Thomas Moore’s Irish Melodies (1808-34)

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Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies (1808-34)*: Translating an Irish Nation into English

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ABSTRACT: Thomas Moore was for a long time considered the national poet of Ireland and remains one of the most popular poets in Irish history. This thesis will examine the politics of his best-known work – the *Irish Melodies*. It will provide an overview of Moore's career, the development of nationalism in 19th-century Europe, and the role of language in 19th-century Ireland. Drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Ernest Renan, it will explain how nationalism creates authority through a perception of authenticity and how this finds expression in the *Melodies*. It will also introduce ideas from translation theory and the work of Walter Benjamin to explain why Moore's *Melodies* are translations and compare them to the collections of Charlotte Brooke and James Hardiman. The thesis will examine how Moore employs the harp and the dead in the *Melodies* in order to create his own version of Ireland. Finally, the thesis contends that the ways in which his audiences understood that version of Ireland illuminate the politics of Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

KEY WORDS: Ireland, Irish literature, Romanticism, nationalism, cultural nationalism, antiquarianism, translation, death, Thomas Moore, *Irish Melodies*, William Butler Yeats, Benedict Anderson, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Ernest Renan, Walter Benjamin, Charlotte Brooke, James Hardiman

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1 INTRODUCTION

Thomas Moore was for a long time considered the national poet of Ireland. The 20th century saw that title pass onto William Butler Yeats, while the 21st century may also consider the title Seamus Heaney's. Regardless, in terms of popular appeal, Moore exceeds not only Yeats and Heaney but many other Irish poets. He is arguably one of the most if not the most popular Irish poet, although today few people know of him by name. His lasting popularity stems primarily from his best-known work and the subject of this thesis – the *Irish Melodies*. However, Moore also published other collections of poetry such as *Odes of Anacreon*, *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little, Esq.* and *Lalla Rookh*, which will all be briefly discussed in this chapter. In addition to a poet, Moore was a sitarist, essayist and historian. His historical works include *The History of Ireland*, *Memoirs of Captain Rock* and *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*. Moore was also well-acquainted and knew other Romantic writers including Lord Byron. In short, Thomas Moore is one of the foremost Irish literary figures of the 19th century.

This thesis will focus on his *Irish Melodies*. As mentioned above, the *Irish Melodies* are by far Moore's most popular work, and their popularity helped promote a version of Ireland imagined by Moore. The Ireland of the *Melodies* is the afterlife of a heroic past filled with dead heroes and steeped in Romantic melancholy. It is a version of Ireland that appeals to the sensibilities of Moore's middle-class audiences, and it is one that did not necessarily exist. It is imagined. Yet, all nations are, to some degree, imagined. But what Moore does is imagine an Irish nations in English. The *Irish Melodies* translate the notion of Irishness into English. This thesis will explore how the *Melodies* do that and how they imagine and promote an Irish nation in English. Their role in defining Ireland and Irishness was recognized by one of the key figures of the Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland – Éamon de Valera, who is quoted on a monument in Avoca Valley, which marks the scene described in Moore's "The Meeting of the Waters".

> During the dark and all but despairing days of the nineteenth century, Thomas Moore's songs kept the love of country and the lamp of hope burning in millions of Irish hearts here in Ireland and in many lands beyond the seas. His songs and his poems and his prose works, translated into many foreign tongues, made Ireland's cause known throughout the civilised world and won support for that cause from all who loved liberty and hated oppression. (Kelly 523)

To explore how the *Melodies* translate Irishness and imagine an Irish nation, one must first explain what makes them translations and explain the concept of imagining nations. The second and third chapter of this thesis will therefore discuss translation and nationalism. The former will define the nation and show how 19th-century European nationalists imagined nations and established a sense of authority through the perception of authenticity. The latter will introduce the concept of translation as an afterlife and provide an overview of the relationship between Irish nationalism and translation as well as link both to Moore. The fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis will then apply these ideas to the *Melodies*. The fourth chapter will focus on the harp as a recurring motif in the *Melodies* and a symbol of Ireland, and it will discuss the implications of how it is used. The fifth chapter will describe in more detail the version of Ireland created by the *Melodies* and the role of the dead and Moore's audiences in its creation.

The rest of this chapter will outline Moore's career and life. Both are surprisingly far-reaching. Moore was well-connected and acquainted with many well-known figures of the 19th century. On one hand, he was a poet and translator, but he was also a satirist and historian. Naturally, this thesis will only highlight the parts of his career necessary for understanding the *Melodies* and their politics. It will name the people and events who inspired many of the *Melodies*, explains the circumstances that informed their creation, and introduce other examples of Moore's work that touch on the same or similar themes as the *Melodies*.

Born on the 18th of May 1779, Thomas Moore was the first-born child of a Dublin grocer, John Moore, and his wife, Anastasia Jane Moore. (Kelly 11-12) Anecdotes from family friends describe him as a theatrical child, and he recited passages from Shakespeare as early as six. (Kelly 19) He also learned to play the pianoforte by listening in on his sister Catherine's lessons. (Kelly 20) This is notable for two reasons. Firstly, the pianoforte was a relatively new and relatively expensive instrument at the time. It was a staple of the drawing rooms and parlours of the late 18th and 19th centuries, where middle-class households entertained their guests. Owning a pianoforte thereby makes Moore's family members of the middle class, and Moore's appeal to the middle classes plays a role in his career, his politics, and the *Melodies*. Secondly, Moore learned to play the pianoforte, but his sister was the one who received lessons for it. Moore himself was not classically trained, and this is reflected in his creation process for the *Melodies*, which will be outlined in the third chapter.

As soon as he was able, Moore attended Samuel Whyte's English Grammar School. (Kelly 20-22) Samuel Whyte was a poet, and his school was the most prestigious grammar school in Dublin in the late 18th century. (ibid.) It was one of the few schools that taught girls, and it placed great emphasis on elocution (i.e., public speaking skills). (ibid.) Attending Whyte's school is another sign of Moore's middle-class status, and in addition to his early recitations of Shakespeare, it highlights the anglophone nature of his upbringing. He was raised in an English-speaking household and his education was in English.

In 1795, Moore continued his education at Trinity College, Dublin. (Kelly 30) He was among the first beneficiaries of the Catholic Relief Act of 1793, which opened the college to non-Protestants. (Kelly 30-31) During his studies at Trinity, Moore made friends whose influence would play a direct role in the later creation of the *Irish Melodies*. These friends included members of the Society of the United Irishmen, like Edward Hudson and Robert Emmet. (Kelly 50-51) Hudson, Emmet, and the United Irishmen greatly influenced the *Irish Melodies* and will feature in the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis, so it is necessary to introduce their connection to Moore and his career.

Edward Hudson shared Moore's fondness for music, but his interest extended to traditional Irish music. (Kelly 50) He played traditional Irish airs on the flute and shared them with Moore, who then played them on the pianoforte. (ibid.) Hudson introduced Moore to Edward Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*, which is a collection of traditional Irish airs transcribed for the pianoforte. (ibid.) Bunting transcribed these airs that previously had no transcriptions at the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792, which showcased harpers playing traditional airs and was attended and partly organized by the United Irishmen. Bunting's *General Collection* was one of the source texts for the *Irish Melodies*, and one of the *Melodies* I will later examine is based on Moore's visit to Hudson in Kilmainham prison in 1798.

Robert Emmet and Thomas Moore met as members of Trinity's junior debating society, and both proceeded to become members of the prestigious College Historical Society or Hist. (Kelly 50-51) Whether or not Moore was also a member of the United Irishmen is a subject of speculation, but it is well known that was close friends with Emmet (and other active members). (Kelly 54-55, 62-63) In March of 1798, the British authorities arrested Emmet's brother and one of the leaders of the United Irishmen, Thomas Addis Emmet. (ibid.) Other leaders were also captured, went missing, or were executed, but the remaining United Irishmen and their

allies rebelled regardless. (Kelly 64-65) The rebellion began in late May of 1798, and it ended the same year. (ibid.) Moore did not participate in it and moved to London the following year.

In 1803, when Moore was still in London, Robert Emmet led a second rebellion in Dublin. The Rebellion of 1803 failed like the one before it, and Emmet was executed in Dublin on the 20th of September. (Kelly 92-93) It is uncertain how much Moore knew about the rebellion. (ibid.) It is not mentioned in Moore's surviving personal correspondences from the time. On the day of Emmet's execution, Moore was preparing to travel to Bermuda to take up an administrative position in the colony. (ibid.) Yet, despite Moore's lack of personal writing and involvement, the United Irishmen and the two rebellions clearly inspired many of the *Irish Melodies*, including some of those that will be analysed in the fourth and fifth chapters.

As mentioned above, Moore spent the time between the two rebellions in London. He was originally sent to London to study for the Bar at the Middle Temple. (Kelly 67) Middle Temple was and is one of the Inns of Court (i.e., one of four institutions where one can qualify as a barrister). (ibid.) In other words, going to London was meant to be the beginning of Moore's career as a lawyer. It instead became the beginning of his literary career. Moore was by nature a socialite and made acquaintances and friends quickly. Among those he made in London were Thomas Hume and Lord Moira. The latter was a general and politician in favour of Catholic Emancipation (i.e., relieving Ireland's Catholic majority of discriminatory law based on religious affiliation). (Kelly 49) He was popular among the United Irishmen, and Theobald Wolfe Tone, one of their founders, dubbed him the Irish Lafayette. (ibid.) It was also Lord Moira who arranged Moore's position in Bermuda. (Kelly 89-90) Moreover, prior to Bermuda, Lord Moira convinced the Prince of Wales to let Moore dedicate *Anacreon* to him, while Thomas Hume secured him a publisher and a list of subscribers for the book. (Kelly 77-79) Thus, thanks to their efforts, the *Odes of Anacreon* was published in 1800.

Before discussing the *Odes of Anacreon*, I would briefly like to focus on those who aided in its publication. Although the United Irishmen respected Lord Moira, he and the other acquaintances Moore made in London belong to a different part of the political spectrum. They were not revolutionary nationalists nor supporters of an independent Ireland, since Catholic Emancipation was not the same as independence. What they did share with the United Irishmen was class. Like his friends in Dublin, Moore's friends in London belong to the middle or even

upper classes. Moore was familiar with both Ireland's and England's middle classes, and his appeal to both these audiences is a point that will be stressed throughout the thesis.

Returning to the book, the *Odes of Anacreon* is Thomas Moore's first published collection of poetry. Anacreon was an ancient Greek poet whose poetry was rediscovered in the 16th century, and Moore had started composing translations of him when he was a student at Trinity. (Kelly 53, 79) Moore translated the poems into English and adjusted them to his sensibilities and style. (Kelly 80) The fact that they were translations shielded the *Odes* from harsher criticism regarding their content. Anything in them that might considered suggestive or erotic by Moore's contemporaries could be excused as merely reflecting the original. Regardless, the *Odes* still earned Moore the nickname Anacreon Moore and a reputation for writing sensual poetry. It also shows that Moore's career involved translation even before the *Irish Melodies*.

After the success of the *Odes*, Moore wrote *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little, Esq.* It was published in 1801 and initially presented as the work of a deceased friend. (Kelly 86-87) Like the *Odes*, *Thomas Little* was a collection of (at the time) sensual poetry and Moore wrote them in the voice of their eponymous, fictitious writer. Yet, writing under a pen name did not prove as good of an excuse as translating classical poetry. As a result, *Thomas Little* was more heavily criticized than the *Odes* for the sensual content and themes found in both collections. (ibid.) *Thomas Little* was still successful despite the criticism and added to Moore's notoriety. (ibid.) It even earned him the admiration of a young Lord Byron, who would later become one of Moore's many friends among the middle and higher classes. (ibid.) Both it and the *Odes* were written in the voice of a dead poet, and both assuming another voice and speaking for the dead are things Moore does in the *Irish Melodies*.

