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## CHAPTER NINE

# *Defining Colony and Empire in Early Nineteenth-Century Irish Nationalism*

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### CHANGING THE QUESTION

It may seem odd that Ireland's relation to Britain was rarely described as 'colonial' in the nineteenth century, even by separatists. Leading nationalists like Daniel O'Connell usually made a clear distinction between Ireland's political status and the status of Britain's colonies in Asia, Africa, Australia, North America and New Zealand. Colonial activity in itself was not necessarily seen in a negative light – an Irish nationalist like William Smith O'Brien could be a whole-hearted advocate of 'colonization' schemes in Australia at the same time as he argued for Irish self-determination.<sup>1</sup> The situation may seem particularly incongruous to a present-day reader, given that since the mid-twentieth century the project of nationalism has been strongly associated with 'anti-colonial' and 'anti-imperial' discourse – an association much influenced by anti-imperial struggles in Africa and Asia. That Irish nationalism in its formative period did not, on the whole, make use of anti-colonial critique says several things about the complicated relationship between Ireland and the British state at the time, and about the internal dynamics of Irish nationalism, as well as offering instructive insight into the historically-determined nature of language itself. It does not necessarily mean that Ireland was not a 'colony' in some important senses of the word, nor does it mean that Irish nationalists were deluded or self-contradictory. As this essay will demonstrate, there are reasons for the relative absence of anti-colonial critique which have a great deal to do with what was possible and strategic in terms of political discourse at that particular historical moment, and cannot be taken as a measure of what Ireland's 'objective' political and cultural status may have been.

The issue of Ireland's 'colonial' or 'non-colonial' condition in the nineteenth century has become a topic of current debate, recently surveyed by Stephen Howe, David Fitzpatrick and others.<sup>2</sup> Works by Howe and Liam

Kennedy have expressed scepticism about the validity of the designation 'colonial' when applied to Ireland, on several grounds: that the term 'colony' was not generally applied to Ireland by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century politicians; that many Irish people were in fact enthusiastic contributors to the imperial project; or that economic statistics show that Ireland is not comparable to 'real' colonies in Africa and Asia. A contrasting argument is made by David Lloyd, who has suggested that Kennedy and others are missing the point. Lloyd proposes that 'the designation colonial' ought to be understood as a 'rational abstraction', which is a

concept that can only function ... at the point when the phenomenon it designates and unifies have emerged in their full material actuality ... [R]etrospectively, we can see the work of the East India Company as a phase of colonialism, though the word itself may not have been used.<sup>3</sup>

With hindsight, in other words, we can see that nineteenth-century Ireland exhibits characteristics of a colony, whether or not nineteenth-century commentators had the ability or insight to say so. Joe Cleary too, in his immensely perceptive summary of the debate over Ireland's colonial status, draws attention to the limited usefulness of semiotic analysis and political consciousness in attempting to ascertain whether Ireland was or was not a 'colony'. He persuasively redefines Ireland's colonial condition in historical materialist terms. Ireland, he argues, was a colony because of its position in an emergent capitalist world-system – not just because of its political relation to Britain, or on account of what contemporary commentators believed. Such an interpretive frame is flexible enough to allow for local differences among colonial histories without denying the existence of certain shared experiences produced by operations of the global economy, experiences that are 'colonial' because they are fundamentally shaped by a country's relation to metropolitan, imperial centres of capital.

The purpose of this essay, however, is not to determine in a purely empirical sense whether Ireland was in fact a colony in the nineteenth century. Instead it tries to probe what is meant by asking the question itself, and how inextricably linked to the vagaries of language and discourse any answer to it must be. This is not simply a retreat into a version of the argument that we are condemned to grope forever within a 'prison-house of language', as if language's unstable or creative relation to extra-linguistic reality disqualifies it as a source of historical illumination. Language can be powerfully instrumental as a force for change and liberation regardless of whether it acts as a reliable vehicle for the conveyance of 'objective truth'; in fact it is a resource that is all the more interesting for its multiplicity of functions and complexity of signification.

Some of the relevance of this to the question of judging Ireland's coloniality may be glimpsed through constructing even a partial genealogy of the terms

'colony' and 'empire' within Irish political discourse. The terms 'colony' and 'empire' have never been used solely to denote social, political and economic formations; they have also been used in a utilitarian way to perform rhetorical functions, and to provoke ethical and evaluative responses. To describe a situation as 'colonial' is to put into play, sometimes deliberately, a wide range of possible meanings and connotations which vary according to history and context, and which greatly exceed the role of the merely descriptive. By paying attention to language as a historical phenomenon in its own right, viewing it as more like a performance than a mirror, terms like 'colony' and 'empire' can themselves be seen as contributors to the process of historical change and the evolution of Irish culture. They are never neutral descriptors of such change. From this perspective, the question – was Ireland a colony? – proves interesting not for the affirmative or negative answers it may generate, but for the rich insight it may provide into the dynamics of language and historical agency.

Tracing the usage of 'colony' and 'empire' in nationalist commentaries about Ireland is therefore not a matter of judging the perspicuity of those writers who recognised Ireland's 'true' colonial nature, nor, on the other hand, a matter of judging the accuracy of those who denied it. Instead it is to see that Irish nationalism's evolution was at an important level a linguistic struggle to define its object and function: to find the right language to define Ireland's political and cultural identity, and to mobilise the kinds of arguments that would secure Ireland's uniqueness and independence. What makes this particularly complicated is that this process of political definition and analysis undertaken by nationalist writers is both enabled by the discursive conventions available to it and constrained by these discourses, be they political, economic, educational, religious, racial, or otherwise. Discursive conventionality may sometimes be strategically enabling, as when it allows Irish nationalist arguments to participate in the mainstream political discourse of the day. But it can also be constraining, as when it limits the possibilities for radical political critique, or for a fundamental re-imagining of the terms in which political argument is conducted. It is also possible to find intriguing moments when Irish nationalism appears to have transgressed the conventions of those discourses it inherited, and opened up new possibilities for national self-definition. When, for instance, several tribes from southern Africa formed an alliance to resist British encroachment in 1847, the *Nation* newspaper broke the usual conventions of Victorian racial discourse by expressing political solidarity with the native Africans. Complaining that 'There seems to be more true civilisation in Kaffirland than in Ireland', the article quotes the (presumably translated!) words of a chieftain named Krieli, who had organised a confederacy of tribes to 'bury our past misunderstandings and unite against the common enemy as one Kafir nation'. The *Nation* writer exclaims:

We wish them success with all our souls. The English have no more business in the country of the Kafirs than in China, or India, or in New Zealand, or in Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the rhetorical link made here between the victims of colonial settlement and imperial aggression across the globe, Ireland has been effectively identified as a 'colony', since southern Africa, New Zealand and India were certainly perceived to be 'colonies' in the press of the day. In a way that was unconventional for the time, Irish people have been identified with 'colonised' people of different races. But what is also significant in this case is the ventriloquising of the 'subaltern' voice of Krieli, since it allows the colonised native to be represented as essentially civil and heroic, a departure from the more usual stereotype of the African as merely barbaric. Such radical analogies between the Irish and the natives of other colonies were not always welcome, even in the pages of the *Nation*.

