

**Sequels of Colonialism:
Edward Bunting's Ancient Irish Music
(produced from rtf of original submission)**

In 1792, Doctor James MacDonnell advertised a competition designed to revive interest in the ancient harping tradition of Ireland. His advertisement for the event, which was to be held July 11-13 in Belfast, was published in almost all the Irish newspapers and suggests an intimate relationship between harp music and national identity: "when it is considered how intimately the spirit and character of a people are connected with their national poetry and music, it is presumed that the Irish patriot and politician will not deem it an object unworthy of his patronage and protection" (Ancient Music [1840] 63). The festival was organized by MacDonnell, Robert Bradshaw, Henry Joy, and Thomas Russell, and it attracted ten harpers. MacDonnell employed a young local organist, nineteen year-old Edward Bunting, to copy down the compositions of the harpers engaged in the competition. Working from his manuscript notes, and from material gathered during his travels around Ireland years after the festival, Bunting went on to publish three successive collections of Irish tunes arranged for piano-forte in 1796, 1809 and 1840.

Bunting provided materials for the kind of collective fiction-making that Benedict Anderson considers crucial to the development of national identity. In Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Anderson examines nationalism not in relation to "self-consciously held political ideologies," but to "the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which - as well as against which - it came into being" (12). But Bunting's work also registers the ambivalence which Homi K. Bhabha, elaborating on Anderson's thesis, describes in Nation and Narration as "haunt[ing] the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it" (1). In his essay, "DissemiNation" in that volume, Bhabha comments further on the ambiguity he sees as inherent in imagining the nation:

the narrative and psychological force that nationness brings to bear on cultural production and political projection is the effect of the ambivalence of the 'nation' as a narrative strategy. As an apparatus of symbolic power, it produces a continual slippage of categories, like sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia, or 'cultural difference' in the act of writing the nation.
(292)

This ambiguity is especially complicated in Ireland, which has been subject to a peculiar kind of colonial rule and where the attempt to define and disseminate the national "spirit

and character" has always occurred by way of a complex series of mediations. As Terry Eagleton remarks, "the discourse of the colonial is always rhetoric which overhears itself in the ears of the other, shaping itself accordingly . . . So it was that the Irish came to direct their own speech and actions at the British (mis)understanding of them, in ways that then introduced division and ambiguity into their own language" (143). In Ireland, then, the slippages between categories within the nation inter-relate with slippages between categories in the larger British colonial sphere. In this discussion, I argue that the three editions of Bunting's music of Ireland offer multiple, sometimes contradictory, interpretations of the Irish nation, interpretations which, although presented as a project of cultural nationalism, often reflect nationalist practices shared by, even derived from, characteristic forms of British imperial ideology. Despite this fact, however, and regardless of Bunting's possible intentions, I suggest that the sequelization of the Ancient Irish Music performs an important intervention into the politics of colonial domination in Ireland. Bunting's work both represents the fracturing process of colonialism and renegotiates its terms, as each edition corrects and transforms the perspective of the previous edition.

Brian Boydell comments that Bunting's three volumes are the culmination of "a new stimulus [which] produced a remarkable increase in the number of publications of traditional Irish music" after about 1780. The incentive for Bunting, according to Boydell, was "the growing sense of national consciousness that marked the closing decades of the century" (603). Janet Harbison also notes the alteration in national consciousness occurring at the end of the century: "The atmosphere in Ireland approaching the year 1792 was one of national euphoria" (113). She attributes this euphoria to the fact that Ireland was experiencing developments in transportation, trade and manufacture. Of equal, if not more importance, was the fact that it enjoyed its own Parliament under the leadership of Henry Grattan. This new national self-determination was accompanied by increased interest in native Irish culture on the part of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. Earlier in the century, Catholics such as Charles O'Connor had sought to promote their political interests in reform by presenting a civilized history of the Gaelic people. For their part, the Anglo-Irish turned their attention to antiquarian research into traditional Gaelic culture as a way of creating a connection with the native tradition. Joep Leerson remarks that "The adoption and central canonization of a Gaelic cultural affiliation and a Gaelic-oriented self-awareness . . . was to remain central to the Anglo-Irish sense of national identity" (376).