In 1817 (i.e., in the period in which volumes of the *Melodies* were regularly appearing), Moore's *Lalla Rookh* was published. It consists of four narrative poems connected by sections in prose. The poems are presented as stories told to the eponymous princess Lalla Rookh by her minstrel Feramorza, while the parts in prose describe their journey from Delhi to Cashmere, where the princess is to be married. The four poems are "The Veiled Prophet", "Paradise and the Peri", "The Fire-Worshippers", and "The Light of the Harem". (Kelly 282) Their appealed to ideas of Orientalism, which represented 19th-century Europe's fascination with the Middle East and Asia – the regions they referred to as the Orient. Famously, *Lalla Rookh* received the largest advance to ever be given for a poem until that point, and once published, it was popular

across Europe. (Kelly 257-258, 294-297) It was especially popular in France and Germany and inspired multiple musical adaptations by various composers like Robert Schumann and Charles Villiers Stanford. (Kelly 294-297)

However, despite the success of the *Odes*, *Thomas Little*, and *Lalla Rookh*, Thomas Moore is best known for the *Irish Melodies*. The *Melodies* are a collection of songs rather than poems. There are 124 in total and were originally published in ten separate volumes from 1808 to 1834. Each one consists of English-language lyrics and an accompanying Irish air. The *Melodies* were thus a collaboration between a lyricist and a composer. The brothers who commissioned them (James and William Power) wanted multiple lyricists to contribute to the collection but quickly settled on Moore as the only one. (Kelly 153) He wrote the lyrics for all ten volumes of the *Irish Melodies*, while Sir John Stevenson arranged the music for the first seven volumes. (ibid.) Stevenson was replaced by Sir Henry Bishop for the final three. (Kelly 324)

All ten volumes were successful, and Moore and the *Melodies* were immensely popular among audiences in Ireland and England alike. They were a staple in the drawing rooms of the English middle classes, and the same was true for the Irish middle classes. Following the completion of the *Melodies*, Moore visited Ireland and was treated like a national hero receiving a ceremonious welcome, complete with speeches, banners, and flags. (Kelly 1-2) This was not to honour his whole career or his reputation as Anacreon Moore. It was for the Bard of Erin, the composer of the *Irish Melodies*. The *Melodies* were so popular that they were sung by the Irish diaspora, leading to "The Minstrel Boy" entering the repertoire of US military bands. (ibid.) In short, at least for the first half of the 19th century, Thomas Moore was Ireland's national poet was recognized as such by the Irish and English middle classes.

His reputation diminished after his death. It was particularly poor among subsequent Irish writers. Even during the last decade of his life, he was considered too politically tame by the members of the Young Ireland movement. A similar opinion was held by the members of the Irish Literary Revival. Authors like Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats acknowledged Moore as a writer of memorable poems but considered his writing inadequate for representing Ireland. (Kelly 2-4) In Yeats' 1895 anthology titled *Book of Irish Verse*, Moore was barely represented, and Yeats would eventually replace Moore as Irelands national poet in the 20th century. (Kelly 556-557) Other Irish writers had less negative opinions on Moore and his work. For example, James Joyce references Moore in both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*

with Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom commenting on Moore's statue in Dublin. The former, despite feeling distain, is reminded of a college friend, while the latter jokingly muses about the public bathroom behind the statue, but even ironized, the affection is palpable. (Kelly 556)

Out of the authors mentioned above, Joyce stands out not only because of his more nuanced opinion on Moore but also because his lack of involvement with nationalism. Young Ireland was a nationalist movement organized around a newspaper, while the Irish Literary Revival was an expression of Irish cultural nationalism. The members of both movements shared a background with Moore and his Irish audience. They belonged to the Irish middle classes. Nevertheless, they tended to view Moore as little more than a writer of pretty songs. The reason is their politics: Irish cultural nationalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries differs from the Irish antiquarianism of the early 19th century. The former imagined an independent Irish nation, while the latter wished to improve Ireland's position within the United Kingdom. Moore and the *Melodies* align more with the latter, so his antiquarian-like ideas might be what caused his loss in reputation. The third and fourth chapters will go into more detail regarding Irish antiquarianism as well as how it pertains to Moore and the *Melodies*.

While attending the celebrations in 1835, Lord Byron proclaimed that Moore would live on in the *Melodies*. (ibid.) This is true despite the changing perspectives on Moore as a poet. Moore's afterlife is that of the *Melodies*, and the *Melodies* found their continued life in popular culture. They continued to be sung after Moore's death and after Yeats replaced him as the national poet. They are sung not just by tenors, like John McCormack and John McDermott, but by other singers too. There is a version of "The Last Rose of Summer" by Nina Simone as well as a version of "The Minstrel Boy" by Joe Strummer. (Kelly 5) The latter is featured in an American war film, and other *Melodies* also appear sporadically in various pieces of popular media. For example, Bugs Bunny plays "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms" in the *Looney Tunes*, while "The Minstrel Boy" is sung by characters in at least one episode of *Star Trek*.

However, this thesis is not focused on the reception of the *Melodies* or their place in contemporary pop culture. It examines the nationalism expressed in the *Irish Melodies*. In Anderson's terms, it will examine how they imagine an Irish nation as the afterlife of an ancient Ireland that did not necessarily exist. I say that it did not necessarily exist because Moore

creates his own version of the Ireland with the *Melodies*. References to Irish history and mythology and the use of symbols like the harp lend authenticity to his version, but as the thesis will show, one of its key aspects is that it expresses Irishness in English. This will be explored in the following chapter, which looks at the concept of nationalism and how it has employed language and the past to imagine nations.

2 NATIONALISM, AUTHENTICITY AND AUTHORITY

To examine the nationalism expressed by Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, one must naturally first define nationalism and the concept of a nation. This chapter will explain both terms and describe some of the features of 19th-century European nationalism to provide a context for Irish nationalism and the *Melodies*. To do that, I will use the work of three different authors: Benedict Anderson, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Ernest Renan. Only one, Fichte, is Moore's contemporary, but both Fichte and Renan are part of 19th-century nationalism. Fichte wrote at the beginning of the century, while Renan wrote towards the end. They express nationalist ideas about language and the past, and I will explain their ideas in order to apply them to Ireland, Irish nationalism and the *Melodies*. Anderson is a 20th and 21st-century author, but his work provides a definition and overview of nationalism and its development, and I will use it not only for definitions but also to contextualize the work of Fichte and Renan.

Anderson's seminal work and the one I will use for the purposes of this chapter is his 1983 book, *Imagined Communities*. The title refers to the notion that communities are based on perceived shared characteristics. If a community is too big for its members to know, or know of, most of its other members, it is an imagined community. Its members have to imagine people they have never seen but with whom they share a connection. As a result, "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined." (Anderson 5-6)

The nation, which is the basis of nationalism, is also an imagined community, and Anderson defines it as "an imagined political community [which is] imagined as inherently limited and sovereign." (ibid.) In other words, it is imagined because even the smallest possible nation is far too large for its inhabitants to know each other. (Anderson 6) It is imagined because every nation has boundaries, and even though the boundaries of nations can be altered, no nation is imagined spanning the whole world. (Anderson 7) In some cases, these boundaries are linguistic, while in others they are based on versions of the past. The two are not mutually exclusive, and the later parts of this chapter will show how language and the past are used to imagine nations. "[A nation is additionally] imagined as sovereign because the concept [of a nation] was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realms." (ibid.) Put plainly, a nation must be independent. It must at least exist independently from other nations and other imagined

communities in the sense that it is recognizable as a separate community. The age Anderson is referring to is the latter half of the 18th century. It is the period of the origin of nations and nationalism, when the first nations appeared first in North America and then in Europe. The events that resulted in the creation of the first nations and the onset of nationalism were the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. (Anderson 192) These first nations and the movements that created them were recognized as a new phenomenon. They were the first of their kind and did not require proof of their authenticity to justify their existence. They were a new phenomenon, and they embraced their novelty.

> It is difficult today to recreate in the imagination a condition of life in which the nation was felt as something utterly new. But so it was in the epoch. The Declaration of Independence of 1776 makes absolutely no reference to Christopher Columbus, Roanoke or the Pilgrim Fathers, nor are the grounds put forward to justify independence in any way 'historical', in the sense of highlighting the antiquity of the American people. [...] A profound feeling that a radical break with the past was occurring [...] spread rapidly. (Anderson 193)

However, this rapidly spreading feeling was temporary. The circumstances that allowed the break with the past to occur were the same ones that necessitated later nationalist movements to reconnect with it. Print media like newspapers and serial publications, or print-capitalism as Anderson calls it, facilitated discourse between previously disparate communities. (194) Ideas travelled and were shared more quickly. Following the Enlightenment, people developed a newfound understanding of causality and began operating on the assumption that everything had a cause that could be found within the right historical context. (ibid.) In simpler words, they understood that events happened for a reason, and they expected the past to provide justifications for the creation of subsequent nations. New nationalist movements had to adapt to this expectation and find a way to validate imagining nations, or as Anderson puts it:

> for the members of what we might call 'second-generation' nationalist movements, those which developed in Europe between about 1815 to 1850, and also for the generation that inherited the independent national states of the Americas, it was no longer possible to 'recapture/The first fine careless rapture' of their revolutionary predecessors. For different reasons and with different consequences, the two groups began reading nationalism *genealogically* - as the expression of an historical tradition of serial continuity. (Anderson 194-195)

Both European and American nationalists thus began imagining nations connected to the past. More accurately, they began imagining nations as a continuation of a past. The indefinite article is deliberate because nations are not based on complete, factual accounts of a region's history. It is a version of the past that does not need to include detailed descriptions of every historical event or be an extensive list of every historical figure. It needs to offer a historical justification for the existence of a nation. It is a means for nationalists to explain how one community succeeded another until one of them was ultimately succeeded by a nation. They can adapt the past to better suit that purpose. They can select historical events and figures and omit others. Moreover, nationalists can reframe historical events as if they occurred in service to a nation-to-come and ascribe national ideals to historical figures. Even if they predated nationalism and nations, they can posthumously elect historical figures honorary nationalists. Nationalism can be named as the cause they fought for or even the cause they died for. That is what Anderson means by reading nationalism genealogically. It is also what I alluded to in the introduction when I said that the heroic past of the *Melodies* represents an ancient Ireland that did not necessarily exist.

Essentially, the authority of nationalism is based on a perception of authenticity. Nationalists speak on behalf of nations, but the nations they represent must be perceived as being authentic for them to have a claim to political authority. If a nation is perceived as inauthentic or artificial, then its nationalist movement has no authority. Earlier, I mentioned that Anderson defines nations as sovereign, and I would argue that being sovereign means being authentic. It means that a community can be recognized as being unique rather than as part of another community. Being authentic does not presuppose being autonomous. Autonomy first requires authority, and to establish authority nationalists must prove the authenticity of the nation that they represent. Everything that threatens a nation's perceived authenticity also directly threatens nationalists' authority. Everything described in the paragraph above is therefore about creating a perceived sense of authenticity. Reframing historical events is not the only way of doing that. Nationalists can also rely on the dead and secure their authority by speaking for them. As Anderson puts it:

> [Nationalist authors like Jules] Michelet not only claimed to speak on behalf of large numbers of anonymous dead people but insisted, with poignant authority, that [they] could say what [the dead] 'really' meant and 'really' wanted, since [the dead] themselves 'did not understand.' From then on, the silence of the dead was no obstacle to the exhumation of their deepest desires. In this vein, more and more 'second generation' nationalists, in the Americas and elsewhere,

> learned to speak 'for' the dead with whom it was impossible or undesirable to establish a linguistic connection. (Anderson 198)

Although at first reading ambivalent, the last sentence hints at something important to Ireland. For reasons that will be briefly outlined in the next chapter, Ireland underwent a language shift, and English replaced Irish as the dominant language. In the first half of the 19th century the shift was an ongoing process, but it and the changes that had already occurred were visible. A majority of Irish nationalists spoke English, while the historical figures they used to validate imagining an Irish nation predominantly spoke Irish when they were alive. As a result, Irish nationalist had to, as Anderson puts it above, “learn to speak 'for' the dead with whom it was impossible [...] to establish linguistic connection.” (ibid.)

