

On the Eve of Famine: Two Ideals of Irish Nationhood in 1842

SIOBHAN FRANCES FALLON

This article reflects on views of Irish nationhood. By the early 1840s, the effects of Union with Britain had generated in Ireland a desire for national autonomy, and the 'Great Hunger' had yet to silence multitudes and sting some others to the point of rebellion. In comparing a painting, 'The Origin of the Harp', with a newspaper, the 'Nation', this article considers the role of the arts in attempts to forge a national consciousness, and examines some of the philosophical questions that confronted the Irish people in 1842. These concern whether the essence of nationhood is determined by the view of the colonised or coloniser, and whether the claims of nationhood should be predicated on the past or the present, on potent myth or experienced reality.

*'There is no cure but nationality'*¹

In the summer of 1842, three twenty-something men were planning the launch of a newspaper. Their headquarters were in Dublin, a city denuded, by the 1800 Act of Union, of its parliament and much of its social and cultural life. In titling their paper the *Nation*, these 'Young Irelanders' announced their ambition to rekindle a sense of nationhood in their country. At the same time, Daniel Maclise (1806-1870), an Irish artist living in England, was the subject of much chatter amongst visitors to the Royal Academy.² One of his exhibits was *The Origin of the Harp* (fig.1), a painting which interpreted Thomas Moore's song of the same name, from the *Irish Melodies*.³ While the *Nation* was explicit about its mission, Maclise's painting was mysterious; though it is now widely interpreted as an 'allegorised representation [...] of Ireland',⁴ this was not so clear to the English audience for whom it was painted. The Young Irelanders and Maclise had different audiences in mind, and different purposes. This article considers the *Origin* alongside poems and prose from the first edition of the *Nation*: two visions of nationhood, in many ways poles apart, but considered together, they highlight the competing claims of the past, present and future on those who sought to shape Irish identity in 1842.

The tendency of nations, particularly at times of crisis, to employ myths of the past for reassurance or self-aggrandisement has been derided. But national myths, like religion, have also inspired great art, perhaps because of the values to which they appeal; an example is Arthurian legend in England's national narrative. Ireland's interest in its past, in the

¹ 'J.E.O'R.' in a letter from Paris, 8 October 1842, printed in the *Nation* (15 October), p.10: 'I am come at length to the opinion that there is no cure but nationality; and Ireland has but to will that and it is accomplished'. All further references to the *Nation*, except where otherwise stated, refer to this edition.

² *Blackwood's* art critic referred to Landseer and Maclise as 'the two artists that most people speak of who visit the academy this year, as giving, more than any others, [...] a character to our Exhibition', 'Exhibitions - Royal Academy', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (July 1842), p. 24.

³ The series of *Irish Melodies* (1808-34) is the best known work of Thomas Moore (1789-1852), Irish poet.

⁴ Fintan Cullen and R.F. Foster, *Conquering England* (London, 2005), p. 58.

nineteenth century, was more vexed; not everyone living on the island, still less those purporting to oversee it, held that it could claim to be a nation. The Irish antiquaries of the eighteenth century had done much to nurture a sense of a coherent Gaelic heritage, but Clare O'Halloran has noted that they were 'edgily aware of the contemporary resonances of [their] pronouncements on the early Irish past'.⁵ It is in this context that Maclise revisited the originary myth of the harp which had come to him, via Moore, from Edward Hudson. This United Irishman had drawn it on his prison wall following the failed rebellion of 1798,⁶ but visitors to the Royal Academy in the summer of 1842 would have had no inkling of this provenance. On the contrary, they were not quite sure what to make of the painting. One reviewer dismissed the *Origin* with the laconic verdict, 'We think [it] a decided failure, very hard, and not possessing his usually good workmanship'.⁷ The *Art-Union* received the painting warmly, but was equally evasive regarding its subject-matter: 'This picture must be seen to be understood and felt; any prosaic description would be a profanation, from which we shrink with becoming reverence'.⁸

