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The Cauldron of Enmities: The Friends of Ireland and the Conflict between Liberalism and Democracy in the Early Nineteenth Century Atlantic World

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THE CAULDRON OF ENMITIES: THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND AND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN LIBERALISM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY ATLANTIC WORLD

by

STEVEN MICHAEL SAMS

Under the Direction of Ian Christopher Fletcher

ABSTRACT

In 1828 the Friends of Ireland formed in the United States in order to support Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association in Ireland. The Catholic Association campaigned for Catholic Emancipation, a successful movement that promoted the participation of Catholic elites in the United Kingdom Parliament. In the 1840s the Friends of Repeal formed in the United States in order to support Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association in Ireland. This organization sought the repeal of the Act of Union of 1800, which had created the United Kingdom and dismantled the Irish Parliament. This time, the movement failed due to mounting sectionalism and sectarianism in both countries. Using Charleston's *Catholic Miscellany* and the *Boston Pilot* as primary sources, this thesis explores how Irish Americans participated in the Jacksonian-era public sphere and how the Emancipation and Repeal campaigns illuminated the sometimes competing claims of liberalism and democracy in the Atlantic world.

INDEX WORDS: Irish Americans, Friends of Ireland, Friends of Repeal, Catholic Emancipation, Daniel O'Connell, John England, Abolitionism

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Master of Arts

In the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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Introduction

Irish American immigrants and citizens, working with allies from a variety of ethnic and religious communities, formed the Friends of Ireland (FOI) in Charleston, South Carolina, to influence politics in Ireland in the name of civil and religious liberties, an American ideal. This organization existed from 1828 to 1829, and was revived between 1840 and 1848, under a new name, Friends of Repeal (FOR.) The goal of the first phase was support for the cause of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland. The second phase arose over the effort to repeal the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. The organization spread throughout America to most other large cities with Irish populations, becoming particularly active in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. Although the organization flourished in the first episode, uniting diverse groups in a liberal cause, the organization decayed and splintered over the American issue of abolitionism during the second episode. This democratic movement of enfranchising discriminated groups was unable to endure in the face of growing sectarian and sectional challenges in the mid-nineteenth century.

Topic and Background

I seek to analyze the changing transatlantic politics of the Irish diaspora between the 1820s and the 1840s. Specifically, I want to highlight the changing ideology, goals, and rhetoric of the Friends of Ireland in Charleston, South Carolina. Irish movements for Catholic Emancipation and for the Repeal of the Act of Union were felt as far away as

Charleston, where they became entwined with American struggles over nationality, slavery, and democracy. Retrospectively, the Emancipation period emerges as a series of triumphs for liberal values, while the Repeal episode seems to be a failure for national claims. Is it, though, so stark and simple a contrast in historical and political outcomes?

A closer analysis can detect overlapping movements of liberalism and nationalism. Furthermore, the divergent goals of varying parties within these movements enjoyed different degrees of success. For example, although Catholic Emancipation's goals were legislated, it only applied to propertied Catholic men who were qualified to vote. The vast majority of the population remained unable to participate in self-government. As another example, the people of Ireland did not benefit directly from Repeal; rather, they benefited indirectly and decades later from the Whig response to the threat of Repeal. However, this study does not follow the Irish past the Repeal movement. Rather, it focuses on pre-famine Ireland and the Irish diaspora.

As in any scholarly work, terms that will be used repeatedly should be defined, including liberalism, nationalism, sectarianism, and sectionalism. I have described the earlier period under study as a period of liberalism. In *The Birth of the Modern World*, C.A. Bayly points out that liberalism in the Britain and America was reform "lodged much more in the activities of voluntary associations and individual aristocratic activities than in the doings of the state." He characterizes liberalism as a kind of humanitarian impulse that arose from the "evangelical middle class." Often, liberal reform, embracing the progressive future born out of rationalism and the belief that individuals should be allowed freedom to act in their own self-interest, helped to ease revolutionary unrest by broad changes such as tempering legal discrimination, abolishing the slave trade and the

worst aspects of slave labor, and easing the exploitation of wage labor in factories. Of course, often, these adjustments provided just enough of an increased sensation of freedom to allow slightly less conservative administrations to replace older ones.[1]

Perhaps Uday Mehta provides the most succinct definition:

> We rightly think of liberalism as committed to securing individual liberty and human dignity through a political cast that typically involves democratic and representative institutions, the guaranty of individual rights of property, and freedom of expression, association, and conscience, all of which are taken to limit the legitimate use of the authority of the state. Moreover, at least since the mid-nineteenth century, liberal theorists have tended, though by no means universally, to champion the claims of minority groups, and have respected religious bodies as entitled to the same toleration as other groups, so long as they did not threaten social peace and order. In general, liberals have looked with favor on the idea of national self-determination…[2]

Although Mehta points out that religious and national liberty came later in the nineteenth century, it could be argued that the antebellum United States (U.S.) South showed signs that liberalism already embraced religious tolerance in the first half of the century. Neither Bayly nor Mehta describe liberalism as perfectly conscientious or successful in its goals. Both authors provide caveats, and they deconstruct both the mission and processes of liberalism.

Nationalism is a relatively modern concept linked with the nineteenth century formation of the nation-state. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson argues that

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[1] C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 140-41, 290-95.
[2] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3-4.

print media and mass literacy are prerequisite for nationalism's existence.[3] More importantly in this study is the idea that nationalism is a fluid and interchangeable phenomenon. Most of the actors in the FOI, the Catholic Association, and the Young Irelanders were not able to coherently and unambiguously define their future visions of an Irish state, let alone agree on what those visions might have been. Rather, the disparate ideals reveal insights into the motivations of the idealists. The romantic nationalism of the Irish and Irish Americans involved in the struggle for Catholic Emancipation was clearly expressed, from the poems found in the *Catholic Miscellany* and *The Green Book*, a book of "facts not altogether unserviceable to the cause of voluntaryism and repeal," to the melodramatic poems found in the *Nation*, the voice of the Young Irelanders.[4]

Sectarianism refers to religious divisiveness between Protestants and Catholics. Rather than the appearance of unity in Ireland, one sees in the late eighteenth century and even during Catholic Emancipation, the disintegrating effects of rival, opposed religious goals. The historian Alvin Jackson describes how the Ulster Protestants and, indeed, Protestants scattered throughout Ireland, began to voice their opposition to the inherently Catholic vision of the nationalist republicans, forming the Orange party and other anti-Catholic groups. Describing the formation of the Brunswick clubs, Jackson states:

> The Brunswick clubs, formed in 1827-8 in the wake of the first dissolution of Orangeism, fulfilled different functions in different parts of the country, but they operated broadly as a popular anti-emancipationist organization and as an adjunct to Toryism… The spread of the clubs in 1828 was, like the New Catholic Association, based upon a parish organization; and, again like the New Catholic Association, the clubs simultaneously recorded electoral triumphs…

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[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2d ed., rev. (New York: Verso, 1991), 36-37.
[4] John Cornelius O'Callaghan, *The Green Book: Or Gleanings from the Writing-Desk of a Literary Agitator* (Philadelphia: M. Fithian, 1842), 5.

> while providing a much-needed boost to Protestant political morale.[5]

Protestant and Catholic sects constructed parallel systems designed to attain and keep political power. In a similar fashion but focusing on America, Robert Dunne describes the growing split between Protestants and Catholics by tracing the angry discriminatory rhetoric of Protestants against Catholic immigration. This sectarianism became a powerful factor in the breakup of the Repeal movement in Ireland, and subsequently provided a foundation as the Nativism movement for Irish American racism.

The last important term that needs attention is sectionalism. Here, specifically, sectionalism refers to geography. Growing regionalism, though for different reasons, was a part of the early nineteenth century in both Ireland and America. In Ireland, sectarianism causes sectionalism. The Protestant majority in Ulster simply could not envision their future as a minority in an Ireland with an enfranchised Catholic majority and a self-governing state. Thus, repeal could not gain the strength it needed to truly cause revolution or force the government's hand due to the dangers it implied. In America, regional difference was based on economic systems, agrarian versus manufacturing interests, but more importantly, slavery, and ultimately racism, compounded by a constitution that gave considerable political power to Southern slave states, lay at the heart of the growing chasm that eventually led to the Civil War. The historian Charles Sellers describes how challenges such as nullification, wherein South Carolina claimed the ability to invalidate displeasing federal laws, challenged notions of

[5] Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998: Politics and* War (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999),60.

unionism. It is sectionalism that doomed repeal in Ireland and dampened support in America.[6]

What more can be discovered about these important periods in transatlantic history? What was the fate and shape of the liberal movement in both decades? Why was there a shift to sectionalism? How did sectarianism and racism shape the fractionalization of America and Ireland? What role did racism play in damaging the movement for Repeal? The history of the FOI provides intriguing answers to these and many other questions.

The FOI was founded in 1828 in Charleston, South Carolina, to raise funds for the Catholic Association in Ireland. The Catholic Association had been created five years earlier in 1823 to press for the legal and constitutional right of Catholics to stand for election and serve in the House of Commons, the lower house of the Parliament in the United Kingdom. This popular cause stemmed from the fact that the Protestant Ascendancy in eighteenth century Ireland had enacted penal laws to entrench its political, landed, professional, and commercial monopolies and to degrade Catholics and Protestant dissenters. Towards the end of the century, however, elite Protestant attitudes softened towards fellow Irish who were Catholic. New legislation relaxed the penal laws and extended civil and religious liberties for Christians who were not members of the established churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland. In 1793, qualified Catholic male property holders received the franchise. Emancipation was intended to sweep away the last and most important of these disabilities.[7]

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[6] Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 329.
[7] *United States Catholic Miscellany*, Charleston, SC, October 11, 1828.

In *Britons*, Linda Colley describes the fracturing of British national identity and the opening up of political and religious demands in response to the end of almost twenty-five years of war with France in 1815. Without the belligerent Catholic other to foster unity, the tensions among the peoples and communities of the United Kingdom began to rise. In addition to this identity crisis, republican and democratic ideals spread after the revolutions in France, America, Haiti, and elsewhere. In *Britain's Imperial Century*, Ronald Hyam suggests that a multi-directional, centrally weak, indirectly administrated British empire had replaced the more direct control of the previous century. Within this setting, pressure for both religious freedom and political reform emerged and took shape.[8]

Although the United States had politically separated from the British Empire, it too was affected by forces—political, economic, social, and cultural—which were Atlantic-wide in scope. One such force was that of democracy, wherein farmers and laborers responded to the emergence of an industrial economy. In *The Market Revolution*, Charles Sellers claims that early nineteenth century America was caught in a clash between an egalitarian agrarian society and a class-based, seaboard commercial society. Sellers discusses how these societies represented the contrast between subsistence farming and the accumulation of wealth. From the struggle between these two sectors emerged social, legal, and economic reform.[9] Most importantly, though, the tension unleashed the political force of democratization. Andrew Jackson, the public champion of this new force, pressed for greater direct representation and a break from enlightened rule

[8] Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
[9] Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution*.

as envisioned by early republicans, a gubernatorial style which the public now judged elitist.

Across the Atlantic, the Catholics of Ireland turned to Daniel O'Connell, the founder of the Catholic Association, for similar inspiration. O'Connell, who was elected by an Irish constituency but could not legally serve in the Parliament due to his Catholic faith, exemplified the lack of self-representation allowed Irish Catholics. Fergus O'Ferrall suggests that O'Connell, in his bid to rectify this imbalance, created the first modern democratic movement through his establishment of the donation process called the Catholic Rent and of geographically-dispersed Liberal Clubs, where democratic issues could be discussed. The parish clergy of the Roman Catholic Church acted as the militants of this movement, ensuring that their male parishioners' subscriptions and votes were cast in favor of the Catholic cause.[10]

The democracy in question, for the most part, was not the system of universal suffrage, mass parties, and welfare services envisioned in today's nation-states. Democracy came in waves, successively eroding the concentration of power from the hands of monarchs and aristocrats. According to Robert Remini, Jackson's concept of direct representation did not include representation for women, blacks, or Indians:

> A slave owner all his adult life, he regarded liberty as the priceless heritage of all men. A staunch advocate of equality, he thought only in terms of white adult males. Women, blacks, and Indians did not enter his thinking about liberty or equality, and his public statements to Congress invariably included the most racist ideas prevalent at the time.[11]

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[10] Fergus O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia: 1788 to the Present*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000, esp. ch. 4.
[11] Robert Remini, *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson: Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal, and Slavery*. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 39.

Similarly, Daniel O'Connell's struggle for Catholic Emancipation was for a share of the power by Irish Catholic middling sorts, rather than peasants and laborers. The Catholics of Ireland had to own or rent a certain amount of land in order to qualify to vote.

The attainment of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 prompted the Catholic Association of Ireland and the various Friends of Ireland groups in America to disband. During the following decade, political, religious, and social forces continued to reverberate across the Atlantic World. In *Cosmos Crumbling*, Robert Abzug describes the loss of the early republican ideal of an American Christian nation through splintering into factions based on commitment to divergent evangelical and social cosmographies. Diverse movements, such as abolitionism, women's rights, and temperance, fractured the nation's psyche and contested the notion of a unitary Christian American nation and polity.[12] In Britain, the limited extension of the franchise achieved in the Reform Act in 1832 stimulated renewed demands for democracy in the Chartist movement between 1838 and 1848. R.F. Foster describes how an uneasy alliance between O'Connell's Irish party and the British Whig government resulted in minor parliamentary reform, such as a few additional Irish constituencies. Continuous agrarian unrest manifested Catholic resistance to the exactions of the established Church of Ireland, yet another form of religious inequality in Ireland. This agrarian struggle recalls Sellers' growing gap between those blessed and cursed by the commercial revolution.[13]

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[12] Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
[13] R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 309; additional constituencies were brought about by the passing of the 1832 Representation of the People Act; the impoverished struggled against the mandatory tithe paid to the Church of Ireland is commonly termed the Tithe War.

The 1840s saw a new Irish movement, Repeal, which superficially united both sides of the Irish Atlantic. Specifically, O'Connell sought the repeal of the 1800 Acts of Union that, following the failed Irish Rebellion of 1798, had created the United Kingdom, combined the old parliaments of Ireland and Great Britain at Westminster, and thus shifted power from the periphery to the English core of this imperial state. Once again, Catholics mobilized in Ireland, resumed the Catholic Rent, and reformed the FOI, this time as the Friends of Repeal, in America to support O'Connell and his Repeal Association.

Unlike the Emancipation movement in 1829, Repeal was not achieved in the 1840s. In Ireland, sectarian factions waged a different power struggle, one where not only traditional Catholic and Protestant sides clashed, but more importantly, competing concepts of nationalism laid claim to the Irish soul. In *The Young Ireland Movement*, Richard Davis shows how several splits in the Repeal movement, most significantly between the constitutionalists led by O'Connell, who cautiously avoided promoting complete separation from Britain, and the Young Irelanders led by Thomas Davis, who embraced separation, highlighted the ambiguousness of national identity.[14] Davis delineates the further split among the Young Irelanders, caused by disagreements over violence as a legitimate means of achieving independence for Ireland. These competing voices attempted to speak for the Irish people, but created multiple, contradicting visions of Irish independence. Ultimately, Repeal could not overcome several political constraints: in Ireland, the opposition of Unionists as well as internal differences over violence, and in the United Kingdom as a whole, the opposition of Whig and Tory Unionists.

[14] Richard Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement* (Totowa, NJ: Gill and Macmillan, 1987).

According to Noel Ignatiev in *How the Irish Became White*, Irish American immigrants split over O'Connell's attempt to link Repeal with abolitionism. According to Thomas R. Hietala in *Manifest Design*, sectional differences and regional power struggles over slavery and the black population in America resulted in a growing and heated sectionalism. Northern abolitionists saw the West and manifest destiny as a way to disperse emancipated blacks, while Southerners viewed the West as a means of maintaining Southern power over the Union by extending slavery into the new frontier territories. At this time, Southerners were terrified by the prospects of either succumbing to slave revolts or living side-by-side with an emancipated and angry population. When David Wilmot introduced his 1846 Proviso denying further expansion of slavery west, which also was a thinly-veiled attempt to limit Southern power, at last unable to disguise or bury the growing struggle of slavery versus emancipation, the ultimate breakdown of the Democratic Party into Northern and Southern factions finally occurred. The national identity of the United States, religious, ethnic, and political, was fast disintegrating.[15]

Scholarship

Irish American historiography frequently focuses on the post-famine period. The Irish potato blight and ensuing famine of 1845 to 1851 precipitated a great migration of survivors. In the United States and Britain, the arrival of mostly Catholic immigrants stirred an angry Protestant reaction. In the previous decades, most Irish immigrants had been Protestants from Ulster and thus, as Donald Akenson points out, the majority of

[15] Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism & Empire*, rev. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

Irish Americans in the 1840s remained Protestant. We still know very little about the degree to which Irish Catholics and Protestants in the US intermingled in a republican climate that stressed religious liberties. I would like to contribute to an understanding of Irish American identities at a moment when liberalism was at least as influential as nationalism and sectarianism.

I will draw on three areas of scholarship for my thesis. First, I will examine migrations, the concepts of a diaspora, identity, and the possibility of an Atlantic history. These areas all investigate and reflect the struggles of immigrants and they highlight the continuing cultural and political connections these immigrants maintained with their homeland. Questioning identity, whether self-identification or group categorization, is essential to understanding the narrative of this period of history. Second, I will focus on liberalism, democracy, the public sphere, and the transformation of popular politics. It is this arena that tells the histories of the political movements on both sides of the Atlantic and places them in a larger context. Third, I will analyze nationalism, racism, and religion. The early nineteenth century has been the focus of the formation of the nation-state, the destructive effects of racism, and the development of distinct religious forces. Again, in this arena, it is difficult to ignore the concept of identity. Although these three fields overlap, it is useful to distinguish them for purposes of analyzing current scholarship.

Traditionally, the concept of a diaspora applied to dislocated groups such as the Jews, and quite often, specifically and only the Jewish communities of the world. Others have applied this concept to other groups such as sub-Saharan Africans, the Chinese, and the Irish. Robin Cohen's *Global Diasporas* describes many of these newly-conceived

diasporas, dividing them into victim, labor and imperial, and trade diasporas. *The Irish Diaspora*, an essay collection edited by Andy Bielenberg, shows that the diaspora experience was complex, varied, and fluid. The Australian, British, and American Irish, while maintaining some cultural commonalities, also reflected the communities which at least partially absorbed them.[16]

The concerns of identity studies will feature heavily in this thesis. As we have already seen, Linda Colley explores British identity. Irishness is also an object of study. Declan Kiberd analyzes Irish identity through literary criticism. Jeanne Sheehy looks at art, literature, architecture, and symbolism in order to examine the attempts to establish Irish identity. Although Sheehy's primary focus is on post-famine Ireland, she provides a useful background to symbols of Irish identity and nationalism, detailing the birth and popularity of the harp, the shamrock, and other familiar Irish icons.

Atlantic world studies tend to focus on the early modern era from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century. In addressing Atlantic world history, David Armitage and Michael Braddick write of both the popularity and the confusion of the field, noting the trend towards coloring the Atlantic in order to highlight the presence of an ethnic or political group, such as the black Atlantic for Africans, or the red Atlantic for socialism. In that context, this study might propose to expose the green Atlantic. Furthermore, Armitage and Braddick propose three divisions of Atlantic history: circum, trans, and cis. This study of the Friends of Ireland in America in an Atlantic context best fits the cis-Atlantic theory grouping, which is defined as "national or regional history within an Atlantic context." Armitage and Braddick explain further:

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[16] Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle, WA: The University of Washington Press, 1997).

> 'Cis-Atlantic' history studies particular places as unique locations within an Atlantic world and seeks to define that uniqueness as the result of the interaction between local particularity and a wider web of connections (and comparison)…
>
> Cis-Atlantic history, at this local level, can be most fruitfully applied to the very places most obviously transformed by their Atlantic connections: port towns and cities…
>
> The greatest potential for cis-Atlantic history may lie in the histories of places larger even than cities, isthmuses or islands, that is, in the histories of the nations and states that faced the Atlantic Ocean.[17]

In a transatlantic context, Kerby Miller examines Irish American immigration and identity. Mary C. Kelly also examines Irish transatlantic identity, though the focus is on the post-famine period. From a world history perspective, Andy Bielenberg's essay collection encompasses a variety of Irish identities, including the Australian, South African, and Canadian experiences. Stephen Howe looks at how Ireland fits within competing concepts of the British empire, positing various typologies, and urging a historical approach that moves beyond the colonial experience.[18]

Bishop John England of Charleston was one of the founders of the FOI. He was actively involved in the FOI, helping to draft its constitution, donating funds, and participating in meetings. Several authors review the life of John England as an example of the Irish immigrant experience in America, including Peter Guilday, Dorothy Grant, and Joseph O'Brien. Their works are from 1927, 1934 and 1949 respectively, so they are dated and should be considered with care. Most studies of Bishop England appear to have

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[17] David Armitage and Michael Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 14-15, 21-25.
[18] Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 241.

been done by members or advocates of the Catholic Church and take the form of traditional ecclesiastical history. Some more recent articles, such as Patrick Carey's on Bishop England and Voluntaryism, argue that he fought hard to maintain separation of church and state and to ensure an almost republican system of limited but accepted lay involvement in church affairs. Indeed Bishop England was a good example of the liberal Irish American in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The wider historiography of early nineteenth century America is rich. Most importantly, the relevant scholarly sources focus on the birth of popular politics, whether expressed through religious reform, Jacksonian democracy, or manifest destiny. Charles Sellers explains the rise of commercial centers and the corresponding rural backlash. Robert Remini examines key issues such as slavery, Indian removal, and the rise of democracy through the experiences of Andrew Jackson. The dichotomy between liberal causes like popular democracy and domination of indigenous and enslaved people echoes the debate about Ireland's place in the United Kingdom and British Empire. Anne Boylan's work on the rise of American women's activism has parallels in Irish women's activism in the FOI. Robert Abzug analyzes the deterioration of the ideal of a singular Christian nation in America, which complements Robert Dunne's examination, through historical and literary analysis, of the religious persecution of antebellum Irish Catholics by the Protestant majority. In *How the Irish Became White*, Noel Ignatiev follows Dunne's argument through to the point when lines of religious and racial division were redrawn, and the Irish were absorbed into white Christian America.