Ireland's situation was not necessarily unique, as especially before the 19th century it was not uncommon for other Europeans not to speak the same language as ‘their’ dead. The largest countries in Europe were multilingual empires like the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. (Anderson 196) Their inhabitants spoke multiple different languages and belonged to different linguistic communities. Similarly, multiple countries, like those who would form Germany, spoke the same language or versions of the same language but were separate countries. Additionally, the middle classes of Europe were also multilingual. It was common for middle class households to speak a language that differed from the vernacular one. (ibid.) Vernacular languages are those spoken by the majority of the population in a particular region or country. They were not spoken by the middle classes because they had “inherited from medieval times the habit of thinking of certain languages [...] as languages of civilization.” (ibid.) They represented modernity, and the language of civilisation or modernity in Ireland was English. However, vernacular languages eventually became expressions of authenticity, or they were at least perceived as such, and European nationalists used them to imagine nations.

> Until late in the eighteenth century no one thought of these languages as belonging to any territorially defined group. But soon thereafter, [...] ‘uncivilized’ vernaculars began to function politically in the same way as the Atlantic Ocean had earlier done: i.e., to ‘separate’ subjected national communities off from ancient dynastic realms. (Anderson 196)

To better explain the relationship between language and nationalism, I will now look at one of the main theorists of this link, Johann Gottlieb Fichte. He was a German philosopher, who held

a series of lectures on the topic of nations and language. In 1808, which is the same year as the first volume of the *Melodies*, these lectures were published as *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, or *Addresses to the German Nation*.

As the title suggests, Fichte's *Addresses* argue for the creation of, or imagine, a German nation. Fichte uses language as a means of doing that. It is what grants his version of a German nation the necessary authenticity to justify its existence. Yet, before presenting his main arguments, one should stress that Fichte held his lectures following armed conflicts that are now known as part of the Napoleonic Wars. Likewise, Renan, whose work will be discussed after Fichte's, held his lectures after the Franco-Prussian War and the Unification of Germany in 1871. The two nations Fichte and Renan imagined were in conflict, and these conflicts coloured their work. That is to say that their arguments may be contrary. They not only imagined nations differently, but each one also questioned the authenticity of the other's nation and tried to invalidate it. Keeping that in mind, I will now summarize Fichte's ideas and how he imagined a nation.

In his lectures, Fichte distinguishes two key terms, and these are living and dead languages. His criteria for what constitutes a living or dead language are not native speakers. He does not refer to Latin when he talks about dead languages. He instead refers to languages based on it. For Fichte, dead languages are Romance (or Neo-Latin) languages like French, and living languages are languages like German and Greek. What distinguishes these two groups is their perceived authenticity or lack thereof. The authenticity of a language is determined by its terms for describing supersensory experiences, whereby supersensory experiences are abstract ideas, since they cannot be perceived with one's senses. (Fichte 60-61) In many European languages, these terms are Latinate. While there are historical reasons why various communities adapted to speaking versions of Latin, one of the reasons for this is the habit mentioned before of certain languages acting as languages of civilisation or modernity. Fichte, however, claimed that languages reliant on Latinate terms for expressing abstract ideas had lost their authenticity, while those able to express them without Latinate terms retained theirs. According to him, speakers of dead language do not understand these Latinate terms and must have their meaning and etymology explained to them in order to understand them. The example Fichte uses to illustrate this are what he calls 'the three notorious words;' humanity, popularity, and liberality (Fichte 65) They are terms associated with the French Revolution and, for Fichte, their lack of authenticity is seen in how speakers of German and French do not really understand them:

> Spoken to a German [...], these words are nothing but empty noise that cannot remind him of anything familiar through its similarity of sound and that pulls him out of the sphere of his observations and all possible observations. [..] One cannot believe that the speakers of Neo-Latin languages, [..], act much differently. Without a learned understanding of antiquity and their real language, they understand just as much as the German. (Fichte 65-66)

In essence, Fichte claims that languages that express ideas using Latinate terms are inauthentic, while languages can express ideas without them are authentic. He considers German one of the latter. It is authentic, and he argues that the authenticity of the German language would extend to a German nation. That is how Fichte justifies the creation of a German nation and why he links nationhood to language. This idea informed the German nationalist movement of the 19th century, and language became central to their discourse. It was important for them to prove the authenticity Fichte ascribed to the language, so the 19th century saw developments in the field of linguistics. For example, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm worked on a German language dictionary first published in 1854, while Konrad Duden published the first edition of his dictionary in 1880. Jacob Grimm also wrote about German grammar and phonology, but the advancement of linguistics was accompanied by a matching interest in folklore and music. The Brothers Grimm are best known for having collected and published German fairy tales, and Jacob Grimm wrote about mythology as well. In short, German nationalists treated folklore and music as additional means of proving the authenticity of a German nation.

These trends spread across 19th-century Europe. Other European nationalist movements adopted Fichte's ideas, and they too developed their own interest in vernacular languages, folklore and music, as can be seen also in Ireland, Moore and the *Melodies*. Elsewhere the educated multilingual elites of Europe began learning and researching the local vernaculars they were previously uninterested in, and began exploring the folkloric and musical traditions related to these vernaculars. These studies were matched by studies in another scientific field—history. As mentioned earlier, the past was the main way of justifying the existence of nations. Or rather, nations are imagined as continuations of the past, so like the studies of language and folklore, the study of the past developed to lend authenticity to newly invented nations. To better explain how the past helps imagine nations, I will now turn away from the beginning of the 19th century and Fichte and turn to the end of the century and Ernest Renan.

Like Fichte, Renan held a lecture on the topic of nationalism and how nations are imagined. The lecture was held in 1882 and later published as an essay. Its title, like the question it tries to answer, is *What is a Nation?* Renan's answer differs from Fichte and so does his opinion on language. He lists language alongside ethnicity, religion, geography and economic interests as unsuitable justifications for creating a nation. He says the following of language specifically.

> Language invites unity; it does not impose it. […] The political importance lent to languages derives from their being regarded as signs of race. Nothing could be more false. […] Languages are historical formations, which tell us little about the blood of those who speak them, and which, in any case, could not shackle human liberty, when it is a matter of determining the family with which one unites oneself for life and for death. (Renan 257-258)

Renan makes two points here. The first is to acknowledge that communities are based on language. That is what he means when he admits that "[l]anguage invites unity." Yet, he believes nations should supersede linguistic communities. They should 'impose unity.' How he suggests they do it will become clear shortly, but before that I would like to focus on the other point that he makes. His second point is that language is conflated with ethnicity, although language is not a sign of ethnicity nor are language or ethnicity bases for nations. To illustrate this, Renan points out that place names in the eastern part of (by his time unified) Germany have Slavic roots. That implies the vernacular changed which undermines the authenticity provided by language. Renan offers the past as an alternative and more reliable source of authenticity.

More accurately, Renan believes that the creation of nations can only be justified by the past, but the past must be one that supports the nation. "A heroic past, great men, glory [...], this is the capital stock upon which one bases a national idea." (Renan 261) Echoing what was discussed earlier in this chapter, this is a past that is deliberately created to justify the existence of a nation. Its great men are historical or even mythological figures who have been elected as national or nationalist heroes, while the glory consists of historical events and stories that have been selected to favourably present the nation that came after them. In short, Renan imagines nations that are continuations of deliberately created, heroic pasts, and these heroic pasts are created by speaking for the dead.

A clear example of Renan speaking for the dead is his definition of a nation. He defines a nation as "a vast solidarity, constituted by the sentiment of the sacrifices one has made and of those one is yet prepared to make." (Renan 261) Here, the pronoun 'one' represents both the living and the dead. They are treated as one entity with a shared goal, and their goal is the creation and continuation of a nation. That may be true for the living. Or rather, it is true for nationalists living in the present, such as Renan or Fichte. They were familiar with the concept of a nation, but the dead predominantly were not. The vast majority of them died before the concept existed. Yet, Renan claims they were willing sacrifices. He treats them as if they died knowing a nation would one day replace their community. In other words, they died as heroes.

I pointed out that the most of these dead heroes would not have been familiar with the concepts of nations and nationalism. Giving the novelty of nations and the rest described in this chapter, that is not surprising. Yet, it still warrants mentioning because Renan gives his lecture towards the end of the 19th century. By then, nationalism had spread across Europe, and there had been multiple revolutions led by nationalist movements. As a result, there were also dead nationalists among the many nameless dead Renan speaks 'for'. He treats them the same as the others. They share a voice with the living, and they all count as "the sacrifices one has made." Although the past consisted of various time periods, Renan's definition blends them together. Dead nationalists can be placed alongside 'great men' from earlier times, and more generally, the 'heroic past' can encompass different time periods. Renan is not the only one to do this, and the following chapters will show how Moore does the much the same in the *Irish Melodies*.

For now, I must note that Renan defines nations in terms of sacrifices. He speaks about 'a heroic past filled with great men and glory,' but these men earned their greatness more likely by how they died than how they lived, and the glory they represent does not entail only victories but also defeats. Death takes precedent when choosing historical figures and events for creating a national past. As Renan says, "Where national memories are concerned, grief is of more value than triumphs, for it imposes duties, it requires a common effort." (261) This is what was meant earlier when nations were said to 'impose unity.' The people living in a nation share a perceived obligation towards the past, or more precisely, the dead. Through their sacrifice the dead pass the duty of imaging a nation to the living.

Naturally, except for the dead nationalists placed among them, the dead did not die for a nation. Their deaths are sacrifices only insofar as Renan is presenting them as such, and the imposed duty is another example of him speaking for the dead. He is the one addressing his contemporaries and giving them the duty of imagining a nation. He treats it as an inheritance from the dead, great men of the heroic past because it establishes a continuity between past and present and in turn lends nations authenticity. In a sense, he vindicates his claims with his own version of the past.

Renan is not the only historian or author who speaks for the dead. As Anderson explained, speaking for the dead is a common feature of nationalism, and Moore does in the *Irish Melodies* what Renan does and suggests doing in his lecture. The *Melodies* contain a heroic Irish past filled with great men and glory, which lends authenticity to an (English-speaking) Irish nation, and they speak for the dead, presenting their deaths as willing sacrifices and imposing duties on the living. As briefly mentioned earlier, speaking for the dead in 19th-century Ireland involved speaking a different language, so prior to exploring the nationalism of Moore's *Irish Melodies*, the next chapter will explain the relationship between Irish nationalism and translation.

3 TRANSLATION AND THE EXPRESSION OF AN IRISH IDENTITY IN ENGLISH

The previous chapter gave an overview of nationalism in 19th-century Europe and examined features of nationalism through the writing of Fichte and Renan. While it mentioned Ireland's unique position within the context of 19th-century Europe, and while Irish authors also articulated ideas like Fichte's and Renan's, the previous chapter did not elaborate on the language shift or the relationship between Irish nationalism and translation. This chapter will therefore do both. It will discuss the role of translation in imagining an Irish nation. Moreover, it will introduce Irish antiquarianism and explore its links to Irish nationalism, translation and the *Melodies*. Prior to that, it will briefly outline the factors that made translation necessary and introduce concepts from translation theory. To that end, this chapter will refer to the work of three authors: Walter Benjamin, Charlotte Brooke, and James Hardiman.