Bunting's 1796 A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music (published in London and Dublin) demonstrates the ambiguities that often accompanied such

antiquarian research. The title page proclaims the novelty of the project, announcing that the collection contains "Admired Airs" which have been "never before published" (See Figure 1). It draws attention to the tunes as a direct line to antiquity: some of the tunes are compositions of "Conolan and Carolan" which have been "Collected from the Harpers in the different Provinces of IRELAND," explains Bunting. The 1796 Ancient Irish Music provides a positive image of the native Irish people; in fact it suggests their historical superiority in the musical sphere. The Preface begins with the assertion, "It is an extraordinary fact, that although Ireland has, from a remote antiquity, been celebrated for its cultivation of Music, and admitted to be one of the parent countries of that delightful art, the present is the first **general** collection of its national airs" (i). Bunting distinguishes his project from those of his musical predecessors by claiming that he attempts to compile a larger corpus of material. The Preface provides historical examples of the praise of Irish music by writers like Powell, Selden, Caradoc, and Giraldus Cambrensis. Bunting notes with relish the fact that even though Giraldus was "probably not free from the prejudices that were then entertained against the Irish," he nevertheless pronounced that the skill of the Irish in music is "beyond all comparison superior to that of any nation I have seen" (ii). Most importantly, Bunting claims a connection between Ireland and the originary moment of notation in Britain, as he argues that the piece that Charles Burney identifies as the "first piece of Music ever set in score in Great Britain" is in fact identical with an Irish tune, "Ta an samradh teacht," or "Summer is coming" (iv). Ireland is indeed, according to Bunting, the "parent" of British music.

Bunting is eager to emphasize the purity of his project. In order to stress the tunes' authenticity as embodiments of native Irish culture, they are given titles in Gaelic script; English translations follow in much smaller script (See Figure 2). Asserting that he was "particularly cautioned against adding a single note to the old melodies, which would seem, from inferences that will afterwards be drawn, to have been preserved pure, and handed down unalloyed, thro' a long succession of ages" (i), Bunting presents himself acting in accordance with a tradition which has kept the music intact throughout the centuries. He notes that the old musicians "seem never to have ventured to make the slightest innovation in [a tune] during its descent" (ii). His proof for this assertion is the uniformity of playing throughout the island: "harpers collected from parts far distant from one another, & taught by different masters, always played the same tune on the same key, with the same kind of expression, and without a single variation in any essential passage, or even in any note" (ii). It is of utmost importance to Bunting that the tunes are seen as uncorrupted reliques of an Irish past which can serve as a

connection to the present. In the process of making that connection, however, Bunting renders native Irish culture essentially homogeneous and static. Characterized as "without variation" even across geographical distance and associated with a continuous oral tradition, native music is figured in opposition to modernity. Bunting's choice of the word "Ancient" in his title for the collection (even though many of them were composed by Carolan who had died only sixty years previously) further suggests the music's separation from the present era. And by identifying what is "Ancient," Bunting's collection also works to define modernity.

Ironically, Bunting seeks to capture the anti-modernity of the native music within a thoroughly modern medium as he shifts the music from a context of oral transmission to the realm of print culture. In addition, he adapts the traditional music of the harp to the piano-forte, capitalizing on the immense popularity of that recently introduced instrument in order to encourage interest in his project. Michael Chanan and John Shepherd discuss the radical difference between oral and printed music. Chanan observes, "the development of notation has the effect of shaping musical materials to satisfy its own demands, thereby marginalizing and excluding from its syntax whatever it is unable to capture" (77). Shepherd extends this observation to consider the introduction of a system of scales that accompanies notation: "previously autonomous melodic shapes eventually became subservient to a unified harmonic scheme. It was not sonic events themselves which were henceforth important, but the various functions that could be visited on them" (161). Along these lines, Harbison suggests that Bunting changed what had been flexible rhythm patterns into standard time and he presented definitive arrangements of right and left hand melody and harmony lines. She argues that whereas the original players of the harp music would have used a great deal of improvisation, this improvisation was eliminated by Bunting's adapting the music for the piano. But the case of the Ancient Irish Music is perhaps more complicated than Chanan, Shepherd or Harbison suggest. As with other music of the late eighteenth-century, Bunting's notation would have served the player as a mnemonic device, not as a binding document; an individual player would still have been at liberty to improvise. What Bunting accomplished was not so much an eradication of spontaneity as a translation of it into a different value system. In the native Irish economy, music would often be exchanged for hospitality (in the case of patronage of harpers) or for hospitality and status in the community (in the case of musicians playing for popular entertainment). Printed and circulating among Anglo-Irish consumers, native Irish music lost its original context of face-to-face communication, but was involved instead in the creation of new audiences: people unconnected with the social contexts of native

Irish music would buy and play the tunes in groups. For these new audiences, Bunting's renditions of Irish tunes for the piano held the symbolic appeal both of exoticism and of novelty. The social context in which Irish music traditionally appeared was now replaced by the commercial context of demand and consumption, factors which rendered it intrinsically modern and which involved it inevitably in the wider colonial marketplace.