For Charleston, the initial hub of the FOI, and Atlantic port cities, there is the work of Walter Fraser, Jr. and Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. In some ways, the

FOI in Charleston reflected local power struggles in the post-revolutionary Atlantic, as religious and ethnic minorities sought to express political views within an expanding public sphere. Benedict Anderson discusses how print capitalism helped to create the notion of an imagined community. Jürgen Habermas writes of this imagined community or public sphere, except this imagined space is one where citizens engage in dialogue and seek to make the state responsive to civil society.[19]

Irish historiography is also suggestive for this period. In *The Tree of Liberty*, Kevin Whelan examines the rise of republicanism in the 1790s by looking at the various ways through which burgeoning popular sovereignty undercut the power of the elite. He also examines the growth of sectarianism, which in turn diminished popular unity. Fergus O'Ferrall focuses on Daniel O'Connell, the cause of Catholic Emancipation, and the creation of modern Irish democracy. Richard Davis delineates the many schisms that blurred the goals and chances for success of the Repeal movement and the Young Irelanders. Ireland offers the paradox of a country where the public sphere expanded enormously with O'Connell's mobilization but also contracted due to government repression. Famously, O'Connell's Repeal campaign collapsed when the Peel government banned his monster meeting at Clontarf in 1843.

Nationalism, racism, and religion form the third distinctive area of scholarship. Work on the birth of nationalism and the nation-state has traditionally focused on the nineteenth century. Benedict Anderson explains the nature of modern nationalism in *Imagined Communities*, using the concepts of horizontal identity, print capitalism, time, memory, and forgetting. Anderson explains how the efforts of intellectual elite helped

[19] Habermas describes the public sphere as a social and intellectual space in which actors form public opinion. Chapter Three will go into more detail on this definition.

create and promote the concept of a nation for the Irish.[20] The FOI demonstrates the formation of a diasporic, transatlantic nationalism out of the competing nationalisms of Ireland, America, and the American South. These national visions were shaped by notions of racial and religious difference. Robert Remini explains white Anglo-Saxon Protestant racism through the eyes of Andrew Jackson. Charles Sellers, Robert Abzug, and Anne Boylan discuss religious reform and rivalry in a white republic where church and state were officially separate but popularly mutually reinforcing.

The story of the FOI in Charleston touches on all of these categories and issues. Essentially, the FOI began as a collection of immigrants reconstituting their older Irish identities in a way that enabled them to negotiate their new American surroundings while still allowing them to maintain connections to their previous homeland. The FOI was a prism within which one can see the spectrum of American and Irish forces of mass politics and democracy. The FOI, though dressed as a charitable organization, had the distinct attributes of a political association. Its progress reveals the concerns of both political and humanitarian movements. Though using methods similar to the Catholic Association, the FOI developed according to regional demands and diverged in some important ways from the Catholic Association. The rise of the abolitionist movement sought to extend the liberal and democratic principles of freedom and equality to black people in America. The explosive parallel between the situations of the Irish and the slaves threatened the integration of the Irish into white American culture and disrupted the FOI, which could not confine itself to Irish affairs once O'Connell had endorsed the abolition of slavery in the U.S. Although Ignatiev mentions the fate of the FOI in passing as an example of Irish American racism, the story of the FOI remains largely untold.

[20] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 71.

Viewed through a cis-Atlantic lens, this story is even more compelling. Thus, my study will fill a significant gap in U.S., Irish, and diasporic, Atlantic-world history.

Sources and Methods

The *Catholic Miscellany* and the *Boston Pilot* narrate the tale of the Friends of Ireland. These nineteenth century American newspapers provide the majority of primary sources that fill this historical gap. As the chief focus is U.S.-based immigrant interest in Irish politics, American newspapers are the most helpful. Periodicals that focus on Irish immigrants are Catholic in subject or published by a diocese. The *Catholic Miscellany* was published by John England from the diocese of Charleston, South Carolina. The intended audience of this publication was the American Catholic community in general, but a casual perusal of its contents reveals that the subject matter was very Irish. The weekly periodical was available to subscribers and was heralded as the leading Catholic periodical of the country through the civil war, when it ceased publication. Occasionally, publication was suspended due to lack of funds, such as from 1825 to 1826.[21]

Typically, the paper led with a narrative or discussion of a historical or religious topic. This initial article could last several pages. After that, the newspaper consisted of many small half page or one column articles. Typical stories covered religious events, news of the pope, histories of Catholic nations, the plight of poor or persecuted Catholics, and reports on books, politics, or festivities relevant to American Catholics. There was always a large amount of information on Ireland and Irish immigrant concerns. The bishop, and editor, was from Ireland as well, and it is clear he had an eye to foreign

[21] Dorothy Fremont Grant, *John England, American Christopher* (Milwaukee: Bruce Pub. Co., 1949), xii.

events, not just in Ireland, but throughout the Catholic world. The FOI meeting minutes were published in this newspaper primarily during the Catholic Emancipation episode. The second phase of the FOI's activities is more elusive probably due to the abolitionist content of the Repeal debate.

Luckily, the *Boston Pilot* was a northern Catholic newspaper with an Irish audience. Thus, it was freer to publish articles concerning antislavery issues. However, the paper began in 1829, months after Catholic Emancipation was granted, so it is useful for the latter half of the study only. On the one hand, this newspaper will be used as a control to which Southern perspectives can be contrasted. On the other hand, the absence of *Catholic Miscellany* FOI meeting minutes during the Repeal years means that I will use the *Boston Pilot* meeting minutes for the Boston FOI in their stead. This substitution is possible because the Irish and Catholic nature of these publications generally outweighs the North/South divide. Both papers tend to be anti-abolitionist while remaining highly supportive of both Catholic Emancipation and Repeal. The focus of my thesis is not New England or Boston history, although when relevant, American sectional differences will be noted. This differentiation becomes important in understanding how some liberal initiatives such as abolitionism will be abandoned in favor of preserving the union against deepening regional differences.

Besides these two papers, I will use the writings of John England, the Charleston Bishop who founded the *Catholic Miscellany* and participated in the Friends of Ireland in both decades. Several biographies of John England are available. Irish historiography of this period predictably focuses primarily on Daniel O'Connell. However, since the focus of this study is primarily American, I am not including primary sources by or about

Daniel O'Connell other than what is reported in the two newspapers. Oliver MacDonagh's biography of O'Connell will suffice. Bishop England was certainly one of the protagonists of this story. As previously stated, he represented in an individual the interests of the FOI in Charleston. However, there are important relations between England and O'Connell to address. Both men personify liberal values of the early nineteenth century. Arguably, Bishop England can be seen as Charleston's own Daniel O'Connell. He galvanized the populace, motivated through religion, collected the Catholic rent, and united diverse constituencies behind both major issues under study. Importantly, he was also interested in keeping the peace. Like O'Connell, he was not looking for violence to solve these civil issues.

We might argue, in the same manner, that O'Connell was Ireland's Andrew Jackson. These men found a way to voice the agrarian interests of their constituencies and to expand the role of popular politics. Both of them accomplished this goal in the 1820s. There was clearly a transnational and transatlantic spirit of democracy. This new democracy certainly extended the franchise to more men, jumping religious and class boundaries, but failed to embrace more radical forces underfoot concerning the rights of women and people of color, such as Africans and Native Americans.

The transitive property does not apply here, however. Bishop England bears little likeness to Andrew Jackson. England's interests were simply too liberal, and his support of southern blacks through sermons and speeches was clear. In this arena, he remains much more like O'Connell. These men struggled to negotiate their beliefs and their public images, acutely aware of what destruction could occur if they linked too openly with William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionists. The last comparison it might be useful to

make is between the Young Ireland leader, Thomas Davis, and William Lloyd Garrison. While Davis took the Young Irelanders on a distinctly nationalist path away from the Whiggish O'Connell, the American Garrison led a dedicated force of American radical reformers that riled the growing Irish American establishment. Davis and Garrison shared a willingness to destroy the superficial unities of nationalism in order to pursue more modern and pluralistic ideals.

Argument and Significance

There is a persistent interaction between religion and politics in both America and Ireland. The fear of Catholic government essentially led Protestants to insist on keeping an Ireland inside the United Kingdom. Partly, the Protestants feared retribution for the discrimination of the penal laws of the eighteenth century Protestant Ascendancy. This fear was not entirely unfounded. The twentieth century in fact revealed persistent church involvement in government affairs in the Republic of Ireland, despite the relatively privileged position of Protestants in the majority Catholic country.

One clear danger of a democracy is the tyranny of the majority. If the majority of Irish are observant Catholics, then Catholic policies and ideals will likely have a greater place in a representative democracy in Ireland. Likewise, if the majority of Americans are practicing Protestants, then those religious ideals will seek establishment within the institutions of the U.S. While the republican vanguard of the U.S. built checks and balances into the government, such as the less democratic structures of the Senate and the Supreme Court, in order to protect minorities against the majority, the democratic impulse of the age of Jackson reduced some of those safeguards and scrutinized others

like the Electoral College. It is a challenge for any government to be liberal and protect the interests and civil rights of each citizen, while respecting majority claims to dominance.

While the democratic reforms of the period of Catholic Emancipation enabled greater participation in politics in Ireland, the continuing battle over the enfranchisement of new constituencies scared and angered the majorities of the unreformed system. Factions formed to try and cope with these new forces. In Ireland, the factions were based on religion. In Britain, they were based on class. In America, factions were based on the economic systems of farming, plantation slavery, manufacturing, and trade. Those factions created friction, rebellion, and violence.

One can view this period as a move from a capacious form of democracy to a fractured expression of regional, sectarian, and party interests. In comparing the Emancipation and Repeal periods of the FOI's history, I will argue that the comparison reveals a deeper shift from a universalistic liberalism to more particularistic nationalisms in the political culture of early transatlantic Irish America. There is an empirical, theoretical, and methodological significance to this study. Empirically, I am filling in a gap in the historical record. Theoretically, I am contributing to a deeper understanding of political culture, the public sphere, racism, and reform. Methodologically, I am demonstrating the value of diasporic, transnational, and "Atlantic world" historiography.

Despite the argument of what American founding fathers may have intended, it is clear that Jacksonian democracy changed the agents of government. The challenge since then has been to find the right balance between the popular and constitutional imperatives. Are terms like democracy and the people open-ended enough to support

everyone who lays claim to them? While liberals may want to allow every "rational" and "respectable" voice to be expressed in the interests of inclusion, democracy is inherently antagonistic. Even when each voice is allowed to express itself, voices usually become antiphonal choruses.

These voices resonate with contemporary debates over religion, politics, and the separation of church and state. As recently as June 2005, for example, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled on two cases involving the display of the Ten Commandments on government property. In one ruling, it was decided that the purpose of the display was religious in nature, so it was not allowed. In the other case, it was determined that the commandments were being displayed for historical reasons. This display was allowed to stand. Both cases were considered in relation to the constitutional guarantee of the separation of church and state. In these rulings then, the Supreme Court proclaimed that religion and government could mix when it came to historical context, but not when the purposes were too obviously religious. This is a fine line. Throughout history, the lines between church and state have been blurred.

The current political climate requires research and debate on the origins of democracy in America. How important was separation of church and state? What were the intentions of the founding fathers? How did American's understandings of these intentions change through immigration and the commercial revolution of the following century? I intend to show how sectionalist and sectarian interests overshadowed the liberal intentions of the first half of the nineteenth century, resulting in a fractured Atlantic, bordered by competing and internally divided national identities. While the beginning of the century shows an intellectual drive to promote civil and religious liberty,

there are indications that increased stratification of wealth, coupled with romantic nationalism, subsequently provided a justification for disunion and illiberalism.

When debating modern issues of separation of church and state, it is important to deconstruct these nationalist structures created in the nineteenth century. Currently, politicians and the media have forced politics into a black or white choice, where conservatives and liberals compete for the public sphere. The experience of the FOI shows a period where people across a wide political spectrum could still talk about the core principles of liberalism. After all, the Irish were for the most part relying on conservative Tories to pass Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The FOI suggests that religion does not have to determine one's capacity to promote liberal values.

Plan of Thesis

The formation of competing nationalist identities, built upon racism and sectarianism, in both America and Ireland created an environment of sectionalism that disrupted the liberal reforms of the republican unionists of the previous decades. The term, unionist, refers here to the political trend of working within the established constitutional order rather than breaking away and establishing a separate government. O'Connell wished to work with the British government to attain greater Irish autonomy. In America, Jacksonian Democrats and Irish American Catholics wished to preserve the fragile union in the course of accomplishing their goals. Soon, competing liberal and democratic forces seized floating signifiers like *the people*. Conflicting and overlapping concepts of democracy and national identity clashed. Once the abolitionists and

O'Connell included blacks as part of *the people*, the signifier paradoxically lost its capaciousness and formerly united forces disintegrated.

Chapter One will begin with a short narration of the formation of the Friends of Ireland in Charleston 1828-29 in order to raise funds for the Catholic Association in the cause of Catholic Emancipation. Starting with the historical background from the republican era through the 1820s, the chapter will tell the story of how the Catholic Association in Charleston united diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities. It will look at the mission, structure, and actions of the FOI as told through Charleston's *Catholic Miscellany*. Next, an analysis of the principal figure of the group, the Bishop John England, will focus on his views on voluntaryism and on his liberal policies within the church. Following this short biography, the focus will turn to more on Andrew Jackson's democratic revolution in America. The conclusion of this period of the FOI is closely entwined with the political events of Ireland in the same period. Of course, no story of Catholic Emancipation can be told without analyzing the contributions of the liberator, Daniel O'Connell, to the movement.

Chapter Two covers Repeal of the Act of Union and the FOR in Charleston, 1841-43. In Britain, the successes of the 1832 Reform Act and the Chartists paralleled social and religious reforms taking place in America in the radical 1830s. This intervening decade between the two periods under discussion set the stage for the friction to come. The Repeal movement was again bolstered by the Friends of Repeal (FOR), who were reformed in the early 1840s to support the Repeal Association and Daniel O'Connell. The organization of the FOR mattered, including the mission, members, and actions, though information from the *Boston Pilot* will be used to compensate for the

silence of the *Catholic Miscellany* in Charleston. It will be relevant to examine the contributions and views of John England and Daniel O'Connell at this point, especially in terms of their statements on slavery and abolitionism. O'Connell's *Irish Address* will reveal his viewpoint.[22]

An important part of this chapter will be the discussion of William Lloyd Garrison and his abolitionists. Americans demonstrated their support for abolitionism, in the monster meeting held at Fanueil Hall, which was similar to the monster meetings held back in Ireland. The *Boston Pilot* and the *Catholic Miscellany* both describe FOI organizations. Though the primary focus is on the Charleston branch, at this point, the Boston branch is equally interesting in its lack of support and outright antagonism towards abolitionism. The chief outrage that led to the breakup of the FOI, at least in Charleston, was Daniel O'Connell's public support of abolitionism worldwide.[23]

In Ireland, the Repeal movement fractured, with O'Connell sticking to agitating from within the Empire, and Thomas Davis and his compatriots in the Young Irelanders stressing complete severance from Britain. Once the Young Irelanders again fractured into two camps, over the issue of willingness to commit violence in order to achieve their revolutionary goal, the Repeal movement began to lose its focus, sense of immediacy, and popular backing. The lack of support from the clergy, whose sectarian ideals were growing by this time in connection with the controversy over religious and secular

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[22] "In 1836, the Working Man's Association of England, parent body of the Chartist movement, addressed an appeal to American workers, urging them to launch a national campaign to abolish chattel slavery." See Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 107.

[23] Of interest are cross-cultural advocates such as George Bradburn and Charles Lenox Remond. These men exemplify the interconnectedness and transmutability of identity in the Atlantic world. It was on a trip to the London Anti-Slavery Convention that Bradburn, an Irish American, and Remond, a black man, won the support of Irish people for the abolitionist movement in America. For more information on Bradburn and Remond, see Gilbert Osofsky, "Abolitionists, Irish Immigrants, and Romantic Nationalism," *American Historical Review* 80, no. 4 (1975): 894-99.

education, weakened Repeal. Finally, the potato blight and famine destroyed what momentum Repeal had left. The narrative of the FOI will finish with this disintegration of the organization and the failure of Repeal in Ireland.

After telling the story of the FOI's two phases of activity, Chapter Three will rethink the genesis and cleavages of democratic politics in the U.K. and the U.S. in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It will revisit the periodicals. Drawing on literary criticism and rhetorical analysis, this chapter will deconstruct the explicit and implicit messages of these articles. The symbols and familiar phrases used in both political movements were not unfamiliar to their audiences of the time. The chapter examines symbolism as well. Phrases and keywords will be analyzed to reveal hidden or not-so-hidden meanings in the subtext. Even the subject matter for articles reveals what is receiving the focus for this audience. All of these symbols and phrases construe the identity of Irish Americans in these decades. Lastly, the many forms of appeal—liberal, democratic, and republican—will be sorted and examined in order to process the relevance of the techniques used in the articles to marshal support for these causes. Receptiveness to various forms of appeal again will help reveal Irish American identity as torn between liberal and democratic forces.

The Conclusion of this study, bringing us towards an Atlantic political history, analyzes how actors used concepts such as *democracy* and *the people* to spread civil liberties to a larger group, but as more and more interests competed for those same liberties, the terms began to change meaning. Once the white male elite lost control of what these terms meant, democracy became a more dangerous force. The racist, slavery-based society of early America prevented the acceptance of blacks into the concepts of

democracy and the people. Something similar happened in Ireland, where sectarianism denied the ability of liberal thought to encompass a religiously-diverse Irish nation, despite the wishes of romantic nationalists.

The Conclusion will also step back and take a look at the emancipation process in general. How effective was the granting of civil and religious liberties to the Catholic community? What was the legacy of the Irish in America from this period? These achievements determine the effectiveness of the overall outcomes. Next, I will examine the relevance and importance of undertaking an Atlantic World approach to this thesis. I will also place what we have learned in context to modern historiography. Finally, I will suggest further areas of research in order to explore dichotomies and dynamics inherent in the political imagination of modern democracy.

Chapter One: Trans-Atlantic Liberalism and Catholic Emancipation (1828-29)

One Thursday night in October, 1828, in Charleston, South Carolina, just before seven o'clock, a crowd of men gathered at Seyle's Hall. Among them were a variety of professionals including doctors, judges, printers, and military officers. Most of these men were Irish, but there were some who were born of parents who had emigrated from Ireland. Among the crowd was the Reverend Doctor John England, the newly appointed Bishop of Charleston. Major Alexander Black, an Irish immigrant from Kilmore, presided over the events that followed. After his initial address and start of the meeting, Charles Carroll, whose father was Irish, read out the minutes from their previous gathering. Very soon, the main matter at hand began. Bishop England, who also led the Cathedral Church of St. Finbar's, stood to announce the evening's mission: formation of a benevolent society to gather funds in support for Catholic Emancipation in Ireland. Through donations to the Catholic Association of Ireland and its leader, Daniel O'Connell, they would attempt to influence the political process overseas. Tonight, along with thirty-four brand new members, they would adopt a Preamble and Constitution for their newfound organization.

Thus began the "short but splendid career," as it was later described by an editor, of the Friends of Ireland in Charleston, South Carolina. This paper demonstrates that the actions of this committee, representing the culmination of eighteenth-century liberal philosophies of civil and religious freedom, predate and complement the more

pronounced and well-known religious strife of antebellum America. The circumstances and resolutions of this consortium, as revealed through its meeting minutes printed in Bishop England's paper, the *Catholic Miscellany*, showed a group of men, and women, united in struggle against religious discrimination. This contest endures to modern times. There is nowadays much debate about the religious intentions of the founding fathers of the United States. Many believe the early Americans were intent on creating a government founded on Christianity; others insist it was religious toleration and separation of church and state that drove the initial course of the nation.[24]

To add some detail and clarity to this debate, it is necessary to look closely at the intentions of the citizens of the young country. By analyzing the diversity of sources from these early years, one gets a more complete picture of the motivations of Americans regarding religious freedom and tolerance. In this regard, it is necessary to look not only at the Protestant majority, but at minority religious groups as well, such as Catholics, Jews, and Quakers. Not only does such attention yield diverse viewpoints, but also it reveals the underlying biases of and enriches the more established narratives of the traditionally conceived and represented political community.

The Irish-Catholic Condition

Robert Dunne, in *Antebellum Irish Immigration and Emerging Ideologies of "America": A Protestant Backlash*, has applied such a method in challenging the established views of minority histories in America by illuminating the struggles Irish Catholic immigrants encountered in the first half of the nineteenth century in the face of

[24] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany,* June 6, 1829.

public Protestant criticism and discrimination. He continues by questioning why this story is not part of the multicultural corpus. In his study, he focuses on the intersection of cultures, concluding that all minority stories enrich each other. He argues that divided academic departments run the risk of not understanding the complexities of a more complete narrative, and that by limiting themselves to too narrow a focus, they do their fields a disservice.[25] Though he speaks of literary canons and departments, the caveat holds equally true for historians.