Among the four authors just listed, Walter Benjamin stands out. Unlike the rest, he is not Irish, and he writes in the 20th century. However, similar to how I employed Anderson's work in the previous chapter, Benjamin's work will be used as a theoretical framework here. More precisely, I will quote from his essay *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers* (*The Task of the Translator* or *The Translator's Task*) and focus on the concept of translation as an afterlife of the original (or source text). The essay was first published in 1923 as a foreword to Benjamin's translation of *Tableaux Parisiens* (*Parisian Scenes*), a section of Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*). This is worth noting, since I will also be focusing on the introductions Brooke and Hardiman wrote for their collections of translations. As the title suggests, the essay is about the role of translators. It discusses the act of translation as a productive process (i.e., one that creates new texts) and the relationship between translations and their originals. When explaining said relationship between translations and the originals, Benjamin writes:

> *So wie die Äußerungen des Lebens innigst mit dem Lebendigen zusammenhängen, ohne ihm etwas zu bedeuten, geht die Übersetzung aus dem Original hervor. Zwar nicht aus seinem Leben so sehr denn aus seinem,Überleben'. Ist doch die Übersetzung später als das Original und bezeichnet sie doch bei den bedeutenden Werken, die da ihre erwählten Übersetzer niemals im Zeitalter ihrer Entstehung finden, das Stadium ihres Fortlebens.* (Benjamin VIII)

Fittingly, Benjamin's essay on translation has proven a notoriously difficult text to translate, so unlike with Fichte, I have opted to reproduce the above quote in its original German before providing English translations. The ability to directly compare the translation and the original will also help showcase the concept they are discussing. I refer to translations because I will provide two separate English translations of Benjamin's quote. The first one is by Harry Zohn.

> Just as the manifestations of life are intimately connected with the phenomenon of life without being of importance to it, a translation issues from the original — not so much from its life as from its afterlife. For a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life. (Zohn 16)

Zohn's translation is the older and the more contentious of the two translations I will provide. That is partly evidenced by the fact that I have taken the versions I am quoting from two separate editions of the same reader for translations studies: Zohn's translation is taken from the older edition, while the translation found in a more recent edition is by Steven Rendall.

> Just as expressions of life are connected most intimately with the living being without having any significance for the latter, a translation proceeds from the original. Indeed, not so much from its life as from its "afterlife" or "survival." If translation is indeed later than the original, it nonetheless indicates that important works, which never find their chosen translators in the era in which they are produced, have reached the stage of their continuing life. (Rendall 76)

The main difference between Zohn's and Rendall's translations is how they translate the term '*Überleben*'. It is the key term within the quoted passage, and Zohn translates it as 'afterlife', while Rendall provides the term 'survival' as an alternative translation alongside 'afterlife.' The two terms are similar in meaning, and both relate to Benjamin's idea, which is that translations exist separately from the originals. The opposite is easy to understand. The original texts exist independently from their translations. Not only were they written in a different language, but they were also created in a different context and for a different audience. However, the same is also true of their translations. They are created in a different context and presented to a different audience than the originals. It is impossible for them to recreate the effect of the originals because they cannot have the same effect when the context and audience

are different. Simultaneously, the translations do not require their audience to be familiar with the originals to have an effect. In that sense, the translations and the original exist separately.

However, although they cannot recreate the effect the originals had in their initial context, translations are still derived from their originals. They adjust aspects of the originals not only to a different language but also to a new context and audience. They give them a new life, and as Benjamin points out, that new life inherently comes after the first (i.e., the one they had "in their time of origin" or "the era in which they are produced"). That is why the translations mark the afterlife or survival of the originals. They are not extensions but continuations of them.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the notions of continuation and continuity are also part of imagining nations, and this is how we might think of translation with nationalism. One is a form of continuity, while the other requires continuity and authenticity. Still, before discussing the relationship between translation and Irish nationalism, one must explain the difference between 'afterlife' and 'survival' in relation to Benjamin's ideas. As said, both terms relate to the idea. Both convey the notion of continuity and continued or continuing life. Nevertheless, the term 'survival' implies that the originals escaped death, while the term 'afterlife' implies that they died. If translations represent the survival of the originals, it implies that the new life follows the old and that one flows into the next without interruption. If translations represent the afterlife of the originals, it implies that the new and old life of the text (i.e., the contexts of the translation and original) are separated by a period in which the originals were dead.

Death in this case means that the originals were not longer accessible. They could not be read, or they were not being read expect in a limited context. A good example of this are the classics. The texts of ancient Greek or Roman authors, such as Anacreon, were inaccessible to the general European readership because ancient Greek and Latin had become dead languages (in terms of the usual definition of that term, rather than Fichte's definition). They were only accessible to those who spoke ancient Greek or Latin, and they were inaccessible to those who spoke a vernacular language or one of the languages of modernity that replaced Greek and Latin. They first had to be translated in order for them to be accessible to new audiences, and once they were, they received a new life that was separate from their initial life and one that followed not their first life but their death. The term afterlife is therefore a more apt term for describing Benjamin's idea, and it will be the term used throughout the rest of this thesis.

Having established the concept of translation as an afterlife, I will now discuss the relationship between translation and Irish nationalism. Yet, to understand the relationship between the two, one must understand why the relationship developed, or rather, one must understand why imagining an Irish nation necessitated translation. The reason is the language shift in Ireland, which was touched on in the previous two chapters. The language shift is the process by which Ireland's dominant language shifted from Irish to English. It is what makes Ireland and Irish nationalism unique within the context of European nationalist movements in the 19th-century. Although their members were previous uninterested in them, other European nationalist movements could use vernacular languages as a source of authenticity. They could adapt Fichte's idea and ascribe to their vernacular the same authenticity that he ascribes to German. Since Ireland's vernacular was changing, Irish nationalists could not use Fichte's ideas as readily. In fact, Fichte's definition of dead languages applies better to Irish than to French. Irish was becoming 'empty noise' to people living in Ireland, and Irish nationalists were faced with the challenge of imagining an Irish nation in English.

Prior to the language shift, the presence of English in Ireland was primarily limited to the Pale, which refers to Dublin and the Anglo-Norman controlled area around it. (O'Malley 31) It was defined by the Statutes of Kilkenny, passed in 1366 by Lionel, Duke of Clarence. (ibid.) The Statutes required that Anglo-Norman settlers speak English and forbade them from speaking Irish. (ibid.) They also governed what customs settlers had to abide by and aimed to prevent the English-speaking Anglo-Norman population from integrating with the native Irish-speaking one. (ibid.) Crucially, the Statutes of Kilkenny applied only to Anglo-Norman settlers, and even more crucially, the Statutes of Kilkenny were not followed. (ibid.) They were hard to enforce, and they easy to avoid or break. As a result, English remained limited to the Pale.

The ineffectiveness of the Statutes of Kilkenny dissuaded similar attempts to promote English or regulate Irish. Although others were proposed, the Statutes remain one of the rare examples of large-scale programs that meant to impose English onto Ireland's population. (O'Malley 73) Even as colonial influence expanded, English as a vernacular was still largely confined to the east of Ireland and its urban areas, while the much of the rest of Ireland continued to speak Irish. Irish remained the first language for a majority of the population until the Great Famine in the middle of 19th century. (ibid.) However, the language shift was already a visible and ongoing process which was accelerated but not started by the Great Famine.

The language shift was primarily caused by the role and importance of English. It was one of the new languages of modernity. Or rather, English was the definitive language of modernity in Ireland. It was spoken in the urban areas, and it was the language of colonial administration and public education. Even when there were no legal restrictions imposed on Irish-speakers, only English-speakers could benefit from aspects of public life. For example, even when Trinity College began accepting Catholics students, their studies were conducted in English (or Latin). English was also the language of Irish politics and the language of the people who participated in politics and attended Trinity—Ireland's middle classes. Thus, English was necessary to deal with colonial administration, attend public education, participate in politics, and interact with or join the middle class. In short, English was not just a prerequisite for being successful, but it was the language of success and represented modernity, and this motivated Irish people to speak English. As a result, the language shift was caused by English establishing itself as the language of modernity and success. (O'Malley 73)

The language shift was a gradual but perceptible process, and in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, authors became concerned about its effects and the changing role of Irish. As seen in the previous chapter, vernacular languages were considered a source of authenticity for European nationalist movements, and losing one's vernacular meant a loss of authenticity. As a result, language became a central issue for Irish nationalism, and Irish authors looked for ways to preserve Irish or express Irishness in English. The act of translation was one way of doing so, and the late 18th century saw the first translations of Irish literature into English.

Most of these translations were the work of Irish antiquarians. Antiquarianism was a movement that was interested in and studied Ireland's past and the Irish language. (O'Malley 79-80) It was particularly interested in the ancient past, and it is comparable to the newfound interest in folklore and linguistics that spread throughout Europe during the 19th century. The inception of Irish antiquarianism is most frequently attributed to the work of General Charles Vallancey, who wrote philological texts about Irish and published them serially in *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*. (ibid.) His theories about Irish and the Irish were not based on historical evidence. Nevertheless, as with Fichte's ideas in the previous chapter, Vallancey's work proved influential because he opened Irish philology as a scientific field and founded associations like the Royal Irish Academy. (ibid.)

The movement Vallancey founded is not strictly speaking linked to Irish nationalism. Antiquarianism was not an organized nationalist movement like the United Irishmen or the Young Irelanders. Neither did it indulge the ideas of revolutionary nationalism. Antiquarians did not advocate for the creation of an autonomous Irish nation. (O'Malley 79-80) Nevertheless, they still imagined an Irish nation. Nations are imagined as sovereign, but as explained in the previous chapter, a nation does not have to be autonomous to be sovereign. It needs a distinct identity, and antiquarianism aimed to create an Irish identity in English. Many antiquarians were Anglo-Irish (i.e., born in Ireland but of English descent), and they wanted to represent Ireland in keeping with the notion of modernity as well as English notions of respectability. (O'Malley 80) Similar notions also appeared to the emerging Irish middle classes, who like their English counterparts were primarily English-speaking. (ibid.) Irish antiquarians nurtured an image of Ireland that appealed to these notions, and they tried to disprove Irish stereotypes that conflicted with them. In other words, they imagined an Irish nation that conformed to English, anglophone, sensibilities, and they often did so through translation.

The first widely available English-language translation of Irish poetry was Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. It was published in 1789 and is one of the first collections of this kind. It is consequently also one of the first antiquarian projects and will serve as an example of Irish antiquarianism and its ideas. I will not analyse the translations but instead quote from the preface, in which Brooke not only introduces the originals and translations but also explains the aims of her translations. Namely, Brooke wishes to make the Irish-speaking past accessible to her English-speaking contemporaries and to awaken interest about the former among the latter. Here, the Irish-speaking past refers to the time periods that predate the language shift. Although it encompasses multiple time periods in which Irish was still Ireland's vernacular language, Brooke is primarily preoccupied with the ancient past. The Irish poetry found in her collection is part of this past, but neither the literature nor the historical period it emerged from are accessible to those who do not speak Irish. Brooke therefore stresses not only the relationship between poetry and Ireland's past but also the need to engage with them despite, or perhaps because of, the language shift.

> It is impossible for imagination to conceive too highly of the pitch of excellence to which a science must have soared which was cherished with such enthusiastic regard and cultivation as that of poetry, in this country. It was absolutely, for ages, the vital soul of the nation; and shall we then have no curiosity respecting the productions of genius once so celebrated, and so prized? (IV)

Of course, Brooke's question is purely rhetorical. She expects her English-speaking contemporaries to be interested in the original poetry because it represents both a continuity and a source of authenticity. It does the former because the poetry in Brooke's collection is part of an Irish literary tradition. That literary tradition consists of works written throughout the past, which are all written in Irish. The language shift constitutes a break in that literary tradition, and although Brooke's translations are not a continuation of it, they resurrect it. They provide it an afterlife in English and help to establish Ireland's anglophone literary tradition, which continued after the language shift. Therefore, Brooke's translations of Irish poetry allow her contemporaries to reestablish a continuity between the Irish-speaking past and the English-speaking present.

Establishing a continuity is one prerequisite for creating or imagining a nation. The other one is a source of authenticity, and Brooke's collection provides that too. The originals are part of its literary tradition, but as mentioned, they also represent the Irish-speaking past more generally. They contain descriptions of the past as well as references to historical and mythical events and figures associated with it. They evoke images of the past, which Brooke considers authentic portrayals of Ireland. They also negate contemporary stereotypes about the Irish, and Brooke stresses how the past reflects on the present by asking another rhetorical question.

