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- 1 In his contentious study of Irish literature in the last century, *Inventing Ireland, the Literature of the Modern Nation*, Declan Kiberd posits that “if England had never existed the Irish would have been rather lonely. Each nation badly needed each other, for the purpose of defining itself”. This may sound rather provocative considering the unhappy nature of Anglo-Irish relations but as he contends interestingly:

A strange reciprocity bound colonizer to colonized. It might indeed be said that there were four persons in every Anglo-Irish relationship: the two actual persons, and the two fictions, each one a concoction of the other's imagination. Yet the concoction leaked into the true version, even as the truth modified the concoction. After a while, neither the colonizer nor the colonized stood on their original ground, for both [...] had been deterritorialized².

- 2 It makes no doubt that, because of their close geographical position, the two islands could not fail to interpenetrate each other, but strangely enough this reciprocal process has hardly received the attention it deserves. England's attraction for Ireland has always been so powerful that few indeed are the English observers of the Irish question, whether politicians, publicists, novelists and social reformers, who did not, publicly or privately, imagine and re-invent a different Ireland, at one time or another. The re-imaginings of Ireland by English minds remain an uncharted territory few scholars have ventured into so far, possibly because the view that Ireland was for England her subordinate and that Anglo-Irish relations have only been dictated by political or economic expediency is hard to die. Although permeated with disgust, anger, contempt or exasperation, the English writings of the 19th century about the Irish are rarely one-dimensional³, more than often they can be remarkably ambiguous or contradictory; a feeling of closeness to and kinship with Ireland (which undoubtedly accounts for England's continued interest in her throughout the century or Gladstone's obsession with her) surfaces as a counterpoint in many diaries, novels, magazines and even political speeches of the period.

- 3 Without flying in the face of historical evidence, challenging the opinion that Ireland was a mere sacrificial ground for England admittedly requires a certain audacity. The revisionist approach met with many criticisms, and when attempted, the analysis of the English perception of the Irish can reveal elusive: recently Michael de Nie's scrutiny of the British press for instance led him to the pessimistic conclusion that the sympathetic elements "never fully displaced the traditional prejudicial stereotypes that informed British ideas of Irishness"⁴. My approach is indebted to such works as Peter Gray's *Famine, Land and Politics, British Government and Irish Society* (1999) for instance, Joel Mokyr's *Why Ireland Starved* (1983), but also Donal Kerr's *A Nation of Beggars* (1994), which have re-established the balance between old and new interpretations. Probing for more nuanced explanations than the ones commonly accepted does not amount to denying British misrule and prejudice and one of the merits of the revisionist trend unmistakably has been to put an end to inflammatory, simplistic or dichotomous interpretations of the question and to open the ground for less impassioned explanations of Anglo-Irish relations. If Ireland was undeniably "a crucible of modernity" (to paraphrase Karl Marx) for testing new ideas (the relations between church and state, the changing role of the aristocracy, the holding and the use of land), it was also in many respects England's Utopia, a fictional locus re-inventing as well as reflecting the original where a past order could be nostalgically re-enacted or a modern Ireland dreamed of.
- 4 The re-imaginings of Ireland were to a large extent upheld by the numerous travel accounts describing the neighbour island either as a ghastly land, economically backward and peopled with brutes or, on the contrary, as a sort of pre-modern country on the verge of progress. England at the peak of the industrial revolution could not understand why misery, starvation, idleness, bigotry was at her doorstep. Throughout the century the condition of Ireland question gripped popular imagination, stirred a strange mixture of emotions and provoked a variety of responses in troubled English consciences. Spencer T. Hall, a Manchester industrialist, recalled his visit with shock in the 1840s: "Instead of being in some far-off primitive land, I was in reality within twenty four hours' ride of home and among citizens of the same nation"⁵.
- 5 Although they felt radically distinct from them, many of the English influenced by Edmund Burke had indeed convinced themselves that potentially "the Irish and the English taken together had the makings of a whole person"⁶; like Matthew Arnold who denied that the two peoples were "alien in blood", they believed that Ireland was England's next of kin, a feeling interestingly voiced by *The Times* in 1847:
- No legislative union can tighten – no Utopian separation could dissolve – the intimate and close connexion between the two islands which has been formed by the hand of nature, and consolidated by the operations of time. [...] Each year cements by closer fusion the twain branches of the Saxon and the Celtic stocks, [...] terror and passion are found equally unavailing to keep those apart a higher Power than man's has joined by the contiguity of position and the bond of mutual dependence⁷.
- 6 Although it is indeed difficult to grasp the exact nature of the bond, it cannot be denied and must be reckoned with. As Matthew Arnold tried to point out in his *Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), it should perhaps be analysed as a fatal attraction:
- The Celt [...] is just the opposite of the Anglo-Saxon temperament [...] but it is a temperament for which one has a kind of sympathy notwithstanding. And very often [...] one has more than sympathy; one feels, in spite of his extravagance, in spite of good sense disapproving, magnetized and exhilarated by it⁸.