While Dunne tries to show how the modern concept of the American Dream was a myth for oppressed groups such as Irish Americans, the largest section of his book focuses on the Protestant-Catholic conflict in America. He portrays this bitter struggle on a large scale, and then delves into a case study focusing on Connecticut. Although his arguments are well made, they are too narrow. He limits his study of religious contact points to that of clashes, failing to show the many-faceted sides of interconnectedness that are created in such contact zones. Though there undoubtedly was prejudice against Catholics in the Protestant majority in America, and much fighting between the religious groups, there were also significant examples of both sides working together, despite their differences, and peacefully advocating for common goals. One such goal was the attempted political liberation of majority Irish Catholics from the minority Irish Protestant yoke. The introductory narrative above was a description of the events that unfolded on the night the Friends of Ireland, a group consisting of diverse religious

[25] Robert Dunne, *Antebellum Irish Immigration and Emerging Ideologies of "America": A Protestant Backlash* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2002), 1-4.

affiliations, nationalities, political parties, and genders, ratified its constitution, thus beginning its brief but impressive history as a benevolent organization.[26]

For this study, I have analyzed every article referring to the Friends of Ireland in the *Catholic Miscellany* from October 11, 1828, through June 6, 1829. Although principally interested in the Friends of Ireland in Charleston, I was careful to examine every article on this subject, so Friends of Ireland organizations in other cities were included in the study as well as relevant articles on Catholic Emancipation or on its advocates, such as Daniel O'Connell.[27] The problem of periodization was naturally solved due to the lifespan of the organization, which lasted less than a year. The group was formally disbanded on June 6 the following year. Most meeting proceedings followed the same format. Each began by naming the chair for the evening. Although a president and other officers were present, anyone from the crowd may have conducted the meeting each night. Following the recitation of the previous meeting's minutes and a treasurer's report on the balance of funds, members read letters aloud, gave passionate speeches, and frequently passed resolutions. Almost always the evening ended with a very informative reading of the donations list followed by someone moving to adjourn the meeting until a specified future date.

Although these proceedings may appear repetitious in format, they reveal many things about the men and women who were involved in this organization. The concerns of Irish American Catholics show the interconnectedness of the Catholic world across the

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[26] For an extensive analysis on how the American Dream was not only a myth for Irish Americans, but also a myth for Protestants as well, see ibid., 5-31. For examples of Protestant-Catholic conflict in America, see ibid., 33-72.

[27] A Friends of Ireland organization in Charleston was reformed in the late 1830s to support the cause of Repeal of the Act of Union between England and Ireland. This organization disbanded and reunited several times over the cause of abolitionism being linked with Repeal. For more information on this subject, see Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 15-16.

Atlantic. Pre-famine immigrants and their descendants organized in communities were in constant communication with a vast network of Catholic communities. These groups corresponded through letters, visitations, and through publishing in newspapers and books. By building a coalition with the Protestants and other religious sects for their cause, Catholics strengthened the funding and popular support for their political freedom.

According to Kerby Miller, the older immigrants from Ireland who had arrived in America in the late eighteenth or very early nineteenth century were wealthier men who could afford the passage. Nearly a million in number, they usually brought family members with them and settled in kinship patterns across the country. Most of these families were Protestant and originated from Ulster in the north of Ireland. In general, many of them were English-speaking, though some may have had the additional culture shock of immigrating to a land with a different first language. The Irish-speaking Gaeltacht were hesitant to leave Ireland and resisted immigration, tenaciously maintaining subsistence farming patterns through extreme poverty. It was only in the second quarter of the nineteenth century that the desperate conditions of famine would eventually force nearly two million Irish to abandon their homes and emigrate, including the Irish speakers. The Friends of Ireland articles in the *Catholic Miscellany* reinforce Miller's description of the immigrants who would have been present during this time, people who felt they faced political exile. They ranged from the higher tier of a working class up to an educated professional class, as evidenced by the job titles that were listed. Some of them were doctors, many were military officers, and there were quite a number of farmers and businessmen.[28]

[28] For explanations of distinctions between waves of Irish immigrants, see Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). For a focus on Irish-speaking immigrants, see Ignatiev,

The organization of the Friends of Ireland disbanded soon after the achievement of its goal, the lifting of the Penal Laws and the granting of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland, which was enacted on April 23, 1829. The Penal Laws were a series of oppressive statutes designed to curtail the power of the Catholic majority. As the British and the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland began to relax these restrictive laws in the second half of the eighteenth century, Irish agitation for independence began to grow, especially in the shadow of the American and French revolutions and establishment of their new Republics. In 1798, the Irish Rebellion was crushed by British forces. As a direct consequence, in 1801 the Act of Union united Ireland and Great Britain politically, creating a single Parliament for the new United Kingdom. As part of the conditions of the Union, Catholic Emancipation in Ireland only was to be granted. However, George III blocked this part of the resolution, as it would have begged the question of Catholic Emancipation in Britain. Catholics were barred from holding office, ensuring the continued rule of a small Protestant minority. Emancipation, both a religious and political cause, sought to remove those and other barriers. In 1828, the campaigning of the Catholic Association in Ireland had previously resulted in the election of O'Connell, who was Catholic, as a parliamentary representative for County Clare. Although elected, O'Connell was unable to serve in the Parliament. In Ireland, O'Connell had pulled together both Protestants and Catholic in this very popular cause of allowing Catholics to hold office.[29]

How the Irish Became White, 38-39. Each Friends of Ireland article lists the profession of donors, especially if the profession gives them a title. For an example, see "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany,* October 18, 1828, and see also Exhibit A, which is a sample donations list.

[29] For more background on Catholic restrictions and the movement for Emancipation in the United Kingdom, see Colley, *Britons*, 324-34; for a description of the political ramifications of Catholic Emancipation during the Act of Union, see ibid., 322-23.

In Ireland, Catholic Emancipation was very political in nature, but in America, it took the form of a benevolent society. The decade in which this occurred was one of many benevolent societies, often religious in nature. Bishop England devoted many pages of his paper to reports on the work of benevolent societies. Robert Abzug, in *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*, describes the 1820s as a decade of unity before abolitionism and women's rights prompted schisms in these groups. This spirit of cooperation allowed the Irish immigrants to continue focusing on their homeland.[30]

Perhaps common for many different immigrant nationalities, but extremely strong in the case of the Irish in this period, was the avid focus of their attention on events in the U.K. Even though they were suffering religious discrimination in the United States, they still directed much of their charitable and political efforts towards the far worse conditions of their relatives and friends back in Ireland. The Preamble of the FOI's constitution framed both sides of the Atlantic in a common picture:

> As Americans, as citizens, as freemen, were we otherwise unconnected with the Irish people, we owe them a debt of gratitude: As men, also, as members of the human family, we felt it our duty to aid them on the present occasion by every lawful means in our power. But there exist strong additional claims: many of us are natives of that country, and have been driven into exile by the unfortunate misrule which there exists—others are the sons of such men—all of us are American citizens, enjoying the blessings of liberty and good government in a greater degree than any other people on the earth—blessings, for the attainment of which, Irishmen poured out their blood like water![31]

[30] Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 161.
[31] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828.

This attention on their homeland could be termed as a sort of *retrofocus*, a looking back on origins, existing in the past, and attempting to affect the fate of one's native land. These directed mental and physical efforts were much stronger than any mere nostalgia or homesickness.

All three of these traits, interconnectedness, benevolence, and retrofocus, describe the culture of this early American minority in context to other groups geographically, by social class, and by nationality. These traits, in addition to the religious sectarian conflict mentioned by Dunne, paint a more vivid portrait of families who were attempting to live the American Dream.

The paper's editor was Bishop England, who was from Cork. He had arrived with his sister eight years earlier in 1820. Together, they had begun the first Catholic newspaper in the United States, the *Catholic Miscellany*. The paper's mission was to support the Catholic community in his new diocese of three southern states and to struggle for freedom of religion and religious tolerance worldwide. Since then, a steady stream of immigrants had arrived, and there were grave concerns for both the state of Catholic persecution in America and the more frightening plight of their Irish friends and relatives back home, who were suffering under the infamous Penal Laws.[32]

Before starting the *Catholic Miscellany* Bishop England had worked on another paper, the *Chronicle*, back in Ireland. England was influential in America and with the Church of Rome. He helped to train new priests, opened schools, founded an anti-dueling society, and supported a variety of charities. Uniquely for his era, Bishop England preached to African American audiences as well. The officers of the society included

[32] "John England," *Virtual American Biographies* (accessed 14 November 2005); available from http://www.famousamericans.net/johnengland/.

Major Alexander Black as president, Mr. Ker Boyce and Colonel T.O. Elliot both sharing the vice presidential post, the eloquent Charles Carroll as corresponding secretary, P. Cantwell as the recording secretary, and Charles M. Furman as treasurer. These men appeared in and out of the weekly meetings, joined by an interesting cast, all showing great creativity, bonhomie, and expressiveness.[33]

Diversity and Membership

It would be a mistake to think that the Friends of Ireland consisted only of Catholic Irish residents of Charleston. Granted, there were such members present, but the organization was remarkable in its diversity; many ethnicities, religions, languages, and geographical regions were represented. Women were active in the group as well. The articles listed new members at the start of the minutes and donors at the end; though often individuals were listed as both, there were nevertheless frequent cases where they were not. The donors list always stated the nationality of each donor. November 9, 1828, for example, included donations from Irish Catholic immigrants and sons of immigrants, and also from four German-born men, an English man, an American Northerner from Rhode Island, a Highland Scot, and a man from Belfast. That evening was the first time a donation from an Ulster immigrant was noted.

Later donations came from French men and women living in the United States, Danes, and Latin Americans. In fact, on November 29, following a proposal from a Mr. Cantwell at the previous meeting, it was reported that the organization formed a formal

[33] Ibid.; "John England," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (accessed 14 November 2005); available from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05470a.htm; Internet; "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, November 8, 1828.

committee to draft a letter in French to appeal for donations from the French-speaking communities, generally Catholics, of South Carolina. Mr. Boutan, an immigrant from France, was frequently called on to assist with such duties. He also brought in donations from French women several times. Perhaps it was thought that Francophone areas like Quebec would sympathize with the cause, having been granted some freedoms for Catholics by Britain in the 1774 Quebec Act? In addition, the French had just emerged from a century of numerous military conflicts with the British. The committee of seven established to form this link between communities were most likely chosen because of their knowledge of the French language. Mr. Ker Boyce was frequently consulted on French language matters. In the Friends of Ireland in New York meeting minutes, a Dr. Macneven is appointed Chairman of a committee to contact the French of New York through the French newspaper, *The Courier of the United States*. He was chosen because he spoke French.[34]

Many appeals were made to Latin American communities, owing to their traditional Catholic connection. These countries were seen as recently liberated from Spanish oppression, so a parallel experience was highlighted. Subjugated people had pursued their desire for liberty and gained their freedom through struggle. On October 25 in the New York branch of the Friends of Ireland meeting minutes, there was mention of General Devereaux, admired for helping to liberate South America, who gave a speech. Two months later, on December 16, a Colonel James McClure, who resided in Buenos Aires, made a special appearance and speech highlighting the Latin American connection. This Latin connection demonstrated how there was an interactive Catholic

[34] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, November 29, 1828; "Friends of Ireland in New York," *Catholic Miscellany*, October 25, 1828.

brotherhood, a sort of worldwide religious fraternity. Letters were suggested but there is no direct mention of Spanish language translation.[35]

Language translation was an important tool through which the members appealed for donations. This required the presence and interaction of a multi-ethnic community as well as the likelihood of highly educated, or at the very least, well-traveled people. It is interesting to note here as well that there is neither a reference to the Irish language in any of the articles nor any attempt to translate an appeal for donations into Irish. This absence shows that there were likely few to no Irish speakers in this community who were not at least bilingual. Irish translation became a necessity for sermons and other communications in the following decades as the poorer farming stock migrated due to famine from the Gaeltacht in Ireland.[36]

Not only did the Friends of Ireland interconnect with Catholic communities internationally through their use of translation, but the group networked domestically in all regions. This communication was made possible through newspapers, letters, and personal travels. The first Friends organization mentioned in the *Catholic Miscellany* is the group in Charleston promoted by Bishop England. Within two weeks, by October 25, there is an article with the meeting minutes of the Friends of Ireland in New York. The minutes made note of the Hibernian Society in Boston as well. There is a frequent mingling and integration of these various societies. The same issue posted the meeting

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[35] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, December 12, 1828; "Friends of Ireland in New York," *Catholic Miscellany*, October 25, 1828; John Devereaux was enlisted by Simon Bolivar to bring some 2000 Irish soldiers in 1820 to help in a South American revolution. For more details, see "The Irish (in Countries other than Ireland)," *New Advent* (accessed 14 November 2005); available from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08132b.htm; Internet.
[36] Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 38-39.

minutes of the Friends of Ireland in the District of Columbia at City Hall, headed by the newly elected chair, Joseph Gales, Jr., the mayor of Washington, D.C.[37]

Once established, the Friends of Ireland concept spread rapidly, especially in the South. On November 8, the paper reported the establishment of the Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty and of Ireland in Raysville, Georgia, and the Friends of Ireland in Savannah. The Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty in Augusta created a constitution in November. Likewise, a constitution was created at the same time for the Friends of Ireland in Philadelphia. Next, in December, the organization spread to Kentucky and to Brooklyn, and in January, to Columbia and West Point, and in February, to New Orleans. It should be noted that these months pertain to when these groups are first mentioned in the *Catholic Miscellany*, but it possible that they formed a few months earlier than when mentioned here.[38]

These multiple societies were interlaced. One member might belong to more than one organization. Clubs sometimes donated to each other. The Washington Benevolent Society contributed $100 to the Friends of Ireland in Charleston. The beneficiary of the Friends of Ireland in turn was meant to be the Catholic Association of Ireland. Anne Boylan, in *The Origin of Women's Activism*, describes how society membership overlapped for Protestant women, and the varying interconnected associations for religious and civil liberty demonstrated that this pattern was true for men of varying religions as well. She states, "In Protestant religious and benevolent circles, then, entwined organization leaderships created dense thickets of connection among women with similar social characteristics and conferred status and power upon their

[37] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828; "Friends of Ireland in New York," *Catholic Miscellany*, October 25, 1828.
[38] *Catholic Miscellany*, November 8, 1828, November 29, 1828.

associations." Surely the presence of notables such as Bishop England leant status when he traveled to other group meetings. Major Black and the other members interacted with and promoted other groups as well, many times traveling to other cities in order to do so.[39]

When Irish immigrants had settled far from a city with an established organization, they often mailed in donations lamenting the absence of such a group in their community and praising the urbanites for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of their homeland. One such jointly authored address from a group of men in Charlotte, North Carolina, revealed the heartfelt motivations of these distant correspondents:

> *Sir*—Desirous to express our approbation of the generous cause in which your "Association" originated, we beg leave through you, to lay our humble offering on the altar of civil and religious liberty. Cold and heartless must that Irishman be, unworthy alike of the land that gave him birth, and of that of his adoption; who, in the enjoyment, of liberty *here*, looks with indifference on the degradation of his brothers, to whom that blessing is denied in his *native* land.[40]

A poignant epilogue to this letter described how one of the undersigned, the fifty-six year old Michael O'Farrell, had made his donation one of his very last acts of life, as he had died later the same day. Surprisingly large sums of money were sent in from unlikely distant sources; it appears that advocates were so dedicated to the cause that they felt such a contribution was morally necessary. From a twelve by thirteen foot log hut in West Florida, one Irish migrant mailed in the notable sum of $5.[41]

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[39] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, January 24, 1829; Anne Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 39.
[40] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, January 24, 1829.
[41] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, March 28, 1829.

At this time, it appears that the popularity and status of these societies were growing, and important members of the community were becoming involved, whether of Irish and Catholic origin or not. A prominent example was the active involvement of the mayor of Washington, D.C. The South Carolina Attorney General joined the Friends of Ireland in November. Several renowned war heroes joined, such as Colonel A.P. Hayne, who served with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans, and General Devereaux. In addition, other newspaper editors made room in their papers for meeting minutes of the Friends of Ireland, such as Henry L. Pinckney, Esq., proprietor of the *Charleston Mercury*, and the editors of the *Charleston Gazette* even donated a sum to the cause.[42]

It is important to note that the group was, typical of this period, clearly an exclusively white group; blacks were neither invited nor present from what one can derive from the minutes. Possibly, free blacks were not interested, since they had their own local oppression to fight. Although the committees sent appeals to Latin America, there is no mention in the meeting minutes of the Catholic population of Haiti. Furthermore, no speeches or connections were given concerning the similar lamentable state of the Irish and the American slave. Later, in the 1830s and 1840s Daniel O'Connell went on to call for the end of slavery, and the Irish themselves were caught between trying to maintain their new status as equal white Americans, which in many parts required opposition to abolitionism, and sympathizing with the oppressed situation of

[42] Ibid., November 29, 1828, November 15, 1828; January 3, 1829; June 6, 1829; *The Charleston Mercury* became an important paper advocating secession in the South. For a brief description of its importance see Walter J. Fraser, Jr., *Charleston! Charleston!: The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

Southern blacks; but in this publication, there was no mention or foreshadowing of this conflict.[43]

Civil Liberty

The organization, though targeting Catholic emancipation, also carried the ideal of religious toleration from the late seventeenth and eighteenth century Enlightenment. The banner of religious liberty was more inclusive than the concept of freeing Catholics from English persecution. Therefore, this strategic alignment with one of the major themes of American national identity—freedom of religion—attracted members of diverse faiths, including Protestants, Presbyterians, Quakers, Unitarians, and Jews. In late October, Townsend Holman, an English Protestant, donated $10, writing, "Let this be accomplished—let there be no political degradation on account of conscientious opinions, and Great Britain will be the key-stone of the arch to support the civil and religious liberties of the whole world." The November 29 meeting minutes included a very moving letter from one Solomon Levy, a German-born Jew. Along with his $6 donation, he offered praise for Americans and South Carolina, in particular. He celebrated free institutions of all kinds, announcing, "The citadels of European bigotry and intolerance are disappearing from those countries they disgraced." Next, he spoke of the Jewish community in England, linking their suffering under restrictive religious laws

[43] There had been some attempts at connecting the Irish experience with the African experience before this time. For a good analysis of Irish involvement and opposition to abolitionism in the years after this study, see Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 6-31.

to the Catholic struggle for emancipation. Lastly, he thanked Daniel O'Connell for including Jews in his pleas for liberty.[44]

The *Catholic Miscellany* promoted religious tolerance as well. Although the editors did not hesitate to write articles defending the Catholic faith against Protestant assaults, there was not much in the way of attacks on other religions. On the contrary, there were tracts defending other persecuted religions in America and abroad. For example, an article from the April 25 edition defends a Quaker, Mr. J. W. Whittier, from negative attacks launched by another paper, *The New England Review.* The *Catholic Miscellany* praised Quakers for their formative role in religious liberty. It is clear that the Friends of Ireland held this same tolerance in high regard by their diverse membership and donation lists. This mutual religious tolerance was characteristic of this period, before the Protestant and Nativist backlash against poor Catholic Irish immigration of the mid-nineteenth century. Boylan describes this soup of religions and ethnicities common to the time, and how it began to break up:

> In 1815, New York's 14,000 Catholics supported two polyglot parishes that included African-descended Caribbean migrants, some of them enslaved, along with groups of Irish, French, Spanish, and German residents…But it was the arrival of large numbers of Catholic Irish in the 1830s that transformed each city; more important, the Protestant response ended an era of casual toleration and occasional cooperation…[45]

The period under study slightly predated this change in the immigration pattern. The rapid transition from religious tolerance to intolerance was intense.

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[44] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, October 25, 1828, November 29, 1828
[45] *Catholic Miscellany*, April 25, 1829; Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism*, 11.

Boylan speaks of gender roles in America's benevolent societies. The women who were active in the Friends of Ireland in Charleston were part of what she would term the third wave, a period in which working class women redefined their concepts of gender and formed their own communities to support each other. The typical sign of women's involvement in the Friends of Ireland was a donation made by way of a male participant. Examples include November 8, when two unnamed women donated through Bishop England, November 29, when Boutan brought the donations of three French women, December 13, when a group calling themselves the Ladies of Maryland printed an address to the women of the United States on behalf of Ireland, December 20, when the group listened to a reading of a letter from Ellen O'Leary, and January 24, when Miss Octavia L. Signe directly donated fifty cents. Although there were no women present at this meeting, there is evidence that they may have been present on other occasions. The donations list was very exact about when a contribution was made directly or through an intermediary, and there were cases of women being listed directly in the list without a middleman. An example is on January 3, when Miss Anne Long of Sligo is listed as a donor. It is, of course, possible that her donation was mailed in, which would have resulted in her being listed in this manner without the naming of an intermediary. Single women and widows could legally handle financial transactions alone, but married women were subject to the rules of common law regarding their property.[46]

The most intriguing possibility of a female presence was the mention of a new member on January 24 by the single name of Ravina. Likely, this may be a member's young daughter or perhaps just the last name of a male member. Maybe she was black?

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[46] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, November 8, 1828, November 29, 1828, December 13, 1828, December 20, 1828, January 3, 1829, January 24, 1829; Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism*, 32-37, 57-58, 130.