> The productions of our Irish Bards exhibit a glow of cultivated genius, — a spirit of elevated heroism, — sentiments of pure honor, — instances of disinterested patriotism, — and manners of a degree of refinement, totally astonishing, at a period when the rest of Europe was nearly sunk in barbarism: And is not all this very honorable to our countrymen? Will they not be benefited, — will they not be gratified, at the lustre reflected on them by ancestors so very different from what modern prejudice has been studious to represent them? (Brooke VII)

So far, I referred to Brooke's audience as her English-speaking contemporaries. By that I meant the (Anglo-)Irish middle classes of the late 18th and 19th centuries, who primarily spoke the language of modernity and success, English. They were largely unfamiliar with Irish and were previously uninterested in it and the Irish-speaking past, but they were educated and politically active. They were the ones who adopted the ideas of nationalism, and Irish nationalists like the

United Irishmen as well as antiquarians like Brooke were commonly members of the Irish middle classes. It is therefore unsurprising that the two rhetorical questions were aimed at them.

Yet, Brooke's translations were not intended just for her English-speaking contemporaries nor are they her only audience. Her translations made the Irish-speaking past also accessible to other English speakers. More precisely, Brooke wanted these translation to make this culture accessible to the English middle classes. She believed that her English audience would acknowledge the authenticity of the poetry and admire the images it conjures. She saw her work as helping foster a more sympathetic bond between Ireland and the United Kingdom and develop a version of Ireland that appealed to the shared middle-class values of her audiences.

> As yet, we are too little known to our noble neighbour of Britain; were we better acquainted, we should be better friends. The British muse is not yet informed that she has an elder sister in this isle; let us then introduce them to each other! together let them walk abroad from their bowers, sweet ambassadresses of cordial union between two countries that seem formed by nature to be joined by every bond of interest, and of amity. (Brooke VII-VIII)

This last quote addresses both Brooke's Irish and English middle-class audience. Although she refers to Ireland as a nation in the earlier quote, she does not consider it separately from England. In fact, the last quote suggests the opposite. She wants the two countries to remain bonded together. However, even if her collection did not achieve a sisterly relationship between Ireland and England, it made the Irish-speaking past accessible to her English-speaking contemporaries and provided them a way of establishing a continuity and source of authenticity for an Irish nation, as Brooke suggested it might.

> But, though I am conscious of having, in many instances, failed in my attempts to do all the justice I wished to my originals, yet still, some of their beauties are, I hope, preserved; and I trust I am doing an acceptable service to my country, while I endeavour to rescue from oblivion a few of the invaluable reliques of her ancient genius; and while I put it in the power of the public to form some idea of them, by clothing the thoughts of our Irish muse in a language with which they are familiar. (Brooke VI-VII)

Other antiquarian projects and authors shared her aim of making the Irish-speaking past accessible to her English-speaking contemporaries through translation. They also wished to

preserve Ireland's past and prove its authenticity, and in presenting an authentic version of Ireland, they participated in imagining an Irish nation.

This can be seen in the work of James Hardiman, who edited a collection of translations of Irish poetry, which was published in 1831 and titled *Irish Minstrelsy, or Bardic Remains of Ireland: with English Poetical Translations*. Its initial aim was to debunk claims made by James Macpherson, the Scottish author who wrote the poems of Ossian. (O'Malley 94) Macpherson, whose work was based on Irish mythology, claimed that the Scottish literary tradition predated the Irish one. (O'Malley 81-82, 94) Hardiman sought to disprove that claim by showing examples of Irish poetry spanning from ancient to modern examples and authors. (O'Malley 93-94)

Beyond its initial aim, Hardiman's collection, like Brooke's, reestablishes a continuity and provides a source of authenticity for an Irish nation. However, Hardiman places more emphasis on reestablishing a continuity than Brooke. Both exalt the work of ancient Irish poets, and both link the Irish and English literary traditions by making the afterlife of the former part of the latter, but Hardiman also describes the Irish literary tradition. The authors in his collection are listed chronologically, while he believes that "no men were ever more deserving of national honour than the ancient bards of Ireland," (XXI) he presents a list of authors who could be considered as their successors. Hardiman essentially outlines an Irish-speaking past through its literary tradition, but the authors he mentions, like Fergal Mac an Bhaird and Aengus O'Daly, are more than just part of a literary continuity. Although obscure, they are historical figures, and more so than Brooke, Hardiman uses references to Irish history and mythology in his preface. Like the poetry, these references conjure specific images of the Irish-speaking past and prove their authenticity. One such reference is the Hill of Tara, which is considered to have been the seat of the High Kings of Ireland. Another is the Harp of Erin, which will be the subject of the next chapter. Both the Hill of Tara and Erin's Harp appear in the following image:

> in the time of Geide, monarch of Ireland, [...] "the people deemed each others' voices sweeter than the warblings of a melodious harp, such peace and concord reigned among them, that no music could delight them more than the sound of each others' voice: Tenur (Tarah) was so called from its celebrity for melody, above the palaces of the world. Tea, or Te, signifying melody or sweet music, and mur, a wall. Te-mur, the wall of music." (Hardiman V-VI)

This version of the Irish-speaking past differs from the one in Brooke's collection. Both collections conjure images of 'a heroic past,' which is filled with glory and 'great men' like the ancient bards of Ireland or the High King mentioned above. The difference is that Brooke's collection focuses solely on poetry and identifies poetry as 'the vital soul of the nation,' while Hardiman's introduces the relationship between music and poetry and presents music as a vital part of the Irish-speaking past. "That this country, from an early period, was famous for the cultivation of the kindred arts of poetry and music, stands universally admitted." (Hardiman III) For example, the image above claims that the seat of Ireland's High Kings was named in honour of music and that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland had naturally melodic voices.

Another and a more significant difference between Brooke's and Hardiman's collection are their audiences. Hardiman's collection is meant for the Irish middle classes but not their English counterparts. He does not refer to Ireland and England using familiar terms, nor does he wish to improve the relationship between the two countries. His goal is to prove the authenticity of Ireland by drawing on Irish literary and musical traditions and using historical and mythological references that are related to the Irish-speaking past. In other words, Hardiman wants to show that Ireland has its own identity that justifies the existence of an Irish nation. Even if he is not discussing its autonomy, he is imagining an Irish nation and doing so without appealing to an English audience. That is why Hardiman's collection can be considered as step away from Irish antiquarianism and towards Irish cultural nationalism.

Having introduced both Irish antiquarianism and Irish cultural nationalism through Brooke's and Hardiman's collections, the remainder of this chapter will compare their ideas and collections to Moore's and the *Irish Melodies*. That involves explaining what makes the *Melodies* a work of translation. As mentioned in the introduction, the *Melodies* consist of lyrics written by Moore and airs arranged by Stevenson or Bishop. The lyrics are exclusively in English, while the airs are taken from various sources. Some were sourced through the publisher and were individual contributions by various composers, but the majority of the airs are traditional Irish airs. Many of them were taken from Edward Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. "Of the twenty-four airs in the first two numbers of the *Melodies*, at least twelve were drawn from […] Bunting's *General Collection*." (Kelly 159)

Bunting's *General Collection* is an antiquarian project. Like Brooke's and Hardiman's, it aimed to preserve the Irish-speaking past, but while their originals are part of the Irish literary

tradition, Bunting's belongs to the Irish musical tradition. His collection consists of airs he transcribed at the Belfast Harp Festival in 1792. There are two main differences between the versions of the airs performed at the festival and those found in Bunting's collection. Firstly, the originals were for the harp, while Bunting's versions were transcribed for the pianoforte. (Kelly 161) Secondly, the originals were modal music, while Bunting's versions were tonal. (ibid.) In other words, Bunting altered traditional Irish airs to accommodate the contemporary musical sensibilities of the late 18th century.

His alterations made the airs accessible to his contemporaries, who would have been unfamiliar with that type of music. Just as Brooke's audience were unfamiliar with Irish and she presented the poetry 'in a language with which they [were] familiar,' Bunting's audience were unfamiliar with modal music and he presented the airs in the tonal style with which they were familiar. As mentioned in the introduction, only the middle classes could afford a pianoforte, so also like Brooke and Hardiman, Bunting's audience belonged to the Irish middle class. Bunting thus gave the airs played by the traditionally-taught harpers a new life in the drawing rooms of the educated classes. In short, Edward Bunting's *General Collection* is a translation of Irish music.

The airs translated by Bunting were altered further for the purposes of the *Melodies*. The most significant change were naturally Moore's lyrics. Some of the lyrics were inspired directly by their airs. Either they are based on the original lyrics and title, or they were inspired by the music and what it evoked for Moore. Other lyrics were inspired by Irish mythology and history. In these cases, they contain specific references like the ones used by Hardiman, and the *Melodies* included extensive footnotes, written by Moore, that explained these references. Additionally, Moore and his collaborator (i.e., Stevenson or Bishop based on the volume) made changes to the music. In general, Moore's creative process for the *Melodies* looked like this:

> Moore would find an air that he liked, play it over on the piano, vocalize the melody, vary it for his voice, and consider what sort of lyric would suit. The variations - of rhythms, of phrasings - confronted to no particular template, except perhaps whatever best suited his voice. [...] In a number of instances the air's original title or lyric fed directly into Moore's imagination. [...] He would also search for inspiration in books on Irish history and legends. [...] Thus, with a few images and phrases percolating, he generally went out walking - or, more specifically, pacing - testing the lines against his strides. [...] Once he had a draft first verse he would try it out on the piano, and if it passed muster he would send

> it to Power; Power, in turn, would send it to Stevenson, who would arrange the music according to Moore's rough notation. (Kelly 161-162)

The *Melodies* are not translations in the sense that Moore rendered their original Irish lyrics into English. They are new English lyrics for old but adapted Irish airs that had no words. The *Melodies* are sung in a different language, performed on a different instrument, and composed in a different mode of music, but they still stem from the original airs. In addition to the original airs, which are part of the Irish musical tradition, the *Melodies* also introduce their audience to elements of Irish history and mythology. All of these belong to the Irish-speaking pasts, so like Brooke's, Hardiman's and Bunting's collections, the *Irish Melodies* present versions of the Irish-speaking past to their contemporary English-speaking audience.

Moore's audience is like Brooke's. It consists of the English-speaking Irish middle classes and their English counterparts. As with Brooke, the two actually comprise two separate audiences. They have different degrees of familiarity with Ireland's past and the references that are used in the lyrics. They are presented with the same version of the past, but it is sketched out in a deliberately vague manner, so that Moore's English audience can read or listen to the *Melodies* as love songs or Romantic pieces of music. This aspect of the *Irish Melodies* will be explored further in the fifth chapter. For now, it is enough to highlight that this is not unique to the *Melodies* but is a characteristic they share with Brooke's collection and Irish antiquarianism in general. They are aimed at an Irish and an English audience, and they imagine an Irish past and nation that appeals to the shared sensibilities of the Irish and English middle classes. Moore even voices these intentions in the *Melodies*. For example, in "Oh, Blame not the Bard" Moore addresses criticism of him and the *Melodies*. It starts with him asking his audience to forgive him for writing loves song in the and ends with the following lines:

> The stranger shall hear thy lament on his plains;
> The sign of thy harp shall be sent o'er the deep,
> Till thy masters themselves, as they rivet thy chains,
> Shall pause at the song of their captive, and weep!

Here, Moore seems to suggest that the *Melodies* are meant to rouse sympathy for Ireland among his English audience. Yet, the lyrical subject is addressing the harp, which makes Moore's statement a promise to his Irish contemporaries. He is promising to speak on behalf of Ireland, after he seemingly claims that he would have been a revolutionary in different circumstances.

