
47. *Western People*, 18 Feb. 1961, 22 Apr. 1961, 4 Nov. 1961, 9 Dec. 1961.
48. *Investment in education*, 148–76.
49. John Walsh, *The politics of expansion: The transformation of educational policy in the Republic of Ireland, 1957–72* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).
50. Brian Callanan, *Ireland’s Shannon story: Leaders, visions and networks: A case study of local and regional development* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 97.
51. Damien Hannan, *Rural exodus: A study of the forces influencing large-scale migration of Irish rural youth* (London: G. Chapman, 1970), 253.
52. Mendras, *The vanishing peasant*, 173–4.
53. Patrick McNab, ‘Section iv: Socialization’ in Newman (ed.), *Limerick rural survey*, 238–9.
54. Daly, *Slow failure*, 308.
55. *Ibid.*, 311.

Select Bibliography

Books

- Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of childhood*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Random House, 1996) [1st ed. 1962].
- Joost Augusteijn (ed.), *The Irish Revolution, 1913–1923* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
- Sarah Bilston, *The awkward age in women's popular fiction, 1850–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Nancy J. Curtin, *The United Irishmen: Popular politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791–1798* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland, 1920–1973* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).
- Lindsey Earner-Byrne, *Mother and child: Maternity and child welfare in Dublin, 1922–60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
- Heather Ellis (ed.), *Juvenile delinquency and the limits of western influence, 1850–2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
- Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson, *Juvenile literature and British society, 1850–1950: The age of adolescence* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2010).
- Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of sin: Sex and society in modern Ireland* (London: Profile Books, 2009).
- R.F. Foster, *Vivid faces: The revolutionary generation in Ireland, 1890–1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2014).
- J. Anthony Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland* (Dublin: Kingdom Books, 2006).
- John R. Gillis, *Youth and history: Tradition and change in European age relations, 1770–present* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1974).
- Timothy W. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish: Households, migration and the rural economy in Ireland, 1850–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
- John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, *The physician and sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974).
- Harry Hendrick, *Images of youth: Age, class and the male youth problem, 1880–1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
- Colin Heywood, *A history of childhood: Children and childhood in the west from medieval to modern times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).
- Greta Jones and Elizabeth Malcolm (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland, 1650–1940* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999).
- Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen women; problem girls: Unmarried mothers and the professionalization of social work, 1890–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).
- Maria Luddy, *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- Maria Luddy and James Smith (eds), *Children, childhood and Irish society: 1500 to the present* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014).

- Anne MacLellan and Alice Mauger (eds), *Growing pains: Childhood illness in Ireland, 1750–1950* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2013).
- Peter Martin, *Censorship in the two Irelands 1922–1939* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).
- Hilary Marland, *Health and girlhood in Britain, 1874–1920* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- Arthur Marwick, *The sixties: Cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958–c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' culture in England 1880–1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
- Ornella Moscucci, *Science of woman: Gynaecology and gender in England, 1800–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent daughters: Protecting and policing adolescent female sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
- Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A new economic history, 1780–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Tina O'Toole, *The Irish New Woman* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- Deirdre Raftery and Susan M. Parkes, *Female education in Ireland 1700–1900: Minerva or Madonna?* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).
- Conor Reidy, *Ireland's 'moral hospital': The Irish borstal system 1906–1956* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009).
- Kevin Rockett, *Irish film censorship: A cultural journey from silent cinema to internet pornography* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004).
- Kenneth Roberts, *Youth and leisure* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983).
- John Springhall, *Youth, empire and society* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1977).
- John Springhall, *Coming of age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860–1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986).
- Martin J. Wiener, *Men of blood: Violence, manliness and criminal justice in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- Clair Wills, *That neutral island: A cultural history of Ireland during the Second World War* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007).
- Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, *The 'natural leaders' and their world: Politics, culture and society in Belfast, c. 1801–1832* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

Articles and chapters

- Helen Bittel, 'Required reading for "revolting daughters"?: The New Girl fiction of L. T. Meade', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 2:2 (2006), <http://www.ncg-sjournal.com/issue22/bittel.htm>.
- R.V. Comerford, 'Ireland 1850–1870: Post-Famine and mid-Victorian' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland v: Ireland under the Union i, 1801–70* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 372–95.
- Anne Digby, 'Women's biological straitjacket' in Susan Mendes and Jane Rendall (eds), *Sexuality and subordination: Interdisciplinary studies of gender in the nineteenth century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 192–220.
- Mark Finnane, 'The Carrigan committee of 1930–31 and the "moral condition of the Saorstát"', *Irish Historical Studies*, 32:128 (2001), 519–36.

- Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, 'The affective revolution in 1790s Britain', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34:4 (2001), 491–521.
- Thomas E. Jordan, 'The quality of life in Victorian Ireland, 1831–1901', *New Hibernia Review*, 4:1 (2000), 103–21.
- Sandra McAvoy, 'Sexual crime and Irish women's campaign for a Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1912–1935' in Maryann Gialanella Valiulis (ed.), *Gender and power in Irish history* (Dublin and Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 84–99.
- Susannah Riordan, "'A reasonable cause": The age of consent and the debate on gender and justice in the Irish Free State, 1922–35', *Irish Historical Studies*, 37:147 (2011), 427–46.
- James M. Smith, 'The politics of sexual knowledge: The origins of Ireland's containment culture and the Carrigan report (1931)', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 13:2 (2004), 208–33.
- Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, 'The female animal: Medical and biological views of woman and her role in nineteenth-century America', *Journal of American History*, 60:2 (1973), 332–56.

Reference

- James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Index

- Abrams, Mark, 178
Act of Union, 17, 18, 65
active citizenship, 5, 19, 22
adolescence
 class difference, 178, 192
 construction of, 2
 definitions of, 16, 199
 discovery of, 3, 4, 9, 108, 109, 152, 177
 female, *see* female adolescence
 history of, 3–11, 17, 66, 200
 male, *see* male adolescence
 medical definitions of, 47–9, 54, 56
 as period of turmoil and danger, 2, 138, 142
 quasi-adolescence, 201
 submissiveness, 202
 transgression, 10
 as transitional period, 2
 as vulnerable, 49–51
 see also individual entries
affective revolution, 4, 17, 33–4
affiliation orders, 131–4, 136, 137, 141
agrarian agitation, 7
Agricultural Wages Act of 1936, 206
Aicéin, 164
Ailtirí na hAiséirghe, 164
Alexandra College Guild, 188
amenorrhoea, 53, 55
Ancient Order of Hibernians, 107
Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921, 115–16
Anglo-Irish War (1919–21), 103, 111
Animal Gang, 159–60
anti-materialism, 162
apprenticeships, 3, 204
Archbishop's Volunteer Corps, 186–7
Archer, Frank, 29, 33–4
Ardis, Anne, 65
Arensberg, Conrad, 201
Ariès, Philippe, 1, 200
aristocracy, 5, 106
artisan class, 91, 181, 182, 205
Ashe, Issac, 55
athleticism, 163, 164
Athlone transmitter, 164
Athill, Lombe, 48, 52
autonomy, 11, 210
 economic, 205
 personal, 205
 sexual, 144
Baden-Powell, Robert, 8, 103, 105–9, 111, 116
 Aids to scouting, 105
Bagwell, Richard, 87
Barnes, Jane, 7
Barrett, Cecil, 185–7, 192, 209
 youth leaders, training courses for, 186
Bean na hÉireann, 109
beat clubs, 178
Bedford prison, 85
Behan, Brendan, 151, 156, 160
 Borstal boy, 151, 152, 158
 The great hunger, 156
Belfast, 15, 18–23, 31, 34, 90, 99, 106
 Census of Ireland (1911), 89, 90
 Clonmel borstal inmates from, 89
 Fianna membership, 116
Belfast Academical Institution, 5, 19, 22, 27
 Debating Society, 20
Belfast Historic Society, 19, 27
Belfast Magazine and Literary Journal, 22
Belfast Monthly Magazine, 19, 26, 27
Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge, 27
The Bell, 158, 160
Belvedere Newsboys Club, 190
Ben-Amos, Ilana Krausman, 16, 17
Bilston, Sarah, 65
Bittel, Helen, 64, 65–6
Blanchard, Phyllis
 The adolescent girl, 140

- Blueshirts, 164
 Bourke, Joanna, 44
 Boer War (1899–1902), 105, 108
 Boland, Gerald, 159
 borstal, *see* Clonmel borstal; Britain,
 borstal offenders in
 Borstal Association of Ireland (BAI),
 88, 94, 95, 97, 98, 100
 Boy Scouts of America, 105
 Boys' Brigade, 105–9
 Catholic Boys' Brigade, 105, 106
 Hibernian Boys' Brigade, 107
Boys' Own Paper, 165
 Brennan, Michael, 120
 Britain, 18, 19, 20, 43, 45, 48, 65, 82,
 84, 85, 87, 88, 98, 105, 111,
 113, 180, 182, 192, 193, 203,
 208–9, 212
 borstal offenders in, 84–9
 Prison Commissioners for England
 and Wales, 84
 social services in, 10
 British Departmental Committee on
 Prisons, 84
 British public school, reform of, 5
 Brown, Terence, 26–7
 'Brugh na nÓg', 152
 Brumberg, Joan Jacobs, 48, 51
 Butlins Holiday Camp, 205
 Byron, Lord, 25–8, 33–4
 Childe Harold, 25
 Rushlight, 27
 Werner, 25–6
 Byronic romanticism, 33