The format of only using a last name without a prefix was used nowhere else in any of the meeting minutes. Ravina was an anomaly. Clearly, though, women were interested in this organization, whether they were physically present or not. In fact, a very specific request is made in the January 24 meeting minutes of the Irish Emancipation Society of Baltimore to have an additional meeting at the Circuit Court room of the Masonic Hall with special seating arrangements so that the "ladies" could attend.[47]

Men and women used multiple strategies through which the association sought to collect funds. Besides the letter writing to other charities and the publishing of appeals, the society also encouraged each member to be a warden. A warden would go out to his local community and petition for donations, bringing them back to the meeting. In effect, this structure was a type of canvassing, probably more in line with networking through business, church, and family than going door-to-door. Furthermore, members were encouraged to pay an extra twenty-five cents for a printed certificate of membership. At times the collecting was more organized, such as when the organization planned a full-blown public fundraising event. Mr. John J. Adams, owner of the Charleston Theater, offered his establishment for a benefit, and members were pressed to sell tickets. All proceeds were to go towards the Friends' treasury.[48]

Although members frequently ranged far and wide in order to procure funds, collective activities were generally concentrated where the general meeting was held. The location for the meetings in Charleston was almost always Seyle's Hall, but occasionally at the Assembly Hall on King Street. Most meetings were held in these city meeting halls. In Baltimore, they were at the Masonic Hall. In New Orleans, rather different than

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[47] *Catholic Miscellany,* January 24, 1829.
[48] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, November 15, 1828, November 29, 1828, March 28, 1828.

the others, members met at Brown's Coffee Shop. Even when the members were involved in a private soiree, events began to resemble a Friends of Ireland meeting. In an entertaining example, New York members of the O'Connellite Club, as reported in the paper, gathered at a certain Mrs. Smith's to celebrate St. Patrick's Day over dinner. The order of objects in their successive toasts reveals much about their priorities and their world view. Cheers and glasses were raised to the following in this order: Ireland, St. Patrick, Andrew Jackson, Daniel O'Connell, Richard Sheil, the Marquis of Anglesey, John Lawless, the Roman Catholic Primate of Ireland and the Irish Clergy, the fair Daughters of Erin and Columbia, Lady Morgan, Thomas Moore, and the Irish Catholic Association, which was described in the article on the event as "the grand organ of the feelings and opinions of our nation." The extreme retrofocus of Irish Americans of this period was distinctly displayed through their cast of Irish and British religious and political figures. Some of the beneficiaries of good will listed here were American, such as Andrew Jackson and the metaphorical daughters of Columbia. Jackson was placed just after St. Patrick and before Daniel O'Connell, a position that cannot be ignored. Reference to Jackson could have indicated a connection to Democratic politics in the city. Furthermore, the decade of the 1820s was a time of incipient democratization in America, and the Friends of Ireland might have been a manifestation of popular cries to shift power from elites to the masses. The power in question might have been more than the institutionalized control over the poor farmers of Ireland; it is possible the power shift was taking place among the immigrants in coastal cities against the more established populations.[49]

[49] For a thorough discussion of democratic forces in the 1820s and the importance of Andrew Jackson in this struggle, see Sellers, *The Market Revolution*; "Friends of Ireland in New Orleans," *Catholic*

The scale of this activity was large, spanning the Atlantic world. The diversity of these organizations offers a contrast to the picture Dunne has presented of a nation in a continuous cultural battle. On April 11 the *Catholic Miscellany* reported about the growth in New York:

> The association of "Friends of Ireland" in this city, has assumed a magnitude and importance which should not be overlooked. It has swollen to the number of nearly two thousand members, consisting of persons of all classes, from the proudest situation to the humblest in condition; from those of the most cultivated talents to those of all parties; its meetings are open and accessible to every visitor…It is not an association of Irishmen, but of "friends of Ireland," of Americans, Irish, English, French, Germans—of men of all nations.[50]

Despite the growth of the organization, liberty was not universal. Religious tolerance was more easily celebrated overseas than at home in America. The *Miscellany* was full of examples of strife. Page after page is devoted to the deplorable state of Catholics around the world, including in the United States. A reader would not have readily found explicit attacks on other religions, such as Protestantism. Rather, attacks were directed at extremist sectarians who were depicted as acting unnaturally or unreasonably in promoting religious bigotry.

Outcome of Catholic Emancipation

The change between what is seen in 1828 and 1829, unity in the public sphere, and what Dunne has argued took place in the following decades, conflict in the public

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Miscellany, February 14, 1828; "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, March 7, 1829; "Friends of Ireland in New York," *Catholic Miscellany*, April 11, 1829.

[50] "Friends of Ireland in New York," *Catholic Miscellany*, April 11, 1829.

sphere, was most likely due to the growing number of Catholics in America from Irish immigration. Dunne cites the following numbers:

> In 1830, there were a little over 300,000 Catholics nationwide; by 1850 there were over a million and a half, and by the end of the 1850s , over three million (Dolan, Catholic 25-26). The Catholic presence in the United States, particularly fortified by the influx of Irish immigrants, made it a fact that despite the mainstream secular and clerical hopes for a homogenous nation Irish Catholics were becoming an influential minority.[51]

Ignatiev explains that this influence, especially when applied to the labor market, was what created the rising tide of Protestant hatred against the Irish Catholic immigrants in the nineteenth century, at least until the Irish began to be seen as part of the white majority in contrast to blacks.[52]

Nevertheless, it is important to trace this earlier strain of cooperation in order to better qualify the latter aggression. Throughout later periods, it is likely that this liberalism, defined as allowing individuals freedom of thought and action, and tolerance for other religions remained alive and active, even though it was often buried beneath the more noticeable persecution. An impressive interconnectedness allowed such liberalism to spread across regions, religions, ethnicities, genders, and classes. As noted in previous examples, Catholic Emancipation in Ireland was not only a national phenomenon; the liberal cry for religious freedom echoed worldwide. The movement was popular, and using that momentum, Daniel O'Connell ushered in original and creative tactics to push his agenda. According to Declan Kiberd:

> Disparaged by his English enemies as "the King of the Beggars", he was perhaps the first mass-democratic

[51] Dunne, *Antebellum Irish Immigration*, 73.
[52] Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*.

> politician of modern Europe in the sense that he built his power on the basis of an awesome popular movement. By 1829, this proudly Catholic leader had secured emancipation for his co-religionists: the Penal Laws against them were finally broken.[53]

O'Connell's democratic ascendancy parallels Andrew Jackson's burgeoning American populism. Eventually, O'Connell's overseas influence began to wear thin, especially over the intertwined issues of the abolition of slavery and the rights of labor. Rather than an abrupt shift, it appears that advocates of religious freedom remained conflicted. The themes of the two periods of the 1820s and 1840s overlapped rather than absolutely diverged.

The story of the Friends of Ireland provides a poignant narrative that illuminates alternate philosophical strains of the nineteenth century. The club ended up in 1829 with a grand total of $1926.24, a particularly large sum for that time. Although they sent a check to the Catholic Association in Ireland, by the time it arrived, Catholic Emancipation had already been won, and the successful Catholic Association had disbanded. Daniel O'Connell returned the funds with a letter of grateful thanks. The association in Charleston framed the letter.[54]

At the last meeting of the Friends of Ireland, June 6, 1829, there was a large crowd, some strangers mingling among the more familiar faces, despite the bad weather that evening. A committee was formed to finish off the last financial and business transactions. A lively debate ensued concerning which charities should receive the remaining funds. The debate, which began to grow a little heated, was cut short by Bishop England, who proposed a compromise that the crowd accepted. One hundred

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[53] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 20.
[54] "Friends of Ireland," *Catholic Miscellany*, May 9, 1829, June 6, 1829.

dollars would go to the Ladies Benevolent Society, $100 to Dr. McNiven for a patriotic T.A. Emmet monument, $100 to the Hibernian Society, and the remainder to the St. Patrick's Society.[55]

Next, speakers made an important point that everyone should show their generosity and forgive any opponents who stood in the way of their movement. Bishop England praised the Emancipation Act, grumbling a little about a few negative clauses that were thrown in at the last minute, but he insisted that overall this was a great victory for those assembled. He suggested that the organization disband, since its goal had been achieved. After many thanks to everyone who helped them in their quest, including politicians, newspapermen, Bishop England, the club officers, and many more, a committee was formed to collect and store the society papers with the St. Patrick's Society. Lastly, the association was dissolved. The writer of that month's minutes described how there were three cheers for Ireland, three cheers for South Carolina, and three cheers for the United States. The article ends with the lines, "We regret that we have no further space to describe the scene, which to be conceived, must have been witnessed."[56] The singular emotional display of unity was one that would stand in stark contrast to the impending division and disintegration.

[55] Ibid., June 6, 1829.
[56] Ibid.

Chapter Two: Cis-Atlantic Sectionalism and Repeal (1840-48)

The 1830s saw a burst of reform in the U.S. and the U.K. The liberal call for individual freedoms challenged existing definitions of democracy and established new frontiers for reform. No longer was democracy just a form of political community for landed white men. Now, various groups were beginning to give the term different meanings in order to agitate for change. In the Friends of Ireland (FOI) of Catholic Emancipation, we saw the extension of self-representation to Catholics in Ireland in 1829. The next decade added the popular and working classes to the call as well as questioned the exclusion of women and blacks. Self-representation posed the question, in which political community? Was the United Kingdom (U.K.) as a whole or Ireland as a distinct nation, the appropriate polity for the democratic expression of collective political will?

As a sign of the coming fractionalization of reform groups, according to the historian Robert Abzug, abolitionists split between those who wanted to keep the focus on the emancipation of blacks, such as the Tappan brothers, and those who wanted to expand emancipation to include women's rights, such as William Lloyd Garrison and the Grimké sisters, Sarah and Angelina. Abzug argues that the "woman question" is an important transition in the history of reform, "Reform had thus moved from changing habits such as drinking to rethinking the basic theological and social foundations of Western culture. For a significant number of radical reformers, nearly two decades of metahistorical tinkering had led to the collapse of the evangelical Christian cosmos."

Although abolitionist and Repeal movements split for different reasons, expanding the original goals of the organization is what led to a similar cleavage in the Friends of Repeal (FOR), the 1840s refoundation of the FOI. Repeal originally constituted a call for dismantling the Act of Union of 1800, which had combined the legislatures of Ireland and Great Britain into one Parliament representing the new United Kingdom. Abolitionists were trying to win Irish support for the antislavery crusade by linking liberties for blacks with freedom for the Irish, thus extending the intentions of Repeal. Here, again, Garrison appears as the leading advocate of this augmentation in mission.[57]

In this chapter, the *Boston Pilot*'s and the *Catholic Miscellany*'s commentary on the FOR and Repeal provides a narrative of the Repeal cause from a Catholic Irish American perspective. It begins with a discussion of the linking of abolitionism to Repeal, the manner in and reasons for which this happened, the reaction of Irish Americans, and the outcome of Repeal as a transatlantic political and social issue. It continues with an examination of the choices that Irish Americans were forced to make in the face of confrontation from Nativism. The dramatic political effect of the untimely deaths of Daniel O'Connell, Bishop John England, and Thomas Davis forms the final part of this chapter. It shows how abolitionism drove splits into the Repeal movement and fractured existing American political coalitions.

[57]Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 228; for more details on the schism in the abolitionism movement in America caused by the women's rights issue, see his chapter called "Women's Rights and Schism," 204-229; Garrison and his supporters sat on the sidelines of the London convention because of the exclusion of women from the proceedings, see Osofsky, "Abolitionists, Irish Immigrants, and Romantic Nationalism," 895.

Friends of Repeal

In 1840 Daniel O'Connell formed the Repeal Association along the lines of his previous Catholic Association in order to influence the U.K. Parliament again through mass politics. In this latest of a string of Catholic challenges against the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, O'Connell campaigned for the repeal of the Act of Union of 1800. Most Irish Catholics would have seen such a move as a step towards greater independence. Yet farmers and laborers were less concerned about the administration of government than they were about the daily discrimination to which they were subject. Suffrage restrictions disfranchised the poor and all women. The secret ballot was not adopted in the U.K. until the Ballot Act of 1872, so the act of voting remained a very public performance of civic duty and party loyalty.[58]

One of the problems with the Repeal movement was the lack of an agreed vision of what post-Repeal Ireland would look like. Many questions remained unanswered, causing friction among the various supporters of Repeal. Was Repeal simply a measure to restore Ireland's Parliament at its pre-1800 College Green location in Dublin? In that case, Ireland would remain in a union of crowns with Great Britain. Daniel O'Connell, and his son, John O'Connell, were in this camp, commonly called Constitutionalists or even Unionists. However, there was plenty of separatist and republican sentiment. The Young Irelanders, a group of younger sentimental Repealers responsible for the publication of the *Nation*, clearly envisioned a separate state from Great Britain. Some Protestant agitators envisioned two separate states in Ireland, itself divided between the

[58] For a discussion of the recreation of the Catholic Association by O'Connell, see Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement*, 11.

majority Protestant province of Ulster and the majority Catholic provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connacht.[59]

Many Protestants wanted to retain their membership in the British Empire, at least in the North, so that they could keep their government out of the hands of Catholics. Thus, compounding the Repeal vision was the question of which specific Ulster counties would be partitioned from the rest of Ireland—four counties, six counties, or more? And what would be done with religiously mixed counties? Catholics in Ulster were afraid of such a division, since then they would remain a persecuted minority. Protestants in Dublin and elsewhere in southern Ireland feared this situation as well, as they would become part of the disestablished minority. Such a complicated vision and undefined future goal hampered the progress of Repeal. This was one of the reasons the Catholic clergy generally did not back Repeal in the manner that they backed Catholic Emancipation. The lack of a unified vision of post-Repeal Ireland compounded by the reticence in support by the priesthood led to the fracturing divisions and eventual demise of the movement.[60]

In America FOR organizations sprang up in 1841 to support Repeal and to donate money to the Repeal Association. The groups were interchangeably called Friends of Ireland or Friends of Repeal. In Charleston, although interest in Repeal remained strong, the organization eventually would break up over the divisive issue of abolitionism. The death of Bishop John England in 1842, the peacemaker of the FOI and FOR, helped ensure that this organization remained broken. While the *Catholic Miscellany* reported

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[59] Constitutional Unionists are not to be confused with the latter day Unionists who sought for Ulster to remain within the United Kingdom in order to maintain the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland.
[60] Many priests did not support Repeal like they had Catholic Emancipation, because they feared the violent consequences for their congregations of the revolutionary nature of the movement.

weekly on the progress of Repeal, there were no weekly meetings of the FOI on which to report. In order to understand what was happening in Charleston, one has to rely on northern newspapers, whose local organizations of the FOI did barely survive the link with abolitionism. For this period, the *Boston Pilot* provided an excellent report on the reasoning of the Irish American populace in response to Repeal.

Noel Ignatiev describes how the Irish Americans were united by their Irishness and by their fear of persecution as Catholics by Protestants Americans. In this regard, the Irish chose to gloss over the southern and northern divisions so prevalent in the rest of America at the time. Ignatiev defines the way the Irish were able to position themselves instead on the winning side of a race question:

> Slavery in the United States was part of a bipolar system of color caste, in which even the lowliest of "whites" enjoyed a status superior in crucial respects to that of the most exalted of "blacks." As members of the privileged group, white works organized to defend their caste status, even while striving to improve their condition as workers. They prohibited free Afro-Americans from competing with them for jobs, in effect curtailing their right to choose among masters (a right which contemporary labor activists declared the only essential distinction between the free worker and the slave.)[61]

As we will see in the *Boston Pilot*, the Irish were not subtle in trying to avoid the subject of slavery. Rather than set themselves up for division, they consciously stifled the debate on slavery and abolitionism.

The Irish were not the only ones to do this. Democrats used the addition of Texas to statehood and other expansionist policies such as the war with Mexico and the acquisition of the Oregon Territory in order to distract America from the growing

[61] Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 100.

regional chasm in beliefs. Thomas Hietala explains this tactic as a balm for Jacksonian America's anxieties: "Distressed by many trends in American life, the Democrats formulated their domestic and foreign policies to safeguard themselves and their progeny from a potentially dismal future. They hoped to prevent domestic disturbances by acquiring additional territory and markets." It was this evasion that helped to keep the Democratic Party from splitting for a time, but eventually the hypocrisy of supporting a war with Mexico for southern power purposes but backing down from northern interests in the Oregon territory that led to the split of the Democratic Party in 1848.[62]

The Irish were predominantly Democrats, so their attempts at burying the debate over slavery are not surprising. Many Irish wanted to align themselves with the party in power in order to carve out a place in the public sphere. Nativism was beginning to rise around this time, though not to the extent that it would surge a few years later in response to the arrival of poorer Catholic Famine immigrants. At this time the majority of Irish Americans were still Protestant. Many were Ulster-born. The Catholics of Ireland had to work carefully with their counterparts in America to create a movement that was non-sectarian in appearance in order to keep all Irish on both sides of the Atlantic united to press for Repeal. As has been mentioned, Orangeism and other Protestant expressions of dissent showed there was not unity even at this period in support for Repeal. However, there was enough unity that often divisive topics were not given publicity.[63]

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[62] Hietala, *Manifest Design*, 263-64; both the South and the North were looking for ways to displace their existing or potential black populations. Expansionism did not accomplish this goal. For more information on the split in the Democratic Party, see Hietala, *Manifest Design*, 252-53, 265.

[63] The majority of the Irish population of America would remain Protestant because of the exponential advantage of arriving earlier chronologically. They simply produced more offspring over time. To differentiate themselves from the Catholics, Protestant Irish began to call themselves Scotch-Irish, alluding to the Scottish heritage of Ulster Presbyterians. See Donald Akenson, "Irish Migration to North America, 1800-1920," in *Irish Diaspora*, ed. Andy Bielenberg (New York: Longman, 2000), 111-15. One must also look beyond the Eastern seaboard to find Irish descendants. In Ruth-Ann Harris, "Searching for Missing

Catholic newspapers again will give us insight into the motivations of Irish Americans in this episode. The *Boston Pilot* was a weekly periodical for Catholic readers in Boston and the New England region. It began publication in 1836. A large portion of readers and subscribers were Irish. The hybrid American and Irish national symbolism of a bald eagle carrying a harp in the paper's masthead makes obvious the intended audience. The proprietor and editor was Patrick Donahoe, an immigrant from Monery, Ireland, who had come to America at the age of ten. Unlike the *Catholic Miscellany*, the *Boston Pilot* remained a private interest, rather than a church interest, until his death in 1901, at which time the Catholic diocese did assume control.[64]

The *Boston Pilot*'s articles are generally liberal in nature, meaning they stress the importance of individual freedoms and promote equal rights for ethnic and other minorities. An example is the January 23, 1842, issue, which spoke of the persecution of the Gypsies in England. The article describes how a "dreadful persecution was raised against them, the aim of which was their utter extermination." This attention to a non-Catholic group is reminiscent of the Catholic Emancipation movement, when FOI members expressed concern for Dissenters, Quakers, Jews, and other groups that faced discrimination. The group praised the inclusion of women, saying, "We are pleased to notice among the audience a large number of ladies, whose presence added to the enthusiasm of the night," in one article. However, once again, blacks were initially excluded from this debate and the slavery issue did not surface at first, although the Irish were frequently described as "slaves" in the paper's rhetoric. Like the *Catholic*

Friends in the *Boston Pilot* Newspaper, 1831-1863," in Bielenberg, *The Irish Diaspora*, 171-72, Harris challenges the common assumption that the Irish clustered in the Eastern cities, claiming they instead dispersed throughout America.

[64] "Famous Natives," *Cornafean Online* (accessed 14 November 2005); available from http://www.cornafean.com/Patrick%20Donahoe.htm; Internet.

Miscellany, every issue devotes some space to the continued plight of Irish Catholics in Ireland and persecuted Catholics around the world. By 1842, Repeal was well underway, and most weekly issues covered the campaign, frequently publishing speeches by O'Connell or other advocates. Clearly, the readership sought this information, this paper likely being the primary source of such news.[65]

The Boston paper published the meeting minutes of the Friends of Repeal alongside detailed articles on Repeal. Although the Charleston paper covered Repeal at this time, the minutes for the Charleston FOR were noticeably absent from the *Catholic Miscellany*. It is difficult to discern when the Bostonians formed their FOR, but there was a meeting as early as September 13, 1841 and another in December 1841 and January 1842. The FOR eventually met weekly. John W. James was the president. The report was typical of such press coverage. Initially, meeting conveners read letters from donators, such as from a man in Lockport, New York, who had sent in twenty-six dollars. A letter with fifty dollars also came from Pottsville, Pennsylvania. These mailed-in contributions show how the Boston organization served as regional headquarters for far flung participation in Repeal.[66]

Following the opening of donation letters, the members discussed various relevant topics, both cultural and political, which often overlapped. In the cultural vein, members praised the *Green Book* from Cornelius O'Callaghan. This book was a collection of Irish romantic nationalist historic tales and poetry; it will be discussed extensively in the next

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[65] The "Gypsies" article can be found in the *Boston Pilot*, January 23, 1842; the "slaves" comment was in the *Boston Pilot*, January 29, 1842; the "ladies" are mentioned in February 5, 1842. Although the previous chapter went into great detail about the participation of women in the FOI, this chapter will not. The liberal inclusion of women continues into the second episode of the FOI. It is also likely Irish women played a symbolic and practical role in maintaining the national community by representing the gendered nature of nationalism. It is racism, not feminism, which serves to divide the organization during Repeal.
[66] *Boston Pilot*, January 29, 1842.

chapter, as it gives insight into the cosmography of the Irish at this time. There was also a political controversy. A Mr. Mooney from Ireland had visited America on business. While there, he attended several Repeal meetings. Mooney's sojourn caused uproar in Ireland and Britain, as it hinted at the transatlantic revolutionary and republican potential of Repeal. Mooney calmed the furor by insisting that he was not in the United States as an agent of O'Connell's Repeal Association. He made the point that the Repeal associations only wanted their own parliament. They were not trying to separate from the U.K. through revolutionary means. Mooney's true intentions could easily have been contrary to his public protestations. However, he claimed he had sought Americans "for their love of peaceful and constitutional liberty." Though he alluded to Concord and the American Revolution, he stressed different means, adding that "not one drop of blood should ever be shed in the struggle in which he was engaged." This pacifist comment was typical of the Constitutionalists.[67]

The minutes continued by describing a donation from the FOI to the Repeal Association in Ireland that was partially lost. Two golden eagle coins costing about ten dollars each were lost or stolen in the mail along with a one hundred dollar bill. The bill was apparently not a problem, as it could be cancelled by the bank from which it was drawn, but the coins were irretrievably lost. On the positive side, T.M. Ray, the Secretary of the Loyal National Repeal Association of Ireland, wrote to say he had received in a separate payment the third of three one hundred dollar bills that had been sent to Ireland from Boston. Those sums suggest a high level of prosperity among the Irish American community. The FOR had sent this bill after the September 13, 1841 meeting. The

[67] Mooney's trip is discussed in the *Boston Pilot*, January 29, 1842.

meeting concluded with a discussion of foreign and local issues, including the Irish Municipal Reform Bill and the appointment of local inspectors for Repeal Wardens.[68]

Through 1841 and the beginning of 1842, the Repeal movement grew in strength in America. FOR were reestablished in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Charleston, and in many other American cities. It is clear that these various groups were in communication with each other. Although they were essentially regional centers for donations, these groups were beginning to form a national network. The January 22, 1842, issue of the *Pilot* discussed the Boston FOR's dismay at the lagging efforts of the Philadelphia FOI in hosting a national convention. In an angry article, the Boston group threatened to host the event if the rumors of cancellation or postponement proved true. Later, Philadelphia did in fact host the National Repeal Convention.[69]

Abolitionism

In February 1842, Repeal was altered by a new force from within American reform politics. Abolitionism had grown in strength and popularity under the guidance of William Lloyd Garrison and his newspaper, the *Liberator*, which he had launched in 1831. In his inaugural editorial, he challenged the exclusion of blacks from the liberal causes of the day, recanting gradualism, which was the previous goal of emancipating the black population slowly and in a measured way that ensured safety for them and the whites around them, saying:

> I deem the publication of my original Prospectus unnecessary, as it has obtained a wide circulation. The

[68] The tale of the missing funds can be found in *Boston Pilot*, January 29, 1842.
[69] The Boston FOI's frustration with Philadelphia's pace is in *Boston Pilot*, January 22, 1842.