Further complicating Bunting's enterprise is his reliance on contemporary aesthetic judgments. In particular, Bunting appeals to his audience's sense of harmony, derived from the European tradition, particularly from the work of the Italians. Thus Bunting praises Carolan's work paradoxically for being both modern and native: "In Carolan's Concerto and in his Madam Cole the practitioners will perceive evident imitations of Correlli, in which the exuberant fancy of that admired composer he happily copied. In the ancient air Grach gan fios, or Love in Secret, he will be charmed with one of the most pleasing strains that any country has produced; it is accordingly so old, that no trace could be discovered of the century [in] which it was produced" (iii). Moreover, the ancient craft is commended for its anticipation of contemporary harmonics. Bunting notes that the ancient authors were "versed in the scientific part of their profession, that they had originally a view to the addition of **harmony** in the composition of their pieces" (ii). The effect is odd. The traditional music is most valuable when it is seen to be a retrospective reflection of currently admired musical qualities. Bunting suggests that Irish music was the point of origin for current European music, but he can only make this assertion by projecting contemporary trends back onto the Irish music. Carolan himself becomes a strange figure here, most valuable for pre-figuring the present, but also for disappearing: Bunting says he "seems to have been born to render the termination of his order memorable and brilliant" (iii). The present folds back onto the past, suggesting that the ancient music was always already anticipating its progress into modernity.

If the ancient music is used to negatively define modernity, it is reciprocally true that the modern also plays a part in the invention of the ancient. In particular, Bunting's collection bears something of the imprint of the Society of United Irishmen, whose republican ideals were a logical extension of Enlightenment ideology. The Belfast Harp Festival took place at the same time as a meeting of the United Irishmen (formed the previous year) to celebrate the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. Katie Trumpener notes that "the harpers' performances were framed by processions and parades, debates on Catholic emancipation, and banquets with toasts to the fall of the Bastille and the rights of man" (10). Bunting himself was acquainted with a number of

the organizers of the United Irishmen, including Henry Joy McCracken and Patrick Lynch. The 1796 edition owed its existence in a large part to Thomas Russell, a United Irishman who was keeper of the Belfast Library, and who would later lose his life as a result of his participation in Emmet's 1803 Rebellion. Russell convinced the library to donate some money to Bunting's project, without which it would have been abandoned.

Several of Bunting's discreet digs at the effects of colonialism in Ireland echo the concerns of the United Irishmen to educate the Irish population in the history of their oppression. He notes, for example, that Carolan labored under the difficulty of being an "inhabitant of a country recently desolated by a civil war, the flames of which had scarcely subsided" (iii). Furthermore, the Ancient Irish Music seems to have an agenda akin to that of the United Irishmen to unite various divergent factors under the single cause of promoting Ireland. Bunting interprets the importance of his work as its transformation of local activity into national enterprise. He emphasizes the fact that he has traveled around the entire country collecting material. This is, he notes, a "General collection of tunes, a word that he reuses in the 1809 collection. Music is presented as a connecting national practice.

But instead of resorting to revolutionary activity to further the nationalist cause, Bunting diverts oppositional political energy into the cultural practice of antiquarianism. Ending his preface by urging people in throughout the country to take up the cause, not of politics, but of music, he exhorts those "in the southern parts of Ireland to follow the example of the Belfast society, by promoting similar meetings of the harp in their respective provinces" (iv). He comments that, "It is a debt every man owes to his country, to search for and perpetuate the records of other days, to oppose, as far as he can, the destructive ravages of time and to render permanent the fleeting productions of every species of genius" (iv). The language of military patriotism -- "a debt every man owes his country" and "to oppose . . . the destructive ravages" -- is converted into a cultural context here. Where the United Irishmen's gathering would inspire a bloody conflict four years afterward, the Belfast Harp Festival led merely to the founding of a number of harping societies designed to revive the native music (most of them disappeared early in the next century). The instrument the Belfast Harpers' Festival was designed to highlight, the harp itself, became the icon of the recently formed United Irishmen, as they adopted the motto "It Is New Strung and Shall Be Heard" (Trumpener 11). But the actual practice of harping and collecting harp music fell back on the resistance of ancientness to the radical temptations of modernity.

The 1809 sequel to the Ancient Irish Music, entitled A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland (published in London), is, like its predecessor, concerned with

promoting Irish culture through presenting a positive image of its music. But whereas the 1796 volume had been in some sense, a local production, closely connected with the Belfast library, the decisions Bunting makes for this next collection of Irish music suggest the volume's design as consumer commodity on the now united national market. For by 1809, the political situation in Ireland had changed drastically, a consequence of the United Irishmen's rebellion and the subsequent 1803 uprising. The Irish parliament, for all its faults, was no more. Instead, as Foster notes, Ireland became subject to more direct and centralized British administrative policy: "Ireland came to be seen as an appropriate area for administrative energy, and even experiment, but this was without reference to the small proportion of Irish MP's, or to any larger constituency of opinion in Ireland at large" (290). Significantly, the 1809 version of the Ancient Music of Ireland is much more attractively fashioned to market Irish culture, with a title page that features a stylized shamrock border and a text is supplemented by illustrations of a variety of harps (See Figure 3). There are two major additions: the elaborate "HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL DISSERTATION on the Egyptian, British and IRISH HARP" and selections of "Poetry chiefly translated from ORIGINAL IRISH SONGS by THOMAS CAMPBELL and other Eminent Poets." The former sets out to explain the noble ancestry of Irish harping; the latter appeals to current market demand for Irish songs. For this edition, Bunting reads traditional Ireland not only through the eyes of its Irish citizens, but also through the eyes of the wider British audience.