As we shall see shortly, though, this kind of text represents a significant transitional stage in the discourse on colony and empire. One of the most obvious indices of this transition is the shift from the eighteenth-century use of the term 'colony' to mean the culture of the *colonisers*, to the twentieth-century use of the term 'colony' to evoke the culture and figure of the *colonised*. It is striking, as Ania Loomba has pointed out, that for most of its history the word 'colony', which derives from the Latin term for 'farmer-settler', has been defined in terms only of settlers and their relationship to a parent state – even the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) definition has not historically registered any recognition of the people displaced or absorbed by such activity.<sup>5</sup> As the 'colonised' became literally more visible within the discourses of colony and empire, more obvious possibilities arose for developing an anti-colonial critique based on principles of natural justice and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Given the historicity of language and discourse, it is misleading to try to answer the question of whether analogies between Ireland and other colonies – at whatever level – may have been scientifically 'correct'. This appears to be the question behind Liam Kennedy's critique of Irish colonial analogies, in which he sets out to statistically prove Ireland's non-colonial status.<sup>6</sup> But neither can the question of analogy be answered by a simplistic readings of what nineteenth-century writers and analysts themselves had to say (or failed to say) about the relationship between Britain and Ireland. Vocabularies and meanings are dynamic: language is not solely a matter of finding the correct word to describe a static object, it is often a matter of mobilising vocabularies and meanings in specific circumstances, in order to get certain things done. The reactive nature of the *Nation* article cited above, written as an immediate response to news from the Cape, alerts us to the fact that the choice of language within Irish nationalism was often highly pragmatic and strategic. Rather than devising a foundational set of definitions and principles, which would fix the essential nature of Irish identity or the constitutional position of Ireland, the political writings of the period show terms like 'colonial', 'imperial' and 'national' being used in quite flexible ways, varying from text to text, even from week to week. Depending upon factors such as audience, immediate political events, the conventions of genre, and the changing legal sanctions

of the state itself (such as 'gagging acts'), nationalist writers tended to choose their language expediently rather than for ideological consistency, or scientific accuracy.

The remainder of this essay proposes to examine, firstly, some characteristics of the English-language discourse on 'colony' and 'empire' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially as it related to Ireland; and secondly, to examine the various ways Irish nationalists adopted and adapted this discourse in the early nineteenth century. The purpose is not to decide objectively the question of Ireland's coloniality but to show what the concept might have meant in the early nineteenth century, and to suggest the variety of ways in which nationalism mobilised those meanings.

### VOCABULARIES OF COLONY AND EMPIRE

There are two distinct senses in which the terms 'colony' and 'empire' were employed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: one was as a legal/descriptive term, the other was as a term evoking moral concerns. It was as a legal term that Ireland's 'colonial' (or non-colonial) character was first theorised. In *The Case of Ireland's being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England, Stated* (1698), William Molyneux made a technical distinction between countries which had been settled as a result of conquest, and were therefore to be called colonies, and those which had been settled as a result of mutual agreement, and which retained the status of kingdoms, even if in some respects absorbed into a larger political entity. Molyneux argued that because the native Irish had voluntarily submitted to Henry II, Ireland had not strictly speaking been 'conquered'. Since it had not been conquered, it could not technically be a colony: rather it was a kingdom of its own which had entered into a compact with the English king. Molyneux was very explicit, for example, in his distinction between Ireland's condition and the colonial status of the North American settlements:

Does it not manifestly appear by the constitution of *Ireland*, that 'tis a *Compleat Kingdom* within itself? Do not the Kings of England bear, the Stile of Ireland, amongst the rest of their kingdoms? Is this agreeable to the nature of a *Colony*? Do they use the title of Kings of *Virginia*, New *England*, or *Mary-land*?<sup>7</sup>

Molyneux's argument, not surprisingly, privileged the status of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. It provided that class with a rationale for relative independence from Britain, yet also justified its continuing power over the Gaelic and Catholic population. Molyneux, for instance, argued that even if one believed Henry II had indeed employed invasion and conquest as his methods, the fact was irrelevant given that he had only employed them against the natives:

it was only the *Antient Race* of the *Irish*, that could suffer by this Subjugation; ... the *English* and *Britains* ... retain'd all the Freedoms and Immunities of *Free born* Subjects.<sup>8</sup>

The 'English and Britains', and their descendants in Ireland – in other words, the settler culture – are here allowed the status of free citizens, while the Gaelic 'colonised' are excluded from such privileges. One might say that the legislative independence which Molyneux was attempting to justify was less a form of 'decolonization' than a reconfiguration of the existing colonial rule.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Molyneux continued to be invoked as an important patriotic authority by various forms of Irish nationalism well into the 1840s. His respectable political pedigree, and the fact that his arguments were based upon the discourse and principles that underpinned the British state itself, made his name tactically useful, even for a subsequent nationalist who might wish to reconcile those very cultural and religious divisions that Molyneux had been happy to enforce (between Protestant and Catholic, and between Anglo-Irish and Gaelic).