- 7 This mysteriously irresistible attachment certainly explains why the Britons' hope of transforming the Irish never abated and why the re-imagining of the Irish as an English copy never stopped.
- 8 When it came to the belief that one day "the Irish will turn English", elements of rationality mixed with naïve illusions. Andrew Hadfield and John McVeagh have demonstrated in their survey of English writings on Ireland from the Reformation to the Famine that such misapprehension was a recurrent hope among the English⁹. Such re-imaginings not only expose the degree of utopianism involved in the process but more interestingly broaden the arc of opinion in Victorian society as regards the Irish people, creating a space for the re-examination of its racial prejudices. Even Thackeray in his *Irish Sketch Book*, a kaleidoscope of Irish life in which racist views mix with a disgust at Irish backwardness, admits: "There is a brightness and intelligence about this immense Irish crowd which I don't remember to have seen in an English one¹⁰." The report by George Nicholls, secretary of state for the Home department, on the mores of the Irish peasantry in 1838 is in this respect quite revealing; instead of making their intemperance, laziness and filth attributable to natural racial defects, he writes:
- It may not be uninteresting to mark the close resemblance which these bear to the characters and habits of the English peasantry in the pauperised districts, under the abuses of the old Poor Law. Mendicancy and indiscriminate alms-giving seem to have produced the same results in Ireland that indiscriminate relief produced in England¹¹,
- 9 and expresses no doubts that the implementation of the Poor Law in 1838 will turn the Irish into an industrious class¹². *An opinion*, in December 1846, shared by Elisabeth Grant in the journal which she kept while living on the neglected Co. Wicklow estate, which her husband Colonel Henry Smith of Baltiboys inherited¹³. To contradict Macaulay's notorious judgment the year before¹⁴, John Bright's plea to the Commons on 2 April 1849 asserted that: "(the Irish) are men whom God made and permitted to come into this world, endowed with faculties like ourselves¹⁵." Lord John Russell epitomizes the English delusions about the Irish with his unwarranted announcement at the time of the emancipation debates that in less than fifty years "the Catholics would become Protestants – at least less Catholics, and therefore more English¹⁶". Symptomatically, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* never essentialized the racial difference or felt despondent as regards the possibility of regeneration for Ireland. In spite of some scathing remarks towards the Irish, Archibald Alison, one of the most regular contributors of the magazine, showed faith in their capacity to become hard-working law-abiding servants of the state¹⁷: "The Irish peasant naturally brave, generous and faithful is, by the system under which he is brought up, rendered cruel, merciless and deceitful¹⁸."
- 10 Unsurprisingly, the extent of the simianization of the Irish¹⁹ has been recently reconsidered by scholars such as Roy Foster or Sheridan Gilley. This is not to belie it but to show the discourse was inseparable from its cultural explanations. In the imperial age, claims for Anglo-Saxon distinctiveness abounded and rested firmly on the comparisons with other peoples encountered and on the inevitable subsequent ranking. Perry Curtis in *Apes and Angels* underlined the role of scientific racism propounded by the influential Robert Knox, but religion and class were equally important, as established by Lorimer Douglas who underlines the "social and religious climate conducive to the acceptance of scientific racism²⁰". When the Irish did not live up to expectations, anger and disappointment followed, remarked De Nie, "directly proportional" to the depth of

conviction of the belief that Ireland could be resurrected, which explains why, in this permanent dialogue, “the invention and reinvention of both Irish and British identity constituted a political process involving both sympathetic and hostile elements²¹”.