Of course, at one level, Maclise was simply interpreting Moore's song which told the story of a sea-maiden who waits in vain for her human lover, until Heaven takes 'pity on true-love so warm' and transforms her into a 'soft Harp', her 'sea-beauties' forming the frame and her hair the 'bright chords'.⁹ The song's focus is on physical beauty and emotional betrayal, and the artist's treatment could be seen as primarily a celebration of the female form, the narrative merely fulfilling the Victorian requirement for a respectable context. Naked or barely-clothed Titanias¹⁰ were popular in the period, while Classical myths¹¹ also enabled artists to give men the best of both worlds: the opportunity to gaze on bare breasts whilst congratulating themselves on their cultured high-mindedness. If we look closely at Maclise's siren, we cannot deny the sensuality of the treatment. The contrast of the warm flesh tones with the cool blues and greens of the background, the fall of the seaweed which draws the eye over the hip and down between the legs, the extra softening of the brush strokes which combine seaweed with shadow where it touches the pubic bone, all offer a sexual charge to the gazer. However, there is at the same time enough allusiveness to engage the intellect. Related myths abound, including one connected with St. Cecilia,¹² and Apollo's lute was, 'strung with his hair',¹³ so Maclise was presenting a version of a familiar myth, and for those

⁵ Clare O'Halloran, 'Harping on the Past', in *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke*, ed. Melissa Calaresu, Filippo de Vivo and Joan-Pau Rubies (Farnham, 2010), pp.327-343 (p. 330).

⁶ Moore's account of seeing the drawing in Kilmainham gaol is quoted by Matthew Campbell in 'Thomas Moore, Daniel Maclise and the New Mythology: The Origin of the Harp', *Anthem Studies in European Ideas and Identities: Voice of the People* (London, 2013), pp. 65-86 (p. 80).

⁷ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (July 1842), p.28.

⁸ 'The Royal Academy', *The Art-Union* (1 June 1842), p.126.

⁹ Thomas Moore, *Moore's Irish Melodies* (London, 1856), p. 51.

¹⁰ From Fuseli's *Titania's Awakening* (1780-90) through Robert Huskisson's *The Midsummer Night's Fairies* (1847) to John Simmons's *Titania* (1866).

¹¹ For example, William Etty's *The Judgement of Paris* (1843), William Edward Frost's *Diana and her Nymphs Surprised by Actaeon* (1846).

¹² See discussion in Campbell, *Thomas Moore*, pp. 81-84.

¹³ William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, III.3.343.

who perceived the reference, Ireland's nationhood was rendered alluring, but passive, and safely located in a past 'adventure time'.¹⁴

The influence of German Romanticism¹⁵ must be acknowledged, and Maclise's thinking is likely to have been informed by the fact that this movement was serving the purpose of nation-formation in Germany. Was Maclise, then, a 'proto-nationalist', as his biographer has claimed,¹⁶ and if so, what is the nature of his nationalism? The harp itself was a symbol whose significance was contested,¹⁷ but the very romanticism of the narrative ensures that whatever Irish nationhood is denoted in the *Origin* is the impotent kind that dissolves itself in lamentation of the past and even panders to the stereotype of a lachrymose, feminised Celt. In questioning whether Maclise has anything to say about an Irish future, a recent re-appraisal of the painting is valuable. Previous analysis reads the sun as setting, but Campbell argues that the time is dawn, in faithfulness to 'Moore's song-lyric, which moves temporally through the night'.¹⁸ These differing positions unconsciously point forward to the twin names for the cultural movement of the late nineteenth century, the 'Celtic Twilight' and the 'Celtic Revival', and in so doing, reveal the insoluble paradox inherent in nation-formation underpinned by mythology. The theme of metamorphosis can be regarded as forward-looking, but here, Campbell finds 'a newness which is nevertheless imminent and not achieved'.¹⁹ It is, however, conceivable that Maclise intended his metamorphosis to signify hope in Ireland's position in 1842, following Catholic Emancipation and the reform legislation of the 1830s.