In spite of Molyneux's rejection of the term on legal grounds, by the late eighteenth century 'colony' became a word quite commonly applied by nationalists to describe Ireland's status. While Molyneux's name and authority continued to be invoked by Henry Grattan and the Ascendancy patriots, Grattan found that deploying the term 'colony' was a strategically useful way of signifying the *de facto* condition of Ireland prior to 1782. For Grattan, 'colony' had a strongly emotive function, signifying degradation, insult and subjection rather than simply describing a constitutional condition. In his declaration of independence in the newly-established Irish parliament he proclaimed:

Spirit of Swift! Spirit of Molyneux! Your genius has prevailed! Ireland is now a nation! ... She is no longer a wretched colony.<sup>10</sup>

Grattan's use of colony here is enabled by the association of 'colonial' status with English misrule, an association which had been accentuated by the American war of independence and its assertion of the rights of colonists to self-determination. Like Molyneux, Grattan believed that, legally speaking, Ireland was not a colony: he argued, however, the English government had treated it like one – and this was the real source of grievance. The term 'nation' in Grattan's discourse performs the same function as 'kingdom' in Molyneux's – that is, as a sign of the properly elevated and independent status the island ought to enjoy. Of course, this nationality belonged only to the Protestant Ascendancy; the Gaelic and Catholic 'natives' were excluded from parliament, and thus denied constitutional political agency.

In the 1790s Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen adopted a great deal of the same rhetoric, but with some important and radical modifications. Referring to the process that led to the establishment of 'Grattan's parliament', an anonymous United Irishmen address in 1792 remarked that

the part of the [Irish] nation which is truly colonial, reflected that though their ancestors had been victorious, they themselves were now included in the general subjection; subduing only to be subdued, and trampled upon by Britain as a servile dependency ... they resisted British dominion, renounced colonial subserviency, and followed the example of a Catholic parliament just a century before ... in 1782 Ireland ceased to be a province and became a nation.<sup>11</sup>

This writer's analysis of Ireland's relationship to Britain at this point is essentially the same as Grattan's, but the United Irishmen took the analysis further by drawing attention to the exclusive nature of the Protestant 'nation' which had been established in 1782. Wolfe Tone radically extended the concept of Irish nationhood to include those who had been excluded by Molyneux and by the Irish Protestant 'nation' – the 'natives', the Catholics and 'men of no property'. Tone's work provides a powerful and novel foregrounding of the rights of the Irish 'colonised' (without actually employing that term) on the basis of natural law.<sup>12</sup>

In this the republican Tone was an unlikely ally of the conservative Edmund Burke, whose critique of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy – which he deemed a plebeian oligarchy – was based upon the fact that it practised a form of despotism over the Irish Catholics. Burke extended his critique to make analogies between Irish Catholics and other victims of oppressive rule, including the colonised of Asia. In an important passage from his 1795 letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Burke explicitly links the Irish Catholics to the subjected people of India, and both to those European peoples subjected to 'Jacobin' tyranny:

I think I can hardly over-rate the malignancy of the principles of Protestant ascendancy, as they affect Ireland; or of Indianism as they affect these countries, and as they affect Asia; or of Jacobinism, as they affect all Europe and the state of human society itself ... Whatever tends to persuade the people, that the *few*, called by whatever name you please, religious or political, are of opinion, that their interest is not compatible with that of the *many*, is a great point gained to Jacobinism.<sup>13</sup>

Colonies, for Burke, are potential sites for tyranny, but not because the establishment of colonies is inherently wrong. Colonies, being essentially commercial in purpose in the late eighteenth century, are simply more vulnerable to a loss of political virtue, a concern at the heart of Burke's political vision. It is commerce that can easily become corrupt and greedy, controlled by the interests of an unscrupulous minority, and when this is linked to political control, the result is despotism.

In the nineteenth century, the term 'colony' took on further connotations as material and political circumstances changed. After a period when the idea



of colonization had been subject to extensive critique, and during which European wars occupied much of the energy and resources of Britain, the idea of colonial plantation had a significant revival, both in the form of 'colonization schemes' and in the increasing use of penal colonies as a way of siphoning off the 'criminal element' from mainstream British society.<sup>14</sup> The emigration and land improvement schemes proposed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield and his supporters focused especially on the settlement of New Zealand, Australia and Canada, reviving the eighteenth-century ideals of Britain's civilising mission, but adding the argument that the establishment of colonies would resolve population and economic problems within Britain itself. Wakefield's own idea of a colony, unlike Burke's, reinstates the exclusive focus on the settler as the colonial subject, much like Molyneux:

A colony therefore is a country wholly or partially unoccupied, which receives emigrants from a distance; and it is a colony of the country from which the emigrants proceed, which is therefore called the mother-country ... [T]he national character of the states formed by colonization must greatly depend on the character of the institutions of government which the first settlers obtain.

Wakefield uses this definition to argue in favour of political independence for settler colonies:

Regarding colonial government, therefore, as an essential part of colonization, the question remains whether the government of the colony by the mother-country is equally so. Is the subordination of the colony to the mother-country, as respects government, an essential condition of colonization? I should say not.<sup>15</sup>

Although Ireland figures in this discourse of colonization as a possible site for 'internal colonization', meaning essentially the agricultural improvement of waste lands, Wakefield excludes Irish people in general from participation in these overseas colonial projects. Although they are British citizens, their slavish behaviour makes them unsuitable for colonial emigration. The causes of this alleged slavishness for Wakefield seem to waver between the historicist view that the Irish people have been degraded by circumstances, and the resolutely anti-historicist view that they are racially different to the industrious Anglo-Saxon:

... the hordes of Irish-pauper emigrants who pour into North America, British and American, are, in considerable proportion, virtually slaves by means of their servile, lazy, reckless habit of mind, and their degradation in the midst of the energetic, accumulating, prideful, domineering Anglo-Saxon race.<sup>16</sup>

The Young Ireland nationalist leader Smith O'Brien's enthusiasm for Irish colonization schemes can be understood in the light of these comments. To argue in favour of Irish participation in colonial plantation, as O'Brien did, was to argue against racial stereotyping such as Wakefield's, and to assert the fundamental dignity and civility of Irish people. It thus fit strategically with one of Irish nationalism's fundamental precepts. The Irish deserved to be recognised as 'freemen' rather than slaves, civilisers rather than barbarians.

