

**Famine Diaries?:
Narratives About Emigration From Ireland To Lower Canada And Quebec, 1832-1853**

by

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Famine Diaries?: Narratives about Emigration
from Ireland to Lower Canada and Quebec, 1832-1853

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Abstract

This thesis examines the Famine Diary and the controversy that surrounds it, both in relation to genuine emigrant narratives from the mid-nineteenth century, and also in the context of recent scholarly debates about nineteenth century Irish migration to British North America, the historical import of the Great Famine in Ireland, and the modern significance and commemorative function of Grosse Ile National Historic Site (soon to become a National Park). I investigate the construction of national identity in the writing of Irish emigrants to Lower Canada and Quebec during the period of the Great Famine in Ireland and the decades immediately prior to it, when Irish mass migration to North America effectively began. I am interested, then, in tracing how the principles of Irish nationalism, particularly those of the Young Ireland movement (with its avowed antipathy towards the British), disseminate and modulate within a Canadian setting, and how such events as the 1832 cholera epidemic (which led to the establishment of the quarantine station at Grosse Ile), the rebellions of 1837, and particularly the potato blight shape and determine Irish Canadian configurations of national identity.

In my first chapter, I focus on the Famine Diary as a spurious text that advances a traditional Young Ireland interpretation of the Famine and of the migration experience as a form of exile, and I distinguish its hostile attitude towards emigration and towards Great Britain from those espoused in Robert Sellar's "Summer of Sorrow" (1895), a prior work of historical fiction that presents a polar opposite account of the Famine migration yet provides the main source upon which the Famine Diary is based. In my second chapter, I trace the

origins of the Famine Diary back one step further, to the Anglo-Irish aristocrat Stephen De Vere, whose authentic eye-witness account of the Famine migration, written to pressure the House of Lords into enacting Passenger Act reform, would provide the main source upon which Sellar's text, in turn, is based. Finally, in my third chapter, I compare the Famine Diary with genuine Famine journals and emigrant narratives from the 1830s, 1840s, and early 1850s, evaluating whether or not there are similarities between their respective attitudes towards emigration and towards Great Britain while accounting for whatever differences arise between them. I have collated a number of such genuine Famine diaries and Irish emigrant narratives written between 1832 and 1853, which provide ample material for comparison yet have received scant critical attention to date. I also examine these texts and the Famine Diary against the backdrop of English emigrant narratives that date from the same time frame (Moodie, Traill) to discern whether or not cultural distinctions between England and Ireland inform their respective representations of the migration experience. I am interested primarily, then, in examining how a select group of *literate* and affluent Irish emigrants choose to represent their migration experience, and, more specifically, whether or not the ethnic, linguistic, political, and religious affiliations of the emigrant communities they ostensibly represent become *accentuated* or *mitigated* in a Canadian setting: whether or not they consider Canada to be a land of opportunity and a natural setting for social amelioration or merely an extension of the British imperial domain

Acknowledgments

Although a scholarly undertaking of this scope will inevitably make use of a large variety of academic sources, I would like to particularly acknowledge Kerby Miller and Chris Morash, both of whose works on Irish emigration and the Irish Famine provided inspiration as well as a very solid foundation from which to undertake my research. I would also like to express my gratitude and indebtedness to Mary Lu MacDonald, Chris Morash, and especially Jim Jackson and Robert Hill for their confidence, support, and suggestions for potential avenues of research both in Canada and Ireland, without whose assistance this thesis would not have been possible. Robert Hill's suggestion that I consult the Robert Sellar manuscript for "The Summer of Sorrow" in the National Archives of Canada proved to be a most fortuitous one for me and provided direction for this thesis; Jim Jackson's enthusiasm and willingness to discuss his current research as well as the unpublished Stephen De Vere correspondence and memoirs in Trinity College Dublin Library proved an invaluable aid for its completion. I would also like to thank my supervisor Leith Davis and Carole Gerson for their unfailing encouragement and incisive commentary throughout the composition of this thesis; the Department of English, FCAR (Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide a la recherche), and a Scott Paper Limited Bicultural Graduate Entrance Fellowship all provided me with invaluable conference and research funding and financial assistance. Finally, my warmest thanks goes to my family and friends, especially Oonagh Shiel, Carl Peters, and Karlyn Koh, for their encouragement, reassurance, and emotional support.

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Introduction:
**Famine Diaries?: Narratives about Emigration from Ireland
to Lower Canada and Quebec, 1832-1853**

On the Celtic cross high above Grosse Ile, Quebec, reads the following inscription:

Sacred to the memory of thousands of Irish emigrants, who, to preserve the faith, suffered hunger and exile in 1847-48, and stricken with fever, ended here their sorrowful pilgrimage.

The monument, erected by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, an expatriate Irish nationalist organization, makes a number of implicit assumptions about the emigrants' social and political affiliations, their ethnic profile, religious orientation, attitudes towards migration, and reasons for leaving Ireland. They are in fact not emigrants at all but exiles, having left their homeland not through their own volition but from economic and political compulsion and under extreme duress. Thus, according to the monument, such "children of the Gael," faced only with "foreign tyrannical laws and an artificial famine" while they remained in Ireland, had no choice but to embark for the United States or British North America. Furthermore, their migration is invested with a religious significance. It is a "pilgrimage," a harrowing journey undertaken by famine-stricken Irish Catholics to preserve their faith, escape from English avarice, and maintain an imperiled Gaelic civilization: their mission the retention and transplantation of an endangered set of cultural and religious values. For such migrants, then, emigration is a matter of strict necessity, hardly an opportunity for social advancement or the achievement of material prosperity and a better standard of living.

This view of the Irish Famine migration is corroborated by the journal of one of its alleged participants, the recently "discovered" diary of Gerald Keegan. Ostensibly based on the record he kept of his voyage from Dublin to Quebec during the spring of 1847, Keegan's Famine Diary (originally published as The Voyage of the Naparima, 1982) attests to the penurious circumstances, political repression, systematic exploitation, and mass evictions faced by the peasantry of western Ireland following the onset of the Great Famine in 1845; the horrendous conditions and endemic diseases, mainly typhus, they encountered on board the *Naparima*, one of the "coffin ships" en route to Quebec; and finally the extreme privation and neglect they suffered after their disembarkation and quarantine at Grosse Ile. Keegan remains adamant throughout his text that the Famine migration is, at root, "a forced expulsion under a plan conceived and now being executed by the [Anglo-Irish] landlords" (15) in collusion with the British parliament; "starving from an artificially created famine and disease ridden as a result of hunger," he avows, "the poor people are easy victims" (16). In the words of James J. Mangan, the editor of the The Voyage of the Naparima as well as the Famine Diary, who claims to have discovered the original journal of Gerald Keegan and to have based his text upon it, Keegan's narrative is an enduring testimonial to the "conditions in Ireland that forced the people to emigrate,... the incredible hardships of the ocean voyage and... the holocaust at Grosse Ile" (Voyage, 12). More importantly, it contains "a living message... from the young man... [himself] and, indeed, from all the poor, unfortunate emigrants" (Famine Diary, 136) to prevent the recurrence of similar famines in the modern world. Recent historical scholarship (Hill, "From Famine to Fraud"; Jackson; Kornblum; McGee), however, has seriously questioned the credibility of the Famine Diary, demonstrating conclusively that it is derived

from the fictional text of a Scottish emigrant to rural Quebec written late in the nineteenth century (Robert Sellar's "Summer of Sorrow", 1895) rather than the journal of a genuine Famine migrant.

This thesis examines the Famine Diary and the controversy that surrounds it, both in relation to genuine emigrant narratives from the mid-nineteenth century, and also in the context of recent scholarly debates about nineteenth century Irish migration to British North America, the historical import of the Great Famine in Ireland, and the modern significance and commemorative function of Grosse Ile National Historic Site (soon to become a National Park). I investigate the construction of national identity in the writing of Irish emigrants to Lower Canada and Quebec during the period of the Great Famine in Ireland and the decades immediately prior to it, when Irish mass migration to North America effectively began (Akenson, Being Had, 49; Houston and Smith, 21-22; James Johnson, 86). I am interested, then, in tracing how the principles of Irish nationalism, particularly those of the Young Ireland movement (with its avowed antipathy towards the British), disseminate and modulate within a Canadian setting, and how such events as the 1832 cholera epidemic (which led to the establishment of the quarantine station at Grosse Ile), the rebellions of 1837, and particularly the potato blight shape and determine Irish Canadian configurations of national identity.

In my first chapter, I focus on the Famine Diary as a spurious text that advances a traditional Young Ireland interpretation of the Famine and of the migration experience as a form of exile, and I distinguish its hostile attitude towards emigration and towards Great Britain from those espoused in Robert Sellar's prior fictional text, one that presents a polar opposite account of the Famine migration. In my second chapter I trace the origins of the

Famine Diary to the Anglo-Irish aristocrat Stephen De Vere, whose authentic eye-witness account of the Famine migration, written to pressure the House of Lords into enacting Passenger Act reform, would provide the main source upon which Sellar's text is based. Finally, in my third chapter, I compare the Famine Diary with genuine Famine journals and emigrant narratives from the 1830s, 1840s, and early 1850s, evaluating whether or not there are similarities between their respective attitudes towards emigration and towards Great Britain while accounting for whatever differences arise between them. I have collated a number of such genuine Famine diaries and Irish emigrant narratives written between 1832 and 1853, which provide ample material for comparison yet have received scant critical attention to date. I also examine these texts and the Famine Diary against the backdrop of English emigrant narratives that date from the same time frame (Moodie, Traill) to discern whether or not cultural distinctions between England and Ireland inform their respective representations of the migration experience. I am interested primarily, then, in examining how a select group of *literate* and affluent Irish emigrants choose to represent their migration experience, and, more specifically, whether or not the ethnic, linguistic, political, and religious affiliations of the emigrant communities they ostensibly represent become *accentuated* or *mitigated* in a Canadian setting: whether or not they consider Canada to be a land of opportunity and a natural setting for social amelioration or merely an extension of the British imperial domain.

Fundamentally at issue here is the diffusion of Irish national identity through emigration to Lower Canada and the impact of migration upon nationalist sentiment. As editor of the Famine Diary, James Mangan represents it to be a period text rather a work of historical fiction, one that is transparently evocative of the Famine emigrant mentality; before I examine

the Famine Diary in more detail, then, I want to situate it in the context of recent Irish and Irish Canadian scholarly debates about the Famine migrants, and explore the affinities (both superficial and substantive) and discrepancies between its interpretation of the Famine emigrant mentality and those of recent historical scholarship. The historian Kerby Miller, for example, stresses the continuities of a nationalist sensibility between the Famine migrants and their pre- and post-Famine cohorts, the way in which the migration experience tended both to inculcate and intensify nationalist sentiments in the Irish expatriate community. Thus, his text Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America, based on over five thousand emigrant letters, correspondences, and memoirs in addition to traditional Gaelic poems, songs, and folklore, proceeds from a strikingly rudimentary thesis: that while the vast majority of Irish emigrants to North America -- predominantly Roman Catholics, but also including many Protestants as well as the majority of the Famine migrants -- embarked from their homeland for reasons of personal and social advancement, to escape from abject poverty, and the moral strictures of a staunchly conservative society, to search for increased material prosperity, they nevertheless tended to regard themselves as involuntary exiles, cast adrift from Ireland by English avarice and political repression, to make a place for themselves in a new and often brutal land. Such avowed antipathy towards the British, Miller maintains, helped to insulate the Irish from the natural pain they must have experienced upon leaving their homeland and loved ones behind, mainly by offering them an "embracing explanation" for the necessity of their departure that "obviated personal guilt, obscured intracommunal [and intra-familial] conflict, and generalized individual grievances into a powerful political and cultural weapon against the traditional antagonist" (306; also see Brown, 330-331). Inveterate

Anglophobia, he continues, provided such migrants with a ready made sense of national identity -- bringing Irish Catholics in particular together across an often wide set of regional and social divisions -- to unite them after disembarkation in North America (188-189).¹ This account of the emigrant experience as a form of exile, of course, was already heralded in much Gaelic oral tradition and poetry well before the onset of the Great Famine in Ireland, but crystallized during the late 1840's, Miller suggests (Emigrants and Exiles, 304-311; "Emigration, Ideology, and Identity", 516-517; "Emigration, Capitalism, and Ideology", 92-96), in the polemical writing of the Young Ireland movement, particularly in the Young Irelander John Mitchel's contention that "the Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine" (219) as part of a deliberate scheme to depopulate Ireland. More importantly, this interpretation of the Famine migration as a journey into exile would also become espoused by Gerald Keegan as the chief premise behind "his" Famine Diary. Miller's research into the resilience of the Irish exile motif thus might seem to authenticate Keegan's text.

When it comes to the example of nineteenth century Irish migration to Lower Canada and Quebec, however, Miller is forced to moderate his claims: "in British North America," he writes, "Irish Catholics were not so isolated and besieged, for a large, restless Quebecois minority guaranteed a more pluralistic approach to political and social issues, and positioned Irish Catholics in a favourable, intermediate role between Canada's traditional antagonists" (276). Irish Catholic emigrants destined for British North America, in other words, might have been less disposed to view themselves as exiles given their relatively favourable position vis-a-vis French Canadians under a seemingly more benign form of British authority. The

influx of Irish emigrants to Quebec during the 1830s and 1840s consequently led to the formation of a unique cultural matrix: one in which both the emigrants and the French Canadian population shared a common religion and a residual sense of antagonism towards Great Britain yet spoke different languages.

From such a unique cultural matrix we can begin to distinguish between the primary and secondary affiliations that informed the emigrants' sense of national identity. For if their migration experience did indeed invest them with a nationalist sensibility and aggravated residual feelings of hostility towards Great Britain, then we might expect them to have put aside their linguistic differences and to have banded together with their French Canadian co-religionists against a politically dominant British culture. "Language is not an instrument of exclusion," writes Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities: "in principle anyone can learn any language" (134). Indeed, "it is always a mistake," he insists, "to treat languages in the way that certain nationalist ideologues treat them -- as *emblems* of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk-dances and the rest. Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect *particular solidarities*" (133). Accordingly, we might expect that the political and religious affiliations between the Irish Catholic emigrants and the French Canadian populace in mid-nineteenth century Quebec would have superseded their linguistic differences to form the basis of a distinctly Irish and French Canadian imagined community.

Yet this is precisely what did *not* happen. Instead, Irish Canadian political loyalties remained enigmatic, factious, fluctuating, and "highly malleable," according to McQuillan,² through the latter half of the nineteenth century. During the *Patriote* rebellion of 1837, for

example, the majority of Irish Catholics banded together with their Protestant counterparts and even Orange militias *in support* of the British colonial establishment to put down the French-Canadian insurrection (MacKay, 169-170), thus suggesting that linguistic barriers are less permeable than Anderson would indicate (also see Connor, 58-67). It would also suggest that emigration from Ireland to British North America had a dampening effect on Irish nationalist dissent. Consider, for example, the political legacy of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, who began his career as a Young Ireland nationalist and a sworn enemy of Great Britain but ended it as an apologist for British rule in North America, a staunch opponent of Fenianism, and a Father of Confederation (Kirwin, 51-61). The career and legacy of the lesser known Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, on the other hand, who was the surgeon-in-charge of the Marine and Emigrant hospital in Quebec during the cholera migration years of 1832-1833, a newspaper man and chief editor of the politically radical *Vindicator*, and then a *Patriote* leader and second in command only to Papineau during the rebellion of 1837 (before he fled to New York) militates against any such readily held assumptions about Irish Canadian political loyalties (Verney, 34-77). Indeed, an entire decade after the rebellion of 1837 had transpired, the Anglo-Irish aristocrat Stephen De Vere, having accompanied the tenants from his estate at Curragh Chase in County Limerick to the port of Quebec, would observe in his diary (June 17, 1847) that Quebec's "Irish population [is] well affected to England" whereas the "Irish + [French] Canadians dislike one another" (Trinity College Library Dublin, Manuscripts Department, MS 5061, 4); yet only ten months later, on April 10, 1848 (after news of William Smith O'Brien's failed Young Ireland uprising had reached Canada), De Vere would write to his mother that "there is a large body of Irish in Canada seriously disaffected towards England and inclined to

fraternize with the [French?]... [For] the feelings of the Irish Canadians are much changed since the last rebellion here, where they were the most loyal people in Canada, and the strong hostility that then existed between them and the powerful French Canadian party has been greatly diminished" (MS 5075a, 117-118). In reality, the majority of Irish emigrants to Lower Canada and Quebec during the 1830s and 1840s fundamentally compartmentalized their cultural and political affiliations between a precarious sense of loyalty to the emergent British Canadian polity, varying degrees of antipathy towards French Canada, and a residual feeling of hostility towards British rule in Ireland that gave rise to some wildly discrepant configurations of national identity and paradoxical observations of the Irish in Canada, like those of Stephen De Vere.

Given the complexities of the Irish Canadian cultural milieu, it would thus seem especially difficult to ascertain how the principles of Irish nationalism disseminate and modulate within a Canadian setting. Unfortunately, Miller fails to develop his analysis of Irish Canadian nationalism beyond his cursory remarks above.³ Accordingly, I want to restrict my analysis of Irish Canadian nationalism to a select body of texts that mediate between the Irish and Canadian cultural milieux -- narratives about emigration from Ireland to Quebec and Lower Canada during the 1830s through 1853 -- to see what they reveal about the diffusion of national identity. What I am concerned with more specifically though is the way in which the vicissitudes of the *Famine* migration and the attitudes towards that migration espoused within these narratives bear upon the credibility of the Famine Diary. To what extent, we might ask, does Keegan's narrative actually represent the attitudes of the Famine emigrants towards their migration experience? Did the majority of them indeed tend to see themselves as exiles, and

their emigration as a form of departure under duress, compelled by English Parliamentary/Anglo-Irish landlord interests and avarice -- a conspiracy of agricultural consolidation and enclosures -- much as Gerald Keegan views them? Or were they more conciliatory in their attitude towards the British, more favourable in their outlook on emigration and towards those very Anglo-Irish landlords who often financed their departures, viewing themselves as settlers and colonists, beneficiaries and voluntary participants in a trans-Atlantic migration scheme?

Before we can begin to address this question, however, we must first consider how atypical the Famine exodus itself was in the context of larger nineteenth century trans-Atlantic migration patterns to British North America. Recent Canadian historical scholarship, for example, has sought to minimize the impact of the Famine Irish in Canada. Thus, according to Houston and Smyth, the great misery of 1847 and the Famine exodus should be considered not as the linchpin but an *anomaly* in relation to larger trans-Atlantic migration movements; they downplay the significance of the Famine migration itself, and insist upon "the importance of pre-Famine events and the voluntary outmigration of those both alert to the worsening conditions of pre-Famine Ireland and sufficiently affluent to take evasive action" (8) in determining the social composition and political disposition of the Irish Canadian populace. Likewise, Donald Akenson rejects the lasting stereotype of the nineteenth century Irish in Canada as an unruly and impoverished set of famine-stricken Catholic refugees destined to become the members of a culturally disadvantaged urban proletariat, an ideal breeding ground, it would seem, for the propagation of Irish nationalism. Instead, he insists that the vast majority of the Irish who came to Canada during the nineteenth century were of Protestant

rather than Catholic or Gaelic descent (at a ratio of 2:1, Being Had, 84), inclined towards rural settlement on their own farmsteads (86), and experienced no more difficulty adapting to Canadian society than any other ethnic group. Like Houston and Smyth, Akenson examines the Famine migration itself as a highly volatile population movement about which it is difficult to generalize but which was acutely responsive to local exigencies in Ireland and to changing conditions in both Canadian and American ports of entry; he gives little credence to the view that it was primarily "a headlong scrambling from a stricken area," a desperate and impulsive "flight of refugees" (MacDonagh, "Irish Emigration to the United States", 321), or what Gerald Keegan terms the "forced expulsion and panic rush of a stricken people[,]... attended by frightful scenes of suffering and death" (142-3). Finally, the Irish historian Cormac O'Grada argues that there are significantly fewer marked discrepancies than one might presume between the emigrants who took part in the Famine migration and "those who preceded them in the 1830's and early 1840's" to warrant the supposition that it was primarily a pauper migration ("Across the Briny Ocean", 122-123; also see Daly, The Famine in Ireland, 106). What each of these historians stresses in common, in other words, is the *agency* and relative affluence of the Famine migrants, their status as part of a *charter group* in the foundation and development of Canadian society rather than their destitution or recalcitrant nationalist inclinations. They each attempt to revise the history of the Irish in Canada and to problematize enduring stereotypes of the Famine migrants as embittered exiles, political outcasts, or vehemently nationalistic refugees.

When it comes to Irish (as opposed to Canadian) historical studies of the Famine and the Famine-migration, on the other hand, such revisionist strategies of interpretation have

recently fallen into disrepute. For example, if Edwards and Williams's pioneering study The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History (1957) had set the tone for later revisionist assessments of the Famine (Cullen, Foster, Lyons) by scrutinizing and undermining many of the assumptions that underlay nationalist interpretations (cf. Mitchel) of the event, then many of their suppositions in turn have come under scrutiny by a "post-revisionist" generation of Irish historians. Led by Brendan Bradshaw, Cormac O'Grada, James Donnelly, and Christine Kinnealy, these post-revisionist historians suspect their predecessors of being overly concerned with adhering to a rigid conception of "value free" history that has no capacity for self-analysis; of being overly cautious in refraining from drawing unwarranted conclusions from the history of the Famine to the extent that they trivialize its significance; and of being overly circumspect in not wanting to assign blame for the potato blight or to aggravate sectarian tensions in the North by providing historical grist for paramilitary movements to the extent that their analyses become exculpatory in tone. Revisionist historiography, according to post-revisionist historians, effectively sanitizes the history of the Famine by falling back upon "interpretive strategies" that "filter out the trauma" (Bradshaw, 338). Unlike their predecessors, post-revisionist historians do not hesitate to apportion blame or determine culpability for the excess mortality caused by the potato blight; to pinpoint the inadequacy of relief measures implemented at the local, national, and intra-national level of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland; or to see the excess mortality and emigration caused by the Famine -- over one million people died and perhaps a million and a half emigrated out of a total population of eight million in Ireland between the years 1841 and 1851, an event that Terry Eagleton likens to "a low level nuclear attack" (23) -- as a product ultimately of the

colonial relationship between Ireland and England.⁴ Likewise, the post-revisionists challenge their predecessors' conclusion that it was the inexorable pressures of population growth in nineteenth century Ireland in conjunction with increasing single crop cultivation and subsistence farming on increasingly marginal lands that made the Famine inevitable; nor do they support the revisionists' contention that the Famine was interpreted by the British administration, Irish gentry, and peasantry alike as a calamitous sign of Providence. Instead, they focus upon the sheer contingency of circumstances and bad luck that led to the potato blight: the extreme unlikelihood, for example, that the potato crop would fail for several years in a row in Ireland at the exact moment when England would be confronted with a fiscal crisis and English adherence to a rigid conception of political economy and Irish reliance upon the potato crop would both crest. Finally though, it should be stressed that post-revisionist historiography is not a throwback to the older school of nationalist historical scholarship: for the post-revisionists also focus upon social differentiation within the famine-afflicted population and the internecine rivalries between the Irish cottiers, labourers, farmers, and landlords who were all affected to varying degrees by the blight. Thus, they reject both the communal solidarity and inevitable calamity of nationalist and revisionist historiography to offer a more nuanced reading of Irish Famine history.