A romanticised love of country is expressed in the painting through the the fusion of myth with nature and humanity. The play of pearls - jewels believed by antiquaries to be found in Ireland²⁰- is emblematic of this treatment. There is a curvaceous vertical from the flowers in the figure's hair, through a string of translucent pearls, whose shapes and luminosity are echoed in the bulbs of the seaweed as it falls towards the water. In parallel, a curving line of tears and water-drops descends from her cheek, across her breast and down her thigh till it reaches the water.

¹⁴ I have borrowed Bakhtin's useful phrase from 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, (Austin, 1981), pp. 84-258.

¹⁵ Leon Litvack has made a detailed study of this influence on Maclise in 'Continental art and the "Cockneyfied Corkonian": German and French influences on Daniel Maclise', *Ireland and Europe in the Nineteenth Century* ed. Leon Litvack and Colin Graham (Dublin, 2006), pp. 122-147 (especially pages 129-131).

¹⁶ Nancy Weston, *Daniel Maclise: Irish Artist in Victorian London* (Dublin, 2001), p.155.

¹⁷ For an analysis, see Clare O'Halloran, *Harping on the Past*, especially p. 332.

¹⁸ Campbell, *Thomas Moore*, p. 67.

¹⁹ Campbell, *Thomas Moore*, p. 69.

²⁰ See Joseph Cooper Walker's *An Historical Essay on the Dress of the Ancient and Modern Irish* (1788) and Sydney Owenson's note in *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806): 'Pearls abounded and are still found in this country; and were in such repute in the 11th century, that a present of them was sent to the famous Bishop Anselm, by a bishop of Limerick', Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale* (Oxford, reissued 2008), p. 98.



Figure 1, Daniel Maclise, *The Origin of the Harp*, 1842, oil on canvas, 110.4cm x 85.0cm, Manchester City Art Gallery.

The sinuosity of these verticals is emphasised by the presence of the straight, green-hued rods of water which travel relentlessly through the curled strands of hair to meet the water surface in hard, bright drops. Larger pearl shapes gleam from the stalactites, connecting the siren to the ovum of her grotto, and for all the other-worldliness of the painting, there is a tenderness in the handling of the figure, which seems at once exposed, adorned and enclosed, and, despite the mythical context, vividly human. By contrast, Maclise's 1846 illustration for Moore's song - the only version seen in Ireland - gives the siren a mermaid's tail, while the flatness of the treatment locates her firmly in myth.

While Maclise was interpreting Ireland obliquely to the English by offering a well-fed beauty to their gaze, the real Ireland was experiencing the usual 'distress'.²¹ Young journalists Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon believed there was a need to interpret Ireland directly to the Irish in order to effect change, and expressed this conviction in the quotation which became the paper's slogan, 'To create and to foster public opinion in Ireland - to make it racy of the soil'. Their focus was on building a sense of nationhood based on residence rather than on confessional or class lines; in other words, founded in the present, not the past. In a subversion of the process de Nie describes as 'Ireland's role in the construction of British identity',²² the editors urged that,

We must open our eyes and look our domineering neighbour in the face - we must inspect him, and endeavour to discover what kind of a fellow he is. Not that we ought to do him injustice - not that we ought to run into opposite extremes - not, above all, that we ought to take universal England to be fairly represented by the disagreeable person who sometimes condescends to visit *Hireland* - a fat man, with his head in the clouds and his brains in his belly, looking the incarnation of self-importance.²³

This measured 'othering', its purpose being to establish a depth of difference which would justify Ireland in governing itself, rather than to rationalise dominion over the 'other', contrasts with the frequently malicious depictions of the Irish in the British press.²⁴

The editorial in the first edition of the *Nation* established a position based on forward-looking ideas of justice and human rights, informed by the theories of libertarians such as Thomas Paine.²⁵ This position explicitly rejected the old fault lines: 'there are, in truth, but two parties in Ireland: those who suffer from her National degradation, and those who profit by it'.²⁶ The editors stressed the importance of now, announcing that their object was 'to organise the greater and better of those parties', because, 'there never was a moment more favourable for such a purpose than the present'.²⁷ The chief author of this 'moment' was

²¹ References to 'distress' - denoting extreme poverty and hunger - in Ireland abound in the parliamentary records for 1842.

²² Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Wisconsin, 2004), p. 24.

²³ 'The Nation', *Nation*, p. 8.

²⁴ For example, de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, p. 90.

²⁵ Thomas Paine (1737-1809), revolutionary and author of *Rights of Man* (1791).

²⁶ 'The Nation', *Nation*, p. 8.

²⁷ 'The Nation', *Nation*, p. 8.

Daniel O’Connell,²⁸ who had formed the Loyal National Repeal Association in July 1840 with the purpose of overturning the Union legislation of 1800. This movement had the support of the *Nation*. The paper argued a rational case for the right to nationhood, and it was one which looked outward as well as forward. Indeed, the extensive coverage of overseas affairs, notably criticism of the British operations in Afghanistan²⁹ and close analysis of the polity of comparably sized nations, such as Belgium,³⁰ signals pretension to a national voice on a global stage. The salient characteristic of the *Nation*, however, was that it strove to inculcate in its readers a pride in their cultural distinctiveness which would find expression in ambition and action. In this it couldn’t be more different from Moore’s and Maclise’s sublimation of Ireland’s distress in terms of romantic love.

Although the weekly *Nation* contained in each 16-page edition a miscellany of news reports, political comment, Repeal campaigning, social gossip and much else, literature was to be a key medium by which the editors would raise national consciousness. The first edition contained poems and songs written in-house, and thereafter the paper would include submissions from the public, both real and invented, inviting editorial comment which would help to form the impression of a lively and often humorous national conversation. Newspapers, especially weekly ones which were extremely popular in rural areas, were often read in gatherings, and this very modern organ of communication could quite naturally, therefore, tap into the tradition of oral culture. The first poem published in the *Nation*, ‘Our First Number’, reflects this reality, striking the note of popular appeal essential to the editors’ philosophy. Framed on the page by a report on the ‘ricketty’ financial fabric of England, which asks ‘Would it not be wise to stand out from it?’³¹ and a bitterly ironic commentary on the English insistence that Irish soldiers should fight the Afghans on their behalf, the poem is a high-energy clarion call for unity and resistance, as seen in the first of the six verses:

’Tis a great day, and glorious, O Public! for you -
 This October Fifteenth, Eighteen Forty and Two!
 For on this day of days, lo! THE NATION comes forth,
 To commence its career of Wit, Wisdom, and Worth -
 To give Genius its due - to do battle with Wrong -
 And achieve things undreamed of as yet, save in song.
 Then arise! fling aside your dark mantle of slumber,
 And welcome in chorus the **nation’s first number**.³²

The trisyllabic metre gives a musicality and energy appropriate to the populist message. Written by the *Nation*’s staff poet, James Clarence Mangan, it is characteristically rousing.

²⁸ Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847), lawyer and politician, known as the ‘Liberator’ for his success in achieving Catholic Emancipation.

²⁹ The campaign in Afghanistan is analysed in detail, and characterised as an invasion, ‘with no pretext save a lie, and no design save aggrandisement’ of ‘the territories of an independent and unoffending people’, in ‘The English Army in Affghanistan [sic], and the “Notions” of the English Press Thereupon’, *Nation*, p. 9.

³⁰ The key factors in Belgium’s comparative prosperity are identified as, ‘Fixity of Tenure and Domestic Legislation’ in *Nation*, (5 November 1842), pp. 56 and 62.

³¹ ‘The Revenue’, *Nation*, p. 9.

³² ‘Our First Number’, *Nation*, p. 9.