The racialisation of the discourse on colonies and colonialism is a more prominent feature of the later nineteenth century than it is of the early half. One early and noteworthy example is Robert Knox's work, *The Races of Men*, first published in 1852, which ironically echoes Molyneux's denial that Ireland had ever truly been a colony. Unlike Molyneux, Knox sees this as a rationale for the continued coercive occupation of Ireland rather than its liberation. Racialising the Irish-British relation, Knox argues that the two races can never be assimilated; therefore the extermination of the 'Celtic race' would be welcome:

Ireland is not a colony, but merely a country held by force of arms, like India; a country inhabited by another race ... The really momentous question for England, as a *nation*, is the presence of three sections of the Celtic race on her soil: ... and how to dispose of them.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of Knox's denial of Ireland's 'colonial' status, his racialised figure of alien native is structurally similar to the figure of the 'colonised' in twentieth-century discourse. In this case the recognition of this figure becomes a pretext for its obliteration.

None of the writers cited thus far used the term 'colonialism' to describe the activity of colonial conquest and settlement. Even the verb 'colonization' used by Wakefield does not carry quite the same meaning as 'colonialism' – that is, it lacks the sense of being an ideological or theoretical project. Colonization is an activity; colonialism is a whole structure or system in which activity takes place. In fact the earliest use of 'colonialism' in the sense of 'the colonial system or principle' dates only from 1886, according to the *OED*. It is instructive to note that this 1886 quotation, taken from an anti-Home Rule tract, reads 'English Colonialism works well enough', while the most recent quotation in the *OED* entry is from 1957, and reads 'Colonialism is the commonest term of abuse nowadays throughout half the world' – an indication of the connotative transformation undergone by the word between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The term 'imperialism' has a similarly late history. One of its earliest appearances in English occurs in 1851, where it is used in a negative way to describe the oppressive and hubristic French regime under Napoleon III.<sup>18</sup> The preferred term for British imperial activity was simply 'empire' well into the later nineteenth century. Edmund Burke's own definition of 'empire' lacks

the acquisitive, expansionist associations we now associate with 'imperialism'; Burke simply defines an empire as 'the aggregate of many states under one common head'.<sup>19</sup> Nearly a century later, George Cornwall Lewis, in a much-cited definition of empire, repeats the same basic formula, focusing on the purely legal denotation of the word:

The entire territory subject to a supreme government possessing several dependencies (that is to say, a territory formed of a dominant country together with its dependencies) is sometimes styled an *empire*, as when we speak of the British empire. Agreeably with this acceptation of the word empire, the supreme government of a nation, considered with reference to its dependencies, is called the imperial government, and the English parliament is called the imperial parliament as distinguished from the provincial parliament of a dependency.<sup>20</sup>

Lewis's definition, however, comes out of a context in which the British empire had become extremely complex. Technical distinctions between crown colony, charter colony, dependency, dominion, province, territory and settlement, for example, were often made for legal purposes. The term 'empire' itself became flexible in order to accommodate this multiplicity. Koebner and Schmidt describe three basic ways of defining the British Empire in the nineteenth century:

There were two great complexes of overseas dominion, each administered by a specific department – the *Colonial Empire* and the *Indian Empire* ('our empire in the East'). For *the British Empire* or *the Empire* there remained two basic interpretations. It was possible and sometimes thought necessary to let those names stand for the whole comprehensive system constituted by the United Kingdom and all its dependencies. One could, on the other hand, without denying the applicability of this broadest interpretation, use the name in a more restricted sense to mean only the United Kingdom, so that the Colonies and the Indian Empire were regarded as dependent on the British Empire rather than being parts of it ... Between the interpretation which stressed the dominion over dependencies and the other which looked to the greatness of the native country there was still room for yet a third. It dwelt on the connexion between Great Britain and those dependent countries which had been completely or to a large extent built up by settlers originating from her soil. It focused its attention on the relation between the 'Mother-country' and the 'Colonies'.<sup>21</sup>

In 1841 the Wakefieldian Herman Merivale, like Cornwall Lewis with the term 'empire', attempted to limit the increasingly widely-ranging signification of the term 'colony':

And I may here mention that throughout these Lectures the term Colony is used in the ancient and proper sense, and not that which has passed from official into general usage, in which it comprehends every species of foreign possession – military stations, such as Gibraltar and Malta; conquered districts, possessed by native inhabitants with a very slight admixture of the conquerors, such as Ceylon; mercantile emporia, such as the factories of European powers on the coast of Africa. By a Colony I understand a territory of which the soil is entirely or principally owned by settlers from the mother country.<sup>22</sup>

Given the multiplicity of meaning for these words in the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that the precise application of the terms colony and empire should also prove difficult and controversial in present-day historiographical and critical discourse.

The possibilities for anti-colonial critique were also bound up with forms of discourse. Of course, in a strictly terminological sense, there could be no anti-imperialism or anti-colonialism before the words imperialism and colonialism existed. Nevertheless, as we have seen with Burke, in the eighteenth century a critique of 'empire' was certainly possible: not from the ideological basis that empire-building was wrong in itself, but from the more general moral perspective that like any other human activity, it became immoral when dissociated from virtue. The ideal vision of empire promulgated in the eighteenth century was one of 'flourishing and commercially viable colonies, populated with free British subjects, that served as bulwarks of trade, prosperity, naval strength and political virtue for the parent state'.<sup>23</sup> Benevolent views like these were challenged late in the eighteenth century by crises such as the American colonial rebellion and criticism of the conduct of the East India Company. Even so, the harmful effects of the Burkean loss of virtue were most often defined in terms of the effects on the parent and settler cultures rather than the culture of the indigenous 'colonised'. The problem with the British empire in Asia, for instance, was not considered to be its effect on the 'native' populations but rather its potential as an unfortunate source of 'luxury, effeminacy, profligacy and debility' which might taint the virtue of the colonist, and ultimately undermine British traditions of liberty and civilisation.<sup>24</sup>

This radical critique of empire which continued into the early nineteenth century in the writings of Richard Cobden and others drew upon a particular vocabulary current in England since the seventeenth century, derived from classical republicanism. This discourse, which in turn shaped the language of the eighteenth-century Irish patriots and nineteenth-century Irish nationalists, articulated political and social critique through a set of binary oppositions. The ideal political state was one based upon a society of 'freemen' who behaved according to a self-generated constitution which encouraged personal liberty and responsibility. Set in opposition to this quasi-democratic, anti-authoritarian model were those regimes based upon centralised rule, which

curtailed freedom for all but the elite. The vocabulary associated with the latter form of government included despotism and tyranny, slavery and serfdom, priestcraft and popery, luxury and corruption. Often this opposition was translated into historical terms as the conflict between virtuous, democratic Saxon culture and feudal, despotic Norman culture. (It was not difficult for Irish nationalists like Thomas Davis to later adapt this model to Irish history – in his poem ‘Celts and Saxons’ the Irish ironically occupy the position of the Saxons in the English radical tradition, with the Norman yoke translated into a yoke of the ‘Anglo-Norman’ variety.<sup>25</sup>)