 Cadogan, Mary, 64
 Cairns, William, 27
 Carbery, Ethna, 112
 Carrigan committee, 130, 131, 137–
 42, 144, 145, 154
Cassell's people's physician, 50
 Catholic Boys' Brigade, 105, 106
 Catholic Emancipation, 6
 Catholic Social Services
 Conference (CSSC), 184,
 187
 'Youth Welfare', 184
 Catholic Social Welfare Bureau
 (CSWB), 185, 187, 203, 212

 Catholic Youth Council (CYC), 184,
 185
 Catholicism, 6, 10, 65, 104, 118, 133,
 152, 156, 158, 169, 205, 209
 Catholic church, 9, 43, 45, 51, 179,
 182, 200, 212
 Catholic inmates in Clonmel
 borstal, 91–2, 99
 Catholic youth clubs, 182–91, 193
 Cavan, 211
An Cead Sluagh, 104
 Ceannt, Áine, 118
 Censorship Board, 156
 Census of Ireland, 1911, 89–90
 Chadwick, Mary
 Adolescent girlhood, 139
 child study movement, 2
 Church of Ireland, 63, 92, 202
 Church Lads' Brigade, 105
 Churchill, Fleetwood, 48–9, 50, 53–4
An Claidheamh Soluis, 104
 Clann na Gael Girl Scouts, 107, 117
 class, 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 43, 44, 56, 57,
 70, 74, 76, 82, 92, 116, 142,
 143, 144, 151, 155, 160, 162,
 163, 167, 169, 177, 188, 190,
 191, 204, 207, 211
 aristocracy, 5, 106
 artisan class, 91, 181, 182, 205
 farming class, 5, 42, 43, 44, 45, 56,
 57, 204
 gentry, 5, 63
 merchant class, 4, 5
 middle class, 3, 5, 6, 11, 16–17, 20,
 26–7, 34, 42, 43, 46–8, 50, 51,
 53, 56, 57, 65, 67, 70, 72, 76,
 105, 108, 136, 137, 157, 161,
 163, 177, 179, 183, 185, 186,
 187, 191, 192, 193, 199, 211
 poorer class, 44, 85, 99, 181
 tenant class, *see* farming class
 working class, 7, 11, 53, 90, 107–8,
 137, 144, 152, 153, 155, 156,
 161, 167, 169, 177, 179, 180,
 181, 182, 185, 186, 187–8, 190,
 191, 192, 204, 207
 Clear, Catriona, 91
 Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, 87–100, 155,
 162

- Clonmel borstal, 82, 87, 88, 91, 94,
95, 97, 99, 100
case studies of offenders in, 93–9
classification of offenders in, 86
criminality of offenders in, 92–3
geography of offenders in, 89–90
impact of First World War on, 98
juvenile-adult offenders in, 83–4,
86, 87, 89, 93
occupation of offenders in, 91
religion of offenders in, 91–2
- Clonmel Discharged Prisoners' Aid
Society, 88
- Colbert, Con, 111–13, 115, 119
- Colleges Volunteer Corps (CVC),
186–92
- Colum, Padraic
The Saxon shilling, 110
- Comerford, R. V., 8, 44, 45
- An Comhairle le Leas Óige (CLÓ),
183–4
- Commission on Emigration, 205
- Commission on the Relief of the Sick
and Destitute Poor, 132, 133,
134
- Commission on Youth
Unemployment, 166, 181,
206–8
- compulsory tillage, 166
- Connolly, Ina, 114
- Connolly, James, 114, 116, 119
- Connolly, Joe, 104, 114
- Connolly, Nora, 118, 120
- Connor, John, 97
- Construction Corps, 166
- Coombe Lying-in Hospital, 47, 48, 52
- Cork city, 89, 90
Clonmel borstal inmates from, 89
corporal punishment, 82
- Council of Europe, 185, 186
- Craig, Patricia, 64
- Craig, Walker, 93
- Creighton, William, 33
- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of
1935, 130, 145–6, 154
- Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 130,
133, 136
- criminality, 4, 7–8, 82–3, 90, 99
Clonmel Borstal, offenders in, 92–93
juvenile, 4, 7, 91, 182
- Crumlin, Dublin, 109, 160, 161
St Agnes' Club in, 190, 191
- Cumann na mBan (the League of
Women), 114, 117, 118
- Daly, Eddie, 182
- dancehalls, 178, 212
- Davy, Humphry, 17
- Dawson, Janis, 64
- degeneracy, 8, 9
of second generation male
adolescents, 153, 158, 160, 161,
162, 165, 168, 169
sexual, 154, 157
- delinquency, 10, 144, 158, 169, 177,
179–82
juvenile, 4, 7, 88, 176, 179–80, 181,
185, 208
sexual, 7
- de Róiste, Liam, 151
- Derrig, Thomas, 120, 166, 183
- Devane, Richard
adolescent female psychology,
130–5, 137–40, 143–5
*Challenge from youth: a documented
study of youth in modern youth
movements*, 138
- Dictionary of Irish biography (DIB)*,
103–4, 114, 116, 118–20
- Digby, Anne, 49
- Dillon, T. W. T., 161
- domestic service, 203, 206, 209–10
- Donegal, 55, 164, 211
- Donegal Lunatic Asylum, *see* St
Conal's Psychiatric Hospital
- Don't Knock Rock*, 180
- Dowd, Dan, 120
- dowry, 45, 202
- Doyle, Edward Daly, 165
- Drennan, William, 18–19, 22, 27
- Drennan, William 'Billy', 20
- Drogheda, Co. Louth, 180, 185, 205
- Dublin, 89, 90, 99, 111–12, 158, 159,
160, 178, 181, 209
Camden Street, 104, 119
Catholic archdiocese of, 178, 209
Census of Ireland (1911), 89, 90
Clonmel borstal inmates from, 89