> principles therein inculcated will be steadily pursued in this paper, excepting that I shall not array myself as the political partisan of any man. In defending the great cause of human rights, I wish to derive the assistance of all religions and of all parties.
>
> Assenting to the "self-evident truth" maintained in the American Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights -- among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population.[70]

With this article Garrison had launched a campaign for radical measures to emancipate and politically incorporate enslaved people, termed immediatism. Since then, he had begun to appeal to various constituencies, especially the Catholic Irish Americans, since they had been persecuted for centuries in Ireland and for decades in America. Most Irish American Catholics, however, were indifferent or hostile to the cause of abolitionism. However, Garrison won over Daniel O'Connell to the antislavery cause, which had been powerful in Britain and Ireland and had led to the emancipation of slaves around the British Empire between 1834 and 1838. The strength of O'Connell's antislavery rhetoric vacillated over the years, but there were examples when he attacked Americans and Southern slaveholders intensely for their attempts at justifying the institution of slavery. Although up to this point, O'Connell had been outspoken against slavery, it had yet to affect the FOI in America. Then, in February 1842 various personages began to link Repeal with abolitionism. With such a linkage, it could be presumed that the success or failure of one would lead to a similar fate for the other.[71]

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[70] William Lloyd Garrison, "Inaugural Editorial," *The Liberator*, January 1, 1831.

[71] Many Irish Americans saw abolitionism as a British plot designed to cause disunion and to destroy the American Republic, see Owen Dudley Edwards, "The American Image of Ireland: A Study of its Early Phases," *Perspectives in American History* 4 (1970): 259; Osofsky, "Abolitionists, Irish Immigrants, and Romantic Nationalism," 891.

Many Irish Americans instantly disagreed with the linkage. Noel Ignatiev describes how the Irish clung to the Democratic Party, since this party had not embraced the anti-immigrant Nativist movement. He describes how the Nativist movement fizzled out as racial issues became more important in the decades leading up to the American Civil War. In that cultural battle, the white side eventually included the Irish. Ignatiev explains:

> Strong tendencies existed in antebellum America to consign the Irish, if not to the black race, then to an intermediate race located socially between black and white, Nativism expressed this tendency, and nativism appealed to many of the artisans who were resentful of immigrants coming into the country. If, therefore, the Democratic Party decided, after some vacillation, to reject nativism, the decision had far-reaching consequences. Nativism lost out not to the vision of a nonracial society, but to a society polarized between white and black. Part of the project of defeating nativism was to establish an acceptable standard for "white" behavior.[72]

Having succeeded in qualifying under the new standard of whiteness, it followed that Irish Americans were unwilling to sacrifice that newfound, if limited, cultural acceptance for a cause that could very quickly ignite such deep racial passions in the communities around them. Such support could lead to physical danger for the Irish in the U.S. South. Furthermore, some Irish Americans were themselves slaveholders.

One reaction in this situation was to imply or outright suggest that low-wage white labor was somehow worse than black slave labor. For example, George Evans, an editor and activist, proposed this logic:

> I was formerly, like yourself, sir, a very warm advocate of the abolition of slavery. This was before I saw that there was white slavery. Since I saw this, I have materially

[72] Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 76.

> changed my views as to the means of abolishing negro slavery. I now see, clearly, I think, that to give the landless black the privilege of changing masters now possessed by the landless white, would hardly be a benefit to him…[73]

This sentiment tells how the Irish Americans were able to disapprove of slavery while disowning the tactics of the abolitionists. Even though O'Connell and many Irish in the U.K. supported abolitionism, the FOI and Irish Americans in general had been able to ignore or avoid the subject for decades while fighting for the rights of Catholics in Ireland. The attempt to link Repeal with abolitionism changed this situation.[74]

The February 5, 1842, issue of the *Boston Pilot* contained an article called "O'Connell & the Abolitionists." In this article, the editors empathized with the Southern slave but they wholeheartedly disagreed with the abolitionists' "fiery means," decrying how abolitionists would:

> …Bathe the whole South in blood, rather than the black should remain in nominal bondage; we look with horror upon the man, who emplores [sic] the lightning of annihilation to "Commerce, Manufacturers, the Union and all," rather than the institution should continue…
>
> With such sentiments, the great champion of Irish freedom, can have no sympathy; even for his own country, the idol of his soul, he would not accept freedom, purchased with a drop of blood.[75]

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[73] George Evans quoted in Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 80.

[74] The argument about northern wage labor being worse than slavery is also detailed in R. Frank Saunders and George A. Rogers, "Bishop John England of Charleston: Catholic Spokesman and Southern Intellectual, 1820-1842," *Journal of the Early Republic* 13, no. 3 (1993): 301-02. They explain the simultaneously racist and anti-capitalist grounds for this notion, "South Carolinians…argued that southern slaves had more freedom than the wage laborers of the North. Wage laborers worked for capitalist masters who had no pecuniary interest in their well-being; their livelihoods were dictated by the vagaries of the market economy…the slave was at the mercy of a planter who must feel the responsibility of his position…"

[75] *Boston Pilot*, February 5, 1842.

The last line referred to how O'Connell frequently opposed any bloodshed in restoring Irish self-government. It was this reluctance to resort to revolution which initially drove the Young Irelanders under Thomas Davis away from O'Connell's Repeal Association. The editors were reminding O'Connell that he could not in good conscience condone certain abolitionists' willingness to shed blood in the cause of emancipation of the slaves. They went on to stress that the Repeal movement needed the "powerful co-operation of the South" and that they would lose that support and those funds if O'Connell continued to press for this linkage.

They again pointed to Irish slavery as somehow worse than the conditions of blacks, saying, "But a worse slavery in Ireland is imposed upon a noble and intelligent people, in a condition to appreciate and enjoy immediate emancipation." Here there is a direct implication that blacks were not noble or intelligent, and that they were not in a condition to be a quick success upon emancipation. The supposed form of slavery in Ireland mentioned here was actually political rather than socio-economic in nature. Other reform groups made similar comparisons, as when suffragists described women's lack of political and legal rights as tantamount to slavery. The comparison of Irish to slaves was absurd, as the Irish could vote and petition for change, while blacks had no such power to change their situation. Again, this tactic was used to belittle the plight of the slaves in an attempt to ignore or bury the issue. This debate was reflected as well in the minutes of the previous week's FOR meeting, in which one Mr. Mellon had begun to give an antislavery speech, but the various floor members quickly quieted him down and buried the issue.[76]

[76] *Boston Pilot*, February 5, 1842.

In Charleston, it can only be assumed that similar debates took place. There is not a regular report of the FOR to investigate as there was in Boston. Repeal news was generally in the form of speeches that took place in Ireland or Britain. This news was not accompanied by editorial commentary as in Boston. By sticking to statements of fact and staying away from the editorializing, the Charleston paper was able to avoid the subject for some time. Eventually, however, the factions would become so loud and intense that the FOR in Charleston would disband over the issue. The FOR of Boston would come close to disbanding as well, but would manage to continue quelling discussion on the subject. It was the *Irish Address* that led to this fragmentation.

As weekly meetings in Boston continued, rumors began circulating about the existence of a document, called the *Irish Address*, in April 1842. The *Pilot* published a notice regarding the rumors. In this article, secretaries Charles Soran and Thos. J. Moriarty of the Baltimore FOR denounce the reported "paper" signed by O'Connell and purportedly 60,000 Irishmen. The paper was in support of abolitionism, explicitly linking Repeal and the antislavery cause. The secretaries insisted its existence was either a lie or a mischievous rumor. The report, however, turned out to be true. O'Connell had issued the address after the World Anti-Slavery Convention, which had been held in London in June 1840. The actual title was *Address from the People of Ireland to their Countrymen and Countrywomen in America*. The message of the address was simple; O'Connell denounced slavery then called for the American Irish to support abolitionism and the abolitionists specifically. He claimed that to be an honorable Irishman, one must do as he asked. The text demonstrates the Repeal link:

> JOIN WITH THE ABOLITIONISTS EVERYWHERE.
> *They are the only consistent advocates of liberty.* Tell every

> man that you do not understand liberty for the white man, and *slavery for the black man*; that you are for LIBERTY FOR ALL, of every color, creed, and country….
>
> Irishmen and Irishwomen! *Treat the colored people as your equals, as brethren*. By your memories of Ireland, continue to love liberty—hate slavery—CLING BY THE ABOLITIONISTS—and *in America you will do honor to the name of Ireland.*[77]

This petition was formally presented to Americans in Boston at a large meeting at Faneuil Hall, similar in nature to O'Connell's monster meetings in Ireland. The address was a good example of the Irish-abolitionist rhetorical link, and this passage is often cited by historians.[78]

The debate over abolitionism continued in the Irish Catholic press. In February the Honorable Edmund Quincy had published a letter which was basically a rebuttal of the "O'Connell & the Abolitionists" article published earlier that month. He insisted that abolitionists did not want bloodshed. He was a member of the Non Resistance Party, an abolitionist group pledged to peaceful methods. In reply, the editors wrote another scathing attack decrying abolitionists' supposed attempts to make the American south another "deck of the Creole," referring to the black population of the Caribbean. In a previous week's article, the editors condemned the radical and destructive nature of abolitionism, bemoaning that "zealously does she stir the cauldron of enmities."[79]

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[77] Much of the address is printed in Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 9-10.
[78] Rumors of the "Irish Address" can be found in the *Boston Pilot*, April 16, 1842; the "Irish Address," Garrison, and O'Connell can be found in Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 8-11, also in Osofsky, "Abolitionists, Irish Immigrants, and Romantic Nationalism."
[79] Quincy and the rebuttal are in the *Boston* Pilot, February 19, 1842; "the cauldron" reference is in the *Boston Pilot*, February 2, 1842.

Nativism

In Charleston Bishop John England shepherded a relatively small collection of Catholics. His sentiments were generally quite liberal. He did not support slavery. In fact, he opened schools for black boys and girls. He was the Vatican's diplomatic representative to the Republic of Haiti. Although he was prone to believe in some of the racial stereotypes common to that age, he was unusually favorable to the black population for a white resident of the South. His greatest concern, though, was for the survival and protection of southern Catholics in the face of the rise of Nativism.[80]

The historian Francis Walsh explains that there are many theories for the rise of Nativism. He explains how the flood of Irish immigrants into America after the European depression caused by the Napoleonic war began to break up the cultural homogeneity of port cities like Boston. This produced a Protestant backlash against the priests and Catholic laity. Sociologically, there were intense differences between these two worldviews. According to Walsh:

> By 1829 one could note the beginnings of a growing division in Boston between the old and new Americans. The split was not only a physical one with the Irish clustered together in the dock and market sections, it was cultural as well, and here the gap was the widest. An optimistic view of the universe clashed with a pessimistic one, and those who talked about perfectability [sic] of man

[80] In Saunders and Rogers, "Bishop John England of Charleston," 307, they give some basic demographics for 1820, "[England arrived]…to serve a diocese that sprawled over 129,000 square miles and had a population of 1.5 million, including approximately 3,600 Catholics. Charleston, the seat of his diocese, had a population of 37,555, of whom 3,000 were free blacks and 19,000 were slaves." Kerby Miller estimates that, "During the years from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the beginning of the Great Famine, between 8000,000 and 1,000,000 Irish emigrants—about twice the total for the preceding two hundred years—sailed to North America." See Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 193; Biographical information on John England can be found in Joseph Kelly, "Charleston's Bishop John England and American Slavery," *New Hibernia Review* 5, no. 4 (2001): 48-56; the rise of Nativism in Boston is recounted in Francis Robert Walsh, "The Boston Pilot: A Newspaper for the Irish Immigrant, 1829-1908" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1993).

> might just as well have been conversing in a foreign language to a group born in original sin and convinced of the frailty of human nature. To the Irish, the reformer with his talk of human progress was simply a busybody on a fool's errand.
>
> One group was "bible crazy," the other was "priest ridden." To the Hibernian with his unlimited faith in the authority of the priests, independent interpretation of the Bible was a vain and ludicrous effort. On the other hand, the Irish dependency on the clergy was seen by many Protestants as a surrender of all independence.[81]

In contrast, Ignatiev stresses the intense competition for work in this period as a motive for distrust and conflict between the two sides. Walsh also blames the publicity in the 1820s surrounding the trustee controversy in Philadelphia. He explains how there was a very public battle over control of church property, with one side favoring the clergy and the other side favoring trustees assigned from the congregation. The clergy won the battle, but this controversy promoted the popular Protestant stereotype of Catholics—that Catholics were controlled by Rome and served the foreign interests of the Vatican. To republican Americans concerned about self-rule and freedom of religion, control by European kings or cardinals was anathema. Furthermore, Walsh explains how a highly visible Provincial Church Council in Baltimore in 1829 became a show of the rising strength of Catholicism.[82]

All along the seaboard Nativism grew in the 1830s. Bishop John England was faced with just such a crisis in Charleston in 1835. Charleston residents were already wary of the Ursuline nuns whom Bishop England had brought to Charleston and of the black boys' and girls' schools he had founded. In this volatile setting, an angry mob

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[81] The rise of Nativism is explained in Walsh, *Boston Pilot*, 3-6.
[82] Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*; The Philadelphia crisis is explained in Walsh, *Boston Pilot*, 3-6.

intercepted a flood of abolitionist mail sent to Charleston for propaganda by the abolitionists. On July 29, the mob decided to march to the cathedral in order to destroy it and to lynch Bishop England. He received word in advance and called the Irish Volunteers, an immigrant militia, to arm themselves and to defend the cathedral. The mob, perhaps knowing what awaited them, never arrived, but all the same, the realities of the danger to life and property of Nativism for immigrants became very clear and immediate. Bishop England eventually closed his Catholic school for black children under pressure from the pro-slavery camp. Kelly presents Bishop England's quandary:

> After this episode, it was obvious that to secure the safety of Catholicism in South Carolina, England would have to dissociate the church from abolitionism. In the summer of 1835, suspected abolitionists had to declare themselves for or against the South. Those who wanted gradual abolition had to make a terrible decision, and at that moment England equivocated. He declared Garrison his enemy, but he refused to publish his own emancipatory principles, and thereby represented himself and his religion to Charleston as pro-slavery.[83]

While it is true that he wanted to convert the local black population to Catholicism and gradually free them from slavery, he certainly was not in favor of the radical immediate emancipation of the blacks, as was suggested by Garrison, that had occurred in Haiti. The bloodshed that had occurred there, coupled with Denmark Vesey's rebellion in Charleston in 1822 and Nat Turner's insurrection in 1831 in Virginia, heightened Southerners' fear of retaliation and cultural subversion should the black population suddenly be free.[84]

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[83] The story of the mob and the threat to Bishop England's cathedral is told in Kelly, "Charleston's Bishop John England and American Slavery," 53-56.

[84] The entire Caribbean wrestled with issues of slavery. Abolition had been a gradual process. Britain had banned the slave trade in 1807, the same year the United States had banned the importation of slaves. In

While Irish American resistance to being identified as abolitionists grew, the Irish in Ireland continued to press their American counterparts to support abolitionism. The Lord Mayor of Dublin spoke at the National Repeal Association meetings in Ireland in support of American abolitionism, saying that the Repeal Association should not accept contributions from southerners earned through slavery.[85] In retaliation to these statements by the Lord Mayor, as well as others from O'Connell and Garrison, at the Philadelphia National Repeal Convention in February of 1842, attendees passed a resolution announcing that Repeal was a movement for the Irish only, and that Repeal was not to be linked with abolitionism. In addition, the editors of the *Boston Pilot* published an editorial in March entitled "The Liberator and our Articles," a reference to Garrison's Boston newspaper. The editorial recounted the many angry remarks exchanged in recent months between the *Liberator* and the *Pilot* over the issue of abolitionism. Even though the text of the editorial was apologetic, the tone was clearly intentionally sarcastic. The editorial was actually a rebuttal of a previous argument.[86]

The controversy continued to escalate and to divide the Irish community. James Haughton sent a letter to the National Repeal Association complaining about the money received by the Repeal Rent from American slaveholders. The money from Southern states was often a troublesome point for O'Connell and abolitionists. Douglas Riach writes:

1833 the Slavery Abolition Act ended slavery on the British Isles of the Caribbean. The French Revolution resulted in the abolition of slavery in 1794, but Napoleon restored the institution in 1802. France agreed to ban the slave trade in the West Indies in 1815, but did not enforce this agreement until 1848. The U.S. South was under this same moral, political, and economic turbulence that was affecting the Caribbean.

[85] The Lord Mayor's speeches can be found in the *Boston Pilot*, February 12, 1842, and June 4, 1842.

[86] The Philadelphia National Convention is reported in the New York Repeal Association meeting minutes in the *Boston Pilot*, February 16, 1842; "The Liberator and Our Articles" is printed in the *Boston Pilot*, March 12, 1842.

> Hard pressed to conceal their bitter disappointment at O'Connell, the abolitionists in Dublin and America assumed that southern contributions to the repeal rent were succeeding in stifling O'Connell's anti-slavery sentiments. O'Connell's response to the southern money was in fact fairly astute. He took the money on the grounds that those who sent it, mindful of his speeches in favor of abolitionism, must love Ireland more than they loved slavery.[87]

The abolitionist crowd struck back by pointing out that southern contributions arrived with resolutions condemning O'Connell's abolitionist stance. On the other side of the issue, Bishop John England wrote letters to O'Connell insisting that the Catholic Church condemned the slave trade but not slavery itself. O'Connell was truly caught in the middle of all of these opinions, unable to please either side fully.[88]

Outcome of Repeal

Several factors contributed to the gradual decline and defeat of Repeal, including Daniel O'Connell's death in 1847, various Repeal splits, the Famine, and mounting sectionalism caused by the wedge of American abolitionism. In Ireland, the arrest and death of O'Connell dampened the fire of the movement, though John O'Connell, his son, and the Young Irelanders, in opposition to the O'Connellites, continued to press for Repeal up to the failed insurrection of 1848. In this vein, their story took its place in the cyclical pattern of rebellion against England; Repeal became the sentimental predecessor to later movements such as Fenianism in the 1860s and Home Rule in the 1880s.

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[87] The Southern money debate is in Douglas C. Riach, "Daniel O'Connell and American Antislavery," *Irish Historical Studies* 20, no. 77 (1976): 14-15.
[88] James Haughton's letter is read in the *Boston Pilot*, June 4, 1842; John England's letters are in Riach, "Daniel O'Connell and American Antislavery," 21.

The Repeal movement in Ireland split twice. First, the sudden and youthful death of the Protestant Dubliner, Thomas Davis, from scarlatina in September 1846, left Charles Gavan Duffy, an Ulster Catholic, in sole charge of the *Nation*, Ireland's romantic nationalist publication. Other men rose to lead this faction as well in opposition to John O'Connell's constitutionalists such as the Protestant William O'Brien, although in his case reluctantly. When John O'Connell began to court a new Whig alliance, the radical Young Irelanders reacted angrily. They saw no chance of success for Repeal under Whig manipulation. Finally, O'Brien walked out of a Repeal meeting over the issue of non-violence, claiming that that there were justifiable defensive cases such as the American Revolution that were necessarily violent. The Young Irelanders walked out with him. Public, clerical, and journalistic rancor at the exclusion of the Young Irelanders from Repeal meetings and *The Nation* from Repeal reading rooms was not as unanimous and profound as the Young Irelanders had hoped, as the country was generally divided in support. The Young Irelanders formed a new committee called the Irish Party or the Irish Council, and eventually became known as the Confederates. In Britain, this group was closely aligned with the Chartists.[89]

This split was further compounded by a second split in 1848 within the Confederate ranks, again over the issue of violence. John Mitchel, notorious supporter of slavery and the South during the Civil War, and others supported the right to revolt against the British government in order to achieve the goals of Repeal and national

[89] Thomas Davis' death and funeral are recounted in Davis, *The Young Irelanders*, 79-80; the Whig Alliance is treated in ibid., 93-94; Specifically, all members of the Repeal Association were asked to support The Peace Proposals, Young Irelanders' refusal officially excluded them, and the walkout is in ibid., 101-02; formation of the Irish Party in ibid., 115-16; Chartists in ibid., 138; the "Whig alliance" sought by O'Connell was with Sir Robert Peel, Tory Prime Minister from 1842-1846, not a Whig himself. His free trade followers later coalesced with Whigs and Radicals to form the Liberal Party in the 1850s.

freedom for the Irish. Mitchel founded a new newspaper, the *United Irishman*, to expound his views. O'Brien and Duffy formed the core of the opposition to Mitchel's more violent invectives. Opportunities created by the French Revolution in 1848 convinced the Constitutionalists and the non-Mitchel Young Irelanders to briefly join forces as the Irish League. Various factions contributed to an insurrection in 1848 that failed mostly due to lack of popular and clerical support. The Irish campaigners who fought for Repeal, after brief arrests, moved on to other issues, emigrated, or retired. The Repeal movement was over by the end of 1848.[90]

One cannot discuss the end of Repeal without pointing to the Famine in Ireland as well. The Famine lasted from 1845 to the early 1850s. As potato crops failed due to the island-wide spread of disease, one third of the Irish people starved to death, died of disease, or emigrated. These emigrants largely consisted of the Catholic, Gaelic-speaking poor. This tide of Catholics intensified Nativist feelings in America due to perceived threats of labor competition and Catholic dominance. The issues at hand also distracted the Irish population from esoteric political worries such as Repeal. The Famine also complicated the British politics on which Repeal was dependent. Kerby Miller writes:

> In 1845 and early 1846 Prime Minister Robert Peel urged the emergency in Ireland as a compelling reason to repeal the Corn Laws restricting food imports to Britain; his opponents countered by minimizing the Famine's dangers and by opposing Irish relief as unnecessary. Equally important, during the preceding decades Catholic spokesmen's seemingly endless recitals of Irish miseries had only alienated British public opinion…the abortive

[90] *United Irishman* in ibid., 144-47; Irish League in ibid., 156; The Conservative Party in the U.K. also faced a schism in 1846 over the Corn Laws, see Richard A. Gaunt, "The Fourth Duke of Newcastle, the Ultra-Tories and the Opposition to Canning's Administration," *History* 88 (2003): 569. Michael Ledger-Lomas, "The Character of Pitt the Younger and Party Politics, 1830-1860," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (2004) takes a different approach, analyzing the effects of the legacy of Pitt the Younger on the Conservative Party and the role of that legacy in the schism that developed.