In a similar spirit, I would like to propose a reading of the Famine Diary that situates it in the context of these historiographical debates, as an invention of modern Irish nationalism that stems from a widespread desire for a more personalized and overtly judgemental style of historical narrative than Canadian or Irish revisionist historians have been prepared to offer. "It is of limited value," suggests Christopher Morash in Writing the Irish Famine,

to treat literary texts as yet another form of historical document with the (often dubious) potential to yield individual nuggets of fact -- facts which, in any case, can only be acknowledged by an ostensibly empirical historiographic practice when confirmed by other, non-literary sources. Instead, we can look to literary texts as highly developed formulations of those metanarratives which both make particular actions possible, and retrospectively justify them.

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I would suggest, then, that the Famine Diary can be positioned at the confluence of two such metanarratives, as a highly contrived nationalist formulation of Irish emigration and Famine history -- a story that both invokes and perpetuates a Young Ireland tradition of interpreting the Famine and the Famine migration as a form of extermination and involuntary exile, genocide and mass-expulsion -- to undermine more recent Irish and Irish Canadian historiography. "The need to bear witness," says Morash, "stands opposed to the need for analytical criticism, remembering opposed to dismembering. And yet, both needs have deep and legitimate claims upon our attention which any attempt at coming to terms with the legacy of the Famine amongst the Irish diaspora ignores at its peril" (forthcoming 1996, "Making Memories", 20-21). It is my hope that my analyses which follow will always seem attentive to the commemorative function of Famine migration narratives, always astute, judicious, and meticulous in their engagements with the legacy of the Famine and inheritance of the diaspora in its various narrative configurations, but never disrespectful, dismissive, or irreverent in tone.

Chapter I:
Famine Diary and "The Summer of Sorrow":
Reception, Transmission, Modulation

"One of the most important things... to note," cautions William Vaughan in his "Reflections on the Great Famine," is "the *absence* of the Famine in sources, especially in personal papers such as diaries" (7, my emphasis). "Like all past events," adds Christopher Morash, "the Famine is primarily a retrospective, textual creation. The starvation, the emigration, and the disease epidemics of the late 1840s have become 'the Famine' because it was possible to inscribe those disparate, but interrelated events in a relatively cohesive narrative" (Writing the Irish Famine, 3). This apparent absence of perception or invisibility of the Great Famine to its contemporaries, however, -- the textuality of Famine history -- should not be overstated: for those who experienced starvation, famine-related epidemics, dispossession, and emigration were no doubt at least to some extent aware of the extraordinary duration and magnitude of the calamities that afflicted them (Scally, The End of Hidden Ireland, 211-216). Moreover, numerous personal recollections and diaries from the Famine period that attest to the severity of the potato blight do exist: the genteel memoirs of Aubrey de Vere and the Irish Journals of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850, for example, the annals of the American traveller Asenath Nicholson, or the epistolary journalism of Anthony Trollope and Alexander Somerville, to name but a few.⁵ Nevertheless, as Dodd and Morash each note, the segment of the Irish population who were most susceptible to the blight -- the often illiterate, often Gaelic speaking landless agricultural labourers and cottiers of Munster and Connaught, at the bottom of the social scale⁶ -- left few written records behind (Dodd, 100-101; Morash, The Hungry Voice, 26-27).⁷ Nor do the multitudes who escaped the Famine through emigration to

the *New World* provide many testimonials to record their departures; indeed, according to Houston and Smyth, the number of preserved letters that remains extant from Irish emigrants in Canada in the mid-nineteenth century, especially from Catholics, is exceedingly few. "The necessary documents from which an appropriate sample could be culled," they suggest, "do not exist" (237).⁸ The writing of the Great Famine therefore would seem to be predicated upon a condition of absence: an absence of perception of the extraordinary and momentous significance of the event itself,⁹ in the first instance; but then also an absence of documentation, personal records, testimonials, and eye-witness accounts of the event from those who were most affected by it but left few written records behind.

It is in this context of absent or missing texts and imperceptibility of the magnitude of the trauma that the enthusiastic reception history of Gerald Keegan's *Famine Diary* has to be considered. For although Keegan's narrative attracted little attention upon its first publication in Quebec in 1982 as *The Voyage of the Naparima*, when it was subsequently republished in Ireland under the new title *Famine Diary: Journey to a New World* (Wolfhound Press, 1991) it quickly became a national best-seller. As Jackson notes, "all the reviews were unanimous in recognizing that in the person of Gerald Keegan, a Sligo [National] schoolteacher, Ireland was about to discover one of the great unsung heroes of the famine period" (1). Indeed, excerpts from his narrative were eventually broadcast nationwide in a series of readings on RTE radio and were serialized in *The Irish Times* (1). Moreover, Irish media outlets did not eschew but embraced the overtly nationalist and accusatory message of Keegan's text: for example, "whereas many of the victims of famine accepted that poverty and starvation were their lot in life," wrote a reviewer in the *Sunday Tribune*,

Keegan -- who was clearly a man of enormous moral and physical courage -- understood that this was not a natural disaster[... He] became convinced that the English were trying to destroy the Irish or at least clear them out of Ireland -- he uses the word "holocaust" more than once -- and so was opposed to the emigration urged by the landlords.

(11 August, 1991; ctd. in Jackson, 1)

Gerald Keegan, in other words, clearly understood the full significance and magnitude of the Great Famine and who was responsible for it -- not as a retrospective textual creation, but *precisely* because he bore witness to and lived through the event. For the Irish public at large then, he would appear to personify the plight of the Famine victim and the emigrant as exile, giving voice to the members of a proscribed race and to the thousands of anonymous Famine migrants whose suffering otherwise would seem to have so few testimonials to commemorate it.

Recent historical scholarship, however, has seriously questioned the credibility of the Famine Diary. Historians and literary scholars like Robert Hill, Jim Jackson, Jacqueline Kornblum, and Robert McGee have each investigated the sources of Keegan's text and have demonstrated conclusively that it is derived from Robert Sellar's short story "The Summer of Sorrow" (1895), a work of historical fiction written by a Scottish immigrant to rural Quebec fifty years after the events it describes rather than being the journal of a genuine Famine migrant. Accordingly, in this chapter I trace the reception and transmission history of Keegan's text and consider the evidence against its authenticity, as well as the ways in which the permutations of the narrative have modulated between Robert Sellar's and James Mangan's renditions of it to create two diametrically opposed accounts of the Famine migration rather

than consecutive instalments of a politically and thematically unified narrative. The process of reception, transmission, and modulation between their two texts, in other words, reveals not only considerable distortions in their respective accounts of the Famine migration but also a process of polarization between Mangan and Sellar, one that leads the former to create an aggressively nationalist interpretation of the event that has little in common with Sellar's politically loyalist rendition of the Famine migration in "Summer of Sorrow" upon which Mangan's text is based.

To begin, then, I survey the nationalist tradition of historical scholarship, Young Ireland invective, and Famine historiography from the 1840s onwards that Keegan's text so vehemently recapitulates, as well as its contrasting functions in current nationalist and revisionist historiography. It is my contention that the popular reception of the Famine Diary in Ireland has to a large extent been a reaction to the paucity of genuine emigration narratives and eye-witness accounts of the Famine migration that clearly articulate a nationalist interpretation of its significance as a journey into exile. I will also review the evidence against the authenticity of the narrative and support the conclusion that the Famine Diary is in fact a work of historical fiction based on Sellar's prior text. In doing so, however, I will suggest that many of the charges that Keegan rehearses against the Anglo-Irish landlords have their basis in historical fact. The central culprit in the Famine Diary and "The Summer of Sorrow," for example, Lord Palmerston (Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1855-58 and 1859-65), is accused of clearing his overcrowded Sligo estate during the spring of 1847 and of sending more than a thousand of his impoverished tenants to Canada totally unequipped for the hardships of a trans-Atlantic voyage or the harsh Canadian climate -- accusations that were

heard (and ultimately dismissed) by the 1847-48 House of Lords Select Committee on Colonization from Ireland. What is of most interest to us here is that part of the proceedings of the Select Committee were reproduced in the newspaper accounts of the Famine migration that provide the backdrop for Robert Sellar's short story "The Summer of Sorrow": therefore, I trace the origins of the central conflict in his text in 1895 and the Famine Diary in 1991 to the bitter controversy surrounding evictions and "assisted emigration" from Lord Palmerston's Estate. Finally, however, I conclude my first chapter by considering the very different motivations that both inform and distinguish Sellar's text from the Famine Diary. In doing so, I argue that Sellar's account of the Famine migration politicizes the tragedy from a radically different perspective than Mangan's text to create what is essentially a historiography of the Famine that impugns only the Canadian administration of 1847, but *vindicates* the British for their efforts to ameliorate a catastrophe that many would argue their negligence gave rise to.

The Famine Diary and the Young Ireland Nationalist Tradition

Much of the Famine Diary's popularity, suggests Jackson, stems from the fact that "it offers readers a tragic story which, for all its simplicity, shows considerable sympathy and respect for the value system of traditional Irish nationalism" (8). Indeed, in many respects Gerald Keegan seems to be an extension of John Mitchel's Young Ireland nationalist and to exemplify Kerby Miller's psychology of exile (see above, 5-6). For like Miller's emigrant, Keegan is reluctant to view his departure from Ireland as a matter of volition rather than compulsion, seeing the Irish outflow in the wake of the Famine not as a voluntary response to a natural calamity but rather as a product of English machinations and social policy. In the

opening section of his fictional diary, for example, he problematizes the very terminology of emigration and volition in the migrant, explaining that while "I have tried to describe conditions and events leading up to this mass emigration movement... perhaps it should be called a mass expulsion movement [instead,] for the term emigration implies a free choice on the part of the emigrant" (56) that he clearly believes did not exist.¹⁰ Likewise, Keegan is extremely reluctant to view the Famine itself in fatalistic terms the way many English policy makers did as an act of God or a calamitous sign of Providence.¹¹ Instead, he subscribes to John Mitchel's dictum in The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps) that "although the loss of one crop be a visitation from God, [the] Irish famine is a visitation from England" (133): in other words, that "the British account of the matter [in Providentialist terms] is first, a fraud -- second, a blasphemy" (219). Indeed, for Keegan such a Providentialist outlook and account of the Famine migration is "the lie" that "our enemies would have us believe[:]. . . the blasphemous idea that all our troubles are a direct visitation of Divine Providence rather than the product of man's malice" (18). "If our trials stemmed from natural causes, from all those contingencies and disasters that are legally classified as acts of God," he adds, "they would in many ways be more bearable. But the famine," Keegan stresses, like Mitchel before him, "was an artificial one" (98).¹² Finally, Keegan bears witness to how "the suffering masses in Ireland" categorically refuse to see the Famine in Providentialist terms as a sign of God's will. For "in spite of the intensity of their suffering," he insists, "I have never heard anyone express resentment against Providence. The[Irish people] apparently realize, intuitively and by observation, that it is the free will of unprincipled, evil men rather than Divine Intervention, that has ruined our country" (46-47).¹³ Keegan thus attests to an Irish popular consciousness of

deliberate English malevolence being the root cause of the Famine rather than their belief in a natural calamity or interpretation of it as a sign of God's displeasure.

In fact, historians are now divided over the extent to which the Famine Irish regarded their plight as an act of Providence and to what extent they actually saw it, the way Keegan suggests, as a "product of the machinations of evil men" (86). Since Robert McHugh wrote his influential essay on "The Famine in Irish Oral Tradition" in 1957,¹⁴ it has been commonly thought that the potato blight was interpreted by the Irish peasantry and gentry alike as a sign of God's displeasure -- Oliver MacDonagh and more recently Patrick O'Farrell and Graham Davis have corroborated this view¹⁵ -- but it is now disputed by a number of historians, including James Donnelly.¹⁶ At issue fundamentally is the extent of diffusion of the Mitchel thesis among the Famine afflicted population in the late 1840s, how widespread the idea was that the English deliberately engineered the Famine to depopulate Ireland for reasons of social and political control. In an essay entitled "Whose Reality?: The Irish Famine in History and Literature," O'Farrell puts forward the supposition that the notion of the Great Irish Famine was "invented" primarily through John Mitchel's acts of writing (1) -- in other words, through a form of "retrospective, textual creation" -- and "that the survivors of the Famine, and their immediate descendants, did not generate or even entertain, the Mitchel thesis" (5). Instead, he argues, John Mitchel's thesis was only popularized later in the 1860s by "well fed nationalists" and Irish expatriates in North America who were influenced by his journalism and texts like Jail Journal (1854) and The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps) (1861). Likewise, Davis contends "that the idea of the Great Famine did not emerge spontaneously from the famine years" (98); "it was only later,... largely through Mitchel's agency, that the idea... was created

and only then [was] a particular interpretation fixed upon it to support the nationalist cause" (106). Donnelly, on the other hand, argues persuasively "that the idea of genocide had taken firm root in Irish political consciousness long before Mitchel published his most influential works on this subject[; and also,] that while genocide was not in fact committed, what happened during and as a result of the clearances had the look of genocide to a great many Irish contemporaries" (173). In support of this contention, he cites a Cork city councillor named Brady who, for example, declared in 1848 to the cheers of his audience that because of English mismanagement and social neglect: "a million and a half of Irish people [have] perished, were smitten and offered up as a holocaust, whose blood [has] ascended to the throne of God for redress" ("Mass Eviction", 173).

The extent of diffusion of the Mitchel thesis in the late 1840s is important to consider in reading the Famine Diary. For it has a direct bearing upon whether Gerald Keegan's own fictional views about the Famine and the Famine migration should be seen as topical or merely anachronistic, as plausible evidence for a contemporary and widespread Irish perception of English genocidal intent during the Famine or merely as a "retrospective, textual creation." Clearly Keegan's narrative would seem to attest to an Irish popular consciousness of English genocidal intent during the Famine period. The term "holocaust," for example, recurs throughout his text. In describing the extreme privation and neglect suffered by the emigrants at Grosse Ile, Keegan laments "that the outside world knows nothing about this final act of our tragedy, the holocaust on this lonely island" (108). The medical attendants and clergy who care for the emigrants, on the other hand, "are a different breed of human beings from the selfish, unprincipled individuals who are the cause of this massive holocaust" (113). Finally,

after his wife Eileen dies at Grosse Ile, Keegan visits her grave to spend "hours of meditation on the whole meaning of life in the midst of a holocaust" (118). Whether it is topical or anachronistic, then, Keegan's use of the term "holocaust" and deployment of the terminology of atrocity and genocide clearly invokes the memory of the Jewish Holocaust that occurred nearly a century after the Famine for any twentieth-century readership, and thereby implicitly lends support to the Mitchel thesis that the Famine occurred not in spite of but rather as a direct result of English social policy.¹⁷

Moreover, one of the intentions behind the publication of the Famine Diary is to establish the contemporaneity of Famine suffering for a twentieth-century readership. Don Mullan, for example, the director of Action From Ireland's (AFrI: a famine relief organization's) "Great Famine Project", who played an instrumental role in having the Famine Diary published in Ireland (Jackson, 1), states this quite explicitly in his preface to the narrative.¹⁸ Elsewhere he writes that "the only way we can understand what happened [at Grosse Ile] and what happened back in Ireland is through a greater understanding of hunger today. I have visited probably more of the famine graves in Ireland than anyone," he asserts, "and often, when I quietly walk across them, I ask the dead, "what is it that you want?" And, more and more, I believe, they want us to link their suffering with the suffering of other poor people" (ctd in *Celtic Communion*, September 1994). In Mullan's vision, then, Gerald Keegan becomes quite literally a spokesman for the Famine dead, one who in speaking for the dead also happens to speak across the span of a century and a half to those living today. For he authorizes the living (his progeny, as it were, the distant survivors of the Great Famine, and, ultimately, the members of the "Great Famine Project") to take action on his behalf, to redress

the inequities that led to his own demise and that still lead, in the modern world, to similar forms of privation. It is worth noting here that Mary Robinson has also consistently and admirably reiterated the enduring significance of the Great Famine and its importance for "re-defining the contemporary attitude to such suffering" (Ctd. in Gray, The Irish Famine, 183) throughout her tenure as President of Ireland, most poignantly in her address on Grosse Ile, 21 August 1994.¹⁹ But in the case of Famine Diary, I would suggest, the connection between past suffering and present social action begins to seem somewhat more suspect, especially given Don Mullan's instrumental role both in the publication of the text *and* his directorship of Action from Ireland's "Great Famine Project". For in a significant way the story of Gerald Keegan appears to be first disclosed by the very same people who stand the most to benefit from his exemplary narrative, by an organization that ratifies its own current mandate and projects according to his supposedly anterior statements and beliefs. Herein, then, would seem to lie a considerable financial as well as ideological investment behind the publication of the Famine Diary -- and what is perhaps at stake in maintaining its authenticity.

In a broader context, however, the publication of the Famine Diary would also seem to serve the interests of traditional nationalist historians as an ostensible period text. For its reception history, suggests Jackson, cannot be divorced from "the current state of Irish historiography" (7). Indeed, the main features of revisionist historiography are commonly described as a tendency towards iconoclasm, ironic inflection, and even "corrosive cynicism," -- especially in the form of an astringent critique of the "nationalist myth" (Brady, 24-31; O'Tuathaigh, 313-320); an emphasis upon discontinuity and the discursive formations that underlie seemingly cohesive Irish nationalist movements and traditions; recourse to an

"austerely clinical tone" and "sociological euphemisms" that cerebralize and thereby sanitize the past and "have the effect of filtering out the trauma" (Bradshaw, 341, 338); and finally, an eschewal of morally evaluative statements in the service of a concept of "value-free" history.

By contrast, Keegan's narrative, says Jackson,

is an attempt to redress the balance in favour of an older school of history writing... [For] stylistically it is a return to the old-fashioned narrative history where the innocent and the guilty are easily recognizable and an accusing finger is pointed at Ireland's ancient oppressor, Britain. In the final analysis, it makes a direct appeal to the conscience of the Irish people by appearing to be the authentic voice from beyond the grave of an Irish martyr of the Famine.

(8)

It is the populist historian and writer Desmond Fennell, Jackson continues, who might be considered "the leading crusader of the anti-Revisionist campaign" (9). Indeed, in an essay entitled "Against Revisionism" Fennell appeals for a return to precisely this type of "old-fashioned narrative history": "the kind of history-writing and history-telling which sustains, energizes, and bonds a nation, and thus serves its well being" (Ctd. in Deane, 588).

Fundamentally, Fennell claims, this type of historical narrative

shows the nation, in its past, involved in a continuous or near-continuous pattern of meaning in which the nation, represented by its state (if it had one), and/or by great men, women and movements, brave soldiers, righteous civilian insurgents perhaps, was always, in some sense, right minded and right-acting, and occasionally morally splendid.

(588)

Clearly, then, Gerald Keegan would serve as just such a legitimating figure: he exhibits the requisite piety for his nation's "pattern of historical meaning" and "correct moral judgement"

(589) in his interpretation of the causes of the Famine and the Famine migration that Fennell would take to be constitutive features of the nationalist sensibility in general.²⁰

Fennell's locus of historical meaning and moral impetus for the Irish nation, in other words, can be seen effectively embodied in Gerald Keegan, delineated in his exemplary character. For he seems ideally suited to "sustain, energize, and bond" the Irish people through his own experiences of suffering; his resilience to oppression; his caustic awareness of the social, economic, and political forces that afflict Ireland; and his education of and ministrations to the most destitute of the Famine Irish whose ranks he ultimately joins: his identification, in short, with the beleaguered Irish nation. Indeed, Keegan can be seen to personally represent or incarnate the tremendous moral and physical courage that Fennell would appoint (right minded) historians to disclose as an integral part of nationalist tradition, given his capacity for suffering, service ethic, and legacy as an "Irish martyr of the Famine." "The figure of the martyr," argues David Lloyd in Nationalism and Minor Literature, "his identity totally immersed in the spirit of the nation, forms the ideal paradigm of the individual's relation to the nation" (72). "In the absence of any real nationalist martyrs after the [Smith O'Brien] 1848 rebellion (those prosecuted were deported rather than executed)," adds Morash, "the abundant, silent ranks of the Famine dead provided obvious recruits to a struggle which required martyrs" (Writing the Irish Famine, 131-132). Even more than the abundant, silent ranks of the Famine dead, however, I want to suggest that it is the articulate, individuated figure of Gerald Keegan whose story seems the most saliently emblematic of the nation's struggle, who functions both as spokesman for and exemplary victim of the Famine Irish -- one whose narrative would provide a powerful vehicle for the condemnation of an

easily identifiable English oppressor and thus confirm the fixed polarities and static markers of English oppression and Irish victimization, while papering over the numerous gradations of social and regional stratification within Ireland's famine afflicted populace. In the absence therefore of any real nationalist martyrs from the Famine period or Famine migration narratives that clearly articulated a nationalist interpretation of its significance as a journey into exile -- at least before the publication of Keegan's text -- the "discovery" of the Famine Diary would clearly seem to fill a historiographical void: not only by providing an eye-witness testimonial for the misery experienced by the Famine migrants, but also by making comprehensible the Great Famine and the exodus from Ireland it occasioned in terms that both confirm an Irish popular awareness of the political significance of the trauma and attest to the perseverance of the individual in the national character. To divest such a figure as Gerald Keegan of his authenticity, then, would be to similarly question the vision of a socially and politically integral Irish nation that he represents.

From a Revisionist perspective, however, this is precisely where the Famine Diary becomes interesting: as a symptom of a much larger attempt to reconstruct -- and appropriate or corrupt -- historical narratives for unambiguously ideological ends. In fact, Donald Akenson, Mary Daly, and D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day have all intimated that the Famine Diary and its exposure as a fraudulent text offer a "cautionary parable" (Akenson, The Irish Diaspora, 16) about the excesses to which nationalist and populist historical narratives are prone. The "recent runaway success of the spurious Famine Diary," writes Daly, "and its continuing sales despite being revealed as a piece of late nineteenth-century Canadian-Irish fiction -- suggest a strong desire to wallow in its emotional horrors, perhaps at the cost of a wider understanding. For some US and Canadian citizens of Irish descent the

Famine is in danger of becoming their answer to the Jewish Holocaust: evidence that the Irish too are a nation of victims, a causal explanation for mass Irish emigration and a symbol of national unity" (Ctd. in George Boyce and O'Day, 71). "This farce," add Boyce and O'Day, "might be taken as marking the final collapse of the 'anti-revisionist' case -- that is, if that case had ever been based on rational argument" (10). Finally, Akenson cautions that the lesson of the Famine Diary "is clear: the hunger for knowledge about certain aspects of the Irish diaspora is so great that one must guard strenuously against credulity, especially when the information that comes to hand is evocative, emotionally gripping, and fits with pre-existent stereotypes" (The Irish Diaspora, 16). For the revisionist school of Irish historians, in other words, the spurious quality of Keegan's text demonstrates the poverty of the nationalist approach to historical scholarship and the credulity of the Irish public at large in the face of enduring stereotypes: it becomes a symbol of the need for "value free history" and of everything that is wrong with what R.F. Foster terms the "straight jacket of historiographical piety" (Ctd. in Deane, 584).