- family life in, 205
 Mary Street Cinema in, 180
 North Inner City, 159, 190
 working- and middle-class youths
 in, 181, 192
 youth clubs in, 11
see also individual entries
- Dublin Institute of Catholic
 Sociology, 186, 190, 192
Dublin Journal of Medical Science
 (DJMS), 46
Dublin Medical Press and Circular
 (DMPC), 46, 47, 50
Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical
Science, 52
 Duffy, Margaret Gavan, 141–2, 143
 Duke of York affair, 19
 Dunbar, Carole, 65
 Dunne, Andy, 112, 114
 dysmenhorrea, 53
- Earner-Byrne, Lindsey, 132
 Easter Rising 1916, 103, 110, 111,
 113, 114, 118, 119, 152
 economy, 6, 10, 52, 178
 British war, 166
 family, 6, 11, 200, 204, 205
 post-Famine economy, 7, 44, 45,
 48, 50, 51
 pre-Famine economy, 5, 42, 44
 Edgeworth, Maria
Popular tales, 25
Edinburgh Review, 25, 28
 education, 3, 5, 6, 19, 20, 45, 64, 71,
 72, 73, 82, 83, 95, 105, 109,
 110, 113, 120, 144, 205, 208,
 210, 211, 212
 of boys, 165
 chronology of, 3
 compulsory secondary, 3
 free post-primary, 6, 210
 of girls, 76
 history of, 5
 liberal, 19, 20
 national education system, 6, 144
 occupational, 208
 post-primary, 165, 186
 primary education system, 46
 reform of, 5
 secondary school, 6, 185–7, 189–92,
 211
 sex education, 209
 technical, 186
see also schooling; schools;
secondary schools
 ‘Éire Ar Aghaidh’, 169
 Elmira State Reformatory, 84
 Emerson, James, 20, 21, 23, 26, 28
 emigration, 6, 11, 43, 45, 46, 48, 56,
 57, 166, 178, 185, 201, 202–3,
 208, 209, 211, 212
 Emmet, Robert, 111, 152
 employment, 3, 6, 10, 45, 46, 48, 64,
 91, 94, 95, 99, 120, 143, 153,
 159, 166, 183, 192, 203, 206–9,
 212
 Irish borstal offenders, 91
 of second generation male
 adolescents, 165–7
- Emsley, Clive, 83
 England, 4, 17, 26, 68, 70, 75, 108, 166
 ethnicity, 2
 European Economic Community
 (EEC), 213
 evangelicalism, 18, 34
Evening Herald, 179, 180
- Fabbrini, Gaetano, 24–5
 faction fighting, 6
 Fahy, Frank, 133
 family economy, 6, 11, 200, 204, 205
 Famine, 5, 6, 11, 42, 43, 57
 post-Famine economy, 7, 44, 45,
 48, 50, 51
 pre-Famine economy, 5, 42, 44
 farming, 43, 44, 56, 204, 210
 farming class, 5, 42, 43, 44, 45, 56,
 57, 204
- Feeney, Tom, 9–10
 female adolescence, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49,
 56, 64, 66, 74, 143, 145
 delinquency, 4, 7, 179–82
 emigration, 6, 11, 43, 45, 46, 48,
 56, 57, 166, 178, 185, 201,
 202–3, 208, 209, 211, 212
 employment opportunities, 45–6
 literacy, 45
 medical definitions of, 47–9