> 1848 revolution merely provided Britons with further "proof" of Irish treachery and ingratitude.[91]

The Famine, the failed rebellion, the multiple splits in the movement, and the death of O'Connell all led to the petering out of the Repeal movement in Ireland, Repeal's home base.

In America, O'Connell's antislavery remarks led to the dissolution of the Friends of Repeal in Charleston and Natchez, Mississippi. Especially destructive had been O'Connell's "American Eagle" speech, in which he proposed Irish support for Britain in the crisis over the American annexation of Texas in exchange for British support for Repeal, using the metaphor of downing the American eagle from the sky. This comment resulted in the dissolution of the Friends of Repeal in Norfolk, Portsmouth, and New Orleans. O'Connell, whose negotiating partners were the British, shared with Garrison the willingness to jeopardize American unity in order to achieve his objective. Douglas Riach describes Garrison's underlying motive in courting Irish compassion and in encouraging O'Connell to issue the *Irish Address*:

> Garrison, however, had hailed the address as the means of breaking up a 'stupendous conspiracy', which he claimed existed between 'the leading Irish demagogues, the leading pseudo-Democrats, and the Southern slaveholders'. He felt that the south was supporting Irish repeal only in order to secure Irish-American votes for the Democratic party, and, if possible, to buy off anti-slavery testimonies.[92]

Unsaid here was that the Irish were willing to give their votes to the Democratic Party and to the slaveholders in order to protect themselves from Nativist sentiment. The *Irish Address* itself did not accomplish Garrison's goal, as it was soundly rejected by the Irish

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[91] The Famine is narrated in Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles,* chap. 7; quote on British politics in ibid., 283.
[92] Riach, "Daniel O'Connell and American Antislavery," 18-20.

American press and public opinion. However, it was abolitionism that eventually destroyed the "stupendous conspiracy."

Sectionalism in America continued to mount. Northern Democrats were outraged by the lack of support from Southern Democrats over the issue of settling territorial disputes over Oregon with Britain. The Southerners were afraid of war with the U.K. and the possibility of a revolution in the South among the slaves. In this light, the southern Democrats' attempt to annex Texas as a slave state highlighted the Southern attempt to expand the power of the slave states and to extend the institution of slavery. Compounding this aggravation was the Northern fear that emancipation of the slaves would lead to a Northern migration of black populations. Eventually, Northern and Southern Democrats were simply no longer able to hold onto their fragile coalition. David Wilmot's antislavery Proviso, first suggested in 1846, if it had passed, would have banned slavery from any territory gained from the Mexican War. In response to the noncooperation from other Democrats, Wilmot and other Northern Democrats formed or joined the Free Soil Party in 1848. Many others followed, a defection which held great consequences for the 1848 election. As Thomas R. Hietala writes about the Whig victory over the Democrats in that election:

> For a quarter of a century the Jacksonians successfully kept slavery out of national politics, but the Free-Soilers broke the moratorium in 1846. Within eighteen months during 1845 and 1846, the United States attained its continental breadth, launched its first sustained foreign war [with Mexico], and confronted again the dilemma of equality and inequality, freedom and slavery. The issues rekindled by this rapid expansion could not be resolved by American political institutions…[93]

[93] Hietala, *Manifest Design*, 254.

Thus, the Garrisonians' agitation, along with the liberalization of American commercial society in the North, ended the cooperation between Irish immigrants, the Democratic Party, and slaveholders. Though the revolution in France in 1848 caused a brief upsurge in the Repeal movement in America, it was short-lived following the embarrassing failure of the 1848 Irish insurrection. Within fifteen years the Irish in the American North would be waging war against the Irish in the American South. In this regard, regional nationalities subsumed previous immigrant nationalities. The Irish immigrant had become the U.S. or Confederate citizen.[94]

Bishop John England died in 1842 after falling ill on a return trip from Europe. For the American south, his death was a crushing blow to liberalism. Despite his seeming defense of slavery in the face of an immediate Nativist threat, Bishop England practiced liberalism to a great degree. He helped to expand its capaciousness by embracing other religions, the female gender, and other races. His establishment of schools for black children and diplomatic work with Haiti showed that he was a supporter of the rights of the black populations. He also typically supported abolitionism in its gradualist form, fearing the potentially destructive consequences of Garrison's immediatism. In an obituary in the *Boston Pilot*, the unknown author wrote, "In the death of Bishop England, true religion has lost a friend, for true religion is not in form, but of the heart." The article continued by naming many religions and describing how Bishop England was an advocate for and was respected by each of them. His support for Catholic Emancipation was particularly noted. As with the death of Daniel O'Connell in Ireland, Bishop

[94] Oregon issue in ibid., 230-31; free-Soil Party in ibid., 228-29; upsurge of FOI in Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 334-35.

England's death resulted in a loss of regional momentum for Repeal and its replacement by sectional in-fighting.[95]

[95] *Boston Pilot*, April 30, 1842.

Chapter Three: Episodic Polarities of the Green Atlantic

In the previous two chapters, we have discussed two episodes in Irish politics, Catholic Emancipation, from 1828 to 1829, and the campaign to repeal the Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland, from 1840 to 1848. In both periods, we looked specifically at the formation of support groups in America and how and why they raised money to fund Associations in Ireland for these two causes. In both eras, periodicals were used as the primary source for information on these support groups.

In Chapter One, I narrated the history of Catholic Emancipation and how Americans of Irish descent and Irish immigrants in Charleston learned of political events in Ireland, participated in the debate, and contributed financially to the Catholic Association in Ireland. The Catholic Association was run by Daniel O'Connell, a Catholic Irish leader prominent in both the episodes under study. The Catholic Association sought to influence the exclusively Protestant U.K. Parliament to vote for Catholic Emancipation. Catholic Emancipation would allow Catholics to hold office in the Parliament and thus to represent the majority Catholic population of Ireland in government. In the previous century, the Protestant minority in Ireland controlled government almost exclusively due to oppressive Penal Laws that restrained the rights of Catholics in Ireland. This movement was part of a series of gradually extended liberties for which Catholics and other liberals had fought in the previous few decades. This chapter followed the storyline of the formation of Charleston's Friends of Ireland (FOI) organization to its dissolution after the success of Catholic Emancipation as told through the *Catholic Miscellany*, a Catholic periodical, with a largely Irish American audience, run by John England, the Bishop of Charleston.

In Chapter Two, we narrated the history of the Repeal movement, and again how Americans of Irish descent and Irish immigrants communicated with their Irish counterparts in order to participate in the debate on Repeal. The Repeal movement was led once again by Daniel O'Connell. In Ireland, the Repeal Association was created to press Parliament to overturn the Act of Union of 1800. This act, a response to the failed Irish insurrection of 1798, consolidated the two parliaments of Ireland and Great Britain into one Parliament for the United Kingdom, located at the British center of power at Westminster, London. In America, the Friends of Repeal (FOR) was formed to support this cause and to gather contributions to send to the Irish Repeal Association. The attempts of Garrisonian abolitionists and Daniel O'Connell to link Repeal with radical abolitionism—support of immediate freedom for American slaves—revealed the boundaries of liberal inclusion in Repeal and caused the dissolution of the FOR in Charleston and other American cities. In the face of anti-immigrant Nativism, many Irish adopted a proslavery stance as a political compromise, other Irish supported the moderate, gradualist wing of abolitionism, and still others simply revealed their racist opinions on the subject of slavery.

In both of these episodes, private individuals organized in order to petition a government. To do this, they formed voluntary associations in civil society. Unlike persistent institutions such as the Catholic Church, these organizations were designed to be temporary. They were constructed for specific political purposes both in America and in Ireland. Although both periods saw similar models created and methods implemented, the two episodes culminated in drastically different results. Advocates for Catholic

Emancipation hailed the movement as a success. On the other hand, proponents of Repeal were disillusioned by the fracturing and eventual decline of that campaign.

What does this study, gleaned from the immigrant press of the early nineteenth century, tell us about the larger picture of that period? How did diffuse immigrant populations organize themselves into relevant political bodies, and why did they feel compelled to do so? Why did government institutions listen and pay attention to the actions of these structures? This chapter sheds some light on possible answers to these questions by defining the public sphere and discussing the transformation of the public sphere, as described by the philosopher Jürgen Habermas, from a liberal model to a model based on the more volatile form of democracy. Following this discussion, I will investigate Habermas' theory of communicative action and apply it to the existence of the immigrant press in the early nineteenth century America. I will then analyze if the Catholic Emancipation episode and the actions of the FOI of Charleston, as detailed in the *Catholic Miscellany*, accurately reflected the liberal model of the public sphere. Lastly, I will take the same approach, questioning if the Repeal episode and the machinations of the FOR of Charleston and Boston, as detailed through the *Boston Pilot* and the *Catholic Miscellany*, epitomized the popular and democratic model of the public sphere.

Transformation of the Public Sphere

In order to speak of changes to the public sphere, we must first clarify that term. In "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," the philosopher Jürgen

Habermas describes a historical institution he terms the public sphere, which unfolded in the liberal and enlightened struggle against aristocratic and autocratic government. Following the stratifying effects of industrialization, he suggests that the public sphere changed from a liberal model to a democratic model. The following section is divided into three parts. The first part will expand and examine Habermas' definition of the public sphere. The second part will detail Habermas' vision of the liberal model. The third will recount Habermas' view of the transformation of the public sphere to a more democratic model.[96]

Habermas describes the public sphere as an abstract space in which actors form public opinion. Essential to the public sphere is assembly, through which a public body is created. The public sphere can be specialized in terms of subject matter. For example, state activity is in the political public sphere, executed by the state authority. Of course, non-governmental opinion-making takes place as well. The public sphere performs the role of mediation between government and society. Historically, the birth of this role followed the progression of eighteenth century enlightenment, and it thus required the existence of enlightened actors to perform it.[97]

Habermas claims that there was nothing like a public sphere in medieval Western society. Then, authorities simply represented a monarchy or a theocracy, wielding power instead of responding to the will of the people. A few transitions had to occur before this system could transform to one with a bourgeois, or middle-class public sphere. First, religion became a private issue, thus separating ecclesiastical and public authority. Second, the nobility began to divide their budgets into private discretionary spending and

[96] Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," *New German Critique* 1, no. 3 (1974): passim.
[97] Ibid., 49-50.

public funds that were potentially open to public negotiation. Lastly, a bourgeois society formed from commercial and professional classes, a society that claimed interest in the usage of those public funds. The final and most relevant point about the bourgeois society is that its representatives began to use newspapers as tools against the public authorities in order to negotiate their claims. This arrangement resulted in a structure Habermas called the liberal model of the public sphere.[98]

Essential to the liberal model was freedom of information, wherein state proceedings were made public. The U.S. Constitution, for example, institutionalized this right in the first amendment, which guaranteed freedom of the press. Habermas says, "In the first modern constitutions the catalogues of fundamental rights were a perfect image of the liberal model of the public sphere: they guaranteed the society as a sphere of private autonomy and the restriction of public authority to a few functions." Legislatures also provided a formalized means of negotiating between the government and the private sphere constructed of assembled individuals.[99]

Liberalism also required assembly to function. The liberal model made use of newly-formed locales, including salons, coffee shops, theaters, and secret society lodges. These locations were places where society could mingle with the nobility and thus transfer ideas. Habermas describes the history of the coffee shop as an example of the rapid formation and spread of such milieus:

> Around the middle of the seventeenth century, after not only tea—first to be popular—but also chocolate and coffee had become the common beverages of at least the well-to-do strata of the population, the coachman of a Levantine merchant opened the first coffee house. By the first decade

[98] Ibid., 50-52.
[99] Ibid., 52-54.

> of the eighteenth century London already had 3,000 of them, each with a core group of regulars.[100]

It is important to note that at this point, this assembled body still represented a small portion of the population, specifically the literate and wealthy segment. The vast majority of people could not claim access to this system, due to illiteracy, poverty, or other restrictions on equal access.

Literary journalism became one of the principal mediums through which the bourgeois actors communicated in the public sphere. The formation of editorial staffs for these newspapers was a major component of this change. Habermas describes this new role: "The press remained an institution of the public itself, effective in the manner of a mediator and intensifier of public discussion, no longer a mere organ for the spreading of news but not yet the medium of consumer culture." Similarly, the political scientist Benedict Anderson writes of the international influence of this "spirit of liberalism" broadcast by means of literacy and print capitalism. He informs, "There is also no doubt that improving trans-Atlantic communications, and the fact that the various Americas shared languages and cultures with their respective metropoles, meant a relatively rapid and easy transmission of the new economic and political doctrines being produced in Western Europe."[101]

Liberalism was born from public recognition of economic stratification in society. The historian Uday Mehta writes of the popularization of liberalism as a term of use and of the genesis of liberal thought from knowledge of inequality:

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[100] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 32.
[101] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 51.

> When liberals and others in Britain reflect on India or other posts of the empire, they do so with a knowledge of this inequality…even before liberalism becomes explicitly paternalistic, following the Napoleonic Wars and the ascendancy of the [British] Whigs in the 1830s, it assumes a paternal posture—as odd mix of maturity, familial concern, and an underlying awareness of the capacity to direct, and if need be, coerce. One gets a sense of these varied sentiments in the frequently used expressions "*our* Indian subjects," "*our* Empire," "*our* dependents." The possessive pronoun simultaneously conveys familiarity and distance, warmth, and sternness, responsibility and raw power.[102]

All three writers point to a historical period wherein liberal sentiments played a great role in the formation of government and formed the rules through which private individuals could influence that government. Not surprisingly, this period saw the proliferation of periodicals and their editorial staffs.

Habermas describes a transformation from the liberal model to a new model based on democracy. The principal factor in this transformation was that the public sphere expanded from representing bourgeois society to representing a much greater body of people. This reshaping of the public sphere followed the emergence of the commercial and industrial revolution. The new model is dependent on the existence of free market capitalism. Habermas explains, "Conflicts hitherto restricted to the private sphere now intrude into the public sphere. Group needs which can expect no satisfaction from a self-regulating market now tend towards a regulation by the state. The public sphere, which now must mediate these demands, becomes a field for the competition of interests, competitions which assume the form of violent conflict."[103] Habermas claims that in this second period freedom of information was subsumed by conscious acts of publicity and

[102] Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 10-11.
[103] Habermas, "The Public Sphere," 53.

public relations, thus the public sphere that had previously formed by more or less spontaneous means became a consciously manipulated construct.

Liberalism was an economic struggle at its core. The historian Charles Sellers also sees in this period a competition for control of the public sphere, though he casts the conflict as one between developmentalism and rural egalitarianism. He posits, "The democratic impulse was driven by feelings of insecurity and powerlessness as the market disrupted ordinary lives. Contrary to liberal mythology, democracy was born in tension with capitalism, and not as its natural and legitimizing political expression." Both Habermas and Sellers point to commercialization as a driving force behind the transformation of the public sphere.[104]

In this section we have examined Habermas' theory of the transformation of the public sphere from a liberal to a democratic model. Let us now turn to the Irish immigrants to America. How did they react to the existing public sphere? Did they alter it in a unique fashion? Perhaps the Irish in America created their own public sphere?

The Immigrant Press as Communicative Action

In the following section we will look at how the Irish in America identified themselves, and how they used public discourse in order to negotiate their position in the public sphere. This section will begin by defining Habermas' concept of communicative action. The next part will examine how this action contributed to Irish identity. Then, we will take a short look at how language conflict further shaped Irish immigrant identity. Lastly, I will illuminate how the immigrant press served as a type of halfway house

[104] Ibid., 54; Sellers, *Market Revolution*, 32.

between the old and new worlds, through which the Irish could perform communicative action.

Rather than a Marxist revolutionary interpretation of history, Habermas' brand of critical theory suggests that it is communicative action that moves societies from one historical stage to another. Habermas explains the difference between strategic action and communicative action; he writes, "Whereas in strategic action one actor seeks to *influence* the behavior of another by means of the threat of sanctions or the prospect of gratification in order to *cause* the interaction to continue as the first actor desires, in communicative action one actor seeks *rationally* to *motivate* another by relying on the illocutionary binding/bonding effect (*Bindungeseffekt*) of the offer contained in his speech act." In simpler terms changes are made through discourse rather than revolutionary violence or authoritative command. Without wandering too far afield, the relevant issue at hand for this section is that the liberal society negotiating through the editorial discourse of periodicals is a clear case of social interaction to gain one's ends as opposed to the more traditional will of authority.[105]

Furthermore, Habermas explains the importance of community identity in communicative action:

> Communicative action can be understood as a circular process in which the actor is two things in one: an *initiator* who masters situations through actions for which he is accountable and a *product* of the traditions surrounding him, of groups whose cohesion is based on solidarity to which he belongs, and of processes of socialization in which he is reared.[106]

[105] Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990), 58.
[106] Ibid., 135.

The important idea here is that actors do not act in an isolated manner. They are intrinsically part of a community, and they interact within the boundaries of a shared identity. Let us next look at some general characteristics of identity as well as how identity was shaped for Irish immigrants in the early nineteenth century.

Identity can mean many things, of course. Both Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper seek to outline the many definitions of identity in order to ask whether the term is even relevant or useful to historians. Both agree that it has its uses, but it should be defined in context, and perhaps subdivided into more restricted, meaningful terms. In this section, identity means both individual identity and collective identity. We will also see how group identity is fluid, complex, and overlapping, and how group identity can be internally or externally perceived.[107]

Though it can be argued, most theorists believe there is some type of individual identity. The sociologist Stuart Hall describes four factors that disrupt the individual identity, the Freudian ego, of a person: historical conditions, the unconscious mind, linguistic determinism, and ethnorelativism. The first two terms are close to what Hall describes, but the latter two are terms I am using to describe what he neglects to name. The historical conditions are quite simply the accidents of birth, such as location, family, race, and class, and the unpredictable historical events that present themselves throughout one's life. The unconscious mind refers to the uncontrollable psychological and physiological events that take place in our subconscious. Linguistic determinism is part of a larger theory called the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Linguistic relativism, the first part of this hypothesis, claims that different languages prescribe unique world views.

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[107] Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004, 33-35; Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, "Identity," in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, ed. Frederick Cooper. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005, 59-90.

Linguistic determinism, the second part, theorizes that humans can only think within the mental boundaries and frameworks that their language allows. Hall's last factor goes unnamed as well, but I will use the term, ethnorelativism. Ethnorelativism describes the disruption to one's identity as one comes into contact with different cultural world views other than one's own. With these four factors of disruption in mind, Hall states, "Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space, or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses." The mention of a space is reminiscent of the spatial rubric used for the public sphere metaphor.[108]

Beyond this level of individual identity is collective identity. Brubaker and Cooper define this concept:

> Understood as specifically a *collective* phenomenon, *identity* denotes fundamental and consequential *sameness* among members of a group or category. This may be understood objectively (as a sameness "in itself") or subjectively (as an experienced, felt, or perceived sameness). This sameness is expected to manifest itself in solidarity, in shared dispositions or consciousness, or in collective action.[109]

According to the authors, identification can be "relational or categorical." In the relational sense, an individual is seen in a hierarchical network in a position that can be ranked in comparison to others. In the categorical sense, an individual is seen as a member of a group. On one hand, a person can self-identify himself or herself. On the other, a person can be identified externally by others. In the case of Irish immigrants, a

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[108] Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference," *Radical America* 23, no. 4 (1991): 10-12; Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in Andrew Dalby, *Language in Danger* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 266; ethnorelativism in Milton J. Bennett, "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity," in *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, ed. R.M. Paige (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1993), 2.
[109] Brubaker and Cooper, "Identity," 65.

group with a collective categorical identity, both self-perceived and externally-perceived, undertook communicative action, in order to create or influence a public sphere.