Thus it is that early nineteenth-century critics of empire, such as Cobden and Goldwin Smith do not so much attack the effects of colonial and imperial rule upon the colonised as they attack the morally corrupting effect on the imperial culture itself. They argue that the greed, ostentation and wastefulness which seem to accompany empire prevent England from properly enjoying the fruits of her greatness and industry and civilisation. Cobden and others were also able to utilise the classical and historical associations evoked by the term empire, bringing an almost scriptural dimension to their critique:

I believe that the desire and motive for large and mighty empires, for gigantic armies and great navies ... will die away ... I don't feel sympathy for a great nation, or for those who desire the greatness of a people by the vast extension of empire ... we have had great empires at all times – Syria, Persia and the rest. What trace have they left of the individual man?<sup>26</sup>

Cobden's target is again the hubris which will destroy the imperialists themselves. In one of the earliest uses of the word ‘imperialism’, Charles Dilke in 1861 also worried about the effect that imperial despotism had upon English virtue. In Dilke's argument, imperialism refers not just to overseas expansion, but is something practised by a European country (in this case, France) over its own subjects:

Virtually, in annexing any Eastern country, we destroy the ruling class, and reduce the government to a mere imperialism, where one man rules and the rest are slaves. ... not only is our government in India a despotism, but its tendency is to become an imperialism, or despotism exercised over a democratic people, such as we see in France.<sup>27</sup>

Goldwin Smith, in his *Irish History and Irish Character* (1861), drew upon these negative, Napoleonic connotations of the term ‘imperialism’, and managed to link it to Irish racial characteristics. Smith argued that there was a ‘strong tendency to what is called Imperialism’ inherent in the ‘Keltic race’, which was ‘opposed to the Constitutionalism to which the Teutonic races tend’. It was apparently making ‘even the highly civilized Kelt of France, familiar as he is with theories of political liberty, almost incapable of sustaining free institutions’. Assuming the racial homogeneity of Celt, Irish and French,

Smith argued that it was as characteristic of the Irish as of the French to favour the rule of persons rather than that of institutions. Thus in an extraordinary turn, it is the Irish who are 'imperialists' at heart, not the British.<sup>28</sup>

Of course, the critique of imperialism was much less common than the celebration of it in English political discourse of the nineteenth century. By 1868, a writer in *The Spectator* is able to use 'imperialism' as a positive term when applied to England, speaking of 'imperialism in its best sense'. This means that it is sometimes a binding duty to perform 'highly irksome or offensive tasks', such as the defence of Canada or the government of Ireland.<sup>29</sup> This sense of the moral duty is a continuation of the eighteenth century rationale for empire: the argument being that Britain's enlightened, libertarian civilisation was one which could only benefit those who became associated with it. In this way, a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* was able to rationalise the idea of empire on the basis that it was actually a superior form of organisation than the nation itself. The British empire connected

scattered dependencies ... with one great whole infinitely more powerful, civilised, free than any separate fragment could be ... The subordination of national or provincial independence ...[bestows] the true citizenship of these realms.<sup>30</sup>

### IRISH NATIONALISM AND THE ANTI COLONIAL CRITIQUE

The preceding gives some sense of the context which shaped the early nineteenth-century Irish nationalist discourse on colony and empire. Nationalists like O'Connell, O'Brien, Davis and Mitchel made use of the existing vocabulary and models in a wide variety of ways. Sometimes it was argued that Ireland was by definition an integral part of the empire, and that its problems would be resolved not by separation, but by proper imperial participation (O'Connell and Smith O'Brien). At other times the moral critique of empire found in Burke and Cobden was employed to argue that Ireland would never flourish within the British empire – not because it was an empire, but because it was British, and therefore incorrigibly iniquitous (John Mitchel). Occasionally, as we have seen already with the *Nation*, a critique of British imperial invasion and occupation was based on a sense of solidarity with those who had been victims of such aggression (Thomas Davis). These arguments never resolved into a coherent theorisation of Ireland's colonial or imperial identity, and were always complicated by strategic moves and demands, which could sometimes push O'Connell into a more radical position than usual, or, on the other hand, could pull Davis back from the more radical implications of his cross-cultural analogies. There were, in other words, a range of opinions represented on the question of Ireland's colonial status.

The figure of Daniel O'Connell is a useful starting point, given his power-

ful effect on Irish political discourse of the early nineteenth century. O'Connell and his followers did not tend to use the term 'colony' to describe Ireland's political or cultural status. He repeatedly defined Ireland's status as 'provincial', not 'colonial': 'I have seen Ireland a Kingdom – I reproach myself with having lived to see her a Province'<sup>31</sup> – the word 'province' for O'Connell carrying the same emotive weight, and sense of degradation, that 'colony' did for Grattan. In the tradition of Molyneux and Grattan, his concern was to gain for Ireland the kind of constitutional justice it deserved, but always within an imperial frame. The problem was that Britain had relegated Ireland to an inferior constitutional position, absorbing it into the United Kingdom as a subordinate appendage, rather than accepting it as an autonomous Kingdom which happened to have the same monarch as England.

Molyneux's argument was strategically useful to O'Connell, in spite of its contradictions, and its exclusion of the very populace – the 'native Irish' and Catholics – that O'Connell spent his political career trying to mobilise. The 1782 parliament which represented the culmination of Molyneux's arguments was a model which O'Connell was keen to utilise in his arguments for the repeal of the Union. For one thing, it provided a counter-example to the violent and destructive events of the 1798 rebellion – a political act from which O'Connell was eager to dissociate his movement.<sup>32</sup> Grattan's parliament was a reformist rather than revolutionary model, a model which could conceivably win liberal support within the existing British parliamentary structure, and which therefore might be thought to have some reasonable chance of success.<sup>33</sup>