- menstruation, 51–6
 pathologization of, 7
 prostitution, 129, 130, 137–41
 psychology, 131–6
 puberty, 4, 47–53, 177
 reproductive capacity, 7
 sexual vulnerability of, 10
 as vulnerable, 49–51
see also adolescence
- female agency, 32
- feminism, 65
 first-wave, 66
 maternalistic, 130, 140
- Ferrall, Charles, 66
- Ferriter, Diarmaid, 50, 154, 155
- fertility
 marital, 50, 51, 54, 202, 204
 transition, 45
- Fianna*, 110, 111, 116–18
- Fianna Code of Honour, 111
- Fianna Éireann republican boy scouts,
 164
- Fianna handbook*, 109, 111
- Fianna Players, 110
- Fianna Roll of Honour, 111
- FitzGerald, Garret, 157, 163, 165
- Fitzgerald-Kenney, James, 130, 133–7
- Fitzpatrick, David, 45
- Fitzpatrick, M., 142
- Fox, Charles James, 19
- Fox, Samuel, 47
- France, 4, 98, 211
- French Revolution, 17, 34
- Freud, Sigmund, 3
- Gaelic Athletic Association, 164
- Galway, 118, 167
- gender, 1–3, 65, 83, 116, 133, 144,
 206, 207, 211
 balance, of emigration, 166
 -based empathy, 140
 hierarchies, 191
- General Prisons Board (GPB), 82, 84,
 87, 89, 91, 94–7
- Genockey, Herbert, 159
- gentry, 5, 63
- Germany, 105, 157, 168
- Gibbons, J. S., 93–4
- Gillis, John R., 1–2, 3, 16
- Gladstone, Herbert, 84
- Gladstone committee, 84, 92
- Glasgow, 97, 104, 105
- Good Friday Agreement of 1998, 116
- Grenville, William, 19
- Griffith, Arthur, 106
- Guinnane, Timothy, 45
- Guinness Brewery, 204
- gynaecologists, 47, 49, 50, 51, 53,
 54, 55
- gynaecology, 7, 43, 44, 46–7
- Hall, Granville Stanley, 2, 3, 8, 138,
 139, 140, 199
*Adolescence: Its psychology and its
 relations to anthropology, sex,
 crime, religion, and education*, 2,
 108–9
- Hancock, John, 19
- Hannan, Damien, 211–12
- Hart, Peter, 162
- Hay, Edward
*History of the insurrection in Co.
 Wexford in 1798*, 25
- Heron, Archie, 118
- Heuston, Seán, 111, 113, 115, 119
- Hewitt, John, 26
- Hibernia*, 182, 187
- Hibernian Boys' Brigade, 107
- Hobson, Bulmer, 103, 106, 113
see also Na Fianna Éireann (Irish
 National Boy Scouts)
- Hogan, Austin, 118
- Hogg, James
The poetic mirror, 26
- Holford, Margaret
Wallace, 25
- Holland, Robert, 111
- Holmes, Finlay, 18
- Holohan, Garry, 104, 112, 115
- homosexuality, 154, 155, 167
- Hood, Roger, 83
- humoural theory, 52
- Humphreys, Alexander J., 181–2,
 201–5
- Hunt, Lynn, 17, 33, 34
- Hyndman, Robert, 32–3
- Illegitimate Children (Affiliation
 Orders) Act of 1930, 130–6

- industrial schools, 8, 94, 142, 167, 189, 206, 208, 209
 industrialization, 3–4, 11, 45, 90, 178
 International Penitentiary Congress, 85, 93
 Irish Centre (London), 212–13
 Irish Civil War (1922–23), 9, 89, 103, 111, 115, 116, 164, 200
 Irish Defence Forces, 165, 167
Irish Ecclesiastical Record, 131, 138, 139
 Irish Free State, 115, 116, 120, 130, 146, 162, 200
Irish Freedom, 109
 Irish Land Acts, 70
 Irish National Boy Scouts, *see* Na Fianna Éireann
 Irish Obstetrical Society, 54
 Irish Republican Army (IRA), 103, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 156, 161, 162, 164
 Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), 112
 Military Council, 103
 Irish revolution, 9, 103, 104, 109, 117, 120
 Na Fianna Éireann during, 9, 113–16
Irish Press, 160, 168
Irish Times, 134, 135, 158, 161, 163, 180, 184
Irish Volunteer, 109, 110
 Irish Women Citizens and Local Government Association (IWCLGA), 141–3

 Jackson, Anna, 66
 Jacob, Margaret, 17, 33, 34
 Jacob, Rosamond, 117
 Jefferson, Tony, 191
 Jewish Lads' Brigade, 105
 Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers (JCWSSW), 146
 Jones, William Todd, 27
 juvenile
 criminality, 4, 7–8, 91, 182
 delinquency, 4, 7, 88, 176, 179–80, 181, 185, 208
 prostitution, 130, 137–41
 juvenile-adult
 borstal offenders, 83–4, 86, 87

 Kavanagh, Patrick, 156, 169, 191
 Kavanagh, Séamus, 119
 Keane, John B., 155
 Kelly, Elizabeth, 107, 117
 Kelly, May, 107, 117
 Kennedy, Michael, 136
 Kett, Joseph, 2
 Kettle, Mary, 143, 146
 Kimball, Solon T., 201
 King, Peter, 83
King Creole, 179
 Kinsale, Co. Cork, 63
 Kirkpatrick, Thomas Percy
 Claude, 49
 Kirwan, Kathleen, 140–1
 Knox, Vicesimus
 The spirit of despotism, 25
 Kunzel, Regina G., 135, 140