The Famine Diary as Historical Fiction: Controversy and Historical Antecedents

The evidence against the authenticity of the Famine Diary is, of course, overwhelming. Indeed, James Mangan's continued avowal of the authenticity of the text even after the disclosure of such evidence can only appear disingenuous.²¹ For although nobody today disputes that the Famine Diary is based on Robert Sellar's short story "The Summer of Sorrow," Mangan and his publisher continue to insist that Sellar himself must have obtained his narrative from a genuine Famine migrant despite all indications to the contrary.

Robert Hill, for example, who wrote his dissertation on Robert Sellar, has argued convincingly that no less than three separate documents -- Robert Sellar's personal diary, his manuscript for "The Summer of Sorrow," as well as the newspaper accounts of the Famine migration upon which his manuscript is based -- all attest to the fictional origins of the narrative ("From Famine to Fraud", 10). It was first published, he notes, in weekly instalments between December 27, 1894 and June 20, 1895 in the *Gleaner* of Huntingdon Quebec, a rural newspaper that Sellar edited, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Great Famine; "The Summer of Sorrow" was subsequently republished in book form in Gleaner Tales, Volume 2: The Summer of Sorrow, Abner's Device and Other Stories (1895) and then again in Hemlock: Gleaner Tales (1918 -- Hill, 1992, 6). "Sellar's own diary," suggests Hill, reveals that the narrative was mainly

composed in snatches between other jobs over a period of several months. "The diary in which I mean to tell the story of the Irish famine on shipboard and in Canada I am unable to give the care I wish," he inscribed on April 7, 1895. "The instalments are written hurriedly as required by the paper."... "Wrote last of Summer of Sorrow on Tuesday," Sellar entered on June 21. "The latter half was prepared as needed by printer, and am afraid bears mark of haste."

(10-11)

The manuscript itself for "The Summer of Sorrow," Hill continues, "with its numerous scratchings out and pastings in, and reconsiderations of dates and wording, all in his own hand, is clearly the work of a writer in the throes of creativity rather than a copyist" (11). Finally, Hill suggests that Sellar's main source for his narrative can be found in a *Catholic Record* newspaper article on the Famine migration entitled "Grosse Ile 1847" (April, 1892), "which he cut out and preserved in his roughbooks for" the text. I will examine these

newspaper accounts of the Famine migration that comprise Sellar's main source in more detail in my second chapter, but for the moment it is enough to note that Hill's research clearly establishes the fictional origins of Sellar's text and thus the Famine Diary that is modelled upon it.

In a similar vein, Jim Jackson has assailed the authenticity of the Famine Diary on purely generic and stylistic grounds as well as on the basis of its historical inaccuracies. In an article entitled "Famine Diary -- The Making of a Bestseller" in *The Irish Review* (November 1991), he was the first to question the credibility of Keegan's text and to expose its fictional origins. Jackson points, for example, to Sellar's and then Mangan's use of the epistolary or memoir novel form and the conventions of this particular genre -- "the interpolated story, comic scenes, a love element and a dominant mood of sensibility" -- as evidence of the fictional status of their respective narratives, claiming that "it is difficult to comprehend how anyone attuned to the style and conventions 19th-century fiction could have been deceived into thinking that Sellar's [or Mangan's] story was an authentic document dating from 1847" (4). Moreover, he also points to a number of historical inaccuracies within their texts to further discredit their claims to authenticity. "The majority of Lord Palmerston's Sligo tenants were sent out much later in the year" than "The Summer of Sorrow" or the Famine Diary would indicate, he charges, the first of nine ships arriving from Ireland in July 1847 at Saint John, New Brunswick rather than Grosse Ile, Quebec, in May, as the two narratives suggest.²² "The crossing in 1847," Jackson continues,

took at least six weeks or longer -- Sellar has his ship arrive in just four weeks...
[Furthermore,] Gerald's fight with the mate[, a central episode in both "The Summer of

Sorrow," and the Famine Diary.] would almost certainly have resulted in his being clapped in irons or in an even worse fate if contemporary documents are to be believed. Finally, unless we are to suppose that Gerald possessed remarkable prescience, the text could only have been produced by someone reflecting on events some considerable time later.

(8)

In defence of the credulous reader, we might adduce the example of Vere Foster's "Treatment of Passengers on Board the *Washington*" (New York: 1851) -- an indisputably authentic Famine migration narrative -- in which the protagonist engages in a similar confrontation with the mate without afterwards facing punitive measures, but Jackson's main point is well founded: that the numerous historical inaccuracies in "The Summer of Sorrow" and the Famine Diary further discredit any claim they might have to be authentic Famine migration narratives.²³

Even so, many of the charges that Keegan rehearses against the Anglo-Irish landlords in "The Summer of Sorrow" and the Famine Diary have their basis in historical fact. As noted, the central culprit in both texts is Lord Palmerston, a man described by Karl Marx as "the great philanthropist, who after... clear[ing] his Irish estates of their Irish natives, could not allow Irish misery to darken, even for a moment, with its inauspicious clouds, the bright sky of the landlords and moneylords" (71). In fact, both "The Summer of Sorrow" and the Famine Diary accuse Lord Palmerston of clearing his overcrowded Sligo estate during the spring of 1847 and of sending more than a thousand of his tenants to Canada totally unequipped for the hardships of the trans-Atlantic voyage or the harsh Canadian climate; following the actual Famine migration in 1847, similar charges were levelled against the historical personage Lord Palmerston by Adam Ferrie, a member of the Legislative Council of Montreal (December 1,

1847), and by the city council of Saint John, New Brunswick, after the city received an influx of paupers from Lord Palmerston's estate. "There have been this year about 1000 persons shipped off by agents of Lord Palmerston," Ferrie charges,

who not only promised them clothes, but they were assured that his Lordship had agents at Quebec, to whom instructions had been sent to pay them all from 2*l.* to 5*l.* each family, according to their numbers. On their arrival, however, no agents of his Lordship were to be found; and they were then thrown upon the bounty of the Government here, and the charitable donations of private individuals.

(416)

Many of those from Lord Palmerston's estate, Ferrie adds, arrived in Quebec nearly destitute, some "almost in a state of nudity" (417), "such hordes of beggars and vagrants as have been so unceremoniously thrust upon this young and thinly-populated country" clearly beyond its capacity to absorb.²⁴ Lord Palmerston's estate agents Stewarts & Kincaid, given the task of arranging the emigration scheme, Ferrie maligns as "rapacious and unprincipled sharpers" (418), "worthless and unprincipled hirelings, in whose bosoms every principle of humanity and every germ of mercy have become totally extinct" (416). "The pleadings of humanity," he concludes, "were stifled by the cannibal cravings of that rapacity which rejoiced in the anticipation" of clearing an overcrowded estate and the rationalization of agricultural production through its conversion from tillage to pasturage (418), so that Lord Palmerston, in the words of Gerald Keegan in "The Summer of Sorrow," would "have his land cleared of people by Michaelmas, and be able to lease it to Scotch cow-feeders" (451).

These charges by Adam Ferrie, recorded in the British Parliamentary Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America (1847-1848), would influence the

Catholic Record newspaper accounts of the Famine migration that inform Robert Sellar's manuscript for "The Summer of Sorrow". For example, in his *Catholic Record* article "Grosse Isle 1847," James O'Leary incorporates Ferrie's testimony almost verbatim to describe Lord Palmerston's broken promises of clothing and money for his former tenants upon their arrival in Quebec (April 9, 1892, 1).²⁵ "A more destitute and helpless set" of emigrants than those embarked from his estate, O'Leary writes, "had not landed in Canada that year, penniless, and in rags, without shoes or stockings, and lying upon bare boards, without even straw under them"; "one poor girl was so naked that she had to be supplied with a garment made from a biscuit bag, and this appeared to be her only clothing" (*Catholic Record*, April 30, 1892). Accordingly, in "The Summer of Sorrow," Gerald Keegan too notes the destitution of Lord Palmerston's former tenants before they leave Ireland and upon their arrival in Lower Canada, as well his broken promises: "their poverty was extreme," he writes, "they had no luggage and many had not rags enough to cover their nakedness. So haggard and white were they, so vacant their expression, that they looked more like an array of spectres, than human beings" (444) he adds, thus invoking a spectacle of suffering that Morash has demonstrated to be a potent "free floating sign" of the Famine period (*Writing the Irish Famine*, 4-7; "Literature, Memory, Atrocity", 111-113). Keegan also records how the Sligo landowner had devised an assisted emigration scheme for his redundant tenantry (372), "promising that his agent at Quebec would pay ten shillings a head on their landing at that city, and saying the Canadian government would give each family a hundred acres free" (376); after his co-tenants have surrendered their land, however, Keegan laments that "not a word about the ten shillings... or the 100 acres" (378) is spoken. "Nothing can be done now" though, he adds; "the poor people

are at Lord Palmerston's mercy." Accordingly, upon their arrival in British North America, "not a shilling, not an acre did they get," charges Keegan's friend Father Moylan (433), for "Lord Palmerston has no agent in Quebec, [and] the government will give no free grant of land. [These are] mere lies told the crathurs to get them to leave Ireland." Finally, in the Famine Diary, Mangan's Keegan delivers a similar indictment against Lord Palmerston for the callous and underhanded dispatch of his tenantry (13-16), although he plays a less prominent role in the text as Keegan's charges are directed more at the Anglo-Irish ascendancy as a whole.

Such charges that were levelled against the historical personage Lord Palmerston in 1847, however, were vehemently denied by Stewarts & Kincaid, his estate agents in Ireland. Their rejoinder to Adam Ferrie's pamphlet was also published in the British Parliamentary Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America, where they affirmed that the emigration from Lord Palmerston's estate in 1847 was undertaken entirely on a voluntary basis. The emigrants, write Stewarts & Kincaid to their employer,

not only went voluntarily and without the shadow of compulsion, directly or indirectly, but their entreaties were so urgent, and the pressure for passage to America so great, that it was impossible to provide shipping for the numbers willing to go, and praying in the most earnest manner to be sent, and many are left behind, who, though they still retain their holdings under your Lordship, look forward with confidence to the prospect of being sent out next spring.

(352)

The allegation that the emigrants were promised clothing upon their arrival in Quebec, they add, is "puerile and absurd," given that it could be procured much more cheaply in Ireland where it would actually be of some use to them prior to embarkation (419). Likewise, they

dismiss the allegation that money was promised, as "no inducement was necessary to persuade the people to emigrate; they were themselves most anxious to go" (419). Finally, in support of their contention, Stewarts & Kincaid adduce "the gratifying fact that already considerable sums of money have been sent home by the emigrants of last season... to enable their friends and relatives to follow them; and [that] several pleasing letters have been received by tenants of Lord Palmerston encouraging them to proceed without delay, and assuring them of success and prosperity upon their arrival" in the New World (420).

Kerby Miller has demonstrated that such emigrant letters provide a valuable index of attitudes towards migration and towards the emigrant's intended destination as well as the Irish nation left behind: a composite myriad repository, in short, of "history from below". While the correspondence from Lord Palmerston's former tenants themselves unfortunately has not survived, a similar collection of emigrant letters from the former tenants of Sir Robert Gore Booth, another Sligo landowner (at Lissadel) who in 1847 financed assisted emigration for his surplus residents, remains preserved in the British Parliamentary Papers for the House of Lords Select Committee on Colonization from Ireland (appendix 10). Many of these letters, however, attest to a considerably wider range and more variegated and ambivalent set of attitudes towards migration than either Sir Robert Gore Booth or Lord Palmerston's agents would indicate, depending to some extent upon the emigrants' socio-economic positions.²⁶ For while such letters do indeed often enjoin friends and relatives remaining in Ireland to undertake the trans-Atlantic voyage, providing remittances both as material proof of the emigrant's success abroad and also as a stimulus for enabling further chain migration, along with detailed descriptions of working conditions and agricultural practices in British North America, they

also tend just as frequently -- often in the very same letter -- to report upon the harrowing conditions of the trans-Atlantic voyage, describing in clipped and neutral tones the deaths of shipmates and even loved ones on board or at quarantine,²⁷ dwelling in some cases upon the economic hardships encountered in the New World while admonishing prospective emigrants to postpone their departures,²⁸ and occasionally expressing acute homesickness.²⁹

The compression of information and rapid changes of register are of course constitutive features of the emigrant letter. However, I will argue in (my third chapter) that such ambivalent and bifurcated attitudes towards migration expressed by Gore Booth's tenants do not result merely from the necessary brevity in their writing nor are they incidental to the vacillations of that particular emigrant cohort. Rather, I will suggest, they are in fact both a formal and thematic characteristic of the Famine migration narrative in general. For the moment though, it is enough to note that the optimism and enthusiasm about emigration expressed on behalf of Lord Palmerston's emigrants by Stewarts & Kincaid is both misleading and limited to a select few early in the season: "we often wished we never Seen St. John," write Bryan Clancy and his sister to their mother on November 17, 1847, as "the government are about to Send all the passengers that were Sent out here [to New Brunswick] by Lord Pamistown [sic] and Sir Robert Home again[,] Because the[y] are sure that all of them that did not perish... surely will this winter" (126). Clearly the Clancy children's sentiments here belie those of Stewarts & Kincaid and represent them to be more exiles and outcasts than voluntary migrants, their emigration less a matter of volition than compulsion. They thus provide some basis for the charges levelled against Lord Palmerston by the host of detractors, ranging from Adam Ferrie and James O'Leary through Robert Sellar's "Summer of Sorrow" to the Famine

Diary, although what historicity they may lend the two narratives in their mutual vilification of the Anglo-Irish landlord is tempered by their ahistorical and singularly hostile attitude towards emigration from Ireland per se rather than only under extreme conditions (see Shrier, 45-65).

The Famine Diary and "Summer of Sorrow": Transmission and Modulation

Both the Famine Diary and "The Summer of Sorrow" indict Lord Palmerston in their respective accounts of the Famine migration, but there remain significant discrepancies between the two narratives. For unlike Gerald Keegan in the Famine Diary, Sellar's protagonist, as Jackson, Kornblum, and McGee each remark, is "far more interested in events in Canada than in Ireland" (McGee, 82). Indeed, there is good reason to question why Sellar should have even written such a narrative about Irish emigrants as "The Summer of Sorrow" in the first place. For he was not of Irish origin or of Irish descent; not a part of the infamous Famine migration but a relatively prosperous Scottish emigrant who embarked for Canada in 1856 under modestly comfortable if physically demanding circumstances; not a Roman Catholic but a Presbyterian and extremely suspicious of the Ultramontane influence in Quebec federal and provincial politics (so much so that he was even willing to play the Orange card when the occasion suited him, such as the founding of the Quebec Loyal Reformers' League in 1876 -- Hill, Robert Sellar, 221-225); and, finally, not antagonistic towards the British Empire or the Colonial Office but highly supportive of them, and ill disposed towards the Canadian government instead. "It remains ironic," suggests McGee, "that Robert Sellar, the liberal, laissez-faire, Scots presbyterian monarchist who spent most of his life defending the bible and the crown, so proudly displayed on the masthead of the *Gleaner*, should become in this century

the darling of the Irish nationalists" (86). Nevertheless, there can be no question that he wrote "The Summer of Sorrow" and thus laid the groundwork for the creation of the Famine Diary.

However, Sellar's account of the Famine migration in "The Summer of Sorrow" politicizes the tragedy from a radically different perspective than the Famine Diary to create what is essentially a historiography of the Famine that *vindicates* the British and impugns only the Canadian administration of 1847 for their neglect of Irish emigrants. The narrator in the frame tales of "The Summer of Sorrow" ("Looking For The Book"; "How The Book Was Got") does express "indignation at the conduct of the landlords, of the ship-agents, and of the quarantine officers" (348), but the focus of Sellar's Keegan's animosity and the animus of the narrative is reserved primarily for that "most despicable" of "creatures", "the office-hunting Canadian politician" (433). "The meanness of the Canadian government in dealing with [the emigrants] is shameful," charges Keegan after he lands on Grosse Ile; he marvels at "the stupidity, the criminal disregard, that leaves us without bread to eat or even straw to die upon" (446). "The Almighty," he adds, "will surely have a day of reckoning with the rulers of Canada, for it is Canada's territory we are on and it is Canada's quarantine in which we lie bound" (446). In a letter addressed to Keegan on Grosse Ile from Father Moylan in Montreal, where he has gone to lobby the provincial secretary unsuccessfully on behalf of the distressed emigrants, the priest vituperatively corroborates Keegan's allegations: "my curse and the curse of every Irishman be on the government," he writes, "that allows the helplessness of our countrymen to be traded upon to make money for their followers" (449). Finally, as he lies dying of typhus himself in the quarantine station, Keegan laments "the callousness of the Canadian government to the sufferings of God's poor on this island" (456), adding in one of

his last breaths that "my heart is broken at the sight of thousands of my own dear people, men, women, and little children, dying for lack of a crust on Canada's shore" (457).

These charges levelled by Sellar's Keegan against the Canadian government in 1847 are reiterated and given editorial sanction by Sellar himself in a postscript appended to the narrative. "For the tragedy enacted at Grosse isle," he writes, "and its scenes re-enacted in every town and city west of it, from Quebec to Sandwich, the Canadian government is accountable, and the responsibility for the death of twenty thousand laid in premature graves lies at the door of Sherwood and his ministers" (461). "There never was a calamity," he concludes, "that could have been more easily prevented" (461). Sellar's animosity though is reserved only for the Canadian administration of 1847; "the British government," on the other hand, he claims, "did its part" (461). He thus censures only colonial officials for their neglect of Irish emigrants but lauds the British parliament for the "vigorous action" it took to alleviate emigrant distress and to absorb all of the expenses incurred by the colony in the administration of relief; Sellar also claims that when confronted with presentments from British North America, "the Imperial authorities" paid immediately and "without enquiry" (462) ("where that money went," he asks caustically, "it is now useless to enquire; [but] assuredly little of it went to feed the famishing immigrant"). In like fashion, Sellar's Keegan avows that "the British parliament has voted enough money to put food in every starving mouth in Ireland," (384) thereby absolving it of any responsibility for Ireland's excess mortality during the Famine period or by extension for the calamity of the Famine migration. The impetus for Sellar's argument here can be discerned in *The Catholic Record* newspaper articles on the Famine migration that comprise his main source, where a Roman Catholic priest working on Grosse Ile

in 1847 named Bernard O'Reilly is cited who believed optimistically "that the Imperial Government would not hesitate for a single moment to refund the Province for every shilling expended in a cause so sacred in an emergency unparalleled in the history of nations"; and O'Reilly also believed that the preponderance of emigrant fatalities on Grosse Ile could be attributed to the Canadian rather than the imperial authorities: the Irish emigrants "slaughtered by legislative neglect, much more than by the hand of sickness" (April 23, 1892, 3). Even if Sellar was influenced by O'Leary's article though, his text remains unique in the vehemence of its utterances and vituperative force of its declamations, his spirited account and interpretation of the Famine migration in "The Summer of Sorrow" that not only exonerates but also celebrates the British administration in 1847 for their efforts to ameliorate a catastrophe that many would argue their negligence gave rise to.

However, Sellar's efforts to vindicate the British administration for their handling of the emigrant crisis and to deflect the onus of responsibility for excess emigrant mortality away from the imperial and onto the colonial government are, according to Leslie Harvey's unpublished MA thesis on the Canadian response to the Famine migration, largely without foundation. Harvey documents the considerable dithering on the part of Earl Grey and the Colonial Office to accept financial responsibility for the cost of the Famine migration for over half a year after the emigration season of 1847 had ended, although emigration was an exclusively imperial jurisdiction over which Canadian officials had little influence to shape policy (145-188; also see Tucker). "Canada's position as a colony," she notes, "was, under these circumstance questioned, and the resultant debate... [led the colony] to take an important step along the road to self-government[.]... gain[ing] complete control over her own

immigration policy" (181-182). Harvey also notes that Canadian relief officials and clergy stationed on Grosse Ile during 1847, although woefully under-prepared for and overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the exodus from Ireland, generally had performed their duties as competently and compassionately as was possible under the circumstances (72-144), and furthermore, that they themselves attributed the onus of responsibility for the calamity of that year "to the insufficient care on the part of the Imperial authorities in the selection of emigrants fit to undertake the voyage" and the inadequate regulation of their living conditions once on board ship (80): "if anyone was at fault it was, Canadians decided, the Irish landlords and the British Government" (180). Sellar's account and interpretation of the Famine migration thus would seem to be as polemical and problematic as Mangan's in the Famine Diary, more an extension of his adversarial editorial persona in the *Gleaner* to defend the interests of crown and old country against the incursions of colonial authorities in a starkly inimical post-Confederation Quebec than a genuine inquest on the Famine migration. Finally, then, the process of reception, transmission, and modulation between the "The Summer of Sorrow" and the Famine Diary would seem to reveal not only considerable distortions of Famine migration history in each of these respective texts but also a process of polarization between rigidly British loyalist and Irish nationalist interpretations of the same event.

**Chapter II:
From Emigrant to Exile:
Gerald Keegan and Stephen De Vere**

In my first chapter I surveyed the reception history, process of transmission, and modulations between Robert Sellar's "The Summer of Sorrow" and James Mangan's renditions of the narrative as well as their considerable distortions of Famine migration history, in an attempt to establish the origins of the Famine Diary. This chapter traces the origins of the Famine Diary back one step further, by investigating Robert Sellar's manuscript for "The Summer of Sorrow" as well as the newspaper accounts of the Famine migration upon which his narrative is based. After consulting both of these documents in the National Archives of Canada, I was quite surprised to discover that despite the fictional origins of Sellar's text the figure of Gerald Keegan is indeed based upon a genuine Famine migrant, but one who hardly conforms to the mold of a conventional Irish nationalist. Instead, I will suggest that the protagonist of the Famine Diary and "The Summer of Sorrow" is based on the historical personage of Stephen De Vere, a *benevolent* Anglo-Irish landlord who accompanied his tenants to the New World aboard an emigrant vessel during the spring of 1847. In doing so De Vere almost certainly risked his life, *travelling steerage* in order to report upon the hardships of the trans-Atlantic voyage and the emigrants' suffering to the Colonial Office: his harrowing testimony would shock a House of Lords Select Committee on Colonization from Ireland, chaired by his uncle Lord Monteagle, into recommending comprehensive Passenger Act reform. More importantly, excerpts from De Vere's testimonial would also become incorporated into *The Catholic Record* newspaper accounts of the Famine migration upon

which Sellar's manuscript for "The Summer of Sorrow" is based. It is my contention that Stephen De Vere provides Robert Sellar with the original model for Gerald Keegan, the protagonist of "The Summer of Sorrow" and the Famine Diary that is modelled upon it, although there remain fundamental dissimilarities between De Vere's and Keegan's outlooks on emigration, political orientation, and reasons for leaving Ireland that I will explore in some detail.