While the 1809 edition offers scientific evidence of the mathematics and philosophy of the ancient harpers in order to assert the superiority of Irish music, it goes even further than the 1796 edition in presenting the ancient Irish music in terms of current European standards. In the Preface to the new edition, Bunting justifies his qualifications to judge tunes by saying he is conversant "in the compositions of the Italian and German schools" (iii), suggesting that only such credentials can satisfy his reading public. In the "Dissertation," Bunting now wrenches Irish music from the earlier claims he had made for its historical roots in the oral tradition as an "unlearned extemporaneous" art, instead claiming for it characteristics which make it more recognizably modern (3). Drawing on the remarks of Dr. Ledwich and putting together the evidence that Welsh harp music appeared in written form with the assumption that the Irish gave the Welsh their harp music, Bunting concludes, "that we had music in score can hardly be disputed" (3). Continuing, he makes a more sweeping claim that Irish music anticipated European musical theory: "What is more extraordinary, most of the pieces for the Harp are in full harmony and counterpoint" (3).

The poetry and lyrics included in the 1809 edition, like the "Dissertation," are also designed to appeal to a British public now turning its attention to its Celtic periphery. In deciding to include text to accompany the songs, Bunting was clearly influenced by the success of two other representatives of Celticism: James Macpherson, whose Ossianic poems were enjoying a new vogue in Europe, and Thomas Moore. A quotation from Macpherson's Fingal begins the new volume of the Ancient Music of Ireland: "Bards of other times! ye on whose souls the blue hosts of our fathers rise, strike the Harp in my hall, and let me hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of grief" (i). Bunting continues to refer to Ossian and Scotland, noting that he has found specimens of music "as sung in artless strains in the Highlands of Scotland, and also by the aborigines of different parts of Ireland, to OSSIANIC FRAGMENTS" (ii). He does his part to wrest interest back to Ireland, however, by noting that the Scots derived both their language and their music from Ireland. (The "Dissertation" also remarks on "the distinctive difference between the music of Ireland and the aboriginal music of neighbouring countries" [ii]). Bunting seems to be both asserting the identity of the Irish in response to Macpherson's denigration of Irish culture, and also capitalizing on the success of Macpherson by presenting the ancient Irish as chivalric rivals of Macpherson's Highlanders.

Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies also influenced Bunting's decision to include lyrics with some of the tunes. Moore's first volume of the Irish Melodies, which contained lyrics written by Moore to match popular Irish tunes arranged by Sir John Stevenson, appeared in 1808 to high acclaim. A reflection of Moore's impact on Bunting can be seen in the latter's statement that his purpose has shifted somewhat since he came out with his original collection, which had been designed "to rescue [the tunes] from oblivion" (i). Now he registers more of a concern with marketing his work to English-speaking readers. He says he now aims "to collate the airs of different provinces with each other; to procure translations of some of the finest songs, and for several of the airs best adapted for the purpose to give English words with an instrumental accompaniment" (i).

In fact, these translated songs present a confusing picture. There are Irish drinking songs like "O'Rourke's Noble Fare Will Ne'er be Forgot" and "Inspiring Fount of Cheering Wine," which are billed as literal translations. In addition, there are songs which were especially "written for this work" by poets like Thomas Campbell, for example, and which have little to do with the "ancient" music of Ireland. "Twas the Hour When Rites Unholy" is Campbell's oriental tale of love between a Turkish woman and an English knight. Those songs in Bunting's collection which do deal with Ireland present a compromised image of the Irish nation. Miss Balfour's literal translation of

"Ulican Dubh Oh -- The Song of Sorrow," becomes the precious "Adieu! My Native Wilds, Adieu." The Irish title is incorporated into English versification, with each stanza ending, "My Ulican dubh, Oh!" The song is the lament of a young man who is in love with a woman of a higher station than he and who is forced to leave Ireland because of "her father's pride" (6). Thomas Campbell's song, "There Came to the Beach a Poor Exile of Erin," written to a traditional Irish air, presents a similar nostalgic longing for things past:

Yet, all its sad recollection suppressing,
One dying wish my lone bosom can draw;
Erin! and exile bequeaths thee his blessing!
Land of my forefathers, Erin go bragh!
. . . thy harp-striking bards sing aloud with devotion,
Erin ma vournin! Erin go bragh! (65)

A footnote translating the Irish ends the song: "Ireland my darling! Ireland for ever!" (65), but the burden of the songs, like that of Moore's collection, is to present Ireland as a focus of nostalgia, an embodiment of Macpherson's defeatist "joy of grief."