 land acquisition, 44, 57
 land procurement, 44
 Landers, John Joe 'Purty', 120
 Lang Benefit Concert, 110
 Larceny Act of 1827, 92–3
 Laverty, Maura
 Never no more, 162
 Law, Hugh, 134, 135
 League of Youth, 164
 Legion of Mary, 130, 141, 183, 189, 190, 209
 Lemass, Seán, 166, 168, 206
 Limerick, 90, 156, 183, 190
 St Brigid's Boys' Club in, 183
 Limerick Rural Survey, 210, 212
 Little, P. J., 130, 133–7
 Local Defence Force (LDF), 157, 165
 Locke, John, 5
 Logan, John, 5
 London, 26, 31, 64, 69, 70, 73, 85, 86, 104, 212
 Lonergan, Michael, 112, 113
 Luddy, Maria, 44
 Ludlow, Thomas, 165
 Lynn, Anna Maria, 28, 31
 Lyons, F. S. L., 90

- Macaulay, Thomas Babington, 28
 MacCaisín, Seamus, 104
 MacCormac, Henry, 30
 MacEntee, Seán, 136
 MacGonigal, Maurice, 120
 Macnamara, Angela, 187–8
 MacNaughton-Jones, Henry, 51, 53, 54
 MacNeill, Eoin, 119
 Madden, Thomas More, 48, 50–2, 54
 Magdalene Asylums, 10, 134
 male adolescence, 4, 7, 10, 11, 66,
 109, 113–15
 criminal delinquency, 9, 158–61
 criminality, 83–4, 91
 leisure activity, 161–5
 second generation of, in
 independent Ireland, 151–69
 sexual behaviour, 154–8
 understanding of, 182
 work, 165–7
 see also adolescence
 malnourishment, 85
 Markievicz, Countess, 103, 104, 107,
 108, 111, 112, 114, 117
 Marland, Hilary, 50
 marriage, 44–5, 50
 defined, 57
 dowry and, 45, 202
 early, 44, 212
 false promises of, 143
 late, 11, 201, 204
 reform of, 66
 Marsh, Sir Henry, 47–8, 49–50
 Martin, Eamon, 104, 112, 113, 119
 Massachusetts, 108
 Mater Misericordiae Hospital, 53
 May, Sheila, 160
 McAuley, Peter, 159
 McAvoy, Sandra, 130, 154
 McCourt, Frank, 156, 157
 Angela's ashes, 160
 McCracken, Eliza, 31
 McEvoy, 'Sweet Kate', 28
 McGahern, John, 164, 165
 McGee, Hannah, 15–16, 23, 28, 31
 McQuaid, John Charles, 11, 166, 178,
 184–6, 188–91, 207
 Catholic Social Services Conference,
 184
 sodalities and, 185, 193
 youth formation and, 184–5
 youth leaders, training courses for,
 186
 Mead, Margaret
 Coming of age in Samoa, 2–3
 Meade, L. T., 5, 6, 63–76
 *Ashton Morton: Or memories of my
 life*, 64
 Bashful fifteen, 66–71, 75
 *The daughter of a soldier: A colleen of
 south Ireland*, 63
 Lettie's last home, 64
 Peggy from Kerry, 66, 67, 70–6
 The rebel of the school, 66, 68–9
 A wild Irish girl, 65–7, 70, 72–6
 Wild Kitty, 65, 66–8, 71–2
 Medical Act of 1858, 42, 46
 Medical Charities Act of 1851, 42, 46
 medical definitions of adolescence,
 47–9
 medical profession, 42–3, 46, 47, 49,
 50, 52, 57
 Mellows, Liam, 104, 112, 113, 119
 Mendras, Henri, 210
 menorrhagia, 54
 menstruation, 48–9, 51–6
 irregularities, 53–5
 ovular theory of, 52
 merchant class, 4, 5
 middle class, 3, 5, 6, 11, 16–17, 26–7,
 34, 42, 43, 46–8, 50, 51, 53, 56,
 57, 65, 67, 70, 72, 76, 105, 108,
 136, 137, 157, 161, 163, 177,
 179, 183, 185, 186, 187, 191,
 192, 193, 199, 211
 military service, 98, 114, 200
 Miller, David W., 18
 Mitchell, Sally, 64
 Mitchell, William, 20, 21, 23, 29–30,
 33
 Moclair, Delia, 143
 Molesworth, Robert,
 *Account of Denmark as it was in the
 year 1692*, 22
 Moloney, Thomas, 98
 Monaghan, 97, 135, 199, 211
 Montgomery, James (film censor),
 154, 157, 179