- 11 England's patronizing visions can of course be addressed as evidence of an imperialist attitude towards the people of conquered territories, but can also be regarded as the outcome of auto-stereotypes of the English national character. The unflagging faith in the reform of the Irish defects that fed so many caricatures points indeed in this direction. The multiple racist indictments of the Celt by the English never managed to put an end to their exhortation to emulate the Saxon. Henry Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* (1857)²² explaining why civilisation had been achieved first and best in England, why others had been left behind, and how they might catch up was the most widely read 19th century study of the national character and contributed until the 1870s to the self-satisfaction of the English with their institutions. Freeman's *The Norman Conquest* (1867)²³ and Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*²⁴ spread the idea that national character grew by a process of imitation. The English became English when the Saxons conquered the Celts. Teutonist historians believed that practically anyone could, in time, be Teutonized. As Peter Mandler wrote:

Apart from the followers of Robert Knox, most ethnological opinion agreed with them. [...] A 'native of Tipperary is as much or as little an Anglo-Saxon as a native of Devonshire' insisted Darwin's bulldog, Thomas Huxley, in an 1870 lecture²⁵.

- 12 Mandler concluded:

Some see mid-Victorian Teutonism as an instrument of aggressive imperial rule over Ireland, used to denigrate and thus subjugate resident Celts in Ireland and immigrant Celts in Britain. Others have argued that the perception of difference was just as often appreciative, taking the Irish in Arnoldian fashion as a complement or an antidote to the English. What we can say is that this more benign view was undoubtedly easier in the comparatively peaceful years between the Irish famine [...] and the Home Rule crisis [...]. In these years it was possible for English observers to imagine that the Irish were mixing and coming to benefit from Teutonic institutions²⁶.

- 13 As Balfour explained during the debates over Home Rule, the British civilizing influence ought therefore to be maintained: “The reason is not that the Englishman was superior to the Irishman; the reason is that the English polity was superior to the Irish polity²⁷”, because, as John Stuart Mill had put it: “What shapes the character is not what is purposely taught, so much as the unintentional teaching of institutions and social relations²⁸.”
- 14 In that sense, as a British colony, Ireland stands apart. The Irish sat at Westminster, intermarriage was never regarded as miscegenation, among the subjects of the Empire the Irish alone were considered as capable of being anglicised. As remarked by de Nie anglicization entailed becoming more British, not Anglo-Saxon, i.e., part of the Kingdom on the same terms as Scotland and Wales, part of the British nation as a whole²⁹. Rather than an ancillary relationship between master and slave, the Anglo-Irish bond strikes us as similar to a parental one (the word education being recurrent): Ireland then sometimes appears as a difficult child who has to be disciplined; hence the cry of the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* that “a paternal despotism is what they require³⁰”, an echo to Russell's declaration that Ireland must be ruled by affection, not force, in 1844³¹.
- 15 Inevitably, the re-imagining of the Irish went together with an economic re-imagining / regeneration of Ireland along English lines. Throughout the 19th century, unsuccessful

reforms addressing the land question were underpinned by a dream vision of Ireland as a land of prosperity and peace. Diagnosed as a sick land groaning under archaic feudal rule but with a tremendous economic potential, Hibernia needed the prescription that the British had applied to themselves: a modernization thanks to the liberalization of the economy. Ireland was persistently imagined by the Liberals in particular as an industrious land won over to the Protestant ethos of the middle classes and sharing in the values of capitalist liberalism. John Scott Vandeleur's agricultural commune in Ralahine near Limerick (1832-34) and John Richardson's model village of Bessbrook in Ulster were both imaginative experiments meant to energize the island³². Both disciples of Bentham, they sought to pursue the greatest good for the island and provided a vision of impending development unfortunately dashed by the events of 1845. E.T. Craig, secretary and trustee of the association responsible for the Ralahine cooperative community, depicts the experiment as one that "might have turned the thoughts of hundreds of landowners to a solution of the agrarian problem which promised not only peace but plenty³³". A few years later, the dream was still alive in spite of the brevity of the experiment: "The soul of Ralahine may reincarnate speedily in modern Ireland where people talk as much about co-operation as about Sinn Féin", wrote the poet George Russell in the preface of Craig's account of the experiment³⁴. Thomas Aiskew Larcom, whose writings and survey maps owed him an appointment to the Irish Board of Works, must also feature among the visionary men dedicated to the improvement of the island³⁵. In his turn, Robert Kane, secretary to the Council of the Royal Irish academy, knighted by Peel in recognition of his services to the Crown, in an essay called *The Industrial Resources of Ireland*, 1844³⁶, claimed that Ireland's unique geographical position predisposed her to become "better than England, a model of industrial success", for "the causes which have led to the bad results of the manufacturing system in the sister kingdom, do not exist with us³⁷". This imaginative dynamism could be achieved he believed by only one remedy, "not Draconic legislation, but making roads; not blindly punishing the people for being savage, but opening to them the means of civilisation and honest industry³⁸".