Further than this, a number of the songs serve, like Macpherson's poems of Fingal, to assuage uneasiness about any possible insurgency in the outlying Celtic colonies. Another of Thomas Campbell's songs, "To the Battle Men of Erin," which was again specifically "written for this work," appears to counteract any possible prejudice remaining against Irish rebels. The song can be seen to have particular relevance to the British war against Napoleon, calling for the "Men of Erin," to each don a shamrock and prepare for battle against the French:

What though France thine eagle standard
Spreading terror far and nigh,
Over Europe's skies hath wander'd
On the wings of victory. (51)

The presentation of the "right true Irish band," with their plumes waving "To the trumpet's jubilee" would serve to alleviate any potential English fears about the kind of alliance between the Irish and the French which occurred during the 1798 Rebellion.

Despite its apparent compliance with the interests of the colonizing hegemony, however, it is important to consider a telling moment of cultural politics behind the 1809 collection. Bunting had originally employed Patrick Lynch, an Irish scholar and teacher to supply "Irish songs set to the 77 airs in the work" (O'Neill 140). When Lynch, a member of the United Irishmen, turned King's Evidence against Thomas Russell, Bunting decided to substitute verses by Thomas Campbell, Miss Balfour and a number

of other poets for those of Lynch in his collection. The 1809 General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland suppresses the "sad recollection" of its own recent history as well as that of Ireland.

Instead, it moves back to "ancient" history, attempting to reverse the historical positions of the Irish and the English by showing the Scots and the Irish to be pure nations and presenting the English as a colonized people. Bunting suggests that the Scots and the Irish are the most authentic nations: "One of the most certain criteria of the antiquity of a nation, is its being possessed of a native or original music" (1 fn.). He quotes Dr. Brown who says that countries peopled by colonies have no characteristic music of their own: "that the Irish, Welsh, and Scotch are strictly natives, and accordingly have a music of their own . . . the English, on the contrary, are a foreign mixture of lately established colonies, and in consequence of this, have no native music" (1). Carthage, for example, was a colony of Tyre, "and music which was of weight in the native city, was of no consideration in the descendent state" (1). Bunting concludes suggestively, "the same principle applies to all times" (1). Bunting even carries the superiority of the Celts into the realm of letters, observing that the Saxons did not have either "the Harp or letters" before their arrival in Britain at the 5th century" (19). The Irish, presumably, had both. The 1809 edition, then, wavers between marketing Ireland and mourning its recent betrayal while asserting its ancient independence.

Bunting projects the ambiguity and unresolved conflict surrounding the publication of the 1809 edition onto the music itself, suggesting that the Irish melodies represent the bewilderment of cultural conflict inherent in the attempt to define the Irish nation.

In a footnote, he quotes Leyden's Preliminary Dissertation to the Complaint of Scotland which illustrates the idea that the tunes "take the very form and pressure of our history; and the conflict of spirits, naturally warm and vivacious, with the gloom which abasement and poverty would cast upon them, is no where more faithfully recorded than in these bewildered melodies" (ii). The presentation of the music in written form presents a further example of this bewilderment, as the "conflict of spirits" and of voices are embodied in the textual apparatuses. In the index, the titles of tunes are given in English and in Irish in two separate columns on the same page, but Bunting makes no attempt to correlate them. Bunting's methodology for providing titles for his tunes has changed from the original edition, as he presents now an extra level of linguistic mediation. On the musical scores, the titles are written in large print Gaelic script at the top. On the next line in smaller print, the Irish name in Roman characters and the English translation are stretched on either side of a long dash, almost poised like

balancing scales (See Figure 4). In addition, the language of European art music appears in the score itself which is filled with crescendo, diminuendo and forte and piano signs, as well as Italian expressions to indicate time. (In the earlier edition, time had been indicated with English phrases). The tunes are separated into melody and bass lines, as in the 1796 edition, but now in the case of tunes which are accompanied by English translations, a melody line for the voice is added. Irish national identity, it would appear from the 1809 Ancient Music of Ireland, is found only within a combination of various voices.