He was born for much more, and in happier hours
His soul might have burn'd with a holier flame.
The string, that now languishes loose o'er the lyre,
Might have bent a proud bow to the warrior's dart; (3-6)

Moore balances the needs of his English and Irish audiences by creating a version of Ireland that appeases the Romantic sensibilities of one and provides the other with what Renan calls "the capital stock upon which one bases a national idea" (261) – a heroic past. Like Hardiman and Irish cultural nationalist, he relies on the original airs and his other sources to create it and lend his version of Ireland authenticity. His *Melodies* evoke images like like the Hill of Tara, and in them, High Kings of Ireland appear alongside other historical and mythical figures. Even Moore's creative process fits in with the Irish musical tradition, for as Hardiman notes:

> The metrical structure of ancient Irish poetry, must be considered with reference to its musical accompaniments. The voice of the bard retrenched, or supplied, the quantity of long or short syllables, in order to adapt them to the sound or melody. (Hardiman XXXV)

While not a continuation of this tradition, the way Moore made the *Melodies* conform to his voice adds to their feeling of authenticity. If the *Odes of Anacreon* had earned him the nickname Anacreon Moore, the *Irish Melodies* made Moore the Bard of Erin, and the nickname captures the essence of the *Melodies*. The *Melodies* do not use the term Irish outside their title (and footnotes). Ireland is never called Ireland in the lyrics. Instead, it is most often referred to as Erin, as in "Erin! The Tear and the Smile in Thine Eyes" and "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old". Erin is a personification of Ireland, but it is not the original Irish version of the term: it is rather an anglicized version of the Irish, Éire. As such, the term Erin is representative of the *Irish Melodies*, which contain an English version of the Irish-speaking past.

Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* are translations of traditional Irish airs and stories from Irish history and mythology. They give the Irish-speaking past an afterlife in the drawing rooms of the Irish and English middle class. However, this chapter discussed the *Melodies* only in general terms. The next two chapters will examine the concepts of translation and afterlife in the *Melodies* more thoroughly. One will examine the motif of the harp that has already been mentioned in this chapter, while the other will analyse death as the main theme of the *Irish Melodies*.

4 THE HARP IN THE *MELODIES*: AN ENGLISH VOICE FOR AN IRISH NATION

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the harp is associated with Ireland and the Irish-speaking past. As an instrument, it is part of the Irish musical tradition. The original airs played at the Belfast Harper Festival and translated by Bunting in his *General Collection* were for the harp. As a motif, the harp is part of Irish history and mythology, and The Harp of Erin appears in both, as was seen in the image described by Hardiman in the preface to his collection. However, the harp is also a political symbol. It was used by Society of United Irishmen as the symbol of their movement, and after the rebellions of 1798 and 1803, it became a symbol of Irish nationalism. It was adopted by nationalism movements that followed the United Irishmen, and it remains a strong political image today: it is on the Irish passport, and on every Irish embassy. In short, the harp is a symbol of Irish music and the Irish-speaking past as well as Irish nationalism.

The harp is a recurring motif in Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. Out if the ten volumes of the *Melodies*, only one does not feature the harp. The remaining nine use the motif at least once. Barring Ireland's personification as Erin, the harp is the most frequent motif connected Ireland. The harp is also personified. In “Dear Harp of My Country”, “My Gentle Harp” and “Sing, Sweet Harp,” which will be examined later in this chapter, the harp is even addressed directly. This chapter will also analyse “Tara's Harp” and “The Origin of the Harp”. However, this is not an exhaustive list of all mentions of the harp in the *Melodies*; instead, it is a selection of the *Melodies* that, in addition to using the harp as a motif, develop the idea of translation and voice in the *Melodies*. The first that will be analysed is “The Origin of the Harp.”

As the title suggests, “The Origin of the Harp” gives a mythological account about the origin of the harp. It consists of four four-line stanzas, and it is set up like a love song. The lyrical subject is playing the harp for a woman he loves, and as he plays, he is telling her the story of the harp. According to this story, the harp “Was a Siren of old, who sung under the sea;” and she would swim out of the sea “To meet, on the green shore, a youth whom she loved.” (2, 4) It is a love story, but it is set in a distant and vaguely defined version of the Irish-speaking past. The lyrics do not specify when or where it happened, but it implicitly takes place in Ireland and the past because it “Was a Siren of old […] on the green shore”. (2, 4) The harp is a symbol of Ireland, the siren is also implied to be a personified version of Ireland. She became the harp after the young men broke her heart and she wept “Till heaven look'd with pity on true-love so

warm, / And changed to this soft Harp the sea-maiden's form." (7-8) She is magically transformed into the harp, and the third stanza describes her transformation like this:

Still her bosom rose fair - still her cheeks smiled the same
While her sea-beauties gracefully form'd the light
And her hair, as, let loose, o'er her white arm it fell,
Was changed to bright chords uttering melody's spell.

Here, personified Ireland literally transforms into the harp, and her description after the transformation matches the version used as the symbol of the United Irishmen (see fig. 1)

(Fig. 1: the symbol of the United Irishmen)

In fact, the lyrics were inspired by a member of the United Irishmen. Moore's friend from Trinity Edward Hudson, who had introduced him to Edward Bunting's *General Collection*, was imprisoned following the Rebellion of 1798. In October of the same year, Moore visited him in prison and saw a drawing in Hudson's cell that depicted the same story of the siren

transforming into the harp. (Kelly 65-66) As a result, what might appear to be a love song uses the harp as both a mythological reference and a political symbol.

More importantly, the siren's transformation can be read as a kind of translation. The hair on her head became the strings of the harp, so while she lost her voice, she retained her song. Her weeping became "sorrow's sad tone" played on the harp. She has received a continued life which extends through the past into the present. "Hence it came, that this soft Harp so long hath been known / To mingle love's language with sorrow's sad tone." (13-14) Fittingly, such a mixture of melancholy songs and love songs describes not only this song in particular but also the *Melodies* in general. Moreover, the song is framed as if it is played on the harp. The lyrical subject is playing the transmuted version of personified Ireland. That implies that music of this song (i.e., its air) is the voice of ancient Ireland. In that sense, "The Origin of the Harp" positions the *Irish Melodies* as an afterlife for the Irish-speaking past and enacts that afterlife by retelling the story of the Irish harp in English.

Another example of one of the *Melodies* that is based on a historic or mythological reference and acknowledges the role of the *Melodies* as translations is "Tara's Harp." It consists of two eight-line stanzas, and it is based on the same reference as the image from the previous chapter that was taken from Hardiman's collection. It references the Hill of Tara, which is traditionally identified as the seat of the High Kings of Ireland. Both it and the previous example therefore rely on references to Irish history and mythology to create the appearance of authenticity. In this instance, the image created by "Tara's Harp" differs from the one found in Hardiman's collection. It is not set in the past, nor does it recount the glory of the past. It is instead set in the present and describes how the Hill of Tara has lost its glory.

So sleeps the pride of former days
So glory's thrill is o'er
And hearts that once beat high for praise
Now feel that pulse no more. (5-8)

Like the "Siren of old" in the previous example, the Hill of Tara belongs to a distant past. It is removed from the lyrical subject and the audience. They can only reminisce about this past. Even the harp that filled Tara's halls with music "Now hangs […] mute on Tara's wall." But if it plays "No more to chiefs and ladies bright", it is also the only part of the past that remains. Although the heroic past is over, the harp still resounds. Its music has changed, but it still plays.

It plays to remind people of the past, and the song closes with that thought: “The only throb she gives / Is when some heart indignant breaks, / To show that still she lives.” (14-16)

This is the afterlife of the heroic past. The hall which was once a sign of glory is empty, and the great men (the chiefs and fair ladies) are gone. The harp is all that remains of the heroic past, and its music is melancholy. Its song reminds its audience of the past and the continued existence of the harp, but it cannot recover what is lost. “Tara's Harp” (and the other *Melodies*) are “the […] throb she gives,” and if the harp is Ireland, then the *Melodies* are meant to remind their audience of Ireland. In the case of an English audience, they may be reminded of Ireland as doomed culture whose propensity for Romantic melancholy can be appreciated without worrying about its political implications. In the case of an Irish audience, they may be reminded of Ireland’s Gaelic culture and how it may be preserved, even if it cannot be recovered. These are two possible sentiments that “Tara’s Harp” and the *Melodies* could rouse in their audience, and they hinge on the *Melodies* acting as the voice of Ireland.

To elaborate, both "The Origin of the Harp" and "Tara's Harp" use the harp not only as a symbol of the Irish-speaking past or as a political symbol but also as a symbol of the *Melodies*. Although they were performed on the pianoforte, the conceit is that they are played on the harp. The airs are provided by the harp while the lyrics are Moore lending the harp his voice. Tellingly, he gives the Irish harp an English voice. He is speaking for Ireland in the language of the Irish and English middle classes. Coincidently, this appeals to the ideas of nationalism because it establishes a continuity. It links the *Melodies* to the Irish-speaking past. Moore is a successor to the ancient bards, as he has inherited the harp. It also gives Moore a greater claim to authority. He is not describing the past but speaking on behalf of the past. In simple words, by evoking the harp, the voice of the *Melodies* becomes the voice of Ireland.

“Dear Harp of My Country” and “My Gentle Harp” are two more examples of this construction. Both explore Moore's relationship to the *Melodies* and their originals. The lyrical subject is the bard addressing the harp, and the two songs are two connected scenes. One is the bard parting with the harp, while the other is their reunion and him picking the harp up again. They are simultaneously the closing and opening songs for the sixth and seventh volume of the *Melodies*, so the time that passed since their parting is the time between the publication of these volumes.

The opening lines of “Dear Harp of My Country” reflect Moore’s approach to the music of the *Melodies*. He did not write it but found it. “Dear Harp of my Country! in darkness I found thee, / The cold chain of Silence had hung o'er thee long.” (1-2) Bunting's *General Collection* and Moore’s other sources could hardly be called darkness, but the image is in keeping with the ideas of 19th-century nationalism. “In Europe, the new [second-generation] nationalisms almost immediately began to imagine themselves as 'awakening from sleep,' a trope wholly foreign to the Americans.” (Anderson 195) In this case, the image gives Moore and his middle-class audience an excuse for why they were not more familiar with the airs prior to the *Melodies*. The harp was asleep, and it was silent because it did not have a voice in English. It was Moore, by his own admission, who freed it “And gave all [its] chords to light, freedom, and song.” Naturally, he did so by giving it an English voice.

The previous image is contained in the first of the song’s two eight-line stanzas. The second stanza uses the image of the Aeolian harp (i.e., a harp that is played by the wind). The “chords to light, freedom, and song” that Moore claimed as his in the previous stanza are now ascribed to the harp. He admits to having been incidental to the music and takes on the role of translator. He merely made the air accessible to his English-speaking contemporaries ‘by clothing the music of the Irish harp in a language with which they are familiar,’ or using Moore’s own lines:

If the pulse of the patriot, soldier, or lover,
Have throbb'd at our lay, 'tis thy glory alone;
I was but as the wind, passing heedlessly over,
And all the wild sweetness I waked was thy own. (13-16)

Here, Moore distances himself from the content of the *Melodies*. The pulse of the patriot and soldier are political images and references dead political figures. The pulse of the lover would be any image considered sensual by the standards of Moore audience. By ascribing both to the Irish musical tradition he took inspiration from, Moore tries to shield himself from accusations of rousing political sentiments as well as his reputation as Anacreon Moore. However, that is only a secondary effect. The image also plays into the notion of authenticity. If the images in the *Melodies* belong to the originals and the *Melodies* only translate these images into English, then the versions of Ireland in the *Melodies* appear more authentic.

“My gentle Harp” consists of four eight-line stanzas and continues where “Dear Harp of My Country” ends. The first stanza opens with the lyrical subject addressing the harp and waking

it again. “My gentle Harp, once more I waken / The sweetness of thy slumbering strain.” (1-2) It uses the same image as the previous song – awakening from sleep. The first two stanzas also share a sense of melancholy. It is the same melancholy that was also present in “The Origin if the Harp” and “Tara's Harp”, and, indeed, most of the *Melodies*. Quoting from the previous example, “so oft hast thou echoed the deep sigh of sadness, / That even in thy mirth it will steal from thee still.” (7-8) Like the image of nations awaking from sleep, melancholy is a feature of 19th-century Romanticism, and many preeminent works of European Romanticism (such as *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe or *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* by Casper David Friedrich) evoke a feeling of melancholy. The melancholy mood of the *Melodies* therefore reflects the broader taste and sensibilities of the time. By appealing to these tastes and sensibilities, Moore imagines a version of Ireland that would garner sympathy from middle-classes across Europe.