However, before I investigate Sellar's transformation of De Vere's testimonial for his own use and adduce the many affinities as well as discrepancies between the figures of Stephen De Vere and Gerald Keegan, I would like to situate the rather extraordinary transmission and reception history of the narrative behind the Famine Diary in the context of an ongoing historiographical debate about the Famine Irish in North America. As previously noted, what is fundamentally at issue here is the diffusion of Irish national identity through emigration to Lower Canada and the impact of migration upon nationalist sentiment. Kerby Miller, on the one hand, stresses the continuities of a nationalist sensibility between the Famine migrants and their pre- and post-Famine cohorts, and the way in which the migration experience tended both to inculcate and intensify nationalist sentiments in the Irish expatriate community because Irish emigrants were already culturally predisposed to revile England and regard themselves as involuntary exiles. Conversely, Canadian historians like Donald Akenson, Bruce Elliott, Cecil Houston and William Smith each seek to minimize the political dimension of the Famine migration and the destitution of the Famine Irish in Canada. They all reject the lasting stereotype of the nineteenth century Irish in Canada as an unruly and impoverished set of

famine-stricken Catholic refugees destined to become the members of a culturally disadvantaged urban proletariat, an ideal breeding ground, it would seem, for the propagation of Irish nationalism.³⁰ They take issue with assessments of the Famine Irish that see them as culturally handicapped in the New World, or, as Woodham Smith puts it, as "the reverse of pioneers" (267). On the contrary, what each of these historians stresses in common is the agency and relative affluence of even the Famine migrants, their status as part of a charter group in the foundation and development of Canadian society rather than their destitution or recalcitrant nationalist inclinations. They each attempt to revise the history of the Irish in Canada and to problematize enduring stereotypes of the Famine migrants as embittered exiles, political outcasts, or vehemently nationalistic refugees (see above, 5-12).

While it is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into the historiographical debate surrounding the Famine Irish, I think that the original sources, transmission history, and permutations of the story behind the Famine Diary offer us a fascinating glimpse of the divergent perceptions of the Famine migrants both as voluntary emigrants and involuntary exiles encompassed within the context of the development of a single narrative. As I have suggested, the Famine Diary and "The Summer of Sorrow" before it have their original source in the testimonial of Stephen De Vere, the benevolent Anglo-Irish aristocrat who accompanied his tenants to the New World in the steerage of an emigrant vessel so that he could report on the hardships of the trans-Atlantic voyage back to the Colonial Office. Excerpts from De Vere's testimony (30 November, 1847) brought before a House of Lords Select Committee On Colonization from Ireland would become incorporated into the *Catholic Record* newspaper accounts of the Famine migration that supply the backdrop for Sellar's manuscript for "The

Summer of Sorrow". In fact, these newspaper accounts of the Famine migration, written in weekly instalments by amateur historian James O'Leary over a period of four weeks from April 9 to April 30, 1892, can be found in the same file in the National Archives of Canada as Sellar's manuscript for "The Summer of Sorrow",³¹ where they are appended to the end of his text. Thus, there can be little doubt that they provide Sellar with the original source for his narrative, although I am not suggesting here that he expressly or exclusively modelled his character Gerald Keegan upon the figure of Stephen De Vere or that he would have been familiar with De Vere other than from what he read in *The Catholic Record*. Nevertheless, Stephen De Vere's excerpts do provide the *only* eye-witness account of the Famine migration listed in *The Catholic Record* newspaper articles that Sellar consulted before undertaking his narrative.

De Vere himself, then, had accompanied tenants from his County Limerick estate at Curragh Chase to Bristol and then London before embarking with them on the passenger vessel *Birman* for Quebec on May 1st, 1847. According to the emigration agent Alexander Buchanan's Returns for the Port of Quebec, the vessel crossed the Atlantic in 48 days with 185 passengers on board (13 cabin passengers, 132 steerage), arriving at Grosse Ile on June 16, where it was not detained nor were any passengers disembarked for quarantine at the island (O'Gallagher & Dompierre, 344). Indeed, the *Birman's* voyage seems to have been quite auspicious -- a model crossing -- in that it was one of very few vessels that season to experience no fatalities whatsoever during the trans-Atlantic passage. Nevertheless, Stephen De Vere was so appalled by the conditions that he and his fellow emigrants were subjected to in the steerage that he wrote a letter of grievance to T.F. Elliot that was brought before the

Colonial Office, and he also lodged a successful complaint against the vessel's captain, one that Robert Sellar would take note of.³²

These excerpts from his letter brought before the Colonial Office that were reproduced in *The Catholic Record* newspaper accounts of the Famine migration read as follows:

Before the emigrant has been a week at sea he is an altered man. How can it be otherwise? Hundreds of poor people, men, women, and children of all ages, from the drivelling idiot of ninety to the babe just born, huddled together without light, without air, wallowing in filth, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, sick in body and despair at heart, the fevered patients lying between the sound in sleeping places so narrow as almost to deny them the power of indulging, by a change of position, the natural restlessness of the disease, by their agonized ravings disturbing those around them and predisposing them, through the effects of the imagination, to imbibe the contagion; living without food or medicine except as administered by the hand of casual charity, dying without the voice of spiritual consolation and buried in the deep without the rites of the Church.

The food is generally unselected and seldom sufficiently cooked, in consequence of the insufficiency and bad construction of the cooking places. The supply of water, hardly enough for cooking and drinking, does not allow washing. In many ships the filthy beds, teeming with all abominations, are never required to be brought on deck and aired. The narrow space between the sleeping berths and the piles of boxes is never washed or scraped, but breathes up a damp fetid stench, until the day before arrival at quarantine, when all hands are required to "scrub up" and put on a fair face for the doctor and Government inspector.

No moral restraint is attempted. The voice of prayer is never heard. Drunkenness, with its consequent train of ruffianly debasement, is not discouraged, because it is profitable to the captain who traffics in the grog.

There is not water enough for the necessary cooking and the satisfying of the raging thirst of the sick. The supply served out was scanty and false measurements were used.

The medical inspections on board were slight and hasty -- hardly any questions were asked -- but as the doctor walked down the file on deck, he selected those for hospital who did not look well, and, after a very slight examination, ordered them ashore. The ill-effect of this haste was two fold: some were detained in danger who were not ill, and many were allowed to proceed who were actually in fever.

(*Catholic Record*, April 9, 1892, 1)

De Vere then goes on to describe the condition of the fever sheds at the quarantine station on Grosse Ile: "They were very miserable," he writes,

so slightly built as to exclude neither the heat nor the cold. No sufficient care was taken to remove the sick from the sound, or to disinfect and clean the bedding after the removal of the sick to hospitals. The very straw upon which they had lain was often allowed to become a bed for their successor; and I have known many poor families prefer to burrow under heaps of loose stones which happened to pile up near the shore rather than accept the shelter of the infected sheds.

(Catholic Record, April 9, 1892, 1)

Finally, De Vere describes the deplorably over-crowded conditions prevailing aboard the steamers chartered to convey convalescing emigrants away from Grosse Ile further inland. "I have seen small, incommodious, and ill-ventilated steamers," he writes,

arriving at the quay in Toronto, after a forty-eight hours passage from Montreal, freighted with fetid cargoes of 1,100 and 1,200 Government emigrants of all ages and sexes. The healthy who had just arrived from Europe, mixed with the half-recovered convalescents of the hospitals, unable, during that time, to lie down, almost to sit. In almost every boat were clearly marked cases of actual fever -- in some were deaths -- the dead and the living huddled together.

(Catholic Record, April 23, 1892, 3)

De Vere enumerates six distinct abuses of the Passenger Act and hazards of the trans-Atlantic voyage that successively contribute to the debasement and debilitation of Irish emigrants, including: 1) the over-crowded, poorly ventilated, and insanitary conditions in the holds of the passenger ships; 2) the inadequate provision of food and water for the duration of the trans-Atlantic voyage; 3) the rampant drunkenness on board the emigrant ships and the sale of alcohol to passengers by their crews; 4) the cursory medical inspection on board once they have reached the quarantine station at Grosse Ile; 5) the shoddy construction and cramped

quarters of the fever sheds at the quarantine station; and finally 6) the overcrowded and insanitary conditions on board the steamers commissioned to transport convalescents away from Grosse Ile where the sick and healthy are huddled in close proximity.³³

What is perhaps most interesting to note here though is that De Vere assembles his intricately enumerated and carefully formulated observations and summation of the trans-Atlantic crossing from a skeletal framework of diary entries and stark, clipped, and emotively-neutral commentary recorded in an unpublished journal that he kept for the duration of the ocean voyage (Trinity College Library Dublin, Manuscripts Department, MS 5061). His first entry for the voyage, for example, is May 1st, 1847, where the only thing that he writes is "sailed" (1); the next one is June 9th, when De Vere remarks that the *Birman* is "Off Cape Breton in sight of land[,] having reached the banks of Newfoundland June 3rd." It is not until the *Birman* reaches Grosse Ile on June 16th, 1847, that he begins to write more detailed entries into his journal, although they remain stylistically clipped and terse, stark and emotively-neutral in tone, and listed in point form. Thus, his journal entry for June 16th, 1847, the one that would provide the unadulterated core of his observations for his more detailed and elaborate letter to the Colonial Office, reads as follows:

Wednesday 16th June.

arrived at grosse isle quarantine about 7am. detained waiting for dr till evening, when he inspected + gave us clean bill of health -- abt 40 ships detained there -- villages of white tents on shore for the sick.

daily mortality about 150 --

one ship, Sisters of Liverpool, in which all passengers + crew in fever.

Of this ship, all but cap'n + one girl died [sic]³⁴

Laid alongside of "Jelsy" [*Jessie?* -- arrived at Quebec June 26th, having spent 13 days in quarantine at Grosse Ile] in which many ill. Water covered with beds, cooking vessels of the dead

ghastly appearance of boats full of sick going ashore never to return.
 several died between ship + shore
 wives separated from husbands, children
 from parents + ascertained by subsequent enquiry that funds in agents hands altogether
 insufficient for case.
 medical attention bad
 exemplary conduct of Catholic clergy.

(2-3)

Clearly De Vere's terse and desultory journal entries here adumbrate many of the themes -- the cursory medical inspections at Grosse Ile, the inadequacy of medical attention or living quarters for the sick, the exemplary conduct of the Roman Catholic clergy -- that he would later elaborate upon in more detail, but the sparsity and economy of his prose also attest to the extremely cramped and uncongenial conditions on board ship that would seem to inhibit the creation of more copious or expansive authentic Famine migration narratives.

Nevertheless, De Vere's spontaneous and desultory observations in the midst of such a spectacle of suffering, augmented with his personal recollections of conditions in the steerage of the *Birman* and on board the government steamers, would provide him with the basis for his carefully crafted testimonial to the Colonial Office that would prove so instrumental for the enactment of Passenger Act reform. Furthermore, there can be no question that De Vere's testimonial would also provide the original source for Gerald Keegan's narratives about the Famine migration. For both "The Summer of Sorrow" and the Famine Diary incorporate his testimony quite scrupulously in their respective accounts of the trans-Atlantic voyage. Keegan complains in the Famine Diary, for example, that the holds of the passenger ships "are dark, cavernous dungeons fitted with narrow movable bunks for the emigrants[,]... no lights, no portholes,... no ventilation except for what fresh air enters from the two hatchways" (66), and

that they are beset with a "stench from refuse and excreta" which is "nauseating" (68).³⁵ He also laments the inferior quality of the food and "foul and brackish" water (72) carried for passengers aboard the *Naparima*: "the ship's supply is nothing short of sewage," he charges, "it has surely contributed to the wave of sickness among the passengers" (96). Moreover, like De Vere, Keegan assails the prevalence of drunkenness on board ship and the ease with which alcohol is procured. "The only crew member who ever goes down below" deck, he writes, "is the ship's steward. He does so in order to collect sixpence from anyone who will buy a drink... Since the captain and the mate share in the profit on any whiskey that is sold, there is no use calling on them to control the traffic" (74). Likewise, Keegan is as critical as De Vere of the cursory medical inspections that take place on board the emigrant vessel after it has reached the quarantine station at Grosse Ile: the inspector whose duty it is to inspect the passengers on the *Naparima*, Keegan complains, "rushed through his job, had a visit with the captain, and left hurriedly" (98). Nor is he impressed with the condition of the fever sheds on Grosse Ile after he goes ashore. There are "hundreds of patients," Keegan notes,

who are just lying in their berths without receiving any attention. The crowding and the filth are almost as bad as on the ships. The berths are in tiers so that the people in the lower ones are targets for whatever waste and even excreta fall from above... People are huddled together with no regard for age or sex and left to die or survive on their own resources... The dead are removed only at certain fixed hours with the result that the living often have to lie for hours beside a corpse.

(113)

Finally, like De Vere, Keegan details the overcrowded and insanitary conditions that prevail on board the steamers chartered by the government to transport convalescing emigrants away from Grosse Ile and further inland: "the people," he claims, "are two days without shelter and

without any food except what they can bring with them[,] many reach[ing] Montreal more dead than alive" (118).

Aside from these numerous textual similarities between Keegan and De Vere's respective accounts of the Famine migration, however, I also want to draw attention to their close affinity of character: the numerous resemblances between the historical personage of Stephen De Vere and Gerald Keegan's fictional persona. Even if Sellar himself may not have been aware of these many likenesses between the two when devising his protagonist, the similarities between Gerald Keegan and Stephen De Vere are striking. For like Keegan, who is a National School teacher before he decides to emigrate, De Vere was not only an educator on his estate but a social reformer and committed altruist as well, one who displayed considerable sympathy for the plight of the Irish peasantry and especially for impoverished Irish Catholics throughout his life, so much so, in fact, that he converted to Roman Catholicism shortly after his voyage to Canada (Ward, 183).³⁶ Furthermore, both Keegan and De Vere display a paternal attitude towards the emigrants whom they accompany to the New World and seek to ensure the welfare of those whom they have voluntarily taken under their charge.³⁷ "Having myself submitted to the Privations of a Steerage Passage in an Emigrant Ship for nearly Two Months, in order to make myself acquainted with the Condition of the Emigrant from the Beginning," De Vere recounts in his letter to T.F. Elliot, "I can state from Experience that the present Regulation[s] for ensuring Health and comparative Comfort to Passengers are wholly insufficient" ("Minutes of Evidence...", 45).³⁸ Moreover, in a letter to Sir G. Wilder, while denying that he himself is a landlord although not that he is from the property owning classes in Ireland, De Vere explains that "the people I brought out here were

principally labourers, whom I had employed for many years, + whose condition, from long natural attachment, I was anxious to better" (Trinity College Library, MS 5075a, 180). No doubt such paternalism and solicitude on the part of De Vere must have impressed itself upon Robert Sellar (to the extent that he would have been aware of it from *The Catholic Record* articles) when he envisioned the role that Keegan would play in his own emigration narrative. Indeed, in this respect both Keegan and De Vere represent themselves to be servants of Ireland and of the Irish people. Keegan's stated intention in the Famine Diary, for example, is "to do something for [his] people" (33) in their time of need. Likewise, in the words of Stephen De Vere's older brother, Aubrey De Vere:

from his early youth Stephen's life has been one of labour for Ireland. He has saved sons of hers from the gallows -- laboured in their schools -- abstained from wine for twenty years that he might encourage temperance among the poor, brought dying men into his house that they might have more comfort in death, pleaded their cause in public and private life, and during thirty years he has reduced the rental of the property by about a fourth below what would have been considered the fair value. [Many] know of his going to America as a steerage passenger (I think it was then a six weeks voyage) that he might speak as a witness respecting the sufferings of Emigrants.

(Ctd. in Ward, 183)

From this character sketch the affinities between Stephen De Vere and Gerald Keegan become readily apparent: their mutual pedagogical disposition, commitment to temperance, obvious compassion for the poor, reformist impulses, and service to Ireland.

But it is the *discrepancies* between Keegan and De Vere and their respective attitudes towards migration that are perhaps the most readily apparent and noteworthy. For unlike Keegan, De Vere impugned neither the English Parliament nor the Anglo-Irish gentry (issuing from these ranks himself) for the cataclysm of 1847, but instead remained steadfastly

Providentialist in his outlook and in his ascription of causes for the Famine and the exodus from Ireland it occasioned: "I cannot but remember that Famine and Fever were a Divine Dispensation," he writes in his letter to T.F. Elliot, "inflicted last Year upon nearly the whole World, and that the Colony could not reasonably expect to be wholly exempt from the Misfortunes of the Parent State" ("Minutes of Evidence...", 45). Moreover, unlike Keegan, De Vere never saw emigration as a form of exile but remained a staunch advocate for emigration from Ireland throughout his life, seeking always to ameliorate rather than abolish the passenger trade. "I shall not regret the Disasters of the last Two Years," he claimed,

if their warning Voice shall have stimulated and enabled us to effect a System of Emigration, *leading to future Colonization*, [italics in source] which shall gradually heal the diseased and otherwise incurable State of Society at home, and at the same Time infuse a Spirit into the Colonies which shall render them the Ornament, the Wealth, and the Bulwark of the Parent Country.

("Minutes of Evidence...", 45)

Indeed, De Vere appears to see the emigrants from Ireland distinctly as *settlers* and colonists rather than as exiles or refugees, whose migration experience he believes can have only salutary effects in both the development of the New World and the revitalization of the Old. It is his hope that their labour in the New World will "become the Mainspring of social Improvement and extended Civilization, and [that] Canada will open her eager Arms to embrace the Thousands whom she would now reject, who from being the Locusts of the Old World will become the Honey Bees of the New" ("Minutes of Evidence...", 48).

One cannot overstate Stephen De Vere's commitment to assisted emigration and colonization from Ireland. More than anything else, he seems to have conceived it his role in

British North America "to divest emigration of its horrors and abuses, and to lay the foundation of [a] much [larger] and well regulated system as will present the only chance for the relief of... Irish misery" (MS 5075, 51); indeed, even after the news of Smith O'Brien's failed Young Ireland rebellion reached Canada in May 1848, he explained in a letter to his brother Aubrey De Vere that he would not return because "at present I am serving my country infinitely more than I could at home" (152). Throughout his sojourn to British North America, then, De Vere travelled extensively between Upper and Lower Canada as well as into upper New York state -- "acquiring knowledge of the country; investigating the causes of last years' fearful mortality; devising means for preventing its recurrence; and examining into the means of introducing and employing a still larger number of Emigrants" (49) -- documenting in copious detail, in other words, his observations of colonial life and emigrant distress in the New World, as well as suggesting numerous remedies for its alleviation. De Vere would "write long dispatches upon these subjects" and then send them back to his mother, the dowager, Lady De Vere, in Ireland, to C.J. Goold, and to officials in the Colonial Office, including his uncle Lord Monteagle, who chaired the House of Lords Select Committee on Colonization from Ireland, and to T.F. Elliot, one of its principal witnesses. Accordingly, in his letters and also in his personal diary, he reveals himself to be a staunch opponent of "any leviathan scheme for wholesale colonization" (40) but rather favours more dispersed patterns of settlement undertaken "by families, not by individuals" (80) on their own initiative³⁹ -- what he terms "simple Emigration" (39) or "direct colonization" (41) -- conducted "through the agency of local colonization societies at home [that] might send out small knots of colonists, under leaders whose experience and character would ensure obedience" and keep "turbulence"

and "religious animosity" in check: an extension of the model of assisted emigration from De Vere's estate at Curragh Chase, in other words, but on a nationwide basis.

What De Vere advocates, then, is a form of *partially assisted* emigration in which "1st the Emigrant himself 2nd the landlord 3rd the whole state [and] 4th the Colony" (MS 5075a, 38) all contribute to defray the cost of "colonial transmission" and resettlement as "the safest mode of advancing colonization," and providing "for the health, comfort, and respectability of the Emigrants accompanied by liberal measures for their employment on arrival" (39). Thus, he does not recommend a principle of assisted emigration whereby the home government or the colony should defray the emigrants' entire transportation expenses to the New World or provide them with vast tracts of land, but rather that they furnish employment for emigrants upon their arrival and facilitate their movements in the colonies through subventions for the creation of infrastructure like railroads and canal-ways and "by contributions to great public works" (79): in particular, De Vere recommends the construction of a railroad from Quebec to Halifax, and the extension of waterways west of Toronto and north and west of Ottawa (MS 5075a, 46; MS 5061, 6; "Minutes of Evidence...", 47). "A liberal and well arranged emigration," he argues, would stimulate both capital investment in the colonies⁴⁰ as well as the imperial mercantilist economy⁴¹, rendering it "beneficial to Canada in the first place, and ultimately to the empire, nay, to mankind, by works which would open to cultivation, commerce and civilization the wild and fertile wastes of the yet unknown" (MS 5075a, 119). "I feel convinced," he adds in a letter to Lord Monteaule (December 23, 1847), "that if something be not speedily & liberally done, the loss of Ireland and of Canada and the utter dismemberment of the Empire will be the not very remote consequences" (46).

Stephen De Vere's liberal attitudes towards emigration thus proceed from a desire to safeguard the interests of British imperialism and the Act of Union as much as the welfare of individual emigrants. Emigration for him is both a safety-valve to offset Irish congestion and discontent and English fears of an Irish influx,⁴² as well as a vehicle to accelerate the pace of colonization in British North America. However, if not carried out efficaciously for the immediate absorption of the emigrant masses in the Canadas and to prevent the ongoing spectacle of flow-through migration to the United States, he believes, it could have a destabilizing impact upon both the colonies and the mother country. For "every man of them" who leaves Canada for the United States, suggests De Vere in a letter to his mother (April 12, 1848), "becomes an American sympathizer" (MS 5075a, 133), "a bitter enemy to England, + to the Anglo-Canadian connection[,...] + every man, through the relation which he carefully keeps up with his old country, contributes to increase Irish disaffection." He also remarks upon the problem of Irish Canadian soldiers' "desertion to the American side," "but believe me," he stresses, "the migration of Irish labourers from Canada to the States, which is going forward to an extent unknown to, or unacknowledged by, our officials, + is produced by the neglect of Enlightened measures for the improvement of the country, is fraught with more serious political and social consequences." Indeed, "England's miserable emigration policy has created an Irish republican nation in the States" (117), De Vere avows, and still

there is a large body of Irish in Canada seriously disaffected towards England and inclined to fraternize with the [French?]. The feelings of the Irish Canadians are much changed since the last rebellion here [in 1837], where they were the most loyal people in Canada, and the strong hostility that then existed between them and the powerful French Canadian [Patriote] party has been greatly diminished. I said clearly

in one of my letters on emigration that if a more liberal system wasn't adopted Canada would be lost to England, and I have no doubt of it.

(118)

Emigrant disaffection therefore imperils colonial stability, foments Irish revolutionary unrest, and threatens ultimately to unhinge the British Empire -- a politically explosive admixture that Kerby Miller has explored most comprehensively in Emigrants and Exiles -- so that a liberal emigration policy might effectively dampen Irish nationalist dissent.