In refusing to apply the term 'colony' to Ireland, O'Connell was motivated by other factors. The idea of Ireland being a sister-kingdom did not merely serve as a way of making the Anglo-Irish feel superior: it gave the entire island a political and cultural status equal to other European kingdoms. The settler/native distinction which Molyneux uses could be blurred without much difficulty in order to appeal to a mass popular audience. One could still have the dignity of being the subject of a kingdom without having democratic access to political power. The imperial idea itself did not cause ideological problems for O'Connell's thinking, either: in fact his notion of empire derived very much from the eighteenth-century idea of empire as guarantor of liberty. Tom Steele, reflecting orthodox O'Connellism in a speech in 1846, 'disdained the attainment of a selfish Irish nationality ... [at the sacrifice of the] sublime principle of universal liberty' – a liberty that for some political theorists could best be maintained by participation in the British multinational empire.<sup>34</sup> Much was made in O'Connellite rhetoric of the contributions Irish people had made to the empire economically, culturally and militarily, in order to prove Ireland's loyal commitment to empire, even when treated unjustly by British governments. The Young Irelander Thomas D'Arcy McGee in the *Nation* in 1847 expressed similar pro-imperial sentiments:

I do not see why we should insist on considering ourselves conquered.

There is an ancient, and advantageous, and a natural connection between England and Ireland – that of the crown – which, until this island drifts from its moorings, or England becomes hopelessly criminal, no sane man will seek to separate.<sup>35</sup>

The argument here is little different to *The Times* of the same year:

The condition of Ireland is, directly, the condition of the British empire. No legislative union can tighten - no Utopian separation could dissolve - that intimate and close connexion between the two islands which has been formed by the hand of nature, and consolidated by the operations of time ...<sup>36</sup>

And indeed, the argument utilised by O'Connell about Ireland's integral place in the empire could be turned, with little difficulty, into an entirely opposite argument *against* Repeal, as in James Grant's 1844 book *Impressions of Ireland and the Irish*:

There is one way, and one way only, of crushing repeal. That is by rendering Ireland in reality what it is nominally – an integral part of the British empire ... [as opposed to treating it as] a conquered province.<sup>37</sup>

Insisting on Ireland's status as a kingdom within an empire also discouraged any attempt to compare Ireland's experience to other nineteenth-century colonial situations, like Canada or Australia. For such comparisons to be made, either Ireland had to be understood to be a colony, or else the colonies had to be understood as kingdoms – which meant seeing the indigenous peoples of North America or Australia as having produced an equivalent civilisation to the Gaelic and Norman cultures of Ireland. Given the dominant Eurocentric view which tended to relegate such cultures to noble savagery at best, it was more strategically useful for nationalists to compare Ireland to other European nations, especially ones like Belgium, Hungary or Norway with which certain historical parallels could be drawn, and certain comparative statistics about population, agricultural output and land ownership could be produced.

This is not to say that O'Connell himself did not utilise colonial analogies when occasionally convenient, or make principled links between his arguments for Irish freedom and the freedom of oppressed people elsewhere. O'Connell's long-standing and unwavering views on slavery are well known, and earned him some notoriety even with Irish nationalism in the 1840s, when his strong abolitionist line was seen as potentially damaging to the Repeal movement in the United States. For O'Connell, slavery was by definition repugnant to natural law, for Africans as well as for Irish or any other people.<sup>38</sup> In this, his views were somewhat more in the radical eighteenth-century tradition than were the views



of some of his contemporaries, most notably John Mitchel, who while denying that the Irish deserved to be treated as slaves, was not averse to the idea of slavery as such. O'Connell did also make reference to the dispossession and slaughter of the aboriginal people of Australia and New Zealand, attacking the imperial policies which had caused such an evil: 'There are your Anglo-Saxon race! Your British blood! Your civilizers of the world ...'<sup>39</sup> Yet this condemnation is not one which directly seeks solidarity or identification between the Irish and the Maori or aborigines: rather it is mobilising the critique of the improper conduct of empire by the British – highlighting the hypocritical chasm between their civilising ideals and their corrupt practices.

The idea of colonial settlement in itself was not a problem for O'Connell any more than it was for William Smith O'Brien. The latter, as noted already, was a strong advocate of Wakefieldian colonization as a remedy for Irish as well as British economic ills. O'Brien, like O'Connell, condemned the genocide of all Tasmania's indigenous people, but also felt that 'a few thousand savages' had no right to control large tracts of fertile territory.<sup>40</sup> From the perspective of missionary activity, too, the colonization of Asia and Africa by Britain opened up positive possibilities for both Catholic and Protestant organisations. In a significant example of the kinds of contradiction which arose in nationalist discourses of the time, the O'Connellite paper *The Pilot* in 1829 foresaw exciting possibilities for Catholic missionary work in the expansion of the empire – without acknowledging the historical irony that it was imperial expansion in Ireland that had been responsible for the persecution of Catholics.<sup>41</sup>

The compatibility of nationalism with an acceptance of the inherent validity of empire was further illustrated by the evocation of the figure of 'King Daithi' in Young Ireland rhetoric. According to legend, the fifth-century Irish king embarked on an imperial foray into France, successfully conquering territory all the way to the foot of the Alps. About to engage the Romans in battle, he committed an act of impiety towards a Christian hermit and was killed by an act of divine retribution. The tale of Daithi was a useful myth in so far as it gave ancient Ireland a legendary imperial past cognate with other major European nations. It also demonstrated that far from being perpetual victims and failures in war, the Irish could on occasion raise themselves to the level of imperial conquerors.<sup>42</sup> The legend also dovetailed with O'Connell's frequent reminders of the heroic contribution that Irish soldiers had made to the expansion and defence of the British empire since the eighteenth century – again proof of Ireland's capacity for loyalty, order and discipline.