The second stanza of “My gentle Harp” appears to reference something that transpired between its publication and that of “Dear Harp of My Country”, and by extension, between two volumes of the *Melodies*. The lyrics do not name or reference the event explicitly. They instead describe it more vaguely. “An hour of peace and triumph came, / And many an ardent bosom bounded / With hopes - that now are turn'd to shame.” This image could represent any historical moment when the relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom seemed to improve, or justice looked more attainable. Yet, it could also be a reference to a specific moment in Irish history, and it is possible that Moore’s contemporary audience would have recognized it or attributed it to be a specific moment that felt like a moment of peace and triumph to them. The image is consequently both specific and general, which is a feature of the *Melodies*.

The third stanza of “My Gentle Harp” contains another interesting image. The lyrical subject expresses doubt about playing the harp. He questions how he can sing about freedom “When even the wreaths in which I dress thee / Are sadly mix'd - half flowers, half chains?” (23-24) If the harp represents the airs, Ireland and its Irish-speaking past, then the wreaths refer to the lyrics. They are flowers in the sense that they praise the past and create an appealing version of it. Nevertheless, they are chains because they are written in English. They imagine a heroic Ireland, but they do it in the language of its colonizer, so the Ireland they imagine is anglophone. In short, they bind the afterlife of heroic Ireland to the English language, for if the *Melodies* are the voice of Ireland, then this Ireland has an English voice.

The final stanza relates to this concept of an anglophone afterlife for the Irish-speaking past. Despite the melancholy, shame and half chains of the previous three stanzas, the lyrical subject asks the harp for music. He pleads for it to play "And show the world, in chains and sorrow, / How sweet thy music still can be; / 'Mid desolation tunefull still!" (26-27, 32) Since the chains are the English language, he is asking it to perform the airs in English and to continue the Irish musical tradition into the present. Moreover, this is presented as a defiant act. Rather than encourage rebellion or armed revolt, Moore wants to continue promoting a sympathetic heroic but melancholy version of Ireland.

Similar images can be found in "Sing, Sweet Harp." It consists of three twelve-line stanza and is another example where the lyrical subject directly addresses the harp. As said, it shares images with the previous examples. Its first stanza opens similarly to how "My Gentle Har"" ends. The lyrical subject asks the harp to share images of the Irish-speaking past. "Sing, sweet Harp, oh sing to me / Some song of ancient days". (1-2) The rest of the stanza creates a melancholy mood which continues into the second one, which employs the image of the Aeolian harp that was present in "Dear Harp of My Country." The difference between the two images is that the wind in "Sing, Sweet Harp" is not a metaphor for Moore as translator but refers to "the midnight air." (13) In that sense, the image is similar to "Tara's Harp." It is melancholy image of night and ruins that evokes "[…] chieftains, now forgot, […] [and] / […] Bards who, once immortal deem'd, / Now sleep without a name." (17, 19-20) The final stanza then opens wishing that these 'great men' could be brought back to life, but it closes with the lyrical subject concluding that is better to join them, which is another quintessentially Romantic image.

One image used in "Sing, Sweet Harp" that did not appear in the previous examples can be found in the first stanza. Here, the lyrical subject compares himself to the harp and concludes that they are alike because they are both doomed. "Both lost to all but memory, / We live but in the past." They belong to the always distant and often vague past found in the *Melodies*, and their connection to the present is through memory. The *Melodies* often address their audiences and ask them to remember the past, and that is how they provide an afterlife for the dead heroes, who inhabit it and are doomed like the lyrical subject and harp in "Sing, Sweet Harp". The next chapter will explore that aspect of the *Irish Melodies*. More precisely, it will explore the role of death and the dead in the *Melodies* and their relationship to the past and afterlife.

5 DEATH AND AFTERLIFE IN THE *MELODIES*: CREATING AN HEROIC PAST

Death is the main theme of the *Irish Melodies*. Despite the relative frequency of love songs like "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms" and "Lesbia Hath a Beaming Eye", and Moore's reputation as Anacreon Moore, the *Irish Melodies* are not a collection of love songs. Death is thematically far more prevalent than love. Images of death and the dead are even more frequent than the harp. All ten volumes of the *Melodies* contain songs that use images related to death or images of the dead. Some *Melodies*, like "Remember the Glories of Brain the Brave," are about the death of a named mythological or historical figure, while other *Melodies*, like "Lay His Sword By His Side," are about the death of an unnamed hero. Other examples like "Forget Not the Field" are about the deaths of many nameless heroes. In short, the *Irish Melodies* are filled with dead heroes, and this chapter will discuss the role they and the audience play in creating Moore's version of Ireland.

Two of the *Melodies* that use images of death in conjunction with the motif of the harp are "The Minstrel Boy" and "Shall the Harp Then be Silent." The former is undoubtedly the better known; indeed, "The Minstrel Boy" is arguably the best-known song of all the *Melodies* with various renditions of it appearing to the present day in popular culture. Its simplicity may have contributed to its popularity. It consists of two eight-line stanzas and is about the death of an unnamed hero – the titular minstrel boy.

When the first stanza opens, the minstrel boy is already dead. "The Minstrel-Boy to the war is gone / In the ranks of death you will find him." (1-2) Since he is dead, everything the rest of the song describes him do or say are the actions and words of a dead man. It is important to stress this fact because the song could otherwise be read as being more belligerent. The minstrel boy is part of an armed conflict, or more specifically, he is part of a rebellion and has prepared himself for it. "His father's sword he hath girded on / And his wild harp slung behind him." (3-4) Yet, the warrior-bard's presence is reduced to a ghostly voice, and the song is not a call to arms but a tragic story about sacrifice.

As explained in the previous chapter, the harp is both a historical and political symbol. It was the symbol of the United Irishmen and was used during the rebellion of 1798. They carried it into battle (albeit on banners) just as the minstrel boy does. One may therefore conclude that "The Minstrel Boy" represent the United Irish and their rebellion. If so, the foeman mentioned

in the second stanza would refer to England. Nevertheless, Moore's English middle-class audience could enjoy it as a tragic song about a dead hero because the minstrel's death disarms him. His rebellion has already happened and failed, and his foemen have won. As a result, Moore's English audience would not necessarily feel threatened by the minstrel boy and could read or listen to the song with sympathy for the harmless dead hero.

This distance between the minstrel boy and the audience is necessary. The song is nominally about an unnamed dead hero, and neither the lyrics nor the accompanying footnotes identify it as a song about the United Irishmen. However, Moore's contemporaries would probably have understood it as such, as both his Irish and English audiences would have recognized the harp as a political symbol. It is a reference to contemporary politics like that found in "My Gentle Harp" discussed in the previous chapter. Similar references appear throughout the Melodies, and another example can be found in "Shall the Harp Then Be Silent."

"Shall the Harp Then Be Silent" is one of the longer *Melodies*. Although only two stanzas were intended to be sung, the song consists of ten four-line stanzas, and it opens with a rhetorical question. Namely, it asks whether Moore as the voice of Ireland will comment on the death of an Irish patriot. "Shall a Minstrel of Erin stand mute by the grave / Where the first - where the last of her Patriots lies?" (3-4) The remaining nine stanzas then proceed to praise the dead hero for his patriotism and eloquence. Using vague images, they present him as a great man, and the song ends naming him one "Of the wisest, the bravest, the best of mankind!" However, this great man is not named in the lyrics. His name is limited to the song's footnotes, which identify the dead hero of "Shall the Harp Then Be Silent" as Henry Grattan.

Henry Grattan was an Irish parliamentarian and an important Irish political figure in the late 18th and early 19th century. He was a Protestant proponent of Catholic emancipation and supported change through constitutional processes. He was not a member of the United Irishmen, nor did he participate in the rebellion of 1798. He was not a revolutionary nationalist, but a constitutionalist. Grattan's views were closer to those held by Irish antiquarians. He was the leader of the Irish parliament, and worked to improve Ireland's position and give its parliament more authority within the British empire. In the aftermath of the failed United Irishmen's rebellion of 1798, the Irish parliament was dissolved, and the 1800 Act of Union saw Ireland become a part of the United Kingdom, with Irish parliamentarians sitting in Westminster. His inclusion by name in the *Melodies* (even if limited to the footnotes) suggests

that Moore approved of his politics, although it is also possible that Grattan is named because his politics align more with the sensibilities of Moore's English middle-class audience.

Another contemporary Irish political figure featured in the *Melodies* is one of Moore's friends from Trinity College and the leader of the Rebellion of 1803 - Robert Emmet. The *Melodies*' homage to him is known as "Oh! Breathe Not His Name," and is a relatively short and simple song. It consists of two four-line stanzas and revolves around one image. That image is a grave covered with grass with the lyrical subject and the audience mourning the death of its occupant. Their tears are compared to dew because one nurtures the grass growing on his grave, while the other nurtures him memory. Nevertheless, the song asks its audience to "breathe not his name, let it sleep in the shade," (1) and remember him without giving his name.

That request is what marks this song as one about Emmert. Following the rebellion of 1803, Emmet was tried and publicly executed, and he gave a famous last speech from the dock after he was sentenced to execution. In this speech, he asked that no one writes his epitaph until the goals of the United Irishmen are fulfilled. In other words, he wanted his grave to be unmarked until the creation of an Irish nation. That speech is what the song alludes to, and Moore's contemporaries would have been familiar with the speech. They would have been able to recognize "Oh! Breathe Not His Name" as a song about Robert Emmet.

Unlike Grattan, Emmet is not identified in the footnotes. "Oh! Breathe Not His Name" and "The Minstrel Boy" rely on the audience understanding the references in the lyrics in order to recognize them as songs about Emmet and the United Irishmen. This is likely because Grattan's parliamentarism would have been deemed acceptable among the English middle-classes, while the revolutionary nationalism of Emmet and the United Irishmen would not. By remaining unnamed, they appear more distant and fit in more easily with the other melancholy images created by the *Melodies*. They are doomed heroes, who invite sympathy from the audience, but since they are already dead and doomed, they are harmless to England and its rule of Ireland, which allows the audience to enjoy the songs they die in as Romantic parlour pieces.

Two more examples of this are "She is Far From the Land" and "When He Who Adores Thee." The former is about a woman in a foreign land mourning her lover, who died for his country. The woman in question is Sarah Curran, who was Robert Emmet's lover, which means that the dead unnamed hero in the song is Emmet again. (Kelly 201) The latter example is about a man

who is aware he will die and asking his country to mourn when he does. According to Moore, the man is Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who was also involved in Emmet's failed 1803 rebellion, although contemporary and later readers and listeners also thought that it could be Emmet. (Kelly 167) In either case, both songs can be approached as Romantic love songs that contain references to contemporary Irish political figures.

Regardless of their political affiliations and their relationship to Moore, all of these figures are dead. Their appearance in the *Melodies* is an afterlife they share with the other dead heroes that populate them. The other dead heroes found in the *Melodies* are historical and mythological figures from the Irish-speaking past. Examples include Irish kings like Brein the Brave, Malachi, and O'Ruark, Prince of Breffni, as well as the Fianna and their leaders. Like their more contemporary counterparts, these dead heroes do not present a threat to England. Within the *Melodies*, they may fight poetical and historical stand-ins for the British Empire such as tyrants and invaders or Saxons and Danes, but they are dead and many of them lost, or have already lost, the battles referenced by their songs. They are reduced to images of the past, distant from the present. As such, the dead heroes in the *Melodies* do not threaten Moore's English middle-class audiences, and they can listen to the *Melodies* and imagine a heroic Ireland aligned with their Romantic sensibilities.

These dead heroes are also the great men that make up "the capital stock upon which one bases a national idea." (Renan 261) They create a version of Ireland's past that is populated by historical figures from period both prior to and after the language shift. English-speaking nationalists like Emmet are placed next to Irish-speaking High Kings like Brien the Brave, and Grattan, the 18th-century parliamentarian, inhabits the same space as O'Ruark, Prince of Breffni. Stevenson, who arranged the airs and is the subject of "Silence is in Our Festal Halls," is akin to the bards mentioned in "Sing, Sweet Harp," while the United Irishmen are treated like the mythological Red-Branch Knights and the Finians. The version of Ireland created by the *Melodies* is an afterlife for all of them: one that connects the Irish-speaking and anglophone parts of Ireland's past. By blending the two, the *Irish Melodies* circumvent the break in historical continuity created by the language shift and imagine a continuous Irish nation.