- 16 Although the great famine came to shatter those dreams, it was also paradoxically but nonetheless perceived as the promise of a future millenium. Christopher Morash demonstrated that to English eyes it certainly laid the foundation for a new order of things. Edward G. Lengel relayed his analysis by writing that "Ireland recreated in the English public image as a frontier country³⁹". The dream of a body of yeomanry on reclaimed plots sustained John Stuart Mills' support of the Reclamation bill, a scheme of waste land reclamation presented by the radical economist George Poulett Scrope in 1846, whose *Irish Relief Measures* in 1848⁴⁰ contributed to the spectacle of a prosperous Ireland. In that sense, the age of Russell and Palmerston (1846 to 1852) is perhaps what illustrates best "the dream of a golden age for Ireland⁴¹". Theoretically the famine had allowed the government the clean slate it needed for its package of proposals, although it soon found out the strict application of liberal principles of economy was impossible to get through the House, but the appointment of the first Catholic Under Secretary, Thomas Redington, or the foundation of Queen's University, testifies to the durability of Russell's Irish vision. Even Trevelyan in the *Irish Crisis*⁴² dreamed of estates freed of overcrowding and capital- and labour-intensive methods of high farming. Once again, *The Times* (October 1846) could imagine that

an island, a social state, a race is to be changed. The surface of the land, its divisions, its culture, its proprietors, its occupiers, its habitations, its manner, its law; its language, and the heart of a people [...] are all to be created anew⁴³.

- 17 Ireland was also the place where High Tories could imagine a moral economy in contrast with the cold doctrines of the Manchester Party, where “the lives of the poor should be as sacred as the purses of the proprietors and capitalists in Ireland⁴⁴”, one of the many examples that led Declan Kiberd to assert that Ireland served “as a foil to set off English virtues, as a laboratory (political as well as social) in which to conduct experiments⁴⁵”. In December 1848⁴⁶, *Blackwoods*, the organ of Tory paternalists, preferred to dream of the agricultural utopia Ireland could become:

The preliminary operation of drainage, and of making roads for the benefit of these lands only [...] it is reasonable to expect, that the operations by which certain of the waste lands are to be reclaimed, and the unions to be gradually provided with productive farms, let to industrious cottars, may serve as a model for similar improvements by individuals.

- 18 But it also shared in the vision of Ireland crisscrossed by “chief arteries and railroads⁴⁷ by supporting Bentinck’s railway project. *Golden Hills: A Tale of the Irish Famine* (1865) by Elisabeth Hely Walshe, writer of Canadian pioneer stories, testifies to the durability of English expectations: “A spirit of enterprise is abroad among them. They find it more profitable to attend to their farms and merchandise than to dip their hands in rebellions”

⁴⁸.

- 19 During the famine the role of the Irish clergy praised many times by the English press had bred hope that such an apocalypse inaugurated in fact an enduring pattern of Catholic-Protestant cooperation in caring for the peasantry. After spending a fortnight in Ireland in 1852, Sir Francis Bond Head, former poor law commissioner, firmly believed in the creation of a Protestant Ireland⁴⁹ and *The Times* wrote on 22 September 1846:

When the Celts once cease to be potatophagi, they must become carnivorous. With the taste of meats will grow the appetite for them; with the appetite, the readiness to earn them. With this will come steadiness, regularity, and perseverance⁵⁰.

- 20 This was confirmed by *The Annual Register* of 1847 which reported that Lord George Bentinck

returned to his panegyric on the character of the Irish people, eulogised their patience amidst the most direful suffering, and concluded by saying, that if by his measure he could fill their bellies with good beef and mutton, and their cottages with fine wheat and sound beer, and their pockets with English gold to purchase the blankets of Wiltshire, the fustians of Manchester, and the cotton prints of Stockport, he, though a Saxon, would answer with his head for their loyalty, and would lead them, through their warm hearts and sympathies, not to sever but to cement the union of Ireland with England⁵¹.