One of Daithi's champions in the 1840s was Thomas Davis, who in fact provided Irish nationalism with its most complex and sustained perspective on nineteenth-century colony and empire. Davis's analysis of Irish history, most systematically articulated in the essay 'Udalism and Feudalism' (1841) is founded, contra Molyneux, upon the idea that Ireland had indeed been conquered by Henry II. The result of this conquest was Ireland's subjection to the rule of a feudal aristocracy that remained at the heart of the problem of

Ireland. Davis sets Ireland's experience within a broad European context: admitting that the Celts themselves had been conquerors in their day, and that European history in general was essentially a history of serial conquests. Ireland's special case, however, derived from the fact that its feudal social and economic structure had never progressed to the modified and liberal stage it had in England, and which produced there a large class of 'yeoman', and enabled England's growth as a commercial empire and parliamentary state. For Davis Ireland is less a colony than an anachronistic relic in the history of western European nations. Aristocracy persisted longer here than elsewhere, and was maintained by force:

The origin of the Irish aristocracy is in confiscation. The nature of that aristocracy results from their alienage – first, of country, then of religion. Their power was founded on conquest; and though penal laws, carrying out what confiscation began, increased their sway during three-fourths of the last century; and though ejection acts and insurrection have continued their legal sway, yet their real power rests, as it originated, in the force of British regiments, recruited by inconsiderate Irishmen.<sup>43</sup>

Citing Gustave de Beaumont frequently as an authority – especially his comment that 'it is necessary to abolish the principle of aristocracy in Ireland' – Davis identifies the class system as the source of Ireland's social and political evils. The country Davis presents as a model for what Ireland's political economy ought to be is Norway, a country never conquered or feudalised, and based upon the solid economic and political foundation of small farm proprietorship: 'the Norwegians have always been freemen'.<sup>44</sup> This kind of analysis enables Davis to mobilise the language of English radicalism, designating Irish peasants as 'serfs', a term which carries the same emotive force as 'slave', but also signals a precise economic meaning of 'the feudal subject'.

Davis's political rhetoric, which draws heavily on English radicalism, also draws upon the vivid metaphoric language and tone of Thomas Carlyle. One of Davis's essays from the *Nation* describes the British Empire as

a sort of world-hydra, as Carlyle would call her. From Canada to the Cape, from Ireland to Australia, from India to China to Western Africa, and the distant realms of South America, no nation but has felt the teeth, and claws, and venom, of this incongruous and pitiless monster ... She has rotted away by her avarice and vices, half the population of Australia and Polynesia; and cleared out, with bullet and bayonet, the 'last man' from the great island of Van Dieman – thus accomplishing at the Antipodes that extermination so often and vainly tried in Ireland.<sup>45</sup>

Davis is more willing than many of his contemporaries to pursue the possible analogies between Ireland and other, non-European victims of imperialism. In

his 1837 address to the Dublin Historical Society, for instance, Davis compares the experiences of Ireland and India under the British Empire – proclaiming that Ireland has actually fared worse, given that extermination was not a feature of the conquest of India. He also extends his critique of empire to include other examples of imperial brutality, such as the Ottoman Turks, and the Boers in southern Africa.<sup>46</sup> While his critique does not become a fully ideological critique of imperialism itself, Davis is nevertheless laying the ground for such a critique; demonstrating that despotic iniquity is not exclusive to a corrupt British state. It appears to be a feature of empire in many cases.

Yet Davis's analogies are also constrained in interesting ways. Davis wished to transcend the ethnocentric assumptions that prevented comparison between European and non-European people, but to do so had to avoid deploying the powerful binary matrix whereby European and non-European were defined exclusively by their differences to each other. The way he overcame this, especially in his early articles on the British invasion of Afghanistan in the *Citizen*, was to suggest that prior to imperialist invasion, societies like Afghan society were in fact organised much like pre-feudal European society. Adapting the English libertarian vision of a proto-democratic, freeborn Saxon society that supposedly existed before the imposition of the Norman yoke, Davis represents Afghanistan as a nation similarly inhabited by 'freemen' who are supporters of 'the old cause', battling against a foreign tyrant determined to 'enslave' them. By making Afghans into a kind of rugged eastern version of the English yeoman, Davis succeeds in constructing his analogy, though at a price which involves translating Afghan society into terms derived from English political culture.<sup>47</sup>

One of Davis's early editorials in the *Nation* illustrates this grafting of European political ideals onto non-European struggles. In the process Davis affirms the priority of nation over empire in a direct reversal of the argument of the *Edinburgh Review* contributor cited above:

Affghans are led by this, their great misfortune to a self-sacrificing union, and firm faith in nationality and freedom, they shall resume their high estate. For great is the strength of a young nation ... Empires go down before its running ...<sup>48</sup>

The article goes on to make comparisons between Ireland, Afghanistan, Tyre and Sidon, Athens, Israel, early Rome, Switzerland, Holland, America, and Circassia. All of these have displayed specific heroic qualities in resisting the aggression of despotic empires. These analogies are, of course, very selective. Certain nations do not qualify – China, for instance:

The villainy of England may excite our anger, but we cannot *much* pity the Chinese, we despise them *so much*. Had they shown signs of manhood we would honour them and grieve for them.<sup>49</sup>

Among other things, the constraints imposed by Victorian discourse on gender are evident here. The need to distance Irish national character from any association with 'feminine' weakness or cowardice outweighs the advantage of anti-imperial solidarity. Imperialist aggression may not always arouse sympathy for its victims: those who do not appear to fit the model of the heroic, masculine 'freeman' are not worthy of comparison.<sup>50</sup>

Yet in spite of the limitations, produced by the discursive context in which he was working, Davis' contribution to the analysis of empire is a remarkably consistent attempt to give attention to the perspective of the 'subaltern'. He was not quite the first to do this in an Irish context – as we have seen Tone's and even Burke's championing of Catholics in the eighteenth century gave prominence to the rights and sufferings of the 'colonised'; and it may also be argued that Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1807–18) and *Lalla Rookh* (1817) offered a literary voice to subaltern experience. Moore's songs often take as their central theme cultural dispossession, and the condition of melancholy which defines a significant part of the Irish character for Moore is shown often to derive from the effects of colonization or imperial conquest. But Davis, unlike Tone and Burke, takes up in some detail the theme of the cultural loss and dispossession which results from colonial or imperial rule, and in doing so makes a contribution which foreshadows the twentieth-century work of anti-imperial critics like Frantz Fanon and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, who have focused upon the traumatic psychological and cultural after-effects produced in the colonised subject. Davis's articles in the *Nation* from 1842 to 1845 argue the need to preserve those relics and reminders of the pre-colonial past before they are entirely lost, be they Celtic and prehistoric antiquities, or old Irish melodies and poems. Most famously, his two articles on the Irish language argue that the language loss produced by conquest and colonial rule produces negative psychological and cultural consequences for colonised or oppressed people. This is a form of critique which goes beyond the moral and legalistic critiques of earlier nationalism, and takes as its central focus the experience of those who have been colonised:

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 people from their forefathers by a deep gulf – 'tis to corrupt their very organs, and abridge their power of expression.<sup>51</sup>

What we see here, then, is an interestingly transitional phase in the development of anti-colonial and anti-imperial critique. As in many of the writings that emerged from nineteenth-century Irish nationalism, eighteenth-century English-language discourses on empire and colony begin to shift into the vocabulary and strategies we more commonly associate with twentieth-century anti-colonialism. Such texts provide us with evidence of the complicated

nature of Irish–British relations, and the widely differing perceptions of those relations among Irish nationalists. These various perceptions are not just a reflection of a simple debate about Ireland's colonial or non-colonial status, however. As we have seen, for Irish nationalists the answer to the question – 'Was Ireland a colony?' – could never be simple. It was inevitably conditioned by factors such as the shape of the discourses of the time, the nature of the writing occasion, and the strategic demands of the moment – as indeed is the case for present-day critics and historians.