Stephen De Vere's support for assisted emigration hence reveals a counter-revolutionary politics. In fact, when revolutionary turmoil surfaced in Ireland in April 1848 after a series of rebellions in Germany, Italy, and France that year, culminating in William Smith O'Brien's (De Vere's brother-in-law's) failed Young Ireland uprising in Tipperary, he recoiled from the threat of violence and insurrectionary change and turned to the countervailing influence of assisted emigration to remedy the unrest.⁴³ His immediate reaction to the Young Ireland uprising though was one of shock and disbelief: "we have just had a dispatch from New York," De Vere wrote to his mother on April 10, 1848, "containing a rumour of serious disturbances in Dublin; it is, however, so very vague that I hope it may be false. I am more inclined to suppose it so from the report that W.O.B had headed the insurgents, a course so opposite to his recent policy in the Confederation that it makes me disbelieve the whole story" (MS 5075a, 117). Two days later De Vere was still uncertain if the leader of the insurgents was in fact Smith O'Brien or John "Mitchell," whom he suspected far more likely to have instigated the rebellion (130). Nevertheless, after it became apparent that the instigator was Smith O'Brien, De Vere did not censure his brother-in-law for his actions but rather

interpreted that although his "motives are always pure, honourable + patriotic" (135), Smith O'Brien was "dazzled by the wonderful progress of the Revolutionary principle over all Europe" and thus "allowed himself to be hurried to the pitch of folly" (163). Likewise, De Vere divests the Irish people of any revolutionary impulse: for although "it was hardly to be expected," he writes, "that in the miserable and excited conditions of Ireland the tide of revolution could sweep over Europe without being felt there... still, I hope and trust in God that my country may remain, on the whole tranquil. The Irish have proved themselves historically to be a long suffering people" (118-119).⁴⁴

Herein, then, lies a counter-revolutionary politics historicized and naturalized as inherent in the Irish national character. Indeed, three months after the Young Ireland uprising had failed, De Vere would write in a letter to his mother (June 4, 1848) that Smith O'Brien's downfall should

prove to England that the Irish people[,] maddened by famine, pauperized by taxation, half-frenzied by the universal triumph of the republican cause, could not be lashed into rebellion by their most trusted and eloquent leaders. England must be grateful; and gratitude mingled with wise fear will compell her to adopt a more worthy system of Irish Legislation. The Irish people too will have learned a lesson of distrust and will have seen the folly and mischief of bullying. I am convinced too that there never was a general intention of rising in arms -- there may have been a general expectation but I am sure that it was more coupled with fear than hope.

(163)

Clearly De Vere's estimate here of the Irish national character -- long-suffering, prone to bullying and turbulent outbursts, but not genuinely revolutionary in temperament -- enables him to recuperate the failed Young Ireland uprising as symptomatic both of an innate Irish tumultuousness and forbearance that should precipitate reform, while at the same time

prefiguring many of the character traits articulated for the "Celtic temperament" nearly two decades later by Matthew Arnold in his landmark lecture "On The Study of Celtic Literature" (1867).

De Vere's notions of national character would also shape his attitude towards assisted emigration. Christopher Morash has remarked upon how his older brother, Aubrey De Vere, had aestheticized his "religious beliefs about the value of suffering" (Writing the Irish Famine, 140) and the significance of the Famine in much of his poetry in the late 1840s (Morash, The Hungry Voice, 32-34, 82-98) while formalizing them in his text English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds (1848), where, incidentally, he too prefigures many of the Arnoldian tenets of "Celticism" (Morash, Writing the Irish Famine, 134-142).⁴⁵ Accordingly, upon the publication of his older brother's text in Ireland in 1848, Stephen De Vere would write to his mother (February 11) seeking to obtain a copy and further explicating his views on the "exciteable" Irish temperament. The appearance of English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds, he writes,

was very needful to open the eyes of the English people. Every act of justice to Ireland, the remedying of each abuse, was done as a "boon" as a "concession" implying a thing done by a superior to an inferiour and served but to imitate [aggravate?] the wound which it sought to heal. England always pretended to despise, but could not conceal her fear; and Ireland learned to adopt the bullying tone, which re-acting upon the exciteable national character has kept the country in a perpetual whirlpool bringing to the surface the worst passions of the people, which would otherwise have lain and rotted at the bottom.

The evils of Ireland, the vices of her people, I can in every instance trace to the national character, which has been moulded by English misgovernment. There are not one of the Penal laws which has not left an ulcer upon the Irish character which time and justice only can cure.

(MS 5075a, 73-74)

Once again then, De Vere would adduce a series of character traits such as "exciteability," churning "passions," a menacing disposition, and a history of long-suffering to delimit a discursive formation of Irishness, although he does acknowledge the condescension implicit in English attempts to ameliorate that Irish temperament and the disfiguring effects of English proscription and the anti-Catholic Penal Laws upon its formation. Moreover, he would also displace this sense of Irishness via a trans-Atlantic conduit into the colonial sphere, recognizing not only in the Irish at home but also in the emigrant "character" abroad "a want of self dependence, and consequently of foresight (a remnant probably of the old feudal or clanish system) which makes an Irishman, if set down in the forest, generally a less successful colonist than the Englishman, the lowland Scot, or the German" (40).⁴⁶ Assisted emigration, of course, if conducted under the aegis of strong leadership and state support, De Vere wholly believes, would remedy the emigrants' "absence of the spirit of voluntary enterprise" and turn them into industrious colonists. But also, of more immediate concern, it offers De Vere himself a personal remedy for his divided loyalties between familial and political allegiances and his devotion to the "noble, deluded people" after the onset of the Young Ireland uprising: "people may say I remain absent + this is cowardice," he writes to Aubrey De Vere on May 14, 1848, though "you fully appreciate the extreme pain of the position in which I should be placed if at home at present. I could not + would not be disloyal, even if I thought the rising had a chance of ultimate success; but I never could bring myself to aid in spilling the blood of the noble, deluded people who are entwined with my very heartstrings" (152).

Emigration thus affords De Vere a refuge from his intractable personal conflict of loyalties as well as an opportunity to shepherd his "noble, deluded people" abroad and to

function as a witness respecting the sufferings of emigrants, an "unprejudiced observer in Canada" (49). My preliminary analysis, however, has yet to disclose De Vere's primary reason for emigration or even whether he intended to settle permanently in Canada, although it is certain that he did return to Ireland early in 1849. De Vere's letters home during 1847-1848 reveal, for example, that he briefly harboured political aspirations in British North America,⁴⁷ that he contemplated purchasing tracts of land, and even establishing a colony with former tenants from Curragh Chase, but that "exorbitantly high" expenditures⁴⁸ and increasing defections and disaffection amongst his former tenants⁴⁹ as well as flow-through migration to the United States weakened his resolve: "it is fortunate," De Vere records in his journal (November 23, 1847), "that I did not purchase a farm in the expectation of their performing their contract" (MS 5061, 55). However, a confidential letter (February 11, 1848) from Stephen De Vere to his brother, Sir Vere De Vere, also reveals a much more personal and poignant motive for emigration: "upon the reception of which," De Vere declares in his journal (February 12, 1848), "probably depends my future fate in life" (MS 5065, 23). "My dear brother," he writes,

In my letters home I have left one thing unsaid, which is for you alone. You know what had been for a considerable time (8 or 9 years) the tendency of my religious opinions. I could no longer, when thrown independently upon the world, reconcile it to my conscience to conceal them & I have, since I reached America, conformed to the ordinances of the Catholic Church. Whether this has got wind at home, or not I do not know. *My principal reason for leaving my own country was to save my mother the pain which I feared the avowal of my convictions would have caused to her, nor will I ever reside in Ireland if that avowal gives her more pain than my presence would give pleasure...* I leave the matter wholly in your hands to disclose or conceal as you think best for my mother. Should your reply be unfavourable, I am determined, at any cost, to remain an exile for conscience sake.⁵⁰ If favourable, being "functus officis" here, & having probably laid the foundation of much benefit to my native land, I am ready to

return and share the fortunes of my family & home; but I will never live again at home concealing my faith, a faith from which I have derived strength to bear every hardship & consolation under every misfortune & privation.

(MS 5075a, 81-82; my emphasis)

While De Vere seems to outline here a fairly definitive reason for leaving Ireland, it is impossible to determine from his letter whether he initially emigrated strictly to facilitate his religious conversion or retrospectively explained it this way as a pretext for returning to Curragh Chase after feeling disillusionment with British North America. His formulaic invocation of the exile motif seems noteworthy though from such a strong proponent of Irish emigration, and in my third chapter I will explore its functions more comprehensively in Famine migration narratives; for the moment, it seems unlikely that De Vere would have contemplated purchasing tracts of land in British North America or entering Canadian politics if his decision to emigrate was motivated exclusively by religious concerns. An exile for conscience sake; an advocate for Irish emigrants and "unprejudiced observer in Canada" (50); an enterprising settler, colonist, and capitalist; a refugee from the Young Ireland uprising; an aspiring politician -- clearly Stephen De Vere's primary reason for emigration awaits further, more detailed investigation, although no doubt, in contrast to the Famine Diary, his political orientation and outlook on Irish migration proceed to some extent from his aristocratic, imperialist, and Unionist frame of reference.

It would thus seem singularly ironic that James Mangan's character Gerald Keegan and his virulently anti-English, anti-landlord Young Ireland tract should originate in the writing of a progressive Anglo-Irish landlord. The permutations of the Famine Diary, in other words,

represent a skewed ideological trajectory: one that culminates in a standard Young Ireland and nationalist interpretation of the Famine and the Famine migration, but originates in a completely antithetical tradition of "assisted emigration" and progressive landlordism. For unlike the Famine Diary, De Vere's genuine migration narrative is clearly more conciliatory in its attitude towards Great Britain and more favourably disposed towards emigration from Ireland than either the Young Ireland movement or the epitaph on Grosse Ile would allow for. Both Stephen De Vere and Gerald Keegan may have similar ends in mind -- Famine Relief, Passenger Act reform, the protection of Roman Catholicism and the amelioration of Irish poverty -- yet each espouses a radically different interpretation of the Famine and of his reason for leaving Ireland: from De Vere's perspective of settler and voluntary emigrant to Keegan's embittered exile, the discrepancy between them spans the historiographical debate on the Famine Irish in Canada.

Chapter III: Authentic Famine Migration Narratives: Preliminary Research

In my first and second chapters I established the origins of the Famine Diary and traced it and Robert Sellar's "The Summer of Sorrow" to the authentic Famine migration narrative of the Anglo-Irish aristocrat Stephen De Vere. This chapter will compare the Famine Diary with genuine emigrant narratives that date from the 1830s, 1840s, and early 1850s, to evaluate whether or not there are similarities between their respective attitudes towards emigration and towards the British administration that regulated it, while accounting for whatever differences arise between them. My research has led me to compile a number of such unpublished or little known Irish emigrant narratives, including the letters of Mrs. William Radcliff (1832); the diary and letterbook of Stephen De Vere (1847); Robert Whyte's The Ocean Plague, or A Voyage to Quebec in an Irish Emigrant Vessel by "A Cabin Passenger" (1847); John Burke's unpublished memoirs ("Reminiscences") and recollections of the Famine Migration to New York City (1847); Herman Melville's Redburn (1849), a fictional account of an emigrant voyage from Liverpool to New York in 1847 based on his own experience; Henry Johnson's letters from British North America describing the ordeal of the ocean voyage (1848); William Smith's Emigrant's Narrative: or, A Voice from the Steerage... (1850); Vere Foster's "Treatment of Passengers on Board the *Washington*" (1851); and Thomas Langford's "Journal of an Irish Emigrant to Canada" (1853); as well as some contemporary literary works written by Irish emigrants to Canada, like Standish O'Grady's long poem The Emigrant (1841), all of which should provide ample material for comparison yet have received scant critical attention

to date. I also examine these texts and the Famine Diary against the backdrop of English emigrant narratives that date from the same time frame (Susanna Moodie; Catharine Parr Traill) to discern whether or not cultural distinctions between England and Ireland inform their respective representations of the migration experience. Historians like Terry Coleman, Oliver MacDonagh, Donald Mackay, and Kerby Miller allude to some of these texts in their respective accounts of nineteenth century Irish migration to North America, but they do so only in a cursory manner with no consideration of the common motifs that both inform and constrain the development of the emigration narrative genre. Moreover, no literary scholar has yet undertaken research into the genre, although the impending one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Famine migration (the "Black 47") makes such research especially topical.

Accordingly, I examine the narratives of the Famine migration from a *literary* and a historical perspective, as part of a growing and discursive, interdisciplinary field that Patrick O'Sullivan terms Irish Migration Studies (Patterns of Migration, xiii-xxi). More specifically, I explore the impediments to writing at sea that confront each migrant writer and I outline the formal and generic features, narrative conventions, and functions of the Famine migration narrative, enumerating in particular those conventions -- i.e., the storm at sea, first impressions of the pilot, the panoramic vista of Grosse Ile from on board ship -- that foreground cultural dissension as well as accommodation between the various emigrant sects on board ship, and that reveal social tension between the almost invariably Protestant narrator and the Roman Catholic passengers whom he or she would ostensibly represent. However, my analysis here remains exploratory rather than comprehensive in scope, seeking only to provide an overview of the genre and establish common attitudes towards emigration that run through

these narratives rather than supply thorough readings of each individual text. I argue that each text paradoxically incorporates the exile motif to a varying degree but at the same time remains favourably disposed towards emigration from Ireland and towards the British administration under whose aegis such outmigration proceeded, viewing it as a remedy for Ireland's intractable social problems and desperate privation rather than a sinister means of depopulation. The elderly Protestant poet Standish O'Grady, for example, vacillates between the subject positions of emigrant and exile throughout his long poem *The Emigrant*, where he lashes out at the vaunted remedy of assisted emigration to Lower Canada for Ireland's indigent population as little more than "to force the poor to famish or to freeze" (61), yet admits that he himself left Ireland "more from discomfort and displeasure than from necessity" (129).

Having emigrated from Ireland in 1836 with the assistance of a government loan after his entitlement to a Church of Ireland benefice ("lay impropriation") was rescinded following the Tithe War in the early eighteen thirties (xviii; Trehearne, 85-87), O'Grady hardly can be considered an exile in any conventional sense of the term. Yet his ambivalence towards the experience of migration is typical of each of the narratives above in that he refuses either to embrace unequivocally the new land of his adoption or to indict categorically the nation and its political superstructure that he has left behind. Instead, *The Emigrant*, like each of the narratives above, reveals a profoundly bifurcated attitude towards emigration that construes it both as an opportunity and an imposition, a voluntary relocation and a forced expulsion, *regardless* of the degree of compulsion involved in the respective emigrant's departure. However, in none of the narratives above does this ambivalent attitude towards emigration correlate with a clear or unequivocal sense of animosity towards Great Britain, as in the case of

the Famine Diary. Therefore, I would suggest that not just Stephen De Vere's diary but the majority of narratives about the Famine migration from Ireland to Quebec during the mid-nineteenth century were more conciliatory in their attitudes towards emigration and towards Great Britain than either the Famine Diary or the Young Ireland movement would indicate.

Famine Migration Narratives: Impediments to Writing at Sea

Perhaps the first thing to note about genuine Famine migration narratives is how socially *unrepresentative* they are of the Famine migration itself.⁵¹ In Emigrants and Exiles Miller comments that "although Protestants formed about a quarter of Ireland's population [in the mid-nineteenth century], they probably accounted for no more than 10 percent of the Famine exodus" (297) -- yet almost invariably, each of the Famine migration narratives listed above (with the exception of Burke's memoirs) features a Protestant narrator. Moreover, "statistical as well as impressionistic evidence indicates," says Miller, "that Famine emigrants were generally poorer and less skilled than those who embarked before the potato blights" (295) -- yet the social and occupational profiles of the emigrant narrators listed above reveal them to be a highly affluent or industrious subset of artisans, entrepreneurs, and lower gentry: De Vere, Foster, O'Grady and Whyte, for example, are all Protestant gentlemen of education and position; Smith is a highly skilled power-loom weaver; Burke a successful merchant who "established a shoe business in New York City"; only Johnson and Langford emigrate as common labourers, but with considerable resources in hand; Redburn is written from the perspective of a mere "boy" in the crew of an emigrant vessel, but one from an affluent middle-class American family. Finally, Miller discerns two distinct patterns of migration in

the Famine era: an earlier, continuing model of "purposeful" migration (294) by "able" and "calculating" emigrants who would become upwardly mobile in the New World (314), established in the pre-Famine era, but overlaid with the tracks of a more desperate, impulsive, and impoverished (although not absolutely destitute) flight of "traditionalist peasants" and "refugees" (292) who were more often Catholic and Gaelic-speaking than their predecessors, and "economically as well as temperamentally less prepared... for material achievement and assimilation abroad" (326). Whyte's The Ocean Plague (1848) confirms this view: a "progressive and natural system of emigration," he claims, "gave place within the last few years to a violent rush of famished, reckless, human beings, flying from their native land, to seek food in a distant and unknown country" (10). What emerges then, is a *highly select* and exceptional set of emigration narratives and memoirs in which members from the first emigrant cohort comment upon and seek to represent the vicissitudes of the second. These are *not* the narratives of the Famine-afflicted populace itself, in other words, so much as the intricately detailed memoirs, observations, and recommendations of a more affluent and elective group of emigrants who ride on the crest of the Famine migration.

The importance of social differentiation in the form and outlook of genuine Famine migration narratives cannot be overstated. In the Famine Diary, Gerald Keegan does differentiate himself to some extent from his fellow emigrants as a National School teacher who seeks to ensure their safety and well-being throughout the ocean voyage, but he nevertheless shares their social and political affiliations, ethnic profile, religious orientation, attitudes towards migration, and reason for leaving Ireland. In genuine Famine migration narratives, on the other hand, many of these facets of identity become points of differentiation

between the almost invariably Protestant narrator and the Roman Catholic emigrants whom he or she would ostensibly represent; whereas in the Famine Diary, Gerald Keegan is decidedly a figure of *the people*, in other words, in authentic Famine migration narratives their narrators are distinctly and self-consciously separate from fellow passengers and, at times, belligerent towards them. "There was fur-five hundred on board[,] all Roman Catholics with the exception of about forty protestants," writes Henry Johnson in a letter to his wife, "and a more Cowardly Set of hounds than the same papists I never seen" (35). Likewise, Robert Whyte differentiates himself from his fellow passengers on religious grounds: they did not "seem to have any regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath," he charges, "in the evening they had prayers in the hold; and were divided into two parties -- those who spoke Irish, and those who did not; each section having a leader, who gabbled in his respective language a number of "Paters and Aves," as quickly as the devotees could count their beads" (31). "Poor little things," he adds more sympathetically, although further differentiating himself from his fellow passengers along class lines:

I learned that many of these emigrants had never seen the sea nor a ship, until they were on board. They were chiefly from the county Meath, and sent out at the expense of their landlord, without any knowledge of the country to which they were going, or means of livelihood, except the labour of the father of each family. All they knew concerning Canada was, that they were to land in Quebec, and to go up the country; moreover, they had a settled conviction that the voyage was to last exactly three weeks.

(29)

"They were the most simple people I had ever seen," asserts Melville's Redburn in like fashion: "they seemed to have no adequate idea of distances; and to them, America must have seemed a place just over a river" (250). "*Those poor creatures*", "*they were of the very*

poorest class" (Smith, 5), "*these emigrants*", "to *them*": each of narrators above even in his choice of pronouns reveals his ingrained sense of social differentiation from the Roman Catholic emigrants whom he accompanies and seeks to represent.

The hold of the emigrant vessel thus would seem to function as a forum for intercultural contact between various emigrant sects while at the same time exacerbating their cultural divisions. "We were a very mixed company in the steerage," writes an anonymous contributor in an article entitled "An Emigrant Afloat" in Charles Dickens's periodical *Household Words* (534). "It was not a little ludicrous," states Mrs. William Radcliff, after witnessing the spontaneous festivities of her fellow passengers, "to see so curious a mixture of [Protestant] religions prancing together upon deck -- Church of England, Methodists, Walkerites, and Quakers!!" (36). Whyte too notes with disapproval the intermixture and intermingling of "young men and young women" who, during St John festivities (June 24, 1847), "got up a dance in the evening regardless of the moans and cries of those who were tortured by the fiery fever" (34), a maritime dance-macabre, it would seem. After the mate "spoke to them of the impropriety of such conduct, they desisted and retired to the bow where they sat down and spent the remainder of the evening singing[,] the monotonous howling they kept up... quite in unison with the scene of desolation within and the dreary expanse of ocean without" (34). However, if such spontaneous festivities might have to some extent alleviated the unceasing monotony of the trans-Atlantic voyage, the intimate and prolonged interpersonal and intercultural contact necessitated on board deck and in the steerage clearly also caused internecine tensions between the emigrants and exacerbated their cultural divisions, especially when rival religious sects were forced to live together in close proximity (cf. Johnson's

remarks about Roman Catholic passengers being "a cowardly set of hounds"), in times of sickness (Smith, 16-17), or, as Foster, Redburn, and Smith each note, in settings where the emigrants were particularly vulnerable and forced to compete with one another, as in the emigrants' kitchen (Foster, 4-5; Melville, 254-255; Smith, 16). For "the very hardships to which such beings are subjected," stresses Redburn, "instead of uniting them, only tends, by imbittering their tempers, to set them against each other; and thus they themselves drive the strongest rivet into the chain, by which their social superiors hold them subject" (255).

Moreover, tensions would also often surface on the passenger vessels between the emigrants and the crews whose function it was to transport them, as evidenced in Melville and especially Vere Foster's text⁵², although only in "Summer of Sorrow" and Famine Diary do these tensions originate from clearly recognizable anti-Irish prejudice.

Nevertheless, despite such sectarian animosities, intercultural friction, and tension between passengers and ships' crews, the experience of the trans-Atlantic voyage also effectively reinforced the commonalities between various emigrants and gradually consolidated their sense of national identity, expanding their horizons both of opportunity and dissent so that parochial grievances and regional animosities -- against individual ship captains, "landlords, farmers, and relief administrators" (Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 301) -- would become transformed into national grievances, against the institution of landlordism, and Great Britain and its political superstructure. After the exigencies of leaving Ireland and the ocean voyage, claims Miller, the migrants were no longer "Dubliners or Kerry men, cottiers or strong farmers' sons, but merely despised Irishmen who therefore must unite on the basis of broadly shared characteristics and experiences" (328). One might even say that the passage through the

"Liverpool funnel" and other Famine ports to North America, suggests Scally, "was their first truly *national* experience. [For] the sight of the exodus was concentrated and magnified in the few square miles of th[ose] waterfront[s] where, in a sense, all of Ireland's townlands met for the first time and witnessed the commonality of their fate" (The End of Hidden Ireland, 212, my emphasis). "Having in fact been the emigrants' one universal experience," Scally concludes, "it is among the most evocative and long-nurtured images of the myth of exile and of the emigrants' severance from the past" (218).

Yet, as David Lloyd points out in Anomalous States, this emergence of a sense of national consciousness was also manifestly delimited and framed within a British imperial setting. For the very port cities where all of Ireland's townlands and displaced agrarian populations meet for the first time, according to Lloyd, "represent concentrations of an English domination which penetrates every level of Irish social life. The[se port cities] are both nodes for the flows of English capital and imperial authority, and conduits for the contrary flows of a dislocated population, the points to which a dislocated rural population gravitates in search of employment or prior to emigration" (93). The very moment of emergence of national consciousness within the emigrant is thus equally a moment of imperial subject formation: a dawning and expanding sense of Irishness in place of a more regionalized form of consciousness is inextricably linked to an emergent awareness of the vastness of the British imperial domain and its palpitations of empire, the routine circulation, exchanges, and movement of commodities and labour throughout the British Isles that occur simultaneously and contiguously with the Famine exodus. "Here" in the Liverpool Docks, remarks Redburn,

you see vast quantities of produce, imported from starving Ireland; here you see the decks [of steamers] turned into pens for oxen and sheep; and often, side by side with these inclosures, Irish deck-passengers, thick as they can stand, seemingly penned in just like the cattle. It was the beginning of July when the Highlander arrived in port; and the Irish laborers were daily coming over by thousands, to help harvest English crops...