A related embodiment of the "conflict of spirits" and voices is seen in the Irish harp itself, the symbol of Irish identity. After the 1796 work, as I have suggested, the harp came to represent in some sense a unified Irish cause, and it was adopted by the United Irishmen. In the 1809 volume, however, as Bunting describes and relates the history of several harps, we see the opposing voices from which Irish identity is constructed. Brian Boru's harp, for example, in Bunting's interpretation, acts to confirm the subordination of the native Irish to their English colonizers. According to Bunting, after Brian Boru's defeat in 1014 at the battle of Clontarf, his harp was given to the Pope. It was eventually presented to Henry VIII with the title "Defender of the Faith." Henry gave it to an Irish earl and it eventually ended up in the Protestant Trinity College in 1782. Bunting includes an illustration of the harp's intricate engravings which bewilder the reader as much as the confusing history of the harp does. A similar confusion is embodied on the harp from Carrickfergus: "Every part of the remaining fragments is covered with inscriptions in Latin and in the Irish character; the former containing mottos [sic], and the name of the maker . . . the latter the year it was made in, A.D. 1621, and the servants [sic] names of the household" (26) (See Figure 5). Like the music, the illustrated harps in the 1809 edition embody the conflicted identity of Ireland.

O'Neill implies that Bunting would have been content to have ended his publication of Irish music at two editions: "it was hardly probable that he would venture to repeat his bitter experience, with a family now dependent on him for support had not the persuasion of friends and the goading of Dr. Petrie stirred his indolent spirit into renewed activity" (140). The "renewed activity" that resulted in the 1840 edition of The Ancient Music of Ireland (published in Dublin) also involved a renewed concern, albeit problematic, to recapture a sense of the purity of Irish music, a project similar to that of the first edition, but now highly elaborated and expressed as opposition to Moore's modern corruptions of the music. Great changes had occurred between the 1809 and the 1840 editions. Catholic emancipation had been achieved finally in 1829. Daniel

O'Connell's Repeal Movement was galvanizing the moneyed Catholic middle-class. Such changes were accompanied by new ideas of how to represent the nation. In the 1840 edition, Bunting rejects the romantic nationalism which can be seen in Moore and which would prove so influential on the Young Ireland movement, situating his own enterprise firmly within an antiquarian tradition of authenticity.

Instead of presenting music as one more site of antiquarian activity, Bunting seeks to make the music the pre-eminent source of information about the past. Whereas the exact nature of early Irish society has been disputed in many cases, Bunting suggests, the authority of Irish music is indisputable: "Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the high degree of early civilization and national glory laid claim to by the Irish people, it has never been questioned that, in the most remote times, they had at least a national music peculiar to themselves, and that their bards and harpers were eminently skilful [sic] in its performance" (1). It is music, then, that offers the most perfect representation of the past. In "the uncertain, or at least debateable matter connected with the early condition of society among our ancestors," music is, of all historical subjects, "the one most capable of being handled with certainty and precision" (1). But Bunting is careful to distinguish between the melodies and the accompanying lyrics. Only the former convey the purity of the past. Whereas in the 1809 edition, Bunting capitalized on the popularity of the poems of Ossian, in the 1840 edition, he is noncommittal about their authenticity. It is "impossible to say whether any, or any part even, be undoubtedly genuine" (2). A similar question mark hangs over Irish songs. But, suggests, Bunting, "the case is totally different with music. A strain of music, once impressed on the popular ear, never varies. It may be made the vehicle of many different sets of words, but they are adapted to it, not it to them" (2). If the music collector confines his search to the native districts, he will find the "absolute and unimpeachable authenticity of every note he procures" (2). The object of Bunting's concern with authenticity soon becomes clear, as he suggests that the only way tunes are altered is when they are introduced "for the first time amongst those who had never heard them in their original state; as in the instance of Sir John Stevenson's supposed emendations of the Irish melodies" (2).

Now, instead of imitating Moore's activity of providing English words to Irish tunes as he had done in the 1809 edition, Bunting sets his project of finding a pure Irish music in opposition to what he sees as Moore's musical miscegenation. He suggests that Moore, while popularizing Irish music, has also taken it away from its roots, from the people from whom it came. In Moore's volumes, the tunes:

assumed a new dress -- one indeed in point of poetic diction and classical ornament infinitely more elegant than they had ever worn before -- under the hands of Mr. Moore; but the Editor saw with pain, and still deploras the fact, that in these new Irish melodies, the work of the poet was accounted of so paramount an interest, that the proper order of song writing was in many instances inverted, and, instead of the words being adapted to the tune, the tune was too often adapted to the words, a solecism which could never have happened had the reputation of the writer not been so great as at once to carry the tunes he deigned to make use of altogether out of their old sphere among the simple and tradition-loving people of the country -- with whom, in truth, many of the new melodies, to this day, are hardly suspected to be themselves. (5)

Because of Moore, the ancient tunes have been put into new "disguises" and have once again become hidden from the people's view. That which is most truly Irish has been re-fashioned and put into "a new dress" as a result of improper coupling. Furthermore, according to Bunting, Moore has replaced the spirit of the people with the cult of the poet.