With these concepts of identity in mind, what then can we understand about the identity of Irish immigrants in the early nineteenth century? Irish immigrants emigrated from a complex demography in Ireland; by no means was the Irish immigrant molded in a homogeneous cast. Most Irish were Catholic, but there was a Protestant majority in Ulster as well as a Protestant cluster in and around Dublin, in a region that was formerly referred to as the English Pale. Protestants were also a diverse group, consisting of Church of Ireland members, Presbyterians, Quakers, and other Dissenters. Besides the religious differences, there were historic ethnic differences as well. Many Irish were of Celtic origin, while many others traced their roots back to former conquests and migrations from England and Scotland. These groups of ethnic identities did not match religious divisions exactly. Distinctions often overlapped. For example, the Old English were Catholics who had settled during the Anglo-Norman invasions and migrations from the twelfth century through the reformation, and the New English were Protestants who were sent over as settlers as part of the plantation policy of James I in the early seventeenth century and later. Similarly, just like any other society, there were differences among economic strata, genders, professions, and geographic regions.[110]

Another factor of demographic complexity for Irish immigrants was language. In the early nineteenth century, though it was in decline, many Irish people still spoke the Irish language, part of the Insular Goidelic branch of the Celtic sub-family of Indo-European. The historian Kevin Collins describes how the Irish language was still the majority language of Ireland in 1800, but that the pace of decline accelerated around the

[110] For a brief introduction to the Old English in Ireland, see Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 11-14.

1830s as Protestant public schools were built in Ireland using English language instruction. As the Irish language lost its prestige and economic viability, more Irish turned to bilingualism or the English language exclusively. The educational incentives compounded with the historical persecution of Irish speakers accelerated this process of linguistic assimilation. Although the second half of the century would see linguistic nationalism spread in the proliferation of Irish language revival movements in both Ireland and America, it would be too late to reverse the decline in that century.[111]

In the first half of the nineteenth century before the Famine, most Irish immigrants were English-speaking. The leaders of the Irish had not yet embraced linguistic nationalism. According to the historian Richard Davis, the leader of the Young Irelanders of the 1840s, Thomas Davis, did not support the Irish language to the extent that traditional historiography suggests. Although in 1843, he advocated the spread of Irish, calling English "the mongrel of a hundred breeds," he grew more cautious as his confidence in Repeal's quick success waned, envisioning instead a bilingual country with English at least dominate around the Dublin center. Daniel O'Connell, who was fluent in Irish, used the language when appropriate, such as when asked a question in Irish. However, the revival of the Irish language was simply not his primary concern. He conceded the greater political and economic utility of the English language for the Irish people. O'Connell, when asked about the language, replied:

> …I am sufficiently utilitarian not to regret its gradual abandonment. A diversity of tongues is no benefit; it was first imposed on mankind as a curse, at the building of Babel. It would be of vast advantage to mankind if all

[111] For more on the historical linguistics of Irish, see Peter Forster and Alfred Toth, "Toward a Phylogenetic Chronology of Ancient Gaulish, Celtic, and Indo-European," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 100, no. 15 (2003): 9081-82; Kevin Collins, *Catholic Churchmen and the Celtic Revival in Ireland 1848-1916* (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2002), 40-41.

> inhabitants spoke the same language. Therefore, although the Irish language is connected with many recollections that twine around the hearts of Irishmen, yet the superior utility of the English tongue, as the medium of modern communication, is so great, that I can witness without a sigh the gradual disuse of the Irish.[112]

Gillian Ní Ghabhann points out that many historians agree and claim that Irish immigrants' fluency of English gave them an advantage over other immigrants in America. The historian Kerby Miller argues the opposite, saying that employers preferred the docile subservience of non-English speakers, those who could not argue. Regardless of the inherent advantage to English speakers, it is clear that the majority of Irish immigrants were not yet proponents of linguistic nationalism.[113]

If language shapes identity, then what does it mean that Irish immigrants were using the English language to converse? One postcolonial consideration is that the Irish were using the language of the empire as a tool to subvert the power structure and to negotiate their own power within that system. Another possibility is that the Irish truly found themselves drawn at this point in time between a variety of poles, the old world and the new world, the Celtic world and the British world, monarchy and republicanism, and even between the worlds of subjugation and dominance. There were many dichotomies in Irish identity that crept into public and private discourse. Reminiscent of the communicative action of Habermas, Charles Taylor explains the importance of this language factor in understanding the world view of this community:

> It would be useful, however, to outline briefly the consequences it has for a theory of society: any atomistic

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[112] O'Connell quoted in Tony Crowley, *The Politics of Language in Ireland 1366-1922: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 153.
[113] Davis, *The Young Irelanders*, 234-36; Gillian Ní Ghabhann, "The Gaelic Revival in the US in the Nineteenth Century," *Chronicon* 2, (1988): 1; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 356-57.

> conception of society in the tradition of Hobbes and Locke which explains social order in terms of the actions of and agreements between individuals becomes unacceptable. By contrast, the individual's particular projects and plans are drawn from the sum of what has been handed down by the linguistic community of which s/he is a member. S/he first proceeds the way 'one' proceeds and only subsequently can s/he find formulations for truly individual intentions. The notion of a self-centered individual presupposed the community and consequently the framework of customs and norms within which s/he acts. Social theory cannot exclusively take the individual into account, but must also consider this framework of common customs and norms.[114]

Because the Irish were in such close communication with their homeland, they became a diaspora. The historian Robin Cohen in *Global Diasporas* describes several types of diaspora, but he fits the Irish into the "victim" category. Historically, it is impossible to prove that the entire population of Irish immigrants saw themselves as victims of persecution. Many Protestants and especially those in Orange, or triumphal anti-Catholic, movements would have seen themselves as part of the establishment. However, it is clear that the rhetoric of Irish immigrant populations did express a sense of exile and persecution that is worth studying. The introduction of the *Green Book,* by John Cornelius O'Callaghan, published in 1842 by Patrick Donahoe, the editor of the *Boston Pilot*, quotes a certain Doctor Doyle, "I am an Irishman, hating injustice, and abhorring with my whole soul the oppression of my country…"[115] So we see just one of many examples of the victim identity of the diasporic Irish population in America.

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[114] Charles Taylor, "Language and Society," in *Communicative Action: Essays on Jürgen Habermas' The Theory of Communicative Action* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 24.
[115] Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 31; O'Callaghan, *The Green Book*, 3.

The press established for immigrants created a bridge between their homelands and their destinations. The historian Francis Walsh comments on the benefit of such a diasporic medium of communication:

> That half-way house bred a half-way source of information, the immigrant press. Such a journal could interpret the newcomer's strange environment intelligibly while keeping him informed of the births, marriages, deaths, and politics of the land he left behind. These papers, by providing the immigrant with a verbal bridge that spanned the ocean, played a major role in the process of assimilation.[116]

In *The Tree of Liberty*, the historian Kevin Whelan claims that the proliferation of newspapers was a part of the process of breaking the traditional links between elites and political participation, since newspapers were available to large sections of the population at relatively low prices compared to books.[117]

Immigrants established other mechanisms to help each other within their diaspora. For example, on January 7, 1843, the *Boston Pilot* reported the creation of an Emigrant Society. This society was an organization that sought to help newly arrived emigrants to America. Kerby Miller suggests that, though economic reasons were still primary, it was also this type of support and encouragement, including letters of praise for America, which self-perpetuated the emigration process from Ireland.[118]

This section has described how the Irish identity was in a state of flux among immigrants. These immigrants found multiple ways to express their interests and to define their identity through discourse in the public sphere, especially through newspapers. In this arena, politics and culture quite naturally mixed, such as when the

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[116] Walsh, *The Boston Pilot*, 9.
[117] Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism, and the Construction of Irish Identity 1760-1830* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 71.
[118] *Boston Pilot*, January 7, 1843.

Boston Friends of Repeal through a Repeal Ball in April of 1842. Using the newspapers of this period and a few other sources, such as the *Green* Book, in the next section, I will attempt to illuminate how opposing liberal and democratic forces clashed in the Irish immigrants' constructs and manipulations of the public sphere. While periods of liberalism and democracy were in no way mutually exclusive, we can identify periods when one force was greater than the other in some actors' minds, and we can also show when these forces were acting against each other.[119]

Catholic Emancipation and the Liberal Public Sphere

The liberal model of the public sphere was essentially an economic one. At its heart was what Stuart Hall in "Variants of Liberalism" calls "freedom from constraint." He specifies:

> Note that it does not mean that people must have equality of condition so that they can compete equally; or that those who start from a poorer position should be 'positively advantaged' so that they can really, in fact, compete on equal terms; and it certainly does not mean that everyone should end up in roughly equal positions.[120]

Liberal rhetoric called for inclusiveness, but the public sphere was still exclusive at this time. What this means in this period is that liberals were typically fighting to expand to a larger group membership within the existing economic system.

A good example of this mentality would be Daniel O'Connell, who under Catholic Emancipation struggled for inclusion of Catholic elites within the existing U.K.

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[119] Repeal Ball in *Boston Pilot*, April 16, 1842.
[120] Stuart Hall, "Variants of Liberalism," in *Politics and Ideology: A Reader*, ed. James Donald and Stuart Hall. [Buckingham, U.K.]: Open University Press, 1986, 41.

Parliament in the 1820s and 1830s. This effort was not democratic, as it did not seek to extend new rights to the Irish Catholic masses. However, it certainly helped to establish some democratic processes that would be used in the following decades in a different way. The culmination of Catholic Emancipation, in fact, actually stripped away suffrage from smaller landholders and their tenants. A very undemocratic deal was struck in the Parliament to make political life accessible for these fewer Catholic elites.

The liberal movement of Catholic Emancipation did see many republican elements. The primary movers were raised in the republican revolutionary era or soon after, so in examining the rhetoric, we see calls for voting and for freedom. However, for the most part, these calls are restricted to white men with property. Other than the Bill of Rights' freedoms of religion, assembly, and the press, not too many other freedoms are being promoted actively in Catholic Emancipation rhetoric. As discussed in Chapter One, there is at this time no direct commentary about blacks and slavery in America.

The historian Matthew Mason saw the liberal rhetoric of slaveholding powers, the U.K. and the U.S., as a contest of national pride. Slavery simply did not fit into the economic concept of liberalism. Mason describes how Southerners felt under "ideological siege" over this institution and moved to a tactic of finding ways to defend the concept of slavery. Americans and British often found themselves using antislavery rhetoric as a weapon in their foreign relations disputes. Mason says, "Americans sought to avoid being stigmatized as backward on slave trade abolition. In the early nineteenth century, one could not pose as a friend to both liberty and slavery."[121] As we saw in

[121] Matthew Mason, "The Battle of the Slaveholding Liberators: Great Britain, the United States, and Slavery in the Early Nineteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2002): 15.

Chapter two, the way around that dilemma was typically to not talk about slavery at all. This avoidance was certainly applicable to the period of Catholic Emancipation.

Catholic Emancipation was not thematically a democratic movement. Though Daniel O'Connell set up the Catholic Association and the Catholic Rent, which did appear as a sort of political party and a means to contribute to that party, the organization was not about mass participation in its direction and purpose. The leadership of the Catholic Association was still restricted to elite actors, such as politicians and priests. The priests were actively involved in ushering their poorer parishioners who had the franchise out to vote. They used threats of hell and punishment to get Catholic tenants to vote against the wishes of their Protestant landlords. For the most part, poor Catholics were not overly concerned with who represented them in government. They had other concrete concerns over rent, land ownerships, and tithes.[122]

Looking in the *Catholic Miscellany* in the Catholic Emancipation period, we see many different angles and trends coming together. The FOI of Charleston was primarily assembled in order to gather funds to support the political movement of Catholic Emancipation back in Ireland. So, how did they appeal for contributions? How could they motivate their friends, neighbors, and relatives to continue their donations and memberships? In this section we will examine the FOI in the *Catholic Miscellany* in terms of the group's views on and usage of liberalism. We will examine membership and investigate who might be excluded. Next, Catholic Emancipation rhetoric made appeals to religious, humanistic, kinship, republican, and liberal ideals and responsibilities. We will examine how the *Catholic Miscellany* covered those areas of appeal.

[122] O'Farrell, *Catholic Emancipation*, 235-57.

Liberalism had racial, class, and gender boundaries. While liberals easily spoke of inclusion, many groups were excluded. Most of the time, these groups are not named. They simply were not envisioned as constituents of the polity. When Irish Carolinians founded the FOI in Charleston in October of 1828, they specifically said, "Any person of whatever national, political or religious denomination, may be a member of the association." Interestingly, ethnicity or race was not included in this list. Neither was gender. There was also a requirement for an application by written letter, which would have required literacy. In this way, an educated member was assumed. Although there were some democratic values involved, such as majority rule voting, the style of organization was more reflective of the elite republican values of the turn of the century. There was an elected Board of Officers, including a President, but this seemingly democratic structure did not represent mass democracy. Rather, the electors were generally members of the local elite. This is not to say that poorer men or an occasional female or black person was never present. These events did occur, as we saw in Chapter One, but they were neither consistent nor frequent.[123]

This mixed group of liberal elites was inconsistent in their description of the goals of the FOI. Yes, they wanted the passing of an act in the Parliament that would allow future participation of Catholics in self-governance, but they also wanted much more. The rhetoric often consisted of much more vague and far-reaching objectives. The FOI sought "sympathy and aid to the persecuted Irishman," "the emancipation of Ireland," "the promotion of education in Ireland," and "the protection of the independent exercise of suffrage." When one said "the emancipation of Ireland" rather than "of Catholics," one posed entirely different and unclear demands for the movement. Did emancipation mean

[123] *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828.

freedom of religion, as in the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, Ireland's Anglican state church which collected tithes from Protestants and bitter Catholics alike? Or did one mean establishing a federalist state within the larger United Kingdom to allow all Irish to better govern themselves? Or did one mean revolution and separation from the United Kingdom? Typical of the rhetoric of exiles and persecution of the period, such statements conveyed a general mood of mistrust and disfranchisement. Furthermore, education and suffrage, when spoken of in this context, only applied to the traditional Catholic elite and the members of the rising commercial class.[124]

The rhetoric of the FOI used varying angles to win over the hearts and minds of its audience, including appeals to religion, humanity, kinship, republicanism, and, of course, economic and political liberalism. In this period, especially in America, the call for religious liberty was a strong one. Religious liberty meant freedom of conscience and protection from interference or persecution. The October 11 issue of the *Miscellany* called religious liberty "the mandates of Revelation." In a December 15th, 1828, letter to the FOI of Charleston, Patrick Barry, a Wexford emigrant residing in Salisbury North Carolina, stated:

> The heart sickens, as the mind contemplates, the scenes of carnage and of blood which have desolated unhappy Ireland in the name of Religion, as if man worshipped his creator by the immolation of his species. But thanks heaven the spirit of enquiry is abroad—the sacred name of Religion will be wrested from the hands of tyrants, and will cease to be a pretext for cruelty and crime.[125]

A report in the *Miscellany* on the proceedings of the actual vote on Emancipation in the Parliament gave examples of some Protestant ministers' reasoning on their positive votes.

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[124] *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828; October 25, 1828.
[125] Patrick Barry's letter is in the *Catholic Miscellany*, January 3, 1829.

The Bishop of Norwich paraphrased a maxim of Locke, saying that "no man should suffer in his civil right in consequence of his religious opinions. The Duke of Sussex supported the measure on constitutional and religious grounds, commenting, exclusion was no part of the British Constitution; but an excrescence growing out of it…[and] that persecution was no part of the Church of England."[126]

The liberal movement was very specific about voluntaryism as well. Voluntaryism was a concept that insisted that church participation be voluntary and that the church be separated from the laity. Bishop John England and other Catholic priests resisted any forces that attacked voluntaryism such as compulsory tithes to the Anglican Church of Ireland, government appointment of bishops, which was called *the veto*, and government grants for religious institutions. Although there was certainly government aid in education, including the 1795 establishment of the Catholic seminary at Maynooth by the Irish government, there were many liberal priests derisive of such contributions.[127]

Liberal rhetoric also focused on humanitarianism; humans had a responsibility to act in certain ways towards other humans. The October 11, 1828, *Miscellany* used terms like "duties of mankind." The article stated that one must be "the good man," or someone who is merciful and generous. One stretched beyond national borders and highlighted the commonality of humanity when one spoke of "his fellows of every nation and every clime." Rather than the divine compulsion of the previous responsibility, human

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[126] *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828; Emancipation debate in parliament in *Catholic Miscellany*, May 23, 1829.
[127] Maynooth in Kevin Collins, *Catholic Churchmen and the Celtic Revival in Ireland 1848-1916* (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2002), 45.

responsibility was biological and scientific, "not less by the voice of nature." This was not divine Nature, but nature as humane and ecological behavior.[128]

The appeal to family was an easy sell. Kindred ties were central to Irish communities and to immigrants. The members of the FOI reasoned that American Irish were more likely to help the Catholics of Ireland because they were ethnically and socially related. Referring to this connection, a FOI article stated, "He does so more readily for those who are connected with him through the ties of kindred or of friendship." Another article, an appeal to female Americans, reminded readers, "Shall then, the descendants of an Irish family forget the affinity which connects her with the sages; the orators; the poets; the noble peasantry, whose patriotism, and long suffering, reflects honour on their kindred, and their names."[129]

Following the republican revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century, the early nineteenth century reflected the legacy of these movements. The speeches and letters of the FOI were full of republican rhetoric. Again, this sentiment was not mass democracy. Voting was seen as a duty of conscience and not a natural right of all mankind. Bishop John England said the following about voting:

> Too often, my hearers, too often do we forget that the right of suffrage is not a privilege conferred upon us for the advancement of our private interest, but that it is a great duty, for the whole discharge of which we are amenable to Heaven. The permanence and prosperity of our institutions can be secured only by each individual's exercising his political rights according to his conscience, and not from interested private views. This is what we call popular

[128] *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828.
[129] *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828; appeal to the "ladies" in *Catholic Miscellany*, December 13, 1828.

> virtue, and this alone is the solid basis on which republicanism can rest.[130]

In his statement, we see that voting was an act of civic virtue, and actually the antithesis of expressing the will of the people. Rather, voting was judging what was for the good of the people.

Much of the republican appeal was made through reminding contemporaries of the military sacrifices of the previous generation for the republican cause. An FOI article stated, "We owe them a debt of gratitude." The article continued by pointing out the particular Irish debt, not just in America, but worldwide, "nor on any spot in the civilized world has the banner of freedom ever been unfurled, without Irishmen being enrolled among its defenders!" Because Irishmen fought in America to attain freedom, Americans should be responsive to the Irishmen's current plight. In an April 25, 1829, speech, FOI member, John Carroll, said:

> This was not all. *Irishmen died in the van of your old father's battles.* Nor was this all. When a noble Son of Carolina cried "millions for defence," Irishmen gave up their all for defence. They asked not whether your old fathers were Hebrews, protestants, or Turks, or what not; theirs were the battles of freedom, and this was enough fro Irishmen to know. They put down their money and their lives; and could your old fathers' [sic] come up this instant from the grave, they would tell you, "*you must aid the sons of those men who aided us.*"[131]

Not only did Americans owe Ireland a particular debt, but Americans were also bound by the general cause of the republican principle. FOI member Patrick Barry reminded his

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[130] Bishop England and voting in Peter Clarke, *A Free Church in a Free Society: The Ecclesiology of John England Bishop of Charleston, 1820-1842 a Nineteenth Century Missionary Bishop in the Southern United States*. [For the Center for John England Studies, Inc.] Hartsville, SC: Bagpipe Press, Inc., 1982, 352.
[131] Carroll's speech in *Catholic Miscellany*, April 25, 1829.

listeners of the maxim, "a brave and virtuous people can never be slaves." Of course, in this speech, he does not mention African slaves.[132]

The last appeal the advocates of Catholic Emancipation use was liberal responsibility. Liberalism called for freedom from economic and political restraints, so that an enterprising person could pursue property and profit. Catholic Emancipation highlighted the potential of political participation of a new group. In the May 23, 1829, issue of the *Miscellany* the *London Sun* was quoted, "from this auspicious date the Papists are free: the doors of either house are open to them: they have henceforth a stake in the Constitution—and may rise, according to their deserts, in every liberal profession." Furthermore John Carroll, the South Carolinian son of an Irish immigrant, made the argument that Americans owe the Irish an economic debt:

> But it is for the substantial things in life that we are most indebted to them [the Irish.] They have settled among us, industrious and enlightened, accumulating fortunes, and spending them in our cities. In the Northern States particularly, they are at the head of the most valuable manufactories; enriching the country with their skill and practical philosophy.[133]

In this sort of speech we see the most direct liberal expression of allowing a new group to participate in an existing economic system.[134]

In this section we have discussed how Catholic Emancipation had little practical relevance to the majority of poor, Irish Catholics. The historian Owen Dudley Edwards describes this apathy:

> In practice, Catholic emancipation enabled the wealthier adherents of Roman Catholicism to take their places in the

[132] Legacy of Irishmen in *Catholic Miscellany*, October 11, 1828; Barry's letter in ibid., January 3, 1829.
[133] Carroll's speech in *ibid.*, April 25, 1829.
[134] London Sun in *ibid.*, May 23, 1829.

> ranks of the elected oligarchs. Beyond this, it did little to enable the Irish to participate to any significant degree in the Parliament of the realm. Indeed, as the act that admitted Catholic members to Parliament brought with it the disfranchisement of the "forty-shilling freeholders," much of the basis of Irish Catholic political strength was destroyed.[135]

We have also examined the various forms of appeal that were evident in the rhetoric of the period in order to show how the liberal model of the public sphere was being utilized. Newspaper editors and other community elites used the newspapers and other accessible publications to enact communicative action in order to compel society to include a new group into the existing liberal economic system. Within the liberal rhetoric were plenty of examples of the beginning of nationalism, especially the references to kindred. In the next section, we will examine how the rhetoric and processes changed even more so in the Repeal era to express new and divisive democratic forces.

Repeal and the Democratic Public Sphere

In the second episode of this study, democratic movements allowed more and more diverse groups to participate in the public sphere. Although at face value this would seem an inclusive concept, democracy is predicated on an ongoing struggle over inclusion and exclusion. As individuals and groups began to express their private or particular interests, many new clashes inevitably developed. As liberalism generally benefited a smaller group of advocates, those members of society could debate topics in the press, through the liberal public sphere. So much disagreement appeared in later years

[135] Edwards, "The American Image of Ireland," 255-56.

among varied interests that the public sphere was no longer capable of providing the only means for working out these differences. At the specific level, Repeal failed. At a larger level, these democratic forces led to party splits, failed insurrections, and a civil war. Let us look at the rhetoric and actions of Repeal for signs of some of these larger democratic issues and cleavages.