The rhyme scheme contributes to the mood: the first three couplets of each verse contain passionate indictments of ‘tyrants and bigots’, ‘serf-grinding Landlords’, and ‘lickspittle panders to Power’, as well as calls for ‘bloodless yet mighty Reform’, and these have the assertiveness of masculine rhyme-endings. The final couplet which contains the refrain, ‘the nation’s first number’, has instead a feminine rhyme-ending, which softens the barb with celebratory good humour. And although there is some reference to the Gaelic past, for example in the oblique reference to the traditional Irish mantle which was outlawed by Henry VIII, the context is an exhortation to abandon the inactivity associated with retrospection. The poem calls for a vigorous engagement with modern realities; to ‘take the shine out of “Punch”’ and, though,

To OLD IRELAND our first love is given;
Still, our friendship hath arms for all lands under Heaven.³³

While ‘Our First Number’ takes a high moral tone, ‘The Exterminator’s Song’ expresses bitter resentment in unvarnished, demotic terms. Set to the tune of the popular ballad, ‘The Gipsy King’,³⁴ the role of the amiable gipsy is taken by a landowner whose deliberate cruelty is darkened by the contrast. The first verse of ‘The Exterminator’s Song’ sets the scene:

’Tis I am the poor man’s scourge,
And where is the scourge like me?
My land from all Papists I purge,
Who think that their votes should be free! (R)
For huts only fitted for brutes,
My agent the last penny wrings;
And my serfs live on water and roots,
While I feast on the best of good things!
For I am the poor man’s scourge! (R)
(Chorus of the Editors of THE NATION)
Yes, you are the poor man’s scourge!
But of such the whole island we’ll purge.³⁵

Readers familiar with the original ballad would remember the gipsy’s conviviality and his ‘kingdom’ wherein,

[...] there is but one table,
All my subjects partake of my cheer,
We would drink Champagne were we able,
As it is we have plenty of beer!

The poem continues to parallel the ballad, drawing contrast after bitter contrast. The gipsy relaxes in his egalitarian ‘court’ where,

³³ ‘Our First Number’, *Nation*, p. 9.

³⁴ All quotations from ‘The Gipsy King’ are taken from *Broadside Ballads Online* <<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/static/images/sheets/10000/09627.gif>> [2 Feb. 2016].

³⁵ ‘Poet’s Corner’, *Nation*, p. 10.

No conspiracy I apprehend,
Among brothers and equals I rule,

while the 'Exterminator' is on the alert for insubordination, and,

If conspiracies I apprehend,
To throw off my rack-renting rule,
For a "*Special Commission*" I send,
To my friends of the old Tory school!

The gypsy's colourful life includes flirtation, and in the third verse he contends that his 'subjects' do not 'grudge' him having 'the prettiest lass' on his knee. The parallel verse in 'The Exterminator's Song' suggests a less amiable enactment of *droit du seigneur*:

My cottiers must all cringe to me,
Nor grudge me the prettiest lass;
Or they know very well that they'll see
Their hovels as flat as the grass!

The ballad form is a powerful tool for making memorable this catalogue of key grudges against British administration, and, true to the *Nation's* desire to energise rather than dispirit its readership, the chorus insists on hope.

The third original poem in the first edition of the *Nation* communicates more explicitly a repudiation of backward-looking nationhood. 'We Want no Swords' is written for the air of one of Moore's *Irish Melodies*, 'Oh! For the swords of former times', a song which laments the loss of Ireland's Gaelic Order, when,

The best honours worn by Man
Were those which Virtue gave him.³⁶

The poem rejects Moore's implication that virtuous nationhood is a thing of the past, dependent on superior force of arms, and offers the prospect of:

A purer brand - the arm of right -
Will manhood's lesson read 'em;
With conquering MIND alone we fight -
'Tis all we need for freedom!³⁷

For the Young Irelanders, recognition of national virtue and intellect was one of the means by which Ireland could be differentiated from England, whose vices were considered to be materialism, greed and misconduct in warfare.³⁸ In contrast to the Irish nationhood Maclise

³⁶ Moore, *Moore's Irish Melodies*, p. 127.

³⁷ 'Songs of the Nation', *Nation*, p. 10.