In the 1840 edition, Bunting sets out to remedy the situation. His aim, he states, is "to guard the primitive air with a religious veneration" (6). In opposition to "Stevenson's supposed emendations of the Irish melodies," Bunting notes that he has learned about the "peculiar mode of playing and fingering" the harp from Denis Hempson and has attempted to arrange the newly collected tunes in the 1840 edition, "in true harp style" (6). Moreover, seeking to isolate the authentic body of music from that which is merely "disguised," he divides the airs into three distinct epochs, "the very ancient, the ancient, and those composed from the time of Carolan to that of Jackson and Stirling" (6-7). Then he proceeds to analyze the structure of the most ancient, and observes that in these ancient tunes, one can "trace a characteristic style which prevails more or less throughout all genuine Irish music, and constitutes the true test by which to distinguish our native melodies from those of all other countries" (7). These most ancient tunes bear witness to Ireland's strong past: "Tunes so unapproachably unique, so eminently graceful, so unlike any other music of the nations around us . . . can never with any shew of reason be attributed to composers living in times of civil discord and daily peril, in penury and comparative barbarism" (8). Instead, they "bear the impress of better days" (8), and they are derived, not from the peasantry or harpers hiding in the countryside, but from a time when "the native nobles of the country cultivated music as a part of education" (8). Bunting adds that "amid the wreck of our national history,

[these tunes] are, perhaps, the most faithful evidences we have still remaining of the mental cultivation and refinement of our ancestors" (8). Bunting refers to but disagrees with Moore's historical narrative which asserts that Ireland's "finest airs are modern" (8). Claiming that "perhaps, we may look no farther than the last disgraceful century for the origin of most of those wild and melancholy strains which were at once the offspring and solace of our grief" (8-9), Moore situates the songs which are most Irish at the point of violent intersection between the colonizer and the colonized: "the last disgraceful century." In Moore's interpretation, the English play a part in creating what is most Irish. However, according to Bunting, it is the ancient songs, those which were written before the conquest and by the nobility, which are the most Irish. Bunting seeks to remove the trace of English colonization from the most characteristically Irish music.

George Petrie sums up the difference between Moore and Bunting in describing The Ancient Music of Ireland as "A great and truly national work of which Ireland may feel truly proud":

To its venerable editor Ireland owes a deep feeling of gratitude, as the zealous and enthusiastic collector and preserver of her music in all its characteristic beauty, for though our national poet Moore, has contributed by the peculiar charm of his verses, to extend the fame of our music over the civilized world, it should never be forgotten that it is to Bunting the merit is due of having originally rescued our national music from obscurity.

(O'Neill 140)

Although Petrie recognizes Moore as the "national poet," it is Bunting who is responsible for preserving and perpetuating the "national music." Whereas Moore is useful in helping to present Ireland to the world, it is Bunting who is credited with uncovering the foundation of "truly national" Irish identity on which Moore and others could build.

Nevertheless, although Bunting attempts to situate the foundation of Irish identity in pre-colonial times, the colonizing presence is not so easily dismissed. In fact, it has leaked uncannily into the ideological foundation of Bunting's assumptions about an authentic nation. David Lloyd describes the process whereby resistant nationalism begins to take on the characteristics of the imperial ideology which it was intended to subvert:

while nationalism is a progressive and even a necessary political movement at one stage in its history, it tends at a later stage to become entirely reactionary, both by virtue of its obsession with a deliberately exclusive concept of racial identity and, more importantly, by virtue of its

formal identity with imperial ideology. Ultimately, both imperialism and nationalism seek to occlude troublesome and inassimilable manifestations of difference by positing a transcendent state of essential identity. (x)

While Bunting's musical project cannot be characterized as self-consciously resistant nationalism, he is nevertheless concerned with the "essential identity" of Irish music, and, correspondingly, of Ireland. His search for the pure products of the "native nobles" mirrors the "deliberately exclusive concept of racial identity" of the colonizing narrative which he has internalized.

Appropriately, the title page of the 1840 edition of the Ancient Music of Ireland iconographically weaves together images of Irish music and British imperialism. In the illustrations of harps flanking the title, Bunting suggests the evolution of the Irish harp from the classical lyre (see Figure 6). These harps are linked to illustrations of Denis Hempson and Arthur O'Neill, two harpers who had appeared at the Belfast harp festival which had prompted Bunting's original project of collecting, suggesting his own place in the development of Irish music. The focal image on the page, however, is the British lion and unicorn which appear at the top of the page under the British royal crown. A network of shamrocks connects all the images together. The 1840 title page encapsulates the ambiguous message of the edition, suggesting the pure lineage of Irish music but placing it within the context of British imperial ideology. Significantly, in his Preface, Bunting indicates his hope that "the collection will be received with approbation by the lovers of music and the learned on both sides of the Channel" (11).