## NOTES

1. The title of a recent biography of O'Brien plays on this paradox; see R. Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist: William Smith O'Brien 1803–1864* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1998).
2. S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), *passim*; D. Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland and the Empire', in A. Porter and A. Lo (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. 3: The Nineteenth-Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 499–504; P. Clayton, *Enemies and Passing Friends: Settler Ideologies in Twentieth-Century Ulster* (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 1–12; L. Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1996), pp. 35–74.
3. D. Lloyd, *Ireland After History* (Cork: Cork University Press/Field Day, 1999), p. 7.
4. 'Resistance to the English in Africa', the *Nation* 16 Oct. 1847, p. 860.
5. A. Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–7.
6. See Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland*, pp. 167–81.
7. Cited in D.G. Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (3rd edn, London: Routledge, 1995), p. 103.
8. Quoted in J. Hill, 'Ireland Without Union: Molyneux and his Legacy', in J. Robertson (ed.), *A Union for Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 280.
9. See Lloyd, *Ireland After History*, p. 7 for a general description of this phenomenon.
10. H. Grattan [Jr], ed., *Speeches of Henry Grattan*, 4 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees Orme and Brown, 1822), vol. 1, p. 123.
11. From a 1792 'Address to the Delegates for promoting a reform in Scotland', quoted in L. de Paor, 'The Rebel Mind: Republican and Loyalist', in R. Kearney (ed.), *The Irish Mind* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1985), pp. 168–9.
12. See for example 'An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland', (1791) in S. Cronin and R. Roche (eds), *Freedom the Wolfe Tone Way* (Tralee: Anvil, 1973), pp. 102–24.
13. *Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke: Volume IX*, ed. R.B. McDowell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 667. See Luke Gibbons, *Burke and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and T.O. McLoughlin, *Contesting Ireland: Irish Voices Against England in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp. 161–88 for a lengthier discussion of Burke's anti-imperial arguments applied to Ireland.
14. See A.G.L. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 17.
15. E. Gibbon Wakefield, *A View of the Art of Colonization* (London: J. W. Parker, 1849), p. 16.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
17. R. Knox, *The Races of Men: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destinies of Nations* (2nd edn, London: Renshaw, 1862), pp. 375, 378.
18. R. Koebner and H.D. Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) p. 10.
19. Cited in the OED entry for 'empire'.
20. Cited in Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, p. 39.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
22. H. Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies* [1841] (London: Longman, Brown and Green, 1861), p. xii.
23. K. Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue: The Imperial Project and Hanoverian Culture, c.1720–1785', in L. Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 132.

24. Ibid., p. 153.
25. T. Davis, *Poems of Thomas Davis* (Dublin: Duffy, 1846), p. 27.
26. See Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, pp. 31–2.
27. From C. Dilke, *Greater Britain* (1868); cited in Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, p. 24.
28. Cited in Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, p. 18.
29. *The Spectator*, 11 Jan. 1868, vol. 41, p. 38.
30. Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, pp. 41–2.
31. Speech quoted in W. Fagan, *The Life and Times of Daniel O'Connell*, 2 vols (Cork: J. O'Brien, 1847–48), vol. 1, p. 116.
32. See further discussion in S. Ryder, 'Young Ireland and the 1798 Rebellion', in L. Geary (ed.), *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 135–47.
33. Compare Smith O'Brien's argument that criticism of empire was likely to make English less receptive to the idea of Repeal; see R. Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1987), p. 206.
34. Quoted in the *Nation*, 7 Feb. 1846, p. 261.
35. T.D. McGee, letter to editor, the *Nation*, 16 Oct. 1847, p. 360.
36. *The Times*, 25 Jan. 1847; cited in E. Lengel, 'A "Perverse and Ill-Fated People": English Perceptions of the Irish, 1845–52', *Essays in History*, 38, <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/EH/EH38/Lengel.htm>>, 1996.
37. J. Grant, *Impressions of Ireland and the Irish*, 2 vols (London: H. Cunningham, 1844), vol. 2, pp. 189–90.
38. See D.C. Riach, 'O'Connell and Slavery', in D. McCartney (ed.), *The World of Daniel O'Connell* (Dublin: Mercier, 1980), pp. 175–85.
39. McDonagh, *O'Connell: The Life of Daniel O'Connell 1775–1847* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991) p. 302.
40. See Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist*, p. 321.
41. See Davis, *Young Ireland Movement*, p. 207.
42. See, for example, T. Davis, 'The Fate of King Daithi', and J.C. Mangan, 'The Expedition of King Daithi', both in *The Ballads of Ireland*, ed. Edward Hayes, 2 vols (Edinburgh: A. Fullerton, 1855), pp. 64–69.
43. T. Davis, *Essays Literary and Historical*, ed. D.J. O'Donoghue (Dundalk: Pandalgan Press, 1914), p. 63.
44. Ibid., p. 64.
45. 'England's Mission', the *Nation*, 18 Feb. 1843, p. 201.
46. See J.N. Molony, *A Soul came into Ireland: Thomas Davis 1814–1845, A Biography* (Dublin: Geography, 1995), p. 28.
47. Ibid., pp. 53–4.
48. 'Afghanistan: The Triumph of Crime', the *Nation* 26 Nov. 1842, p. 105.
49. 'Poor China', the *Nation*, 26 Nov. 1842, p. 104.
50. See S. Ryder, 'Gender and the Discourse of Young Ireland Cultural Nationalism', in T.P. Foley et al. (eds), *Gender and Colonialism* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1995), pp. 210–24.
51. See Davis, *Essays*, p. 97.