³⁸ Examples of accusations of materialism and greed have been given above. Regarding warfare, the first edition of the *Nation* ventriloquized Britain's call to Irish soldiers to serve in Afghanistan: "The path to Cabul must open to our money or our swords. Its harems and bazaars shall repay your toil. When we pierce its walls your motto shall be our old one, "booty and beauty". The note appended

presented as resignation to suffering, these writers, still idealistic in 1842, were convinced that the rebuilding of national pride amongst Irish people of all classes and creeds was the cure for the country's ills. They believed, along with Maclise, that romance was an Irish trait, but rather than telling this to an English audience, they asserted that, 'The people of Ireland must have [...] food for their imaginations as well as their stomachs'. Their focus was on accessible and dramatic verse whose 'music - the universal literature of mankind'³⁹ would convey the theme of nation to all inhabitants of the island. This was a vital ingredient in making the *Nation* 'the highest circulated newspaper in Ireland'.⁴⁰

It appears that Maclise, by contrast, engaged only passively in the cultural nourishment of the Irish people. In 1842, the Irish Art-Union was on a mission to rebuild the arts in Ireland through the formation of a permanent National Collection. The endeavour was characterised by a forward-looking inclusivity: 'the Society throws open annually its exhibition [...] to the public at large. For the last fortnight this has been daily thronged by crowds of all classes [...]'.⁴¹ Maclise 'cordially responded'⁴² to a request for permission to make an engraving of one of his paintings⁴³ for the collection, but his contribution was limited to persuading the painting's owner to submit it to the English engraver,⁴⁴ who failed to complete the commission until after the demise of the Art-Union.⁴⁵ Weston contends that Maclise wanted to paint Irish subjects,⁴⁶ but dependent as he was on an English market which disliked them, had adopted, in the 1840s, 'a strategy of disguised Irishness'.⁴⁷ This theory would explain why he chose to paint in oil one of the songs he was preparing to illustrate for a new edition of the *Melodies*.⁴⁸ However, the disguise was arguably too thorough to communicate a 'cohesive',⁴⁹ yet 'amiable'⁵⁰ 'Celtic culture'⁵¹ to the English. On his death, the London press deemed it good taste to avoid the word 'Irish' in his obituaries,⁵² and lauded him for illustrating 'the glories of England in war'.⁵³ Three years later, the *Origin* was regarded by an English enthusiast simply as, 'a poetical illustration of a poetical idea'⁵⁴

explains that this 'motto' was 'the English watchword given out before their attack on New Orleans in 1814', 'Exclusive Intelligence!', *Nation*, p. 9.

³⁹ 'Literature', *Nation*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Ann Andrews, *Newspapers and Newsmakers: The Dublin Nationalist Press in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, (Liverpool, 2014), p. 23.

⁴¹ Stewart Blacker, 'Fine Arts', *The Athenaeum*, (17 September 1842), p.822.

⁴² 'Royal Irish Art Union', *Freeman's Journal*, (11 July 1842), p. 3.

⁴³ The painting was *A Peep into Futurity*, an Irish genre scene.

⁴⁴ Richard Golding (1785–1865).

⁴⁵ The Irish Art-Union was terminated in 1851, and the engraving completed 1854-9.

⁴⁶ Weston, *Daniel Maclise*, p. 79.

⁴⁷ Weston, *Daniel Maclise*, p. 144.

⁴⁸ Weston tells us that Charles Dickens indicated in September 1843 that the illustrated volume would be published 'one of these days', Weston, *Daniel Maclise*, p. 156.

⁴⁹ Weston, *Daniel Maclise*, p. 158.

⁵⁰ Weston, *Daniel Maclise*, p. 162.

⁵¹ Weston, *Daniel Maclise*, p. 158.

⁵² Obituaries in *The Morning Post*, (27 April, 1870), p. 3 and *The Daily News*, (27 April 1870), p. 3 describe Maclise as born in Cork, of Scottish descent.

⁵³ 'Music', *The Daily News*, (27 April 1870), p. 3.