- Montgomery, James 'Monti', 20, 21,
24, 28, 29, 32–3
- Moore, Thomas, 27
Letters and journals of Lord Byron, 28
Loves of the angels, 25
- More, Hannah
Coelebs in search of a wife, 31
- Morris, Hannah Charlotte, 28
- Morton, H. V., 157, 162, 165
In search of Ireland, 155
- motherhood, 4, 10, 45
unmarried, 10, 129, 145
- Mount Merrion, Dublin
St Theresa's Boys Club in, 190
- Mountjoy Square, Dublin, 190
- Mullingar Assizes, 95
- Murray, Eddie, 112
- music industry, 179, 180
- Na Fianna Éireann (Irish National Boy
Scouts), 9, 103–4, 106–7, 120
during Irish revolution, 113–16
formation of, 104–9
membership, 116–20
philosophy of, 109–13
- National Athletic and Cycling
Association, 164
- national education system, 6, 144
- Navan, Co. Meath, 159
- Neville, William C., 48, 52
- 'New Girl', 64, 66
- New Woman movement, 64
- Newman Demographic Survey, 208
- News of the World*, 156
- Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 110
- Northern Ireland, 116, 161, 210, 211
- Northern Whig*, 23
- Norton, William, 165–6
- Norway, 211
- occupation, *see* employment
- Ó Gráda, Cormac, 90
- Ó hEithir, Mícheál, 164
- O'Connor, Patsy, 110–12, 119
- O'Daly, Patrick, 118, 119
- O'Duffy, Eoin, 141, 142, 154, 155,
164, 168
- O'Farrell, John, 132
- O'Higgins, Kevin, 162
- O'Hora, Liam, 179
- An Óige, 163–4
- Oliver Plunkett Boys' Club, 185
- 'one-day-a-week' continuation
schools, 190–1
- O'Neill, Fr Dermott, 181, 187
- O'Neill, William, 104
- Ó Riain, Pádraic, 112, 113
- Ormonde, John, 120
- Osgerby, Bill, 193
- Our Lady's Hostel for Boys, 189
- ovular theory of menstruation, 52
- Owenson, Sydney
The wild Irish girl: A national tale, 65
- Paine, Tom
Age of reason, 25
Rights of man, 25
- parental authority, 202, 205
- parental control, 158, 181, 201, 205,
213
- paternalism, 144, 188
- Pearse, P. H., 152
- Peel, Sir Robert, 92–3
- Pioneer Club, 64
- Pitt, William, 19
- Plant, George, 120
- poorer class, 44, 85, 99, 181
- Porter, Jane
Duke Christian of Luneburg, 25
- Pouch, Seamus, 112–13
- Power, Jennie Wyse, 133
- prejudice, 22, 65, 169
- Presbyterianism, 4, 15, 17, 34, 92, 118
- Presbyterian radicalism, decline of,
18–20
- Prevention of Crime Act of 1908, 88,
89
- Prison Commissioners for England
and Wales, 84
- prostitution, 129, 131, 134
juvenile, 130, 137–41
- protectionists, 129, 130, 133
- Protestantism, 18, 70, 92, 118, 158,
192
see also Church of Ireland;
Presbyterianism
- psychology, 2, 4, 10, 108, 130–5,
137–40, 143–5, 177, 199

- puberty, 4, 47–53, 177
pubs, 178
- Queen Caroline affair, 19
Quinlan, Robert, 31
- Radó Telefís Éireann, 176
Radzinowicz, Leon, 83
rape, 10, 142
Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin, 130–1
Redmond, John, 118
reformatory schools, 8, 88, 92, 94, 97,
141, 158, 181, 182
respectability, 34, 42–3, 44, 50, 57
revolutionary generation, 9, 151, 153,
154, 161–2, 164, 169
Reynolds, Frank, 112
Reynolds, Kimberley, 64
Reynolds, Percy, 110
Richmond Lunatic Asylum, *see* St
Brendan's Hospital
Roberts, Kenneth, 192
Rock Around the Clock, 180
rock 'n' roll, 179, 180, 193
romanticism, 17, 24–5, 27, 33, 68
Rosenberg, Charles, 43
Rotunda Hospital, 46–7, 53
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 5
Royal College of Physicians, 49
Royal Irish Constabulary, 109
Ruggles-Brise, Evelyn John, 84, 85, 92
Russell, Miss, 32
Russell, Thomas, 19
Ryan, Liam, 190–1
Ryan, W. P., 119
- School Attendance Act of 1926, 206
schooling, 6, 17, 66, 72, 177, 179,
210–11
 compulsory, 200
 primary-level, 209
 secondary-level, 186
 single-sex convent, 211
schools, 5, 48, 64, 71, 76, 88, 92, 94,
119, 142, 143, 152, 159, 161,
183, 185, 186, 200, 206, 212,
213
 attendance, 206
 Board school, 71
 convent, 187–8
 English schools, 71, 72, 76
 industrial, 8, 92, 94, 142, 189, 208,
209
 military schools, 119
 reformatory, 8, 88, 92, 94, 97, 141,
158, 181, 182
 secondary, *see* secondary schools
 technical, 187
 vocational, 165, 167, 211
 see also education
Scotland, 25, 29, 30
Scott, Walter, 26
 Halidon Hill, 25
 Lay of the last minstrel, 27
 Marmion, 27
 Peveril of the peak, 25
 Redgauntlet, 25
Scottish Free Church Sunday School,
105
secondary schools, 6, 185, 186, 187,
189–92, 211
 see also education; schools
second generation male adolescence,
 see male adolescence
secret societies, 17, 18, 69, 112, 113,
169
servanthood, 3, 204
Seton, Ernest Thompson, 105–6
sex, 30, 31, 48, 50, 52, 141, 153, 168,
179, 199
 curiosity, 142
 education, 209
 impulses, 51, 139, 142, 144
 outside marriage, 132
 sexual abuse, 142, 155–56
 sexual agency, 145
 sexual assault, 142
 sexual behaviour of second
 generation male adolescents,
 154–8
 sexual delinquency, 7, 140
 sexual development, 42, 51
 sexual deviancy, 9, 182
 sexual double standard, 129, 138,
140
 sexual exploitation, 129
 sexual expression, 169
 sexual maturation, 2, 42, 45, 50