- 21 It seemed that Thackeray’s 1842 re-imagining of Ireland in his *Irish Sketch Book* was finally taking shape: “a glimpse of Old England in the pretty village of Ahascragh [...] handsome plantations, forming on the whole such a picture of comfort and plenty, as is rarely to be seen in the part of Ireland”. Thackeray after expatiating on the prettiness of a well-run estate in Kildare “a noble feature of country neatness, thrift, and plenty⁵²”, had concluded that “one can’t but be struck with the idea that not one hundredth part of its capabilities are yet brought into action, or even perhaps, and that, by the easy and certain progress of time, Ireland will be poor Ireland no longer⁵³.” Harriet Martineau, who travelled extensively all over Ireland in 1852 and pleaded for the encouragement of Quaker settlements, writes similarly that she was “struck with the prosperous advance of the whole neighbourhood” in Kerry⁵⁴ and concludes that the famine

will bring in a better time than Ireland has ever known yet [...] freedom, in short, to begin afresh, with the advantage of modern knowledge and manageable numbers. It was this view that consoled us during many a day's journey⁵⁵.

- 22 Such blueprints cannot destroy the accusation of ruthlessness, indifference and villainy which Britain displayed on several occasions⁵⁶, but they should not obscure the empathy that bound England to Ireland. Given that gender runs as a constant thread in English perceptions of Ireland in the 19th century, to understand the nature of the relationship between the two islands one could use the marriage trope and compare it to an unhappy marriage⁵⁷. Now for Victorians the idea of marriage denied the possibility of independence, equality, underscored complementarity. For the English John Bull, Hibernia must accept that her feminine characteristics cannot make her his equal⁵⁸. One of the men who incarnates best this version of things is William Carleton, a Catholic Ulster writer converted to Protestantism. In *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (1843-44), Hibernia, an idealized female figure, cannot live on her own, he contended, but must be uplifted by England through a gentle matrimonial embrace, even if it did not preclude Irish consent once the advantages of the bond were plain. This vision was once again promoted by travel guides. Central to the work of Anna Maria and Samuel Carter Hall's travel guide in the 1840s, which was widely read, was the belief that the British Isles were in the process of consummating a marriage that would lead to mutual prosperity and happiness: "A union, based on mutual interests is rapidly cementing", they wrote confidently in 1841⁵⁹. Any attempts to move Ireland in the direction of autonomy were unnatural and as immoral as separating husband and wife. Although for John Bull Hibernia was his destined bride which made them inseparable, their relationship was according to Edward G. Lengel rather similar to a marriage left unconsummated (for Repealers England and Ireland were too close, for the English the union was not close enough). The Act of Union for all its strategic reasons was never totally a marriage of reason but it certainly took on for the English the sacredness of an act of marriage. In 1859 the Dean of Rochester, Samuel Reynolds Hole, who was touring Ireland, considered that the marriage was still viable, although he admitted the husband was harsh and the wife's conduct aggravating⁶⁰. In spite of the interminable series of ups and downs which plagued the relationship, all along persists and transpires between England and Ireland a reciprocal attachment whose baffling nature remains to be explored.
- 23 Whether fully or half-articulated, the re-imaginings of Ireland by England lie broken in pieces like a puzzle awaiting reconstruction. But however benevolent or well-intentioned the dreams of cultural readjustment of the Irish by the English may have been, they never managed to dampen Ireland's deep-rooted aspiration to a separate identity, which not only fostered the conflicting relationship between the two islands but accounted for its ever-changing nature. When economic reforms made agitation unnecessary, Ireland embarked on a Celtic revival destined to further her ethnic identity. England's blindness to Ireland's individual identity and inability to grapple with it led the two islands towards the final divorce. Inexorably. Against all hopes, England's re-imaginings proved impossible.