⁵⁴ James Dafforne, *Pictures by Daniel Maclise, R.A., with descriptions: A biographical sketch of the Painter* (London, 1873), p. 24.

and by 1894 it had become the subject for what must have been a quasi-pornographic *tableau vivant* at the Palace Theatre.⁵⁵

There is no doubt that the *Nation*, on the other hand, fulfilled its purpose in the pre-Famine years. It helped to foster in Irish people of different classes and creeds a sense of nationhood which made justice seem, for a moment in 1843,⁵⁶ within reach. Dissent within the Repeal Movement, opposition from London, and the coming of *An Gorta Mor*⁵⁷ ended this moment. Roy Foster speaks of ‘the theme of the missed chance’⁵⁸ in Irish history, and it is tempting to see the early 1840s in this way. In retrospect, however, we know that the system under which Ireland laboured in 1842 was already too ‘rotten’⁵⁹ for the cure of nationality, and the loss of a quarter of the population between 1845 and 1851 would harden attitudes as well as actualities. Few open the pages of the *Nation* now, but those who do find the early editions crackling with optimism. The Ireland of 1842 comes alive in the musical voices which express anger, humour and love of country with the vigour of youth, while Maclise’s siren floats timelessly in the dark.⁶⁰ Painted for English viewers, the *Origin* perhaps represents an English view of Irish nationhood now as well as ever: inscrutable, imperfectly acknowledged, quiescent.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Art-Union (1 June 1842).

Athenaeum (17 September 1842).

Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine (July 1842).

Dafforne, James, *Pictures by Daniel Maclise, R.A., with descriptions: A biographical sketch of the Painter* (London: Virtue, Spalding and Daldy, 1873).

Daily News (27 April 1842).

Evening Standard (27 February 1894).

Freeman’s Journal (11 July 1842).

⁵⁵ ‘Politics and Persons’, *St. James’s Gazette*, (27 February 1894), p. 13; ‘Living Pictures’, *Evening Standard*, (27 February 1894), p. 3.

⁵⁶ 1843 was known as ‘Repeal Year’.

⁵⁷ The ‘Great Hunger’ of 1845-1850.

⁵⁸ R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. ix.

⁵⁹ Tim Pat Coogan describes the report of the Devon Commission (1843-5) as containing ‘glaring evidence that the land system in Ireland was rotten to the core and was a disaster waiting to happen’, in Tim Pat Coogan, *The Famine Plot: England’s Role in Ireland’s Greatest Tragedy* (New York, 2012), p. 50.

⁶⁰ The painting is in storage at Manchester City Art Gallery at the time of writing.

Nation (15 October 1842).

Nation (5 November 1842).

Moore, Thomas, *Moore's Irish Melodies* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1856).

Morning Post (27 April 1870).

St. James's Gazette (27 February 1894).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Andrews, Ann, *Newspapers and Newsmakers: The Dublin Nationalist Press in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014).

Anon, 'The Gypsy King', in *Broadside Ballads Online*
<<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/static/images/sheets/10000/09627.gif>>.

Campbell, Matthew, 'Thomas Moore, Daniel Maclise and the New Mythology: The Origin of the Harp', *Anthem Studies in European Ideas and Identities: Voice of the People* (London: Anthem Press, 2013), pp. 65-86.

Coogan, Tim Pat, *The Famine Plot: England's Role in Ireland's Greatest Tragedy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Cullen, Fintan and R.F. Foster, *Conquering England* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005).

de Nie, Michael, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

Foster, R.F., *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London: Penguin, 1988).

Litvack, Leon, 'Continental art and the "Cockneyfied Corkonian": German and French influences on Daniel Maclise', in Leon Litvack and Colin Graham (eds.), *Ireland and Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), pp. 122-147.

O'Halloran, Clare, 'Harping on the Past', in Melissa Calaresu, Filippo de Vivo and Joan-Pau Rubies (eds.), *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), pp.327-343.

Weston, Nancy, *Daniel Maclise: Irish Artist in Victorian London* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001).

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Daniel Maclise, *The Origin of the Harp*, 1842, oil on canvas, 110.4cm x 85.0cm, Manchester City Art Gallery. Image courtesy of Manchester City Art Gallery