The past that justifies this nation is created by references to Irish history and mythology that include but are not limited to the dead. For example, "Remember the Glories of Brien the Brave" is about the Irish High King Brien the Brave, his death and the death of his men. It

references the Kingdom of Munster and his seat in Kinkora, and the battle where he died, or at least where the battle took place. “That sun which now blesses our arms with his light, / Saw them fall upon Ossory's plain.” (5-6) Other examples that feature Irish kings are “Let Erin Remember the Days of Old” and “Avenging and Bright.” The former references High King Malachi and the Red-Branch Knights, who were a knightly order belonging to the Kingdom of Ulster. The latter places Conor, King of Ulster, in an antagonistic role and presents him as a traitor who has vengeance sworn upon him for “When Ulad's three champions lay sleeping in gore.” (6) Meanwhile, “‘Tis Gone, and For Ever” and “The Wine-Cup is Circling” both feature the Finians of Irish mythology, and “The Song of O'Ruark, Prince of Breffni” and “Desmond's Song” intertwine a love story with an episode from Irish history. These references are more overt than those about Robert Emmet and the United Irishmen. These figures, places and events are named and described in the lyrics, while the accompanying footnotes offer further explanations about the sources they reference. The *Melodies* can identify these dead historical and mythical heroes because, like Henry Grattan, they do not pose a threat to English colonial rule of Ireland. They are too distant and have been dead for too long to affect it.

In this light, these references can be seen as a form of antiquarianism. Similar to Brooke, Moore uses poetry to acquaint his English-speaking contemporaries and their English counterparts with an Irish-speaking past. He allows them to access it by translating the parts he selected into English and adjusting them to Romantic expectations. His Irish audience can relate themselves to their Irish-speaking predecessors, while his English audience can acknowledge the heroism displayed by the dead. One could proudly sing a song at a gathering in Ireland, while the other wistfully listens to a performance of the same song in a drawing room in England, and both would be remembering versions of the same dead hero. In short, the *Melodies* foster a relationship between Ireland and England by letting them share the Irish nation Moore imagines through them.

The dead and the references to Irish history and mythology also contribute to Moore's version of Ireland by lending it authenticity. They create images, like those Hardiman uses in his collection, that evoke a sense of Irishness. More importantly, to imagine an Irish nation, Moore does what Anderson considered characteristic of second-generation nationalists - he speaks for the dead. Not only does he speak on behalf of the dead, as in “Oh, Breathe Not His Name” or “Remember the Glories of Brein the Brave,” where he tells us what the dead would have wanted, but he also literally speaks for the dead. In some examples, like “The Minstrel Boy,”

Moore quotes the dead. In others, such as “When He Who Adores Thee” or “Song of the Battle Eve,” the lyrical subject is one of the dead, and the lyrics are written from the perspective of the dead. Their voice instead of Moore’s is the voice of their songs.

“Lay His Sword By His Side”, for example, consists of three eight-line stanzas, and its lyrical subject is a separate voice from its unnamed dead hero. It opens with the lyrical subject directly addressing the audience. “Lay his sword by his side - it hath served him too well / Not to rest near his pillow below.” (1-2) Like the minstrel boy, the song's hero is already dead in the opening lines. Also like the minstrel boy, he reappears as a ghostly presence and addresses the audience. Notably, he addresses the audience in a language they understand (i.e., English), and although many of the dead heroes in the *Melodies* would have spoken Irish, they all speak English. Theirs is a literal afterlife in English, for the dead heroes who populate the *Melodies* are resurrected as ghostly anglophone voices.

What the dead heroes of the *Melodies* tell the audience is limited to hopes of future victories. They do not give battle cries, nor do they try to stir the audience into immediate action. Instead, they offer that their actions will inspire future victories. In “Lay His Sword By His Side”, this is represented by the dead hero leaving his sword to the living. “Though the day of your Chieftain for ever hath set, / Oh leave not his sword thus inglorious to sleep / It hath victory's life in it yet!” (14-16) In “Remember the Glories of Brien the Brave,” the sentiment is the same. The sacrifice of the king and his men are supposed to inspire the living, or to quote the song:

That sun which now blesses our arms with his light,
Saw them fall upon Ossory's plain; --
Oh! let him not blush, when he leaves us to-night,
To find that they fell there in vain. (21-24)

Barring exceptions like Finians proclaiming victory in “The Wine-Cup is Circling” or the oath of vengeance sworn in “Avenging and Bright,” the dead in the *Melodies* follow this course. They serve as a source of inspiration for some future change, and that change is as distant as the past and its dead. It is nothing more than a vague suggestion that something may occur in the future, and while it may have comforted Moore’s English-speaking contemporaries, who shared political views with Grattan and Irish antiquarians, the suggestion of future change does not threaten English colonial rule or the position of Moore’s English audience. Moore’s audience would have been able to understand the implications, and Moore was accused of

rousing political sentiment in Ireland, but the Romanticism of the lyrics provides an alibi. It allows Moore to position his work as an apolitical antiquarian project, and it lets his English audience imagine an Ireland that appeases their sensibilities.

The last point bears repeating. Moore's audience participates in creating his version of Ireland. As already established, when Moore speaks on behalf of, or as, the dead heroes in the *Melodies*, he is addressing his audience. He repeatedly asks them to remember the great men, the glory and the heroic past of Ireland. Examples that were mentioned include "Oh Breath Not His Name," "Remember the Glories of Brien the Brave," and "Lay His Sword By His Side." Other examples include "Forget Not the Field", which asks its audience to "Forget not the field where they perish'd, / The truest, the last of the brave." (1-2) Borrowing Renan's rhetoric, these gesture to the duties imposed on the living by the sacrifices made by the dead. They died for Erin, so the living have to "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old." This is the common effort required (according to Renan) to imagine a nation, and the *Melodies* elicit it from Moore's audiences in Ireland and England.

The point applies equally to Moore's English-speaking middle-class contemporaries in Ireland and their middle-class counterparts in England. The *Melodies* ask readers and listeners from both groups to "Breathe Not His Name" and "Remember the Glories of Brien the Brave." They are witnesses to the sacrifices made by the dead and exposed to the same images of the Irish-speaking past. Their memory forms the afterlife of Ireland's dead heroes, whether they belong to the Irish-speaking past like Brien the Brave or more recent and more anglophone periods like Emmet. In short, the Irish and English middle-classes imagine an Irish nation in English.

However, the Irish nation imagined by an English audience differs from the one imagined by their Irish counterparts. Like the ghostly voices of its dead heroes, the Ireland imagined by the former is not a threat to colonial rule. Despite being their geographical neighbour, it is distant or feels distant. Imagined in a drawing room in England, the Ireland of the *Melodies* becomes a distant island of ruins like those found in "Tara's Harp" and potentially landscapes akin to those found in the work of European Romantic painters. It is an image that evokes sympathy rather than worry, and such an image is politically advantageous because the middle class holds political power and is more likely to support policies that benefit Ireland if they are sympathetic towards it. That is the Ireland imagined by the English middle-class audience of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* – a harmless, doomed but sympathetic nation.

6 CONCLUSION

If success is measured by popularity, then Thomas Moore remains one of the most successful poets in Irish history, and the *Irish Melodies* are the main reason for this. As has been argued here, the *Melodies* can be seen as translations: they are an afterlife for the dead doomed heroes of the Irish-speaking past and those of those of more recent times. The dead and the harp act as voices of the past, and together with the references to Irish history and mythology, lend authenticity to Moore's version of Ireland. However, this is nonetheless a past that could be understood in different ways. For his English-speaking (Anglo-)Irish middle-class audiences, it represented a source of inspiration and validation for a future anglophone Irish nation, while for his English middle-class audience, it is a doomed, essentially harmless and sympathetically Romantic location.

This ambivalence distinguishes Moore politically from Brooke and Irish antiquarians. On one hand, like them, he appeals to the English middle classes and presents a version of Ireland that suits their sensibilities. Yet, he gives his English audience a more active role. They are not meant to only accept a version of Ireland, as is the case with Brooke, who says that "[England] is not yet informed that she has an elder sister in this isle." (VII) Moore's English audience is also meant to perpetuate his version of Ireland, for they are repeatedly asked to remember the heroism of its doomed dead heroes. The sympathy garnered by this image of Ireland is a political currency and could be leveraged to improve the position of Ireland within the United Kingdom and the British Empire. Seamus Deane, indeed, has argued that "[t]he long history of Irish catholic petitions to England, pleading for justice, relief from penal legislation, admission to citizenship, recognition of the petitioners' humanity and tradition, reaches an unexpected culmination in Moore's melodies." (Deane, 1054). At the same time, unlike the antiquarians, Moore appeals to nationalist sentiments in Ireland, gesturing towards the possibility of a future Irish nation by creating a heroic past that might inspire it. Notably, he does this in English and so plays a key role in giving expression to Irish experience in English—a process that informs the Irish Literary Revival of the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

The politics of Moore's *Melodies* may therefore be best described as an example of parlour nationalism. Parlour nationalism lacked the belligerence and rebellions that marked the revolutionary nationalism of Robert Emmet and the United Irishmen. Its goal was not to create a nation through armed revolt. Borrowing its approach from antiquarianism, its goal was to

improve Anglo-Irish relations by favourably representing Ireland to Britain. Yet, by fostering a strong sense of Irishness it set the scene for the cultural nationalism that succeeded it.

Parlour nationalism is named after the drawing rooms, or parlours, of the middle classes. They are where the middle classes of 19th-century Europe would gather and entertain themselves but also potentially discuss politics. They are where songs like the *Melodies* would have been performed and where Moore's version of Ireland would have been shared among his Irish and English audiences. Parlour nationalism is a distinctly middle-class form of nationalism, and the same can be said of the politics in the *Melodies*.

Moore's successors took a greater interest in defining Irishness and what would lend a greater sense of authenticity and thus authority to an Irish nation. This represents the transition from the parlour nationalism embodied by Moore towards the Irish cultural nationalism associated with the Irish Literary Revival and figures such as William Butler Yeats in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, it is already present in middle of the 19th century and can be seen in Hardiman's collection and the work of the Young Irelanders. They were a nationalist movement organized around the *Nation*, a newspaper with contributions written by the movement's members. In 1853, the *Nation* published *Our National Language*, an essay on by Thomas Osborne Davis, which expresses views on language and nations similar to Fichte's.

> The language, which grows up with a people, is conformed to their organs, descriptive of their climate, constitution, and manners, mingled inseparably with their history and their soil, fitted beyond any other language to express their prevalent thoughts in the most natural and efficient way. To impose another language on such a people is to send their history adrift among the accidents of translation—'tis to tear their identity from all places—'tis to substitute arbitrary signs for picturesque and suggestive names—'tis to cut off the entail of feeling, and separate the people from their forefathers by a deep gulf—'tis to corrupt their very organs, and abridge their power of expression. (Davis 173-174)

Cultural and parlour nationalism were not two distinct phenomena. The former primarily took the form of the latter, and it too distinguished itself from revolutionary nationalism through an emphasis on culture rather than politics and rebellion. Later Anglo-Irish authors like Yeats travelled, to some extent, on roads Moore had

constructed, which afforded them access to readers or listeners in both Ireland and Britain. In effect, they expanded on the Romantic parlour nationalist version of Ireland provided by Moore, which appealed to British and Irish notions of respectability. One may therefore conclude that Moore opened the way for Irish cultural nationalism. To return to de Valera's words cited in the Introduction here, "Thomas Moore's songs kept the love of country and the lamp of hope burning in millions of Irish hearts here in Ireland and in many lands beyond the seas," (Kelly 523) and his successors used the same lamp to light the way forward.

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