When I thought of the multitudes of Irish that annually land on the shores of the United States and Canada, and, to my surprise, witnessed the additional multitudes embarking from Liverpool to New Holland; and when, added to all this, I daily saw these hordes of labourers, descending, thick as locusts, upon the English corn-fields; I could not help marvelling at the fertility of an island, which, though her crops may fail, never yet failed in bringing her annual crop of men into the world.

(192)

Redburn, like the emigrants themselves, finds it difficult to distinguish between the routine movements of Anglo-Irish trade and internal migration and the vicissitudes of the Famine exodus. If, as Miller and Scally propose, the congregation and dislocation of Famine migrants in the port cities of Ireland and England precipitated nationalist sentiments, then Ireland's awakening to national self-consciousness was also ironically staged within imperial theatres of commerce. From the emigrant's severance from the past, in other words, emerges an expanded consciousness of Irish nationality *and* imperial subjectivity that are imbricated rather than differentiated in the same experience of identity formation.

However, this first truly "national" experience and emergent sense of national self-consciousness was, at best, poorly documented. Scally suggests a number of reasons for the emigrants' apparent reticence about their migration experience, including widespread illiteracy⁵³ ("very few of them could read," comments Whyte about his fellow passengers, 31), the obvious environmental constraints and physical impediments to writing on board ship, and the enervating effects of the ocean voyage upon the Famine migrants. Indeed, even the more

affluent emigrant authors listed above attest to some of the difficulties of writing and reading while at sea. Under the best of conditions, inescapable sea-sickness, turbulent waters and the blustery north-Atlantic, over-crowding, lack of reading and writing materials, and the sheer monotony of the ocean voyage all conspired against the emigrant who had aspirations to document his or her travails; the threat of epidemic and the outbreak of infectious diseases or "ship-fever," the unceasing spectacles of death and illness, extreme hunger and thirst, and the immanent danger of capsizing further discouraged literary activity on the worst of the "coffin ships." "Until this day I have been unable to hold a pen," writes Mrs William Radcliff after a bout of sea-sickness, "yet, thanks be to God, I am now well enough able to write... with a tolerably steady hand; holding down my paper on the binnacle, while a freshening breeze wafts us along" (30). "Let no one dream," stresses the anonymous correspondent in *Household Words*, after a decidedly uneventful crossing,

that the sea, particularly on board an emigrant ship, is the place for reading or study. It is either too cold, when there is the slightest breeze, or too hot when it is calm: it is noisy at all times. Happy is he who, under such circumstances, has a resource against *ennui* in his own reflections.⁵⁴

(537)

Robert Whyte similarly complains about the difficulty of reading while at sea and his recourse to "observation" (26) that the voyage affords him, although he is at least able to seize "upon a greasy old volume of sundry magazines" and navigation texts to occupy his time. "These, varied with the Book of books, Shakespeare, and Maunder's Treasuries," he states, "kept me free from ennui" (26). Johnson, too, laments the obstacles that impede literary activity for the emigrant, for whom writing materials are scarce, the opportunities to write infrequent, and the

postal service unreliable. He implores his wife to economize in her reply: "In writing Say many things in few words," he insists, "so that I will get more news" (41). All of these environmental constraints and difficulties of reading and writing while at sea, however, represent only a minor impediment at best to the creation of Famine migration narratives.

Far more detrimental, on the other hand, was the enervating effect of the trans-Atlantic voyage upon the Famine migrants. Scally points to a number of disquieting parallels between the conditions of transportation and "mesmerized passivity" ("Liverpool Ships", 6) of the Famine migrants and the slaves' "middle passage" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the trains of the Holocaust (The End of Hidden Ireland, 218). "The worse horrors of that slave-trade which it is, the boast or the ambition of this empire to suppress, at any cost," reads Whyte's Ocean Plague, "have been reenacted in the flight of British subjects from their native shores" (15). The African slave and Irish emigrant trades, Scally notes, were broadly similar in terms of their duration, economic contours, volume, and "wastage" ("Liverpool Ships", 5-6)⁵⁵; many slave ships were actually redeployed as Irish emigrant vessels -- "specially designed and built to maximize the margin of profit in the stowage of human cargo" -- after the abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain in the early nineteenth century (6, 26); in the winter of 1847-1848, bales of rags and human hair from Irish vessels surface for the first time as tradable commodities in the *Liverpool Customs Bills of Entry* (8, 27), predating by almost a century the much more regularized commodification of human remains and economy of extermination that would systematically envelop European Jewry. In all three of these population movements, whether voluntary or involuntary, Scally argues, human cargoes had to be effectively incarcerated and made tractable to maximize profit (6), so that "varying applications of

captivity, dislocation, malnutrition, crowding, exhaustion, debasement and terror... were incorporated into the routine of moving [them to] produce a creature who was not only amenable to discipline but close enough in appearance to the detested stereotype to permit the suspension of ordinary rules of decency and law in dealing with him" (9). Indeed, the process of elision whereby symptoms of starvation would become interpreted as signs of national character -- the idleness, indolence, lethargy, listlessness, and lunacy of the Irish -- has been well documented, especially for the ports from which the Famine migrants embarked, such as Liverpool (Scally, The End of Hidden Ireland, 204-211), and in British North America, as Daniel Connor's unpublished MA thesis on the nineteenth-century Irish Canadian image and self-image attests to (see especially, 50-92). Clearly then, it is in these conditions of transportation and their resultant psychology of displacement and emigrant inertia that comparisons between the Famine and the Holocaust or the slave trade are most apposite, rather than the more facile and polemical analogies often drawn between Famine Ireland and "Belsen" (ctd. in Donnelly, "The Great Famine", 28) or Grosse Ile and Treblinka (ctd. in Mangan, Robert Whyte's 1847 Famine Ship Diary, 101).

For at their most extreme, the enervating effects of the trans-Atlantic voyage could reduce the emigrant, like the African slave or displaced Jew, to a condition of complete helplessness⁵⁶ and even madness.⁵⁷ Impressionistic evidence for such incidents of emigrant inertia and despondency -- the effects of "mental paralysis" that contemporaries termed "Irish symptoms"⁵⁸ -- can be discerned from numerous examples in the Famine migration narratives above. Redburn, for one, recoils from the spectacle of an emaciated Irish madonna-figure in a cellar near the Liverpool docks, cradling a dead infant on her breast, "her blue arms folded to

her livid bosom [with] two shrunken things like children, that leaned towards her, one on each side" (172-178); a few days later he encounters "a pale, ragged man" on the docks, "rushing along frantically, and striving to throw off his wife and children, who clung to his arms and legs; and, in God's name, conjured him not to desert them. He seemed bent upon rushing down to the water, and drowning himself, in some despair, and craziness of wretchedness" (194). Smith calls attention to a similar scene of delirium after his vessel has left Liverpool, in which a fever-stricken "lunatic ran up on deck, and before anyone was aware of his intentions, threw himself into the sea and was drowned" (14); "in consequence..., the captain had every delirious person tied down who evinced a disposition to injure themselves or others" (15). Likewise, in the Famine Diary, Gerald Keegan records the plight of Kathleen O'Shea, whose father "sprang suddenly from the hatchway, rushed to the bulwark, his white hair streaming in the wind, and without a moment's hesitation leaped into the seething waters of the Atlantic" (78) -- an incident that is predicated almost word for word upon a similar suicide in Robert Sellar's "Summer of Sorrow,"⁵⁹ but one that actually has a factual basis in a newspaper article on the Famine migration ("An Awful Voyage on the *Sir Henry Pottinger*") that Sellar consulted before undertaking his narrative.⁶⁰ No doubt such widespread incidence of madness and the debilitating effects of the trans-Atlantic voyage inhibited all but the most perseverant, affluent, and insulated of emigrants from documenting their experience.

Moreover, such heart-rending scenes and spectacles of mass-suffering and trauma could lead even those emigrants who were still capable of literary activity to an injunction against representation. "No language can express the agony of mind I suffered," Smith declares, recollecting how he was stricken with typhus (19); "would that I could represent the afflictions

I witnessed at Grosse Isle!" laments Whyte (107). "Did Ireland possess a writer endowed with the laborious truth of Thucydides, the graceful felicity of Virgil, or the happy invention of De Foe," reads an extract from the *Times* in Whyte's Ocean Plague (14), "the events of this miserable year might be quoted by the scholar for ages to come, together with the sufferings of the pent-up multitudes of Athens, the distemperèd plains of northern Italy, or the hideous ravages of our great plague"; but the contingencies of the Famine migration "are circumstances beyond the experience of the Greek historian or Latin poet, and such as an Irish pestilence alone could produce" (15). The suffering of the Famine migrants thus would seem to represent an entirely new and unique order of magnitude for a literature of calamity whose previous authors -- most recently Daniel Defoe in A Journal of the Plague Year of 1665 (1728) -- could hardly envision such intense and protracted human misery.

Famine Migration Narratives: A Distinct Literary Genre

Nevertheless, despite such difficulties of representation and of finding an appropriate language to convey the experience of mass-trauma, the emigrant writers listed above -- especially De Vere, Melville, Smith, and Whyte -- do attempt to document the misery they bear witness to, and for them such spectacles of suffering become a stimulus for the creation of a history and literature of the Famine migration. They write for admonitory, tendentious, and testimonial reasons -- reasons that I will explore in more detail below when I turn to the functions of Famine migration narratives -- but for now it is enough to note that each of these writers fully appreciates the magnitude and momentousness of the events he bears witness to, and conceives of his text as a literary vehicle for the advocacy of emigrants, to effect social

change and enact Passenger Act reform. Robert Whyte's Ocean Plague expresses indignation, for example, at the mistreatment of Irish steerage passengers and the very institutions of empire that necessitate expatriating "the superfluous population of a country wherein hundreds of thousands of acres of land susceptible of the highest culture, lie waste" (9). "Of these awful occurrences some account must be given," reads the extract from the *Times* that functions as his preface: "Historians and politicians will some day sift and weigh the conflicting narratives and documents of this lamentable year, and pronounce with or without affectation, how much is due to the inclemency of heaven, and how much to the cruelty, heartlessness or improvidence of man. The boasted institutions and spirit of the empire are on trial" (16).

Melville's *Redburn* also writes with a sense of indignation and zeal for reform in his account of his ill-fated voyage on the *Highlander*; he makes it his project to recuperate and preserve the suppressed voices of Irish emigrants, voices that are constantly under threat of erasure from official discourses like captains' logs⁶¹ and shipping news columns in the popular press. For "the only account you obtain" of maritime distress, he claims,

is generally contained in a newspaper paragraph, under the shipping-head. *There* is the obituary of the destitute dead, who die on the sea. They die, like billows that break on the shore, and never more are heard or seen. But in the events, thus merely initialized in the catalogue of passing occurrences, and but glanced at by the readers of news, who are more taken up with paragraphs of fuller flavor; what a world of life and death, what a world of humanity and its woes, lies shrunk into a three-worded sentence!

You see no plague-ship driving through a stormy sea; you hear no groans of despair; you see no corpses thrown over the bulwarks; you mark not the wringing hands and torn hair of widows and orphans: -- all is a blank. And one of these blanks I have but filled up, in recounting the details of the *Highlander's* calamity.

(281)

Plague-ships and storms at sea; multitudes of emaciated emigrants racked with hunger, sickness, delirium, and despair; the anonymity of an ocean burial; and the frenzied anguish of those who remain behind: these are but some of the conventions that Melville and other emigrant writers invoke against the compressing and effacing institutional discourses of "newspaper paragraphs" and ships' registries. Against such obliterating institutional discourses, they seek to elevate the emigrant tale and narratives of the Famine migration into a distinct literary genre.

Such narratives of the Famine migration remain, however, a particularly elusive genre. For although its literary conventions are geographically and historically bounded, the Famine migration narrative occupies a generically fluid and unstable position between the fixed motifs and epistolary conventions of the emigrant letter,⁶² the more digressive and elaborative style of eighteenth and nineteenth-century travelogue,⁶³ and the testimonial quality of a literature of calamity and mass-trauma. Indeed, Famine migration narratives might vary in length from the fully elaborative, retrospectively written texts of Melville, Smith, and Whyte that are designed for public consumption -- replete with literary frontispieces, frequent Biblical allusions, and references to Byron, Coleridge, Crabbe, Dickens, Milton, Moore, Shakespeare, Southey, Swain, and Young (although only in the Famine Diary do the more overtly nationalist writers James Clarence Mangan and John Mitchel surface) -- to the much shorter, more private, and spontaneously recorded Johnson letters or America journals of De Vere and Langford. Thomas Langford's America journal, for example, features a starkly written, emotively neutral, clipped and terse day by day account of his horrendous voyage aboard the *New World* from Liverpool to New York in the autumn of 1853, a voyage that lasted thirty-five days in

which sixty-five passengers died, with bodies thrown overboard almost every day except for a brief respite off the Outer Banks of Newfoundland. It reads as a highly jarring if unconsciously ironic admixture of benign observations, nautical progression, maritime weather conditions, and mortuary record:

Thurs. 10th. Last night very rough wind, fell at day-break this morning. This day we are steering S.W., hardly any wind. One sailor and four passengers died.

Fri. 11th. Not much wind this morning, but getting on pretty well from dinnertime. Passed through whole shoals of porpoises this morning. Five dead to-day.

Sat. 12th. About four o'clock this morning we got a good wind and have continued sailing very well all day. One dead person.

Sun. 13th. Sailing slowly this day. One dead.

Mon. 14th. Sailing very well to-day, nice wind, very good day, going S.W. One dead.

(44)

No doubt the cramped conditions on board ship, lack of writing materials, and numbing spectacle of recurrent deaths all contribute to such a compression of information, rapid changes of register, and emotionally detached observations, although somewhat astonishingly, upon his arrival in New York, having endured five weeks at sea without a single comment about the extraordinary mortality of the ocean voyage, Langford complains of lice in his boarding house and that "we had tea twice and the same dinner. This is shocking... The people in the poor-houses in Ireland are better off than we are" (46). His condensed journal is particularly illustrative though of the collision of narrative conventions -- travel narrative's enthusiasm for discovery offset by a mortuary spectre of calamity -- that typifies Famine migration writing.

Famine Migration Narratives: Narrative Conventions

A preliminary survey like this is not the place to enumerate all of the literary conventions of the Famine migration narrative. I will elucidate three of them, however, that foreground cultural dissension between the various emigrant sects on board ships, social and religious tensions between emigrant narrators and their fellow passengers or citizens of the New World, and the incongruity of employing the conventions of travel writing in a calamitous setting: the storm at sea, the narrator's first impressions of the North American pilot, and the panoramic vista of Grosse Ile from on board ship are all motifs that recur in each Famine migration narrative.

The storm at sea is a particularly interesting convention because it documents what was for many emigrants a life-threatening, and, less frequently, a sublime, experience. In his "Reminiscences" of his ocean voyage of 1847, John Burke recollects "the Horrors of the storms which overtook the good old craft -- everytime [during] her creaking and stead[ying] I felt she would [get] into some more terrible strain [and] tear apart" (22); "the gale became perfectly terrific," records Vere Foster in his journal of a voyage on the *Washington* (1851), "for a few minutes we all expected momentarily to go to the bottom, for the sea, which was foaming and rolling extremely high, burst upon the deck with a great crash, which made us all believe that some part of the vessel was stove in" (5); "we were now in the midst of a terrible storm," writes the correspondent for *Household Words*, "and great was the commotion in the steerage... Some ran at once upon deck to take immediate advantage of the boats -- the women all screamed together -- and we had a pretty tolerable taste of the horrors to be witnessed on the eve of a shipwreck" (536).⁶⁴ Under such circumstances, the emigrants evinced varying degrees of leadership,⁶⁵ instinct for self-preservation, sheer panic, and awe-struck immobility,

many of them agreeing with Edmund Burke in his Philosophical Enquiry into... the Sublime and the Beautiful that in its power, vastness, infinite expanse, turbulence, and sheer capacity to take life, "the ocean is an object of no small terror" (58). "The lesson of a storm is humility," records Smith in A Voice from the Steerage.⁶⁶

Each cloud may be the engine of destruction, each sea may capsize or overwhelm your ark; you cannot lighten its stroke by a single drop. Surrounded by objects, all potent to destroy, there is nought on which your skill can work the least amelioration. The sky, the wind, the waves, are eloquent with the announcement, 'God is all in all;' you can do nought but meekly crave his compassion, or humbly await his will, and when the danger is passed, man has had no hand in averting it... You see his agency through no obstructive instrument, you have been dealing directly with your Maker.

(9-10)

In his long poem The Emigrant, Standish O'Grady also apprehends sublimity and the Divine through a perception of infinitude during a storm at sea:

The dusky night now dims the murky skies,
And waves on waves in monstrous mountains rise;
 The convex world shuts from our eager view
 All but the wide expanse of azure blue;
 Above, beneath, as if to Chaos riven,
 Lost in the mystic wrath of God in heaven!

(ll 245-250)

"I was truly thankful to the Almighty for my escape" from an Atlantic squall, writes Mrs William Radcliff a decade before the Famine migration (38), offering her gratitude to "that Power unbounded, who rules the waves and wind" (39).

However, if some emigrants experienced Divinity and sublimity in the ocean storm, others, like Henry Johnson, saw it and the prayers it occasioned in more factious terms as a

cultural revelation, of the cowardice, turpitude, and weakness of their fellow passengers. In a letter to his wife, for example, Johnson ridicules the supplications and terror of Roman Catholic emigrants during an ocean gale, seeing their actions as confirmation of the baseness and servility of their religious character and practices. "In the time of danger they would do nothing," he complains,

but sprinkle holy water, cry, pray, cross themselves and all sorts of Tomfoolery instead of giving a hand to pump the ship and then when danger was over they would Carry on all sorts of wickedness and they are just the same any place you meet them at home or abroad... One old fellow Kept me laughing nearly the whole time at the way he was getting on. The very Senses were frightened out of him. Cursing & praying in one breath. I got such a disgust at the party of papists at this Scene that I felt almost as if I could have submitted to go down if I had got them all with me.

(35)

In like fashion, Susanna Moodie, an English emigrant writer who travelled to Canada in 1832, deploys anti-Catholic stereotypes in Roughing It in the Bush to record "the shrieks of the women, the shouts and oaths of the men, and the barking of dogs" when her small brig collides with an Irish emigrant vessel in the port of Quebec (34). "The cowardly behaviour of my companions" and the Irish emigrants, she declares, "inspired me with courage. I was ashamed of their pusillanimity and want of faith in Divine Providence" (35). She attests to the emigrants' "clinging," "shrieking," "convulsive sobs," "scalding tears," "agony of despair," and "oaths and imprecations too blasphemous to repeat"; "I shall be lost," cries one "ancient dame," and "my sins are more in number than the hairs on my head" (35). Accordingly, Moodie tries to restore calm, reassuring her fellow passengers that "British sailors never leave women to perish" (36) with a firm conviction that none of the Irish emigrant writers seem to

share, but to no avail, as "the head strong would no[t]... be controlled" (35). Whether it takes place out at sea or in port, then, the ocean storm, as a literary convention, often foregrounds cultural dissension between the various emigrant sects or nationalities on board ship and between the emigrant narrator and his or her fellow passengers, frequently through the deployment of stigmatized notions of Roman Catholic passivity and supplication or anti-Irish stereotypes.

A related motif is the narrator's first impression of the North American pilot, often representing his or her first cultural contact with a citizen of the New World. For as the emigrant vessel approached its destination, it was customary to take on board a pilot who could steer it into the harbour of New York City or through the dangerous shoals of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and so the emigrant would have his or her first opportunity for cultural contact with Americans or French Canadians. Redburn, an American himself, declares that "when, among sea-worn people, a strange man from shore suddenly stands among them, with the smell of the land in his beard, it conveys a realization of the vicinity of the green grass, that not even the distant sight of the shore itself can transcend" (287) -- an impression that is confirmed by Burke and Smith on their respective approaches to New York harbour in 1847.⁶⁷ At least as frequently though such first impressions of the pilot are negative, especially when he is French Canadian. "The pilot was a heavy, stupid fellow -- a Canadian, speaking a horrible patois, and broken English," writes Robert Whyte in The Ocean Plague (60); Patrick Finan, in his Journal of a Voyage to Quebec in the Year 1825, documents (albeit disapprovingly) the incipient animosity of Irish emigrants towards French Canadians after they go ashore on the banks of the St. Lawrence (67-68); Susanna Moodie even goes so far as to transcribe Whyte's "horrible

patois" into her unflattering portrait of "a little, shrivelled up Frenchman" (12) who works as a medical inspector at Grosse Isle, seems a "very good emblem... of hopeless decay" (12), and boorishly declares: "Joke! me no understand... joke. Bete!" (14). It is in the writing of Standish O'Grady, however, that such pejorative representations of French Canadians would achieve their most virulent expression. In The Emigrant, he recollects his first impressions of French Canada, where

adverse custom mixed with men unknown
 Who add to this a language not your own,
 Forbid that converse social minds impart,
 And makes you foreign to the alien's heart;
 With sanguine sash and eke with Indian's mogs,
 Let Frenchmen feed on fricassees of frogs;...
 No matter here in this sad soil who dwell;
 Still leave their *lower province* to themselves.

(ll. 1154-1159, 1164-1165)

O'Grady thus paradoxically proscribes French Canadians for their insularity and unaccommodating stance towards foreigners while at the same time denigrating them for their foreignness which he derides as a type of primitivism. Here in embryonic form, then, lies a vision of adverse cultural contact between Irish emigrants and French Canadians that would underline their communal relations for much of the nineteenth century (see Connor, 58-67).

Both Irish and English emigrant writers like Robert Whyte or Susanna Moodie have similarly negative first impressions of French Canadians, but they have very different reactions upon their arrival at Grosse Ile. Virtually every emigrant writer who travelled down the St. Lawrence river valley to Grosse Ile was moved to comment upon its spectacular scenery, arboreal and pastoral settings, and natural beauty -- "replete with scenes of the most romantic

grandeur" (*Household Words*, 538) -- that even today draws travellers to the (L'Isle-Aux-Grues) archipelago of islands north of Quebec City. They often provide effusive, panoramic and rhapsodic descriptions of these "beautiful islets" (Whyte, 74) from the vantage point of their ships, their effusions no doubt augmented to some extent by long weeks of prior confinement spent gazing at monotonous Atlantic expanses and endless vistas of water. For writers of the Famine migration, however, such evocations of natural beauty mask a spectacle of intense human misery and protracted suffering that they are determined to expose through ironic juxtaposition. "The scenery today is magnificent. Our ship is the only thing out of harmony with Nature's splendour," writes Gerald Keegan as the *Naparima* nears Grosse Ile (92), his paradoxical collocation of human degradation and pristine wilderness taken from authentic Famine migration narratives before him.⁶⁸ Robert Whyte records his arrival at Grosse Ile in like fashion: "a few miles further sail brought us among a number of beautiful islets -- so beautiful that they seemed like a fairy scene; their verdant turf was almost level with the blue water that wound amongst them, submerging not a few, so that the first [trees] that grew upon them appeared to rise from the river" (74) -- but "Oh! what a contrast to this magic beauty was presented within our floating pest-house" (71). "We landed immediately in boats, and, after having been for about six weeks at sea, it was with inexpressible joy that I sprang ashore, for the first time, in the New World," writes the correspondent for *Household Words* describing his arrival at the quarantine station, several years after the Famine migration has taken place (538). But his enthusiasm is immediately tempered by reflection: "Grose Isle! With what melancholy associations have the events of 1847 encircled the name of the Canadian lazaretto!"