The goal of Repeal was disunion. Contrarily, the goal of Emancipation was inclusion. Repeal was profoundly affected by democratic forces which sought to include more members in the civil liberties that had been advocated by the liberal movement. Emancipation's outcome actually had removed previous self-representation enjoyed by parts of the Irish population. Both eras had their respective contradictions. In this chapter, we will speak briefly of democracy and its spread in Ireland and America. Then, we will explore the rhetoric of division that entered the public sphere in the 1830s and 1840s.

Charles Sellers describes democracy as a reaction against the encroachment of capitalism. Previously farmers had experienced a kind of egalitarian rural economic system made possible by the abundance of cheap land in America. The crowding of the eastern seaboard limited the lifespan of the old system. Citizens moved west to extend temporarily the life of their land-based inheritance system or were forced to adapt to the new commercial society. The new economy created new class stratifications between the poor and the wealthy. While the new wealthy class explored ways to justify their new experiences through religion, the poor struggled for an equalization of opportunities. This struggle was not a liberal economic policy; freedom from constraint never promised to level the playing field for participants.[136]

[136] Sellers, *The Market Revolution*.

In the 1820s, democracy found its figureheads. In Ireland, Daniel O'Connell was seen as the promoter of the rights of the majority Catholic population of Ireland, even though as we have analyzed, Catholic Emancipation was not a movement for democratic rights. Repeal was closer to being democratic, as it sought to bring self-rule nearer to home by giving Ireland its own parliament. As we have seen, calls for Repeal were extremely mixed with general rhetoric concerning general Irish freedoms and rights. In the United States, angered by the elitist outcome of the 1824 election in which the will of the electorate was ignored by the Democratic Party, Andrew Jackson set out to institutionalize new democratic functions. While the success of his goals is debatable, his popularity did reflect the sentiment of the voting public.[137]

Many historians insist nationalism is inherently tied in with democracy. Habermas describes nationalism as:

> A national consciousness propagated by intellectuals and scholars that slowly spread outward from the urban bourgeoisie—a consciousness that crystallized around the fiction of a common ancestry, the construction of a shared history, and a grammatically standardized written language—did indeed transform subjects for the first time into politically aware citizens who identify with the republican constitution and its declared goals. But notwithstanding this catalyzing role, nationalism is not a necessary or permanent precondition of a democratic process. The progressive extension of the status of citizenship to the whole population does not just provide the state with a new source of secular legitimization; it also produces a new level of abstract, legally mediated social integration.[138]

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[137] For Andrew Jackson and the election of 1824, see Remini, *Legacy of Andrew Jackson*.
[138] Jürgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other*, ed. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo de Greiff. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000.

The historian Liah Greenfeld describes nationalism as "the location of sovereignty within the people and the recognition of the fundamental equality among its various strata."[139] Greenfeld explains that at first this was the definition of both nationalism and democracy, but then they diverged. In the nationalist model, democracy ended up being administered by those who would interpret the will of the people for them, along a more authoritarian line. The historian Benedict Anderson points out that imagined national communities developed their own vocabulary for nationalist sentiment and expressing political love, especially concerning kindred and home. He also points out that nationalism requires exclusion, often based around racism or class, in order to exist. These descriptions of democracy and nationalism are beginning to look more and more like the same vocabulary used regarding Irish patriotism in the Repeal era.

Rhetoric about home and homelands abounded in the periodicals and popular Irish writings of the Repeal era. An article on the death of Bishop John England speaks of his native country and longing for home, saying, "His native country was ever green in his memory and dear to his heart." The historian Kerby Miller has emphasized the imagery of Irish as exiles in this period. The Repeal era nationalist author Cornelius O'Callaghan depicts Ireland as a homeland in a poem, charging that the fondness for home grew in times of struggle, "'Tis winter's chilling blasts that serve to bind us most to home."[140]

This notion of home led to a vocabulary of kindred as well. At times these words reflected fellowship with other natives, such as in the phrase, "the home of his oppressed

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[139] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 10-11; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 143-44.
[140] "Death of Bishop England" in *Catholic Miscellany*, 1842; O'Callaghan, "I Saw Thee—Time's Rude Hand Had Dimmed," *The Green Book*, 31-32.

and exiled fellow countrymen." At other times the relationship was drawn to express familial bonds. Similarly, this bond was often translated as romantic affection for a love object, as in this poem about the sorrows of emigration from *The Green Book*:

> Dear isle of my birth, ere I sail from thy shores,
> In the banquet's wild glow I will try to subdue
> The thought I leave *her* whom my bosom adores—
> Yet, in silence, as if to affection untrue.
>
> In silence, as if to affection untrue—
> For vain were this fevered emotion to quell
> The throb of the heart, in its lingering adieu,
> The frenzy of love, in its burning farewell.[141]

Ireland was also a mother figure, and her diasporic brood was often described as the "sons of Erin" or the "daughters of Erin." In this manner, the Irish formed a nationalist construction of a family. This process of definition, however, included the exclusion of those who did not fit into this family.[142]

The rhetoric of exclusion is easy to find. Regarding the "Irish Address," the *Catholic Miscellany* had the following denial of its truthful origin, which served to name the enemies of Irish nationalism as envisioned in the American South:

> As to the 60,000 signers, we have no doubt it is a mere fiction of the brain of the negro who put forth the report at Boston. We question whether there were 600 signers to it—if there were, most of them were Quakers and enemies to the Repeal cause. The truth is very few of the repeal people of Ireland take any interest in abolition of negro slavery. They have enough to do to throw off their own yoke, and out earnest hope is, that they will succeed.[143]

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[141] O'Callaghan, "Dear Isle of My Birth, Ere I Sail from Thy Shores," *The Green Book*, 77.
[142] "Death of Bishop England," *Catholic Miscellan*y, 1842.
[143] *Catholic Miscellany*, 1842.

In the previous quote, Quakers, abolitionists, and blacks were all accused of not being supportive of Repeal, when, of course, opponents of slavery sought to link their cause with the cause of Irish self-government. A subsequent letter from Bishop John Hughes cast suspicion on the "Address" because it was of foreign origin. This strategy is particularly interesting, as it shows the dichotomy of claiming exile status from Ireland while decrying it as foreign and potentially malicious in intent towards America. The Irish were perhaps victims of and perpetrators of Nativism at the same time.

Nationalist imagery began to coalesce in the Repeal era. The *Boston Pilot* logo, for instance, was an American bald eagle carrying a harp, an ancient Irish symbol. The banner of the Friends of Repeal society in Charleston consisted of the female figure of Hibernia depicted with a harp on a ground of green silk with a medallion of Saint Patrick and the American shield worked into the drawing. What these two examples clearly depict was the ambivalent nationalist imagery of a community torn between Ireland and America.[144]

How does this nationalist rhetoric tie us back into an exploration of the origins of a democratic public sphere in this second episode? Signs of nationalism demonstrated the democratic impulse. New images and themes representative of the common person emerged. The historian Kevin Whelan describes the politicization of poverty and the politicization of popular culture. He claims that rhetoric about poverty drove political action. Both the *Boston Pilot* and the *Catholic Miscellany* were replete with images of the destitution and suffering of the poor Irish people. Likewise, we begin to see the needs and cares of the people politicized over the more abstract and elitist concepts of the liberal

[144] *Catholic Miscellany*, 1842.

oligarchy of the former decades. Whelan points out the profusion of calendar festivals, such as Saint Patrick's Day. We saw in previous chapters that such festivals were occurring and that editors were reporting on them in the periodicals of the day. In this way, editors were mixing politics and the culture of the people of more classes. Whelan emphasizes that the Irish agitators, beginning in earlier decades, had begun to adopt a more vernacular style of rhetoric and new more accessible mediums that appealed to the masses, had lessened the authority of the elite, and had broken through the literacy barrier. All of these factors helped to contribute to greater numbers joining the debate within the public sphere.[145]

As more people found voices, the messages and goals of democracy, such as Repeal, became complex and confused. In Ireland, sectarian differences between Protestants and Catholics increased. Furthermore, the more liberal voice of the Constitutionalists clashed with the revolutionary nationalism of the Young Irelanders. In America, abolitionism created a wedge in the Irish community and the Democratic Party as well. The Irish in America began to lose their national and political coherence in the face of rising sectional differences that would eventually lead to civil war. Other voices and issues complicated the scene, such as when the Garrisonians attended the London World Anti-Slavery Convention but protested the exclusion of women in the conference by sitting in the balcony. As democratic forces increased, new groups, such as blacks and women, challenged their exclusion from the public sphere.

Again, I am not claiming that liberalism was dead in this later period—quite the contrary. Amidst complaints about the "Irish Address," the *Miscellany* reported a meeting in Charleston in 1842 to support Charleston Jews and to express sympathy in reaction to

[145] Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, 79-84.

reports of persecution of Jews in Europe. What we see instead in this latter period is the struggle between liberal and democratic forces over which would be hegemonic in the relationship, as evidenced by that debate in the public sphere. We see the beginning signs of a transformation in the public sphere—at least in the public sphere of Irish emigrants. Although democratic calls for universal suffrage and other measures would increase throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the 1840s was a tipping point. In the editorial arena, for example, there was still a strident debate taking place over whether liberalism or democratic notions would be primary in the understanding of liberty, nationality, and self-rule.[146]

[146] *Catholic Miscellany*, 1842.

Conclusion

Americans are still grappling with the inherent contradiction within the phrase that is often used to describe their government, a liberal democracy. Looking back to the early nineteenth century, we see these terms as oftentimes paradoxical; at the minimum, these terms were complex and represented divergent philosophies to different groups in the polity. In an economic sense, liberalism, or freedom from constraint, did not necessarily lead to democracy, or the redistribution of wealth or equalization of opportunity. Socially, liberalism made an appeal for freedom for religious minorities, and on some occasions, slaves and women. This appeal was limited, though, when it came to inclusion in politics. From a political angle, liberalism only guaranteed the inclusion of a specific group of propertied white men. Democracy challenged that exclusion in a variety of sometimes contradictory ways.

The Friends of Ireland (FOI) and then the Friends of Repeal (FOR) revealed larger struggles occurring in national and transatlantic debates about self-representation, suffrage, freedom, and identity. The Friends of Ireland, organized to support Catholic Emancipation, struggled for the inclusion of Catholic elites in the public sphere of the United Kingdom. The Friends of Repeal, assembled to promote Repeal of the Act of Union of 1800, sought to move the center of Irish political theory back to Dublin. Although the Repeal movement began as a further extension of power to Catholic elites, eventually democratic and nationalist forces caused supporters of Repeal to break away into splinter groups on the basis of conflicting national, sectarian, racial, and sectional identities and interests. Liberalism, as expressed in both phases of the FOI, was not

capacious enough to support the growing needs of a larger and more diverse constituency.[147]

Liberalism and democracy were circum-Atlantic concepts. This thesis used an Atlantic World approach by analyzing the history of multiple nations and migrant groups during a formative period of American and Irish identity. In the introduction, I asked if it would be a good idea to do a transatlantic approach. I suggest that it was highly effective to look beyond national histories for this examination. The material was available for such an approach. Looking at only one national history would not have shown the greater parallels that were taking place across the Atlantic. The transference of ideas across the ocean reflected the existence of a transnational identity of the Irish immigrants in America.

The historians David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick discuss several kinds of Atlantic World historiographical methods, including *trans* and *cis*. Trans signifies the traditional international approach of crafting a narrative that traverses multiple regions. Cis, on the other hand, refers to a specific local or regional history within an Atlantic World framework. In this light, I applied the terms trans-Atlantic to my examination of liberalism and cis-Atlantic to my examination of democratic forces. Why did I choose these prefixes, trans for the first chapter and cis for the second chapter? How do those terms reflect the state of the public sphere for each phase?[148]

Armitage and Braddick describe trans-Atlantic history as "the history of the Atlantic world told through comparisons." In Chapter One, I compare the story of liberalism in Ireland and America. The political connections between these two states

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[147] Habermas describes the public sphere as an abstract space in which actors form public opinion.
[148] Armitage and Braddick, *The British Atlantic World*, 14-15, 21-25.

manifested through press coverage of the campaign for Catholic Emancipation. On either side of the Atlantic, Catholics and Protestants competed for political power. The most striking discovery was the interconnection of Irish Catholics around the Atlantic rim and into the Pacific as far away as Australia. Through the immigrant press these persistent communities stayed in contact. They also provided assistance to new immigrants joining their dispersed communities. Such interconnectedness reflected a strongly-tied diaspora in the 1820s.[149]

The existence of the press evinced the liberal model of the public sphere as described by Jürgen Habermas. The liberal model, consisting of a bourgeois society operating through a press to express political views, relied on liberal freedoms such as freedom of information, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly. These liberal ideals were reflective of the republican ideology of the Irish insurrection of 1798 and the earlier American revolution of 1776. The liberal model itself and the parallels of ideology operating across the Atlantic were in themselves suggestive of the trans-Atlantic model of historiography adopted in Chapter One.

Chapter Two uses a cis-Atlantic approach. Armitage and Braddick tell us that a "'Cis-Atlantic' history studies particular places as unique locations within an Atlantic world and seeks to define that uniqueness as the result of the interaction between local particularity and a wider web of connections (and comparisons)." I suggest that the sectionalism of the 1840s, caused by democratic and nationalist forces acting on the formerly unitary liberal movements, naturally suggests a cis-Atlantic historiographical approach. With the fragmentation of communities which had previously traversed the Atlantic and sought to maintain their communal identities, a trans-Atlantic perspective is

[149] Armitage and Braddick, *The British Atlantic World*, 18.

no longer appropriate. Instead, the Atlantic World consisted of a mixture of regional motives and claims, each influence by the broader context.[150]

Charles Sellers suggests that democracy was a reaction to the commercial revolution. Similarly, Habermas conjectures that the liberal model of the public sphere is transformed to the democratic model following industrialization. Both authors indicate that internal tensions following these transitions led to disagreement, conflicts of interests, and sometimes violence. Chapter Two describes how such transformations led to the destruction of the Friends of Repeal in the American South and contributed to the failure of Repeal in Ireland. By the 1840s, although immigration to America from Ireland increased due to the Famine, it was no longer as possible or useful to view the Irish diaspora as a unified community as it was previously in the 1820s.[151]

The 1840s left a mixed legacy for the Irish and for Irish leaders in both Ireland and America. The historian Douglas Riach tells how in Ireland O'Connell's abolitionist stance did little to influence the Irish view of America. Nationalist Irish agitators continued to utilize slavery rhetoric, in a political sense, to describe the Irish people. O'Connell's persistence in linking Repeal to antislavery exacerbated tensions between the Repeal Association and the Young Irelanders. Although all of the splintered factions failed to achieve their goals, in the coming decades, they were often seen as important

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[150] Armitage and Braddick, *The British Atlantic World*, 21.

[151] Sellers, *The Market Revolution*; Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*; Democratization was also shown through a revolution in communications. According to Kevin Whelan, Thomas Paine created a "vernacular prose" and "breaking the inherently elitist link between a classical education and political life made available a fundamental democratization of style itself." He tells of how Irish revolutionaries sought to "diminish the authority of elite culture, by displacing expensive books in favour of cheap pamphlets, newspapers, songbooks, prints and broadsheets, thereby democratizing the printed word itself." He also describes the development of genres that overcame the literacy barrier, such as "ballads, prophecies, toasts, oaths, catechisms, and sermons." For more detail, see Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, 71-72.

steps in the nationalist chain of historical events that would eventually lead to Ireland's partition in 1921, the independence of Southern Ireland, and the retention of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom. In America, the anti-abolitionist stance of the Irish press was an unpopular memory after the Civil War. More so, the continued immigration of the Catholic Irish to America during and after the Famine continued to agitate laborers who feared the competition from new workers willing to work for cheaper wages. However, the memory of Daniel O'Connell's support of abolitionism mediated the racist image of Irish immigrants. Owen Dudley Edwards writes, "Zeal for women's rights, temperance, and pacifism, all otherwise lacking in the Irish-American, were indelibly associated with Ireland as a result…" Similarly, Riach claims O'Connell was to the abolitionists "the single most important supporter that American anti-slavery had in Europe."[152]

Thus, the legacy of Repeal on the American image of Ireland was in the end positive, but what direct lasting effects did Catholic Emancipation and Repeal have for the Irish population and their immigrant diaspora? What was the effectiveness of these movements for the people? As Chapter Three discussed, Catholic Emancipation did little to free the majority of Irish peasants. The movement was primarily one that addressed the inclusion of Catholic elites in the existing liberal economic and political system. Clerical involvement led to the success of Emancipation. The priests had to threaten their congregations with divine retribution in order to persuade tenants to vote against the wishes of their Protestant landlords. Lack of support from the clergy assisted in the failure of Repeal. The critical point here is that modern mass democracy did not exist in the first half of the nineteenth century. There was neither an enlightened populace nor

[152] Riach, "Daniel O'Connell and American Antislavery," 22-24; Edwards, "The American Image of Ireland," 265; In 1921 the treaty of Irish independence was signed, but it prompted a civil war that lasted until 1923. The Irish Free State emerged in 1922.

mass voting with secret ballots. Although elite rhetoric may have suggested so, the common people were not politically involved in negotiating for self-rule. Their interests were much more local and concrete. Owen Dudley Edwards writes:

> Hitherto only a tiny minority of Protestants and wealthy Catholics were involved in problems of constitutional and economic importance on a national scale. The great mass of the Irish Catholic populace was apathetic, and insofar as it dreamed of politics at all, it did so in terms of the exiled Stuarts and the broken treaty of Limerick.[153]

Democracy started as a reaction to economic forces at the start of the nineteenth century. What occurred in the 1840s was the burgeoning of those democratic forces into competing nationalisms that effectively split an ethnic diaspora into regional communities.

In terms of Irish historiography, Catholic Emancipation and Repeal are generally not studied in contrast as they were here. Although there is interest regarding the abolitionist and Repeal linkage, this crisis is not typically tied into something that competed with the liberal efforts that propelled Catholic Emancipation to its passage in Parliament. Much historiography focuses on the Wolfe Tone era of republican revolution in the 1790s and the Famine of the late 1840s and early 1850s. The half-century in between is often treated in the narrative of Irish history as a period of calm between two more important eras. Although studies focus on Emancipation and Repeal individually, the grander narratives of modern Irish history gloss over this period. For example, R.F. Foster in *Modern Ireland* uses nearly three hundred pages to discuss the events from 1600 leading up to and including the 1798 rebellion. Foster dedicates only twenty-five

[153] Ibid., 255.

pages to Catholic Emancipation and Repeal. He then spends approximately four hundred pages discussing the Famine up to 1972. This is a remarkable ratio.[154]

Catholic Emancipation and Repeal traditionally do not warrant much coverage in either British or American histories. In *Britons*, Linda Colley devotes about twelve pages to Catholic Emancipation as a prelude to her much lengthier discussion on parliamentary reform, but she does not cover Repeal. Charles Sellers in *The Market Revolution* examines the early nineteenth century in the United States, focusing on the growth of Jacksonian democracy, but does not mention Catholic Emancipation or Repeal at all. These events are clearly seen as consequences of Irish politics by American historians. Warranting such a small role in Irish, British, and American history, Catholic Emancipation and Repeal, as well as what those events suggest regarding the paradoxical challenges of liberalism and democracy, are relegated to international histories. It is the domain of the Atlantic World historian or the world historian to cover this material.[155]

There is much more to learn about the Irish in a transatlantic context in the nineteenth century. My research suggests future investigations into the role of women or other religious minorities in these events. There is also historiography available on comparative emancipation, such as the granting of civil rights to Jews in Christian Europe. These other studies pose further inquiries regarding this minority, the Irish in America. Comparative emancipation theory suggests questioning the homogeneity of the minority, examining the formal versus the informal emancipation of the minority, and investigating the differing experiences of the central population versus the peripheral population of the minority. Furthermore, comparative emancipation theory also suggests

[154] Foster, *Modern Ireland*.
[155] Colley, *Britons*; Sellers, *The Market Revolution*.

doing a new comparison in contrast to the Irish narrative. For example, the experiences of the American Catholic Irish could be compared to those of the Protestants in Ireland. The emancipation of American Irish could also be contrasted with the emancipation of blacks, Native Americans, or women.[156]

I would also suggest extending this study in either direction chronologically, so that the Catholic Emancipation and Repeal years link more relevantly with the traditional modern Irish narrative. By going backwards and tracing the republican and liberal growth from the 1790s republican era to Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s, one could further examine the coalescence and growth of new political forces in the early nineteenth century. On the other hand, by extending the periodization under study to cover Fenianism in the 1860s and possibly Home Rule in the 1880s, one could track the route that the growth in democracy and nationalism traveled. I have posited that the collective unity and action of the Irish diaspora fizzled upon the challenge of destructive democratic forces that led to sectional interests, at least in the 1840s. However, the Famine and the flood of new immigrants may have resulted in a rekindling of this international identity.

The Friends of Ireland and later the Friends of Repeal represent an overlooked facet of American, Irish, and Atlantic World history. In their story, we see a reflection of the clash of political ideologies that were birthed in the early nineteenth century. We have yet to see a resolution to this crisis in political ambitions. The United States government of today continues to vacillate under strong forces of liberalism and democracy. Continued research in the creation and development of these terms, so often used in

[156] Stephen Wendehorst, "Emancipation as Path to National Integration," in *The Emancipation of the Catholics, Jews, and Protestants: Minorities and the Nation State in Nineteenth-century Europe*, ed. Rainer Liedtke and Stephan Wendehorst (New York: Manchester, U.K., 1999), 188-93.

political rhetoric, could only help modern audiences to better understand their meanings and to contemplate more successful ways of binding them together in the future.

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