- sexual permissiveness, 176, 179
 sexual predators, 143
 sexual segregation, 155, 156
 sexual transgression, 10, 131, 134, 184
 trade, 140
 Shallow, Jack, 112
 Sheehy, John Joe, 120
 Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 26
 Rosalind and Helen, 25
 Shine, Liam, 179
 Shore, Heather, 83
 Sion Hill school, 188
 Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, 47
 Sligo Lunatic Asylum, 55, 56
 Smith, Alfred Toulmin, 64
 Smith, James, 141
 Smith, William Alexander, 105
 Society of St John Bosco, 183, 193
 Society of St Vincent de Paul, 183, 190
 Society of the Crescent, 21–4
 sodalities, 185, 192–3
 sodomy, crime of, 154
 'The Soldier's Song', 168
 Somerville-Large, Peter, 158
 Southey, Robert
 Wat Tyler, 25
 Spanish Civil War, 164
 Spencer, Anthony, 208–9
 Springhall, John, 108
 St Agnes' Boys' Club, 190, 191
 St Brendan's Hospital, 55
 St Brigid's Boys Club, 183
 St Conal's Psychiatric Hospital, 55
 St Patrick's Institution, 89, 189
 St Stanislaus Boys Club, 190
 St Theresa's Boys Club, 190
 Standfield, Maria, 29, 30, 33
 'Step Together!', 163
 Stokes, John F., 185
 Sunday Press, 168

 Teddy Boy, 180, 181, 191
 'teddy boy international', 180–1
 teenager, 4, 10, 157, 160, 161, 164, 165, 176, 177–8, 180, 185, 187, 189, 203, 204
 Templeton, John, 19, 20

 Templeton, Robert, 20
 Templetrine, Ballinspittle, Co. Cork, 63
 tenant class, *see* farming class
 Tennent, Isabella, 31
 Tennent, Jane, 31
 Tennent, Robert, 15, 19, 20
 Tennent, Robert James, 5, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 26, 29, 32–35
 education, 20–22
 engagement with romanticism, 24–8
 friendships, 20–21
 political engagement, 23–4
 relationships with women, 28, 30–31
 and Society of the Crescent, 21–2, 23, 24
 Tennent, William, 15, 19, 20
 Tone, Theobald Wolfe, 111
 Tosh, John, 20
 Trinity College, Dublin, 15, 20, 21, 23, 168

 Ulster, 18, 19, 34
 Ulster Volunteer Force, 113
 unemployment, 166, 167, 207–8
 United Irish movement, 15, 18–19, 22–3
 United States, 10, 11, 43, 48, 95, 140, 144
 unmarried motherhood, 10, 129, 145

 Vaughan, Dennis, 183–4
 Vejuoda, Kathleen, 44
 Viney, Michael, 176
 violence, 7, 83, 86, 94, 99, 109, 116, 182
 Vocational Education Act of 1930, 165
 Vocational Guidance Service, 208
 vocational schools, 165, 166, 186, 211

 Wales, 84, 211
 Walker, Thomas, 19
 Walpole, Harry, 112
 Walton, Martin, 120
 Walvin, James, 6

- War of Independence, *see* Anglo-Irish War
- Ward, Conn, 135
- Ward, Patrick, 112
- Watt, Gregory, 33
- Watt, James, 33
- Weil, Robert, 157–8
- Westmoreland Lock Hospital, 142
- Wiener, Martin, 83
- Wollstonecraft, Mary
A vindication of the rights of woman,
30–1
- Women Writers' Club, 64
- Woodcraft movement, 105
- Wordsworth, William, 26, 27
‘Tintern Abbey’, 24
- work, *see* employment
- working class, 7, 11, 53, 90, 107–8,
137, 144, 152, 153, 155, 156,
161, 167, 169, 177, 179, 180,
181, 182, 185, 186, 187–8, 190,
191, 192, 204, 207
- youth clubs, 11, 176–93
- Youth Hostel Association, 164
- youth welfare work, 176–93