The ironic juxtaposition of natural beauty and human calamity serves the Famine migration writer as a perspectival device. He employs the conventions of travel narrative or landscape painting -- the broad expansive vista and panoramic setting, intricately etched with naturalistic detail and adjoined to an enthusiasm for discovery -- but adroitly and ironically transposed into a literature of calamity, both to accentuate and situate or "encircle" the spectacle of human suffering that occasions it, and thereby provide a sense of its scope and magnitude. Consider, for example, Robert Whyte's extended, panoramic description of Grosse Ile, its natural environs, and the frenetic human activity in his purview:

We lay at some distance from the island, the distant view of which was exceedingly beautiful: At the far end were rows of white tents and marquees, resembling the encampment of an army; somewhat nearer was the little fort, and residence of the superintendent physician, and nearer still the chapel, seaman's hospital, and little village, with its wharf and a few sail boats; the most adjacent extremity being rugged rocks, among which grew beautiful fir trees. At high water this portion was detached from the main island, and formed a most picturesque islet. But this scene of natural beauty was sadly deformed by the dismal display of human suffering that it presented; - - helpless creatures being carried by sailors over the rocks, on their way to the hospital, -- boats arriving with patients, some of whom died in their transmission from their ships. Another, and still more awful sight, was a continuous line of boats, each carrying its freight of dead to the burial ground, and forming an endless funeral procession. Some had several corpses, so tied up in canvass that the stiff, sharp outline of death was easily traceable... In a few, a solitary mourner attended the remains; but the majority contained no living beings save the rowers. I could not remove my eyes until boat after boat was hid by the projecting point of the island, round which they steered their gloomy way... I ventured to count the number of boats that passed, but had to give up the sickening task.

(80-81)

As Whyte begins to constrict his expansive and panoramic vision, shifting his focus from a wide angle view of Grosse Ile and its natural environs to survey the architecture and settlements on the island, before trying to concentrate on the individual examples of "human

suffering" and emigrant fatalities that occupy his immediate foreground, we can trace a movement from nature to culture to the lone figure of the "solitary mourner." But this movement is disrupted and Whyte's vision "deformed" by an "endless funeral procession" and continuous line of boats, upon which his eyes remain transfixed yet unable to count or quantify, -- despite "the stiff, sharp outline of death" each of these boats contain -- until the mortuary spectacle of death on Grosse Ile takes on the properties of a landscape painting and begins to seem as encompassing, expansive, and measureless as the very category of Nature that ostensibly surrounds it. The result, then, is not so much a naturalization of death and suffering on Grosse Ile as the disruption of a tradition and set of conventions of landscape portraiture to foreground the magnitude of emigrant distress.

In English emigrant narratives, on the other hand, such as Susanna Moodie's Roughing it in the Bush and her sister Catharine Parr Traill's The Backwoods of Canada, evocations of picturesque scenery and natural beauty at Grosse Ile function to dilute and minimize the spectacle of Irish suffering in their midst. Both Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill passed through Grosse Ile on their way to Upper Canada in August 1832, when a cholera epidemic in Lower Canada was at its height and the highest incidence of Irish emigrant fatalities was recorded before 1847 (see O'Gallagher, 19-26); yet in Roughing it in the Bush Moodie depicts Grosse Ile to be a "lovely island" (19) which "looks a perfect paradise" from the vantage point of her ship, a place where "Nature had lavished all her noblest features in producing that enchanting scene" (17). Likewise, Moodie's sister Catharine Parr Traill describes her impression of Grosse Ile as a "picturesque island" (26), "a beautiful rocky island, covered with groves of beech, birch, ash, and fir-trees" (25), although she at least is more

forthright than Moodie in acknowledging that "t'is distance lends enchantment to the view" (26). Indeed, it is hard to believe that even after Moodie goes ashore (an opportunity that is denied her sister) she still omits from her description of "everything worthy of notice on the island" any mention of the fever sheds or lazarettos (except to say that they "greatly resembled cattle pens" (20), mass graves, or immobilized crowds of cholera victims whose quarantine and hospitalization it was the very function of Grosse Ile to provide. Instead, she describes her sojourn with her husband to the interior of the island and "the tranquil beauties of that retired and lovely spot" (21); when the Irish do intrude upon her reverie and "melancholy awe" (18) it is in the capacity of "a fresh cargo of lively savages from the Emerald Isle" (23), "hard-featured, sun-burnt harpies" (20), and "vicious, uneducated barbarians who form the surplus of over-populous European countries" (21): "shure we'll all be jintlemen!" (23) screams one such feral Irishman, disturbing not only her musings but inherited notions of social order as well.⁶⁹

Moodie's effusive and lyrical descriptions of natural beauty thus function not to accentuate but to repress the radically disturbing and shocking images that must have confronted her on Grosse Ile. Through a narrative strategy of evocation and displacement she represses these images of suffering on the island by excluding from her representation "any depreciation of what seemed so beautiful" (20). But even so, the shocking and repressed condition of the Irish returns to infiltrate her prose and underlie her description. Thus, about her sojourn to the interior, Moodie writes:

the dark shadows of the mountains, thrown upon the water, as they towered to a height some thousand feet above us, gave to the surface of the river an ebon hue. The sunbeams, dancing through the thick, quivering foliage, fell in stars of gold, or long lines of dazzling brightness, upon the deep black waters, producing the most novel and

beautiful effects. It was a scene over which the spirit of peace might brood in silent adoration; but how spoiled by the discordant yells of the filthy beings who were sullyng the purity of the air and water with *contaminating* sights and sounds!
(22, my emphasis)

Even Moodie's most ornate prose would seem to be infiltrated by images of infection and pathology, the underlying reality of cholera on Grosse Ile. Unfortunately, Moodie seems more interested in the metaphor than the reality of disease and the desperate medical condition of the emigrants on the island; and so she transforms the Irish from the objects to the agents of (social) pathology, the carriers and transmitters of an infectious and subversive ideology rather than an infirm population desperately in need of medical attention. Consider, for example, Moodie's remark that her fellow "passengers, who were chiefly honest Scotch labourers and mechanics from the vicinity of Edinburgh, and who while on board ship had conducted themselves with the greatest propriety, and appeared the most quiet, orderly set of people in the world, no sooner set foot upon the island than they became *infected* by the same spirit of insubordination and misrule, and were just as insolent and noisy as the rest" (21, my emphasis). Moodie thus appropriates the language of pathology and infection from a medical discourse to deploy it in a political one; she confuses symptoms of deprivation and disease with signs of national character. She effectively obfuscates the relationship between cause and effect to naturalize the infirm condition of the Irish, representing Irishness as an infectious agent for social insubordination and savagery without any examination of what gives to such a condition.

In Moodie's defence, one might point to her more positive representation of individual Irish characters in later chapters of Roughing it in the Bush as evidence of her maturation and evolving sympathy towards the Irish. Both of Moodie's Irish servants, for example, John

Monaghan (156-170) and Jenny Buchanan (463-488), are highly sympathetic figures who safeguard Moodie's family when it is imperilled and exhibit few characteristics in common with the savages on Grosse Ile. Jenny Buchanan is described as

a generous, warm-hearted daughter of the Green Isle -- the Emerald gem set in the silver of the ocean... One of the poorest children of that impoverished but glorious country where wit and talent seem indigenous, springing up spontaneously in the rudest and most uncultivated minds; showing what the land could bring forth in its own strength, unaided by education, and unfettered by the conventional rules of society. Jenny was a striking instance of the worth, noble self-denial, and devotion which are often met with -- and, alas! but too often disregarded -- in the poor and ignorant natives of that deeply-injured, and much abused land.

(464)

Likewise, John Monaghan is described to be "honest and true" (161), a faithful servant "who endeavoured by a thousand little attentions to shew the gratitude he really felt" for his employment (161), and not at all the "Papist vagabond" that he is mistaken for by Moodie's servant Bell (160). In sharp contrast then to Moodie's initial representation of the Irish on Grosse Ile as "wild savages" and "incarnate devils" (22), characters like John Monaghan and Jenny Buchanan embody more positive attributes and seem to represent a rehabilitated image of the Irish, a rehabilitated image that one might adduce as evidence of the mature Moodie's more sympathetic attitude towards the Irish in place of her overt racism as a younger narrator.

However, in my view such a reading is a little too pat and can only be proposed with considerable reservations. To begin with, Moodie herself never alludes to the contrast between her youthful and more mature attitude towards the Irish, nor seems conscious of any evolution in her outlook. Instead, the diminution of her anti-Irish bias is left unexplained and for the reader to infer, and, according to a contemporary reviewer of Moodie's text for the *Observer*, appears to be more an unresolved contradiction in the narrative than a deliberate

effort at rehabilitation: "at the very outset of her career," the reviewer charges, Moodie "describes the Irish emigrants in terms which a reflective writer would scarcely apply to a pack of hounds...; and yet every page of her work bears distinct and unequivocal testimony to the fact that it was to the kindness, the charity, and the disinterested services of poor Irish emigrants and settlers that she and her family were indebted for, perhaps, the only real benevolence they had encountered in Canada" (Ctd. in Moodie/Ballstadt, xxxi). It is also important to note that Moodie's positively valenced images of the Irish are religiously tintured and exclusive to *Protestant* Irish characters, unlike the majority of the emigrants she was exposed to on Grosse Ile. "I'm no Papist, but a Protestant like yourself; and I hope a deuced dale better Christian," (160) Monaghan declares indignantly to Moodie's servant Bell when she seeks to have him excluded from the Moodie household; Jenny Buchanan "called herself a Protestant, and a Church of England woman, [even though] she knew no more of religion, as revealed to man through the Word of God, than the savage who sinks to the grave in ignorance of a Redeemer" (465). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, even Moodie's positively valenced images of the Irish are racially inflected and in my view companionable with her representations of the emigrants on Grosse Ile. Jenny Buchanan, for example, "a neglected child of nature" (465) and as she is described above, is clearly a variation type of the Noble Savage, even if a less degenerate one than "the vicious, uneducated barbarians" on Grosse Ile who remain "far behind the wild man in delicacy of feeling or natural courtesy" (21). Likewise, John Monaghan is a distinctly primitive figure who exhibits little understanding of his Protestant origins but rather a "superstitious fear so common to the natives of his country" (163); an "irritable nature" (161); a remarkable impracticality and lack of foresight ("it now appears to me that his whole life was spent in tearing his trousers to repair his jacket," (168)

observes Moodie); and comic social aspirations: "I love horses, and dogs, and fine clothes, and money," Monaghan declares, "Och! that I was but a jintleman!" (168). Whether Moodie's representations of the Irish are positively or negatively valenced, then, they proceed from and reaffirm the same racial typology of Irishness that underlines a colonial mindset and allows for only a very limited and restricted set of Anglo-Irish or Anglo-Canadian/Irish Canadian relations, relations that are defined by attitudes that range from paternalist sympathy at best to patent racism on the part of the former.

Whatever Moodie's attitude towards the Irish as a whole, she reveals little compassion or even decent regard for the intense and pervasive suffering in her midst at Grosse Ile -- suffering that she interprets, unlike Irish Famine migration writers, as evidence of Irish social pathology: of innate delinquency, uncleanliness, insubordination, and vagrancy, which she contrasts with the pristine beauty and scenic splendour of the natural environs around Grosse Ile as something that despoils it. It is in this context, I would suggest, that either the Famine Diary or authentic Famine migration narratives become an important corrective for Moodie's influential vision of the Irish in Canada, as counternarratives of Irish emigration that both record the emigrants' suffering and restore them to a more properly dignified and tragic condition.

Famine Migration Narratives: Narrative Functions

In fact, testimonial is one of the functions of the Famine migration narrative. As noted, emigrant writers like De Vere, Melville, Smith, and Whyte attest to the suffering, neglect, and forbearance of Irish migrants who are written out of more popular travel narratives like that of Susanna Moodie or institutional discourses on emigration like ships' registries and the popular

press. "It may be thought that the immolation of so many wretched starvelings was rather a benefit than a loss to the world," writes Robert Whyte in The Ocean Plague, "yet -- untutored, degraded, famished, and plague-stricken, as they were; I assert that there was more true heroism, more faith, more forgiveness to their enemies, and submission to the Divine Will, exemplified in these victims, than could be found in ten times the number of their oppressors" (18). "The reader may not expect to find anything more in these pages," he insists, "than a faithful detail of the occurrences on board an emigrant vessel" (13). In his preface to A Voice from the Steerage, Smith writes that "whatever may be its defects, it shall have one merit, at least, namely: a truthful statement of a few out of many events that came under my observation" (3). "'Tis no more than hundreds of thousands who have left their native land, could tell," he adds, "who, after exchanging the most painful adieus with their families and friends, the objects of their affections and solicitude, have relinquished all those social and domestic comforts which ever exist in the endearments of home, and all those feelings so dear to the human heart, have thrown themselves upon the trackless ocean, to meet a watery grave, or death in a foreign land, unknown, uncared for" (34). About the incidents of his trans-Atlantic voyage, "I have set them down simply, and exactly as they occurred," writes the correspondent for *Household Words*, "for the purpose of presenting a true picture of the emigrant's life afloat" (539).

In addition to its testimonial function, however, the Famine migration narrative would also serve an admonitory purpose, warning potential emigrants about the dangers of the trans-Atlantic voyage and the hardships of the New World, often dispelling their romantic preconceptions, to prevent further death and suffering or at least prepare them for what to expect. "My faith in the romance of the sea was greatly shaken by my first night's experiences

on board, and it soon received a fatal blow," recalls the correspondent for *Household Words* (534). "Intending emigrants, therefore, who picture to themselves in bright colours the glories of a sea voyage, will, by reading these pages, have their dreams modified by some touches of reality and truth, if not entirely dispelled" (539). "I may as well warn you now to beware of... most [of the] American letters you may hear," Henry Johnson writes to his wife Jane from Upper Canada (December 3, 1848), where he has had trouble finding employment and adjusting to life in the New World: "they either greatly overrate the matter or through ignorance put a false face upon the nature of things altogether" (40). Likewise, the Reverend John O'Hanlon -- whose Irish Emigrant's Guide for the United States (1851) was written in response to the suffering of Famine migrants in the New World -- sets out to demolish the romantic ideas and unrealistic expectations about American life that prospective emigrants might entertain: "the Utopia of the imagination... is not the United States of our experience," he warns. "By substituting fancy for judgement, romantic hopes are first formed to be afterwards destroyed -- Thus it often happens that the Irish emigrant who imagines he has escaped from the misery and oppression of his own misgoverned Island when he abandoned it, from pauperism and its attendant ills, finds a thousand difficulties stare him in the face, and which he was unprepared to meet, when landed on the wharfs of some of our sea-board cities" (12). Clearly then, another important function of the Famine migration narrative is to dispel romantic illusions about the migration process and the New World inculcated by previous emigrant texts.

More immediately though, Famine migration narratives have a tendentious rather than a testimonial or an admonitory function, as literary vehicles for the advocacy of Irish emigrants both in the Old World and the New. Stephen De Vere and Vere Foster, for example, address

their narratives not to prospective emigrants leaving Ireland but to the House of Lords and the Colonial Office, their intention to pressure the British Legislature into implementing Passenger Act reform, or, in Foster's case, to seek restitution for the mistreatment of passengers aboard the emigrant ship *Washington* on which he travelled. "I am sure that to give publicity to the truth is the best way to do good," writes De Vere in a letter to Lord Monteaule (February 29, 1848), who chaired the House of Lords Select Committee on Colonization from Ireland, "& I greatly fear the Govt has no sincere intention of taking any manly steps in favour of emigration, unless they are compelled to by public opinion" (MS 5075a, p 85). Melville's Redburn and William Smith, on the other hand, write for a New World audience and aspire to improve the conditions for the reception of Irish immigrants in the United States. As an ardent Republican who spent "many happy hours... reading a history of the United States, and contemplating the circumstances which had given a Washington to the world[,] the noble devotion of Americans to the cause of liberty, their struggle with their tyrants in 1776, and the declaration of Independence" (28), Smith is particularly appalled by the inhospitable conditions and apathetic and brutalizing medical staff he finds in the Staten Island hospital:

In a country blessed with a free government, with a people possessing the highest order of intelligence, and in the highest state of civilization, the existence of such a system of heartless cruelty, perpetrated upon the poor unoffending immigrants, and that too in the hour of sickness, and on the confines of eternity, may well indeed be doubted. But experience has taught me that neither the character nor the manners of a nation are to be judged by what may be found to exist in some of its institutions, particularly in a hospital.

(28)

"Reader, if you are an American," Smith implores, "let your sympathy be extended to the honest immigrants, whom tyranny, overpopulation, and taxation has forced upon your shores,

and may the star-spangled banner protect your noble institutions, and triumph over liberty's foes till time shall be no more" (34). Melville's *Redburn* is equally forthright, if less patriotic, in calling for an open immigration policy, -- as an explicit rejoinder to the burgeoning nativism and xenophobia that would culminate in the rise of the Know Nothing party in mid-nineteenth century American politics (see Archdeacon, 57-82) -- although he concedes that "no legislation, even nominally, reaches the hard lot of the emigrant" (282).⁷⁰ Nevertheless, he entreats his readership to "waive that agitated national topic, as to whether such multitudes of foreign poor should be landed on our American shores;... with one only thought, that if they can get here, they have God's right to come; though they bring all Ireland and her miseries with them" (281-282).

Famine Migration Narratives: Politics

From De Vere's "manly steps in favour of emigration", Smith's republicanism, and Melville's anti-nativism, we can begin to discern a complex politics of the Famine migration narrative. Whatever its function, then, even its most outspoken of authors would seem to advocate the amelioration rather than the abolition or dismantling of the passenger trade. Even Robert Whyte, for example, whose caustic observations of the abuses in that trade at times seem to border on singular denunciation, still distinguishes between "a natural and progressive system of emigration" and the vicissitudes of the Famine exodus (10). Yet surprisingly, each of the narratives above also lends succour to Kerby Miller's analysis of ritualized emigrant disaffection and the resilience of a migrant subculture of exile -- on occasion even to John Mitchel's venomous Anglo-phobia -- through repeated invocation of the exile motif, sometimes quite formulaically. O'Farrell has detected a similar anomaly in Letters from Irish Australia

1825-1929, where he notes that "the testimony of highly atypical emigrants from Protestant Ulster may be manipulated to strengthen and refresh stereotypes conventionally attached to impoverished Catholic settlers" (Fitzpatrick, "The Irish in America", 275). In like fashion, Stephen De Vere, a very strong proponent of emigration from Ireland, declares himself "an exile for conscience sake" (MS 5075a, 81-82) when describing his motivation for leaving his homeland to facilitate his conversion to Roman Catholicism, although it provides at most a subsidiary reason for his departure. William Smith's professed reasons for his expatriation are even more contorted: "I had left my native land, which I loved, though I detested her tyrants," he declares (6). "I had *voluntarily exiled* myself from all that was near and dear to me in my native country, to seek for that remuneration for my labor in a foreign land, which I could not obtain in my own," he adds (my emphasis), thus conflating notions of personal agency, economic migrancy, political banishment, and enforced expulsion in a highly overdetermined self-image of the emigrant as exile. In his *Reminiscences*, John Burke recollects how in "1847 [I] made up my mind to Emigrate to America... and try [my] fortunes in the Grand Republic,... as the thinking portion of the country gave up hope of any improvement in their condition" (20). "I left the country in disgust," he stresses, for "after the year of the famine I came to the conclusion the country had the day of [reckoning?]... and the sooner she was left to her own fate the better for those who had enterprise enough to leave" (19). But once again, a narrative of economic opportunity, elective emigration, and personal volition becomes suffused with Miller's Irish American rhetoric of exile: "if 'population is wealth' than England must have cost a good [deal of it?]," Burke declares, "in oppressing her Irish subjects and forcing them to migrate[,] and losing her part of pesantry their national pride where ever distress can never be supplied" (19). Langford, too, invokes a rhetoric of exile, commenting

upon his arrival in New York City in 1853 where he "met a procession with a band and Flags formed for the purpose of meeting and congratulating John Mitchell, one of the Irish State prisoners, on his escape from tyranny in England and to give him a hearty welcome" (47); however, Langford's political sympathies remain quite opaque as he also records his admiration for the Branch Protective Emigrant Society, and as the very same day he sees Mitchel he also leaves New York for Toronto and then London, Upper Canada, so that he is once "again in British possessions" (47). Finally, Robert Whyte's Ocean Plague invokes the exile motif, and more than any other authentic Famine migration narrative seems closest to articulating the Mitchel thesis that English parliamentarians and Anglo-Irish landlords share culpability for the devastation of the Famine migration⁷¹, although he remains, as noted, supportive of the principle of emigration from Ireland when carried out under more auspicious conditions. What emerges, then, is a set of highly contorted perceptions of exile in even the most elective of emigrant narratives that effectively obfuscate often complex motives for migration through recourse to a rhetoric of enforced expatriation and political compulsion.

However, in none of the narratives above do these contorted perceptions of exile or ambivalent attitudes towards emigration correlate with a clear or unequivocal sense of animosity towards Great Britain, as in the Famine Diary. Indeed, it is the conservative, Unionist, and profoundly disaffected Irish Canadian poet Standish O'Grady⁷² who vacillates most between the subject positions of emigrant and exile throughout his long poem The Emigrant, where "he attempted an epic treatment of emigration," suggests Trehearne (lxi), but his ambition "simply could not stand up to the sense of isolation, bitterness and grief which dominated his life in Canada" (lxiii). Thus, in his preface, written in Sorel in 1841, O'Grady states that he conceived his work "for the instruction of my transatlantic friends," yet he

remains deeply and painfully ambivalent on the subject of whether they should consider migration:

as nothing is more remote to my purpose, let none imagine me an enemy to emigration; nothing, from my heart, do I desire more. This Lower Province, however, is not calculated to afford happiness to the European settler; the cold is excessive, and its winters too long; those best inured to the climate, and the soil, are its best inhabitants, - I mean the French Canadians, who agree well among each other, and best subsist on a tolerable diet.

Even in his preface, then, O'Grady's long poem exhibits convoluted perceptions of emigration, expressing his untrammelled enthusiasm for the idea of it in principle, on the one hand, while at the same time admonishing prospective emigrants not to embark for Lower Canada and undertake the trans-Atlantic journey because of the painful dislocation it must entail.

As the poem develops, O'Grady's reservations about emigration acquire more distinctly cautionary overtones. He apostrophizes "the rude peasant, [who] to requite his toil,/In other climes seeks more congenial soil" (*ii* 40-41), warning him and his fellow migrants of the hardships that await in British North America, the anguish for those who will remain behind, and the anonymity of an emigrant grave:

From peaceful homes and habitations spurned,
 From fond connections, aged parents mourned,
 From dear society, now friends no more
 To cheer their wanderings on a distant shore,
 From all those tender ties on friendship wait,
 From links that bind and *fortify* a state
 Behold proud Erin's sons promiscuous spread --
 No stone to mark the unrecorded dead!

(43-50)

Emigration is thus construed as a licentious and haphazard activity that reflects badly on the Irish nation, -- "Erin's sons promiscuous spread" -- whom O'Grady in turn apostrophizes:

ere her sons seek transatlantic clime,
 Brave storms and seas true wretchedness to share
 And seek for shelter in a northern sphere;
 Let Erin pause, and ere her venturers go,
 Far better still to bear the ills we know.