NOTES

1. Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland, the Literature of the Modern Nation*, London, Vintage, 1996, p. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 279. The considerable time spent and energy spent on the Irish question ensures Ireland a prominent place in the construction of Britishness in the 19th century argues Edward G. Lengel, who underlines that Ireland's role in the construction of British identity had been underestimated. *The Irish Through British Eyes, Perceptions of Ireland in the Famine Era*, London, Praeger, 2002, p. 24 and 35.
3. Very few newspapers maintained a consistently sympathetic or hostile editorial line toward Ireland within any several-year span. See Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy, Irish Identity and the British Press 1898-1882*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004, p. 104.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
5. S.T. Hall, *Life and Death in Ireland as witnessed in 1849*, Manchester, s.n., 1850, p. 60.
6. According to Declan Kiberd, *op. cit.*, p. 20. See Edmund Burke, *Letters, Speeches and Tracts on Irish Affairs*, London, Macmillan, 1881; or *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, T. W. Copeland (ed), Cambridge Mass, 1958.
7. *The Times*, 25 January 1847.
8. Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, London, Dent, 1916, p. 86-87.
9. Andrew Hadfield and John McVeagh (eds), *Strangers to That Land: British Perceptions of Ireland from the Reformation to the Famine*, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, Colin Smythe, 1994.
10. W.M. Thackeray, *The Irish Sketch Book*, Gloucester, Sutton, 1990, p.129.
11. Poor-Laws, Ireland, Mr Nicholl's *Three Reports*, London, W. Clowes & Sons, 1838, p. 11.
12. A few years later Trevelyan's measures will be also meant to moralize the pauper class.
13. "The Poor House will improve their habits, the dearness of provisions has driven many of the idle hangers-on at home out into the world to earn the food no longer to be had by grubbing for it. So we must live in hope that happen what may things can never again be so wretchedly bad as they have been". Patricia Pelly and Andrew Todd (ed), *The Highland Lady in Ireland, Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus*, Edinburgh, Canongate Classics, 1991.
14. "(The Irish) sprang from different stocks [...] They did not belong to our branch of the great human family". Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England*, London, H.T. Roper, 1968, p. 145.
15. Speech in the House of Commons, 2 April 1849, *P. D.*, vol. 104, cc. 177-78.
16. *The Times*, 16 June 1826, p. 4.
17. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, October 1848, p. 491-92.
18. *Ibid.*, December 1844, p. 709.

19. On this process, see L. Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1971. On the incredible adaptability of these racial stereotypes in the Brontë novels see Elsie B. Michie, "The Yahoo, Not the Demon: Heathcliff, Rochester, and the Simianization of the Irish", p. 46-78. *Outside the Pale, Cultural Exclusion, Gender Difference, and the Victorian Woman Writer*, London, Cornell University Press, 1993.
20. Lorimer Douglas, *Colour, Class and the Victorians, English Attitudes to the Negro in Mid - Nineteenth Century*, Leicester University Press, 1978, p. 385.
21. De Nie, *op. cit.*, p. 269.
22. Henry Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*, London, J. W. Parker & Son, 1857.
23. Edward Augustus Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest, its causes and its results*, Oxford, 1867-79.
24. Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics: or, thoughts on the application of the principles of 'natural selection' and 'inheritance' to political society*, London, King, 3rd edition, 1875.
25. Peter Mandler, *The English National Character*, New Haven and London, Yale, 2006, p. 97.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
27. "Aspects of Home Rule", Speech of 6 November 1911, *Speeches of the Rt. Hon. A.L. Balfour*, London, Routledge & Sons, 1912, p. 12-13.
28. John Stuart Mill, "The condition of Ireland", *The Morning Chronicle*, 17 December 1846 in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Toronto, 1981-91, vol. 24, p. 1001-4.
29. De Nie, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
30. *Blackwood's*, October 1848, p. 489.
31. P.D., vol. 72, 13 February 1844, c. 684.
32. See details in Thomas E. Jordan, *Quality of Life and Modernization in XIX century Ireland*, Lampeter, Edwin Mellen Press, 2006.
33. E.T. Craig, *An Irish Commune. The History of Ralahine*. Adapted from the narrative of E. T. Craig [in "The Irish Land and Labour Question"] Dublin, Martin Lester, 1920, p. v.
34. *Ibid.*, p. vii.
35. See Thomas E. Jordan, *An Imaginative Empiricist, Thomas Aiskew Larcom (1801- 1879) and Victorian England*, Lampeter, Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.
36. Robert Kane, *The Industrial Resources of Ireland*, Dublin, Hodges & Smith College Green, 1844, p. 371.
37. "There is no country in the world her superior. She is placed, as it were, by nature, the key of the two hemispheres", *Ibid.*, p. 369.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 330.
39. Lengel, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
40. George Poulett Scrope, *Irish Relief Measures, past and future*, London, James Ridgway, 1848.
41. Part of Russell's ambition was to be the man who would rescue Ireland. On his dream see Donal A. Kerr, 'A Nation of Beggars'? *Priests, people, and Politics in Famine Ireland, 1846-1852*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, chapter 1: "Lord John Russell and the Irish Catholic Church: Problems and Plans".
42. Charles Trevelyan, *The Irish Crisis*, London, Longman & Co, 1848, p. 164.