The musical score, too, reflects an internalization of the dominant ideology. Despite its claim to represent the "true harp style," Bunting's final edition, more than either of the earlier editions, presents standardized pianoforte music, although the directions for tempo have been mostly changed from Italian back to simple English. The titles of the tunes are now written in standard English, despite descriptions of them being "Very ancient, Author and date unknown." The most awkward approximation of antiquity is found in the "The Caoinan or Lamentation Chorus," one of the group of the most ancient pieces, which is rendered in treble and bass clef, with directions for the pedal (See Figure 7). Keening, the eerie traditional Irish cry for the dead, is adapted for the pianos in parlors, presumably "on both sides of the Channel."

During the course of the three editions of his collections of music, which were written amidst three very different political situations, Bunting represents his nation in different ways. His work, then, maps the course of Ireland's colonial history, in which both political and cultural activity in Ireland is dominated by the relationship with England. Particularly in the 1840 edition, we see Bunting trying to write a redemptive

identity for Ireland, but in order to represent that history, he relies on the ideology of the colonizers of his nation; he is caught in the cycle of repeating the colonizing moment. Nevertheless, despite the personal and political factors which motivated Bunting's three editions, his work as a whole also serves to interrogate the ideology on which colonialism depends, specifically the ideology of fixity. Although each version of the Ancient Irish Music attempts to fix Irish national identity in relation to the national Self of England, each version in its way demonstrates the impossibility of doing so. There is no representable nation; there are only arrangements of influences which produce ambiguous cultural artifacts. The nation is revealed as what Homi Bhabha describes as a "transitional social reality" (1). The publication history of Bunting's three editions further emphasizes the nation as process, not product. The editions of the Ancient Irish Music appear in sequel: one decade apart, then thirty years apart. The three editions present images of an Ireland which is constantly changing, never static, and therefore never completely co-optable. Bunting's presentation of such variant identities for Ireland suggests a nation which cannot be permanently defined, understood, and dominated; the "spirit of the nation" is constantly twisting and resisting its own previous definitions. The last edition of the Ancient Irish Music was dedicated by permission to her Majesty the Queen; the title page announces this fact directly under the word "Ireland." While the work seemingly confirms the position of Ireland within the British Empire, as I indicated earlier, taken as the third in a sequence, the 1840 edition can also be read as a disconcerting reminder of the trouble on the inside edge of the empire. Bunting's serial work, then, both articulates the process of colonialism and represents the way Ireland would continually challenge to the administrative center.

Works Cited

- Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London and NY: Verso, 1991.
- Bhabha, Homi K. Nation and Narration. London and NY: Routledge, 1990.
- Boydell, Brian. "Music, 1700-1850." A New History of Ireland Vol. 4 Eighteenth-Century Ireland. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.
- Bunting, Edward. A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music. Dublin, 1796.
- Bunting, Edward. A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland. London, 1809.
- Bunting, Edward. The Ancient Music of Ireland. Dublin, 1840.
- Cairns, David and Shaun Richards. Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988.
- Chanan, Michael. Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western Music from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism. London: Verso, 1994.
- Curtin, Nancy J. The United Irishmen: Popular Politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791-1798. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Eagleton, Terry. Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture. London and NY: Verso, 1995.
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth. The Printing Press as an Agent of Social Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979.
- Flood, W.H. Grattan. A History of Irish Music. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.
- Foster, R.F. Modern Ireland 1600-1972. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989.
- Kelly, James. Prelude to Union: Anglo-Irish Politics in the 1780s. Cork: Cork UP, 1992.
- Kennedy, Liam and David S. Johnson. "The Union of Ireland and Britain, 1801-1921." Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy. D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day, eds. London and NY: Routledge, 1996. 34-70.
- Harbison, Janet. "The Legacy of the Belfast Harpers' Festival, 1792." Ulster Folklife 35 (1989): 113-128.
- Leerson, Joep. Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael: Studies in the Idea of Irish Nationality, its Development and Literary Expression prior to the Nineteenth Century. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press in association with Field Day, 1997.

- Levine, Kenneth. The Social Context of Literacy. London and Boston: Routledge, 1986.
- Lloyd, David. Nationalism and Minor Literature: James Clarence Mangan and the Emergence of Irish Cultural Nationalism. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988.
- Ó Cuív, Brian. "Irish Language and Literature, 1691-1845," in A New History of Ireland Vol. IV Eighteenth-Century Ireland. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986, 374-423.
- O'Neill, Captain Francis. Irish Minstrels and Musicians. Darby, PA: Norwood Editions, 1973.
- Ong, Walter. Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word. London and NY: Methuen, 1982.
- Shepherd, John. "Music and Male Hegemony" in Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Thuente, Mary Helen. The Harp Re-Strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- Trumpener, Katie. Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997
- Whelan, Kevin. The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760-1830. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press in association with Field Day, 1996.
- White, Harry. The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press in association with Field Day, 1998.