43. *The Times*, 7 October 1846.
44. *Blackwood's*, December 1848, p. 668.
45. Declan Kiberd, *op. cit.*, p. 1. For instance Ireland was given a national system of education, thanks to the redistribution of the property of the Church at the time of the appropriation clause (see also Jonathan Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain*, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 107) and a country-wide postal network years ahead of England who adopted it when it was tested (Declan Kiberd, *op. cit.*, p. 23). Similarly according to Declan Kiberd, Synge and Wilde “hoped to make a new Ireland called England” (*Ibid.*, p. 628).
46. *Blackwood's*, December 1848, p. 664-665.
47. *Blackwood's*, October 1848, p. 491.
48. Elisabeth Hely Walshe, *Golden Hills, A Tale of the Irish Famine*, London, Religious Tract Society, 1865, p. 1.
49. “Within a couple of years there can exist no doubt whatsoever that the Protestant population of Ireland will form “the majority” (Sir Francis B. Head, *A Fortnight in Ireland*, London, Murray, 1852, p. 393). His chapter ‘What is to be done about Ireland’ concludes that “a complete new system of what in parliamentary phraseology is termed ‘men and measures’ will [...] effectually and irrevocably overturn that miserable, degrading, pig-priest-and-potato mode of existence which has so long prevailed” (*Ibid.*, p. 399).
50. Quoted in Peter Gray, *The Irish Famine*, Thames & Hudson, 1995, p. 155.
51. *The Annual Register*, 1847, p. 58-59.
52. Thackeray, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
54. *Letters from Ireland*, Glenn Hooper (ed), Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2001, 5 October 1852, p. 144.
55. *Ibid.*, letter dated 17 September 1852, p. 111.
56. See L.P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish prejudice in Victorian England*, Bridgeport, University of Bridgeport, 1968 and Richard N. Lebow, *White Britain and Black Ireland, The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy*, Philadelphia, Institute for the study of human issues, 1976. But Edward.G. Lengel, *op. cit.*, contends that there is no 19th century view of the Irish race, p. 5.
57. The marriage trope was employed in Anglo-Irish relations from Swift to Heaney (McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy, Tradition and Betrayal in Literary History*, Cork University Press, 1944. If England considered it as a marriage of “consent”, founded “on a sense of mutual interests and affections” (see for instance Lord John Russell’s speech on Ireland, P.D., vol. 42, 13 February 1844, cc. 686-687), for nationalists it was of course a “forced” marriage.
58. As underlined by Lengel, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
59. Mr & Mrs S.C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery and Character*, London, Howard Parsons, 1841-1843, vol.1, p. 2.
60. S.R. Hole, *A Little Tour in Ireland*, New York, W. S. Gottberger & Co, 1891, p. 90-91.

ABSTRACTS

In spite of the unhappy nature of Anglo-Irish relations and although the English response to the Irish ailments was recognizably inadequate, particularly during the Great famine, it makes no doubt that throughout the 19th century the Irish question regularly exercised the minds of English politicians, publicists, novelists and social reformers. Diaries, novels, magazines and political speeches are dotted with alternative visions of Hibernia that testify to the English re-imagining of the sister island.

Beaucoup d'historiens s'accordent à imputer les tensions et les conflits qui ont opposé l'Irlande et l'Angleterre aux réponses inadéquates que le gouvernement anglais a apporté aux maux de l'Irlande, particulièrement au XIX^e siècle au moment de la Grande Famine. Pourtant la question irlandaise n'a jamais laissé l'Angleterre indifférente. Nombreux sont les politiciens, journalistes, romanciers et réformateurs sociaux qui voulurent ré-inventer l'île sœur. À travers quelques journaux intimes, romans, discours ou magazines de l'époque cet article invite à la rencontre d'une Hibernia imaginaire et encore peu connue.

INDEX

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