(2095-2099)

Erin's "pause" is thus redolent with a quiescent acceptance of intractable social, political, religious, economic, and juridical conditions in Ireland -- conditions that were formerly the occasion of O'Grady's emigration -- now viewed nostalgically and more optimistically⁷³ in light of the even harsher and more incorrigible realities experienced in British North America. Finally then, O'Grady expands his purview to apostrophize not just Irishmen who might emigrate but all of the assorted nationalities of the United Kingdom, the members of an implicitly unified imagined community of Great Britain and Ireland, imploring them not to forsake their native hearth and homeland or localized natural environs for the uncertain "transatlantic clime" or "northern sphere" of the New World. His is a profoundly conservative and circumscribed patriotism, conditioned through incremental levels of attachment to a domesticated United Kingdom rather than the nation as an abstract political entity, and largely influenced by Edmund Burke's idea of the "little platoon we belong to in society [that] is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affection,... the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country": an idea that would also become explicitly associated with a localized topography and retrenched domesticity in the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge (see Butler, 83-87). For O'Grady, Burke's political conservatism and

celebration of the hearth along with these Romantic tropes are adjoined to feelings of aversion for emigration:

Ye cheerful sons of Erin's virtuous land,
 Ye hardy Scots, ye conquering Highland band,
 And ye proud Britons, why thus brave the seas
 To combat sad vicissitudes like these?
 The fragrant heath, your long neglected hills,
 Your bubbling streams, your loved transparent rills,
 Your fenny moors, your rocks, your mountain brows,
 Should best your native energies arouse,
 Endear each peasant to each stately dome,
 And best engage your husbandry at home.

(1098-1107)

Far from embittering him to the Old World, O'Grady's experience of migration thus solidifies his feelings of attachment to Great Britain and Ireland and becomes the impetus for a renewed patriotism, displacing the locus of his animosity and disaffection from the Old World to British North America. Indeed, he comes to revile the New World, his migration tintured with feelings of regret and despair, although O'Grady never loses sight entirely of the adverse conditions that pushed him out of Ireland in the first place. He "never had a conclusive attitude to emigration," suggests Trehearne (lvi). "Both nostalgia for and hard-headed assessments of Ireland inspired O'Grady to treat the question of emigration, and the two impulses led in contradictory directions" (lvi). It is in this respect, then, I would suggest that his ambivalence towards the migration experience is typical of each of the narratives above in that he refuses either to reconcile himself to the new land of his adoption or to fully and irrevocably dissociate himself from the nation that he has left behind. Instead, The Emigrant,

like each of the narratives above, reveals a profoundly bifurcated attitude towards emigration that construes it both as an opportunity and an imposition, a voluntary relocation and a forced expulsion, *regardless* of the degree of compulsion involved in the respective emigrant's departure. Such bifurcated attitudes towards emigration and contorted perceptions of exile, however, belie varying degrees of support in authentic Famine migration narratives for the principle of emigration under more auspicious conditions and for the British administration under whose aegis such outmigration proceeded. For if, as I have argued, the Famine migration narrative is a distinct literary genre, one that is replete with its own narrative conventions, and that can be differentiated from English travel narratives by its advocacy of Irish emigrants and tendentious function to improve the conditions for their transportation while at sea and for their reception in the New World at quarantine stations like Grosse Ile -- whereas these aspects of the trans-Atlantic voyage tend to feature only incidentally in English emigrant texts -- then such narratives still presuppose the continuance of the Irish passenger trade that has occasioned them and which they seek to ameliorate, such narratives remain decidedly reformist rather than abolitionist in their intent. Clearly more research is needed into the politics of the Famine migration narrative, but from my preliminary analysis it is evident that the vast majority of such texts were more conciliatory in their attitudes towards emigration and more favourably disposed towards Great Britain than either the Famine Diary or the Young Ireland movement would indicate.

Conclusion

The politics of authentic Famine migration narratives have largely been eschewed in the recent debate surrounding the modern significance and commemorative function of Grosse Ile National Historic Site, although many of these narratives have been adduced in that debate as period texts and eye-witness accounts of the Famine migration. At issue fundamentally is whether or not Grosse Ile should specifically commemorate the tragic years of 1832 and 1847, in which up to thirty thousand Irish emigrants died on the island (O'Laighin, 89), or the more pedestrian and less calamitous role that it played through one hundred and five years of Canadian immigration history between 1832 and 1937, when the quarantine station was finally closed. The Canadian Park Service's 1992 proposal to develop Grosse Ile as a theme park celebrating Canada as a "Land of Hope and Welcome" generated considerable opposition from many Irish community lobby groups, all of whom were incensed by its recommendation in a Proposed Development Concept that "there should not be too much emphasis on the tragic history of Grosse Ile... which [has] often been overemphasized in the past, [and] need[s] to be put back into perspective" (62). According to the most vocal of these lobby groups, Action Grosse Ile, such a development plan represented "the worst elements of historical revisionism and moral amnesia. [For] the mass graves on the island are testimony to Ireland's holocaust" (Landers, 6); "that historic island is our Treblinka," claimed Pat O'Shea, president of the Tara Golf Association, for "no more than the Jewish people would want to relegate to oblivion the tragedy of Treblinka, would the Irish people want to forget the tragedy and historic significance of Grosse Ile" (*Montreal Gazette*, May 21, 1992, 1; repr. in Mangan, 1994, 101).

Thus, the tropes of Irish nationalist and revisionist historiography would seem to be re-deployed in the local controversy surrounding Grosse Ile's commemorative function, replete with an exculpatory brand of historical revisionism (Canadian Parks Service) on the one hand, and the inflammatory rhetoric of an overtly accusatory style of Irish nationalist discourse (Action Grosse Ile) on the other. For by conflating the Famine migration with the Holocaust, representatives from Action Grosse Ile implicitly lend support to John Mitchel's accusation that the English deliberately perpetrated the Famine as a means of depopulating Ireland. They also align their struggle with that of First Nations (Landers, 6), "boat people" (Quigley, 55), and French Canadians, emphasizing in particular the facts that French Canadian priests played a major role in relieving emigrant distress during the Famine migration, and that nearly one thousand Irish orphans were adopted into Quebecois families, as evidence of a cultural affinity between the peoples of Ireland and French Canada (Quigley, 51-53) -- although such an affinity often failed to materialize throughout the nineteenth century. In 1994 the Canadian Parks Service bowed to pressure from Irish community lobby groups and revised its proposed development concept "to tell the full story of the Canadian immigrant experience at Grosse Ile[, with] the Irish experience on the Island, especially during the tragic epidemic years of the first half of the 19th century, [being] a particular focus of the commemoration" ("Future Development", 17), although Quigley and Action Grosse advocates remain sceptical about such a new development concept, interpreting it as further evidence of the Canadian Parks Service's "negligence" of Grosse Ile's specifically and tragically Irish heritage.⁷⁴

What is of more immediate interest, however, is the way in which both authentic and fraudulent Famine migration narratives have been enlisted for this debate. Both O'Laighin and

Quigley cite Robert Whyte's Ocean Plague, for example, to support their contentions that Grosse Ile was the site of "Ireland's holocaust, a veritable 'Isle of Death'" (O'Laighin, 75), and that the British Government and colonial administration in Canada in 1847 deliberately under-reported the magnitude of the calamity to stifle criticism of their paltry efforts to stem excess mortality (Quigley, 53) -- yet neither of them refers to Whyte's own favourable attitude towards emigration (under more humane circumstances) or his favourable disposition towards Great Britain. Quigley has elsewhere enlisted De Vere's testimonial about conditions on Grosse Ile in 1847 to emphasize the hardships that Irish immigrants faced and to indict the British administration for forcing them to flee Ireland, without acknowledging De Vere's own support for assisted emigration and his strenuous efforts to ameliorate rather than abolish the Passenger trade.⁷⁵ Likewise, O'Laighin cites Robert Sellar as a witness to the extreme privation faced by Lord Palmerston's tenantry after they were relocated from his estate in 1847 ("his crime against his tenants"), without even mentioning that "Summer of Sorrow" is a work of fiction; nor does O'Driscoll caution that Gerald Keegan's narrative is in fact a fictional text when he claims that it should serve as an important corrective for the "counter-mythology" of the Famine migration produced by Canadian revisionist historians (xx). Curiously, then, both genuine and spurious Irish emigration narratives have been adduced to support a nationalist interpretation of the Famine migration and of Grosse Ile's commemorative function by Irish Canadians who do not adequately consider how such narratives themselves represent the events they describe or the context in which they were produced.

The temptation to conflate authentic Famine migration narratives with more popular fictional or spurious versions of the genre has proven difficult to resist, but the result is often

misleading. I have attempted to dispel some of the popular misconceptions about Famine migration narratives and to begin a process of undertaking serious scholarly research into them as examples of a discrete narrative form and distinct literary genre, although clearly more research needs to be undertaken into the genre, both as a historical and a fictional species of narrative. To begin with, little is known about the historical personage of Robert Whyte beyond what I have stated here, including even whether he himself undertook the trans-Atlantic voyage in 1847 or merely compiled his narrative from composite emigrant accounts and dockside stories.⁷⁶ Moreover, although this thesis provides some impetus for investigation, a great deal of research remains to be completed on the figure of Stephen De Vere, his movements in the New World and his influence in shaping British North American immigration policy, his evolving attitudes towards emigration, and also those of his brother Aubrey and the role that each of them played in orchestrating the assisted migration scheme from Curragh Chase. Trehearne has produced an excellent critical edition of Standish O'Grady's long poem The Emigrant, augmented with meticulous biographical research, but his work is distinctly Canadianist and singular in its orientation and might be richly supplemented from the comparative perspective of Irish Migration Studies, as I have begun to do here; likewise, Scally's comparative approach to the Famine migration and the African slave trade or transportation of Holocaust victims might yield a potential avenue of research for the literary scholar. The influence of Irish ethnicity and cultural contact on canonical writers like Charles Dickens, Herman Melville and Susanna Moodie is still only at a preliminary phase of investigation; the intersection between authentic Famine migration narratives and recent creative writing on the Famine migration -- Alan Ryan's Cast a Cold Eye (1984); Jane

Urquart's Away (1993); Peter Quinn's Banished Children of Eve (1994), and Margaret Atwood's Alias Grace (1996), for example -- has yet to receive any critical attention, although it too would seem a most promising avenue for literary researchers. I have outlined three of its narrative conventions, but a complete motif-index of the conventions of the Famine migration narrative remains to be compiled, and the way in which its "free-floating signifiers" and icons of suffering -- icons of suffering that Morash discerns in Irish Famine writing (see above, 33) - - are grafted onto the more linear and sequential narrative of emigration still needs to be considered more comprehensively at a theoretical level. Moreover, although I have provided an overview of the Famine migration narrative as a distinct literary genre, the impact of geographical and historical contingencies, epistolary conventions, and the imperatives of travel writing upon its formation also still needs more exacting and comprehensive theoretical elaboration. Finally, other authentic Famine migration narratives are known to exist that have received scant critical attention or even consultation to date,⁷⁷ and no doubt there are more still that have yet to be discovered. Numerous avenues of research into the Famine migration narrative would therefore seem to lie open for the scholar of Irish Migration Studies.

End Notes

1. It is worth noting here Hasia Diner's argument in Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983) that Irish nationalist and expatriate Irish nationalist organizations were predominantly *male* preserves that held little appeal for Irish or Irish American women (15, 128), who tended to become active instead in labour activist movements and in seeking to improve the living conditions for emigrants in North America (see chapter 6). My thesis will not seriously engage the topic of gender and nationalism; only one of the narratives about nineteenth century emigration from Ireland to North America that I will study is written by a woman (the letters of Mrs. William Radcliff, 1832), and the representations of women that surface in all of these narratives perpetuate a banal stereotype of Woman as nurturer/sufferer that originates in the devotional tradition of Mariolatry. Gerald Keegan's wife Eileen in the "Summer of Sorrow" and the Famine Diary, for example, is a singularly flat character who possesses many attributes that derive from the Virgin Mary; in Emigrant's Narrative: or, Voice from the Steerage William Smith even goes so far as to apostrophize Women for their "greater fortitude" than Men, "the sacrifices they make, the noble devotion they evince in the hour of trial... beyond all praise" (16) -- their capacity for nurturing and suffering, in other words. But for a full length study that does examine the representation of women in Famine literature, see Margaret Kelleher, The Feminization of Famine: Narrative Representations of Irish and Bengali Famines (forthcoming, 1996), and "The Female Gaze: Asenath Nicholson's Famine Narrative," in Fearful Realities: New Perspectives on the Famine, eds., Christopher Morash & Richard Hayes (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996); also see Janet Nolan, Ourself Alone: Women's Emigration from Ireland, 1885-1920 (Lexington: U of Kentucky Press, 1989) for another full length study that examines Irish emigrant women, but in the latter nineteenth century.

2. Aidan McQuillan, "Arenas of Power: The Irish in Nineteenth Century Quebec," conference paper presented at the ACSI (Association of Canadian Studies in Ireland) conference, held at Malahide, County Dublin, Ireland, May 24, 1996.

3. More generally, he is criticized for postulating too uniform a model of the Irish emigrant mentality to the exclusion of Protestant sensibilities (Akenson, Review of Emigrants and Exiles, 409-410); for perpetuating a debilitating stereotype of the Irish Catholics in the New World as culturally handicapped that does not stand up to statistical scrutiny of the evidence (Akenson, Small Differences, 48-50; The Irish Diaspora, 236-237; O'Day, 208); and for supplying insufficient contextual detail to explain the "epistolary pessimism" of his diffuse source material (Fitzpatrick, 273-276). See Donald Akenson's review of Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America in the Canadian Historical Review, 67 (Sept 1986), 408-410, as well as his remarks in Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922 -- An International Perspective (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1988), 48-50; in "Reading the Texts of Rural Immigrants: Letters from the Irish in Australia, New Zealand, and North America," in Canadian Papers in Rural History, v VII (Gananoque, Ontario: Langdale Press, 1990), 390-391; and in The Irish Diaspora: A Primer (Streetsville, Ontario: P.D. Meany, 1993), 236-237. Also see Alan O'Day, "Revising the Diaspora," in The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy, eds. D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (London: Routledge, 1996), 208-209; and David Fitzpatrick's article "The Irish in America: Exiles or Escapers?" in Reviews in American History, 1987, 15 (2): 272-278.

4. Critics who question the British administration's commitment to relieve Irish distress during the famine are often quick to point out that the British treasury expended approximately 9.5 million pounds on famine relief (most of it in the form of loans) between 1845 and 1851 -- a fraction compared to the 69.3 million pounds it would spend only a few years later in prosecuting the disastrous Crimean War (Deane, p 115; Kinealy, 295, 351). Or to put it another way, the Imperial Parliament eventually approved the expenditure of approximately 100 000 pounds (O'Gallagher, 1984, 58) for the relief of Irish emigrants on Grosse Ile during 1847 (of whom up to 30 000 died that year), which is perhaps five times the amount impetuously offered by the British Admiralty just one year later as a *reward* for any information leading to the discovery of the missing Franklin expedition, last seen in the summer of 1845.

Chapter One

5. See Recollections of Aubrey De Vere (New York: Edward Arnold, 1897); The Irish Journals of Elizabeth Smith 1840-1850, eds. David Thomson with Moyra McGusty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Asenath Nicholson, Annals of the Famine in Ireland, in 1847, 1848, and 1849 (New York: 1851), as well as Margaret Kelleher, "The Female Gaze: Asenath Nicholson's Famine Narrative," in Fearful Realities: New Perspectives on the Famine, eds. Christopher Morash & Richard Hayes (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996), and C. Woods, "Americans Travellers in Ireland Before and During the Great Famine: A Case of Culture Shock," in Literary Interrelations: Ireland, England and the New World, eds. Wolfgang Zach & Heinz Kosok (Tubingen: 1987); The Irish Famine: Six Letters to the Examiner, 1849/1850, by Anthony Trollope, ed. Lance O. Tingay (London: Silverbridge Press, 1987); Letters from Ireland During the Famine of 1847, eds. Somerville & Snell (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994).

6. For a discussion of the effect of the Famine on these underclasses, see David Fitzpatrick, "The Disappearance of the Irish Agricultural Labourer, 1841-1912," *Irish Economic and Social History* 7 (1980), 66-92.

7. On the whole, suggests Morash, the men and women of the Famine afflicted population who advocated dissent and agitated for reform "were members of a class who, were it not for Ireland's colonial status, would have been in positions of political power. While this urban, Dublin-based middle class were agitating for reform, the real impact of the Famine was being felt by an entirely different class of rural peasantry, who were, for the most part, politically passive during the Famine years" (The Hungry Voice, 27).

Also, for a fuller analysis of the middle class composition of the dissident population and the Young Ireland movement in the 1840s, see Jacqueline Hill, "The Intelligentsia and Irish Nationalism in the 1840s," *Studies Hibernica* 20 (1980), 73-109.

8. "The dearth of letters from Catholics among the many collections of emigrant letters," add Houston and Smyth, "may be discovered in the works of Patrick O'Farrell on Australia and Kirby [sic] Miller on the United States. Dr Brian Trainor, responsible for the fine collection of emigrant letters at PRONI [Public Record Office for Northern Ireland], has been keenly aware of the issue but is at a loss to explain it" (362).

9. Mary Daly notes, for example, "the curious reticence about the famine [and] the failure to use the word... in Fenian novelist Charles Kickham's best-selling novel, Knockagrow" ("Revisionism in Irish History", 85).

10. Both Keegan and Mitchel also seem to read their departures in terms of an effusive "Celtic" temperament, one that was popularized by Matthew Arnold in his widely influential essay "The Study of Celtic Literature" (1867). "Now I can understand the crushing feeling of loneliness that seizes the exile and emigrant as he severs the roots that bind him to his native land," (67) Keegan laments after the *Naparima* has embarked from Ireland, "and I know that we Irish experience the pangs of parting more intensely than do most other people." Compare Keegan's sentiments of homesickness here with John Mitchel's remarks in The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps): "The Irish are peculiarly attached to their homelands; and like all people of poetic temperament, surround their homes and hearths with more tender associations than a race of duller perception could understand" (67).

11. For an interesting analysis of the role of Providentialism in mitigating Great Britain's response to the Irish Famine and in steeling public opinion against the provision of "excessive" relief, see Peter Gray, "Potatoes and Providence: British Government's Responses to the Great Famine," in *Bullan*, vol. I, no. I (Spring 1994); as well as "Ideology and the Famine," in The Great Irish Famine, ed. Cathal Poirteir (Cork: Mercier Press, 1995), 86-103. Also see James S. Donnelly, Jr., "'Irish Property Must Pay for Irish Poverty': British Public Opinion and the Great Irish Famine," Fearful Realities: New Perspectives on the Famine. Eds. Christopher Morash and Richard Hayes (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996); and Christine Kinnealy, This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine, 1845-1852 (Boulder: Roberts, Rinehart, 1995), 136-265, for a more detailed account of the British government's response to the Irish Famine.

12. For example, like John Mitchel, Keegan emphasizes the fact that agricultural produce was *exported* from Ireland to England throughout the Famine period. Irish emigrants, he writes, "are second only to food as chief exports from their native land. Along the way they see loads of the finest agricultural products in the world being transported for shipment to England" (57). Compare this with John Mitchel's remark that the Irish potato blight led to an "artificial famine: that is to say... a famine which desolated a rich and fertile island, that produced every year abundance and superabundance to sustain all her people and many more. The English, indeed, call the famine a dispensation of Providence, and ascribe it entirely to the blight of potatoes. But potatoes failed in like manner all over Europe; yet there was no famine save in Ireland" (219). Elsewhere Mitchel writes that "for every Englishman who added to his domestic expenditure by a pudding thrice a week, an Irishman had to retrench *his* to cabbage-leaves and turnip-tops. As dyspepsia creeps into England, dysentery ravages Ireland; and the exact correlative of a Sunday dinner in England is a coroner's inquest in Ireland" (125).

13. This stridently anti-Providentialist interpretation of the causes of the Famine and the Famine migration is starkly at odds with the one offered by Robert Sellar in "The Summer of Sorrow." In Sellar's text, after Gerald Keegan goes ashore at Grosse Ile, he remarks that "over all this sad scene from which hope had fled, shone the virtues of patience and submission to the divine will. No querulous words were heard, no grumbling; the stricken flock bowed beneath the rod of affliction with pious resignation" (440).

14. See Robert McHugh, "The Famine in Irish Oral Tradition," in The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, eds., R.D. Edwards, and T.D. Williams (New York: 1957), 391-436. It is worth noting here that in some more recent investigations of the Famine in folklore and oral tradition -- ones that also make use of evidence from the Irish Folklore Commission -- Cathal Poirteir does *not* support McHugh's conclusions but rather suggests that the Irish peasantry maintained a number of conflicting views of the Famine, ranging from Providentialist interpretations to bitter and venomous memories of the Anglo-Irish landlords as well as (less frequently) the British administration of Lord John Russell. See "Landlords, Grain and Government," in Famine Echoes (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1995), 197-212; as well as "Folk Memory and the Famine," The Great Irish Famine, ed., Cathal Poirteir (Cork: Mercier Press, 1995). Also, for a recent analysis of exclusively Gaelic recollections of the Irish Famine in the Irish Folklore Archive that challenges McHugh's conclusions, see Cormac O'Grada, An Drochshaol. Bealoideas agus Amhrain Coisceim (Dublin: 1994).

15. See Oliver MacDonagh, "Irish Emigration to the United States of America and the British Colonies During the Famine," in The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, eds. R.D. Edwards, and T.D. Williams (New York: 1957), 319-387. Also see Patrick O'Farrell, "Whose Reality?: The Irish Famine in History and Literature," Historical Studies (Melbourne), v 20, April 1982, 1-13.

16. See James Donnelly Jr., "Mass Eviction and the Great Famine: The Clearances Revisited," in The Great Irish Famine, ed., Cathal Poirteir (Cork: Mercier Press, 1995), 155-173.

17. It is worth noting here that some critics find it instructive to read Famine writing in the light of the Holocaust. Christopher Morash, for example, suggests that Holocaust writing offers a useful comparative and heuristic framework for gauging literary responses to mass trauma (The Hungry Voice, 35; Writing the Irish Famine, 166, 176; "Literature, Memory, Atrocity", 117-118), although he cautions that "'atrocity' is a word to be used with the greatest care in relation to the Famine, for it suggests elements of intentionality which simplify matters to an unacceptable degree" ("Literature, Memory, Atrocity", 117) and that "there are major causal and motivational differences" between the Holocaust and the Famine (The Hungry Voice, 35).

18. In his preface to the Famine Diary, Mullan writes that it teaches "us that we cannot be indifferent to the suffering of the poor of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Indeed, the cry of the so-called 'Third World', is clearly telling us that the Rich World, to which many Irish people now belong, is inflicting on their people the same political and economic injustices which our own people endured under British Colonialism at the time of the Great Irish Famine." While Mullan's sentiments here certainly seem well founded and beyond reproach, what is at issue is whether or not

the Famine Irish actually displayed the same acute political awareness and understanding of the economic disparities produced by colonialism that he would attribute to them and claim Keegan's diary to represent.

19. "Grosse Ile is not simply a place to commemorate the past and honour those who are buried here," declared President Robinson. "In essence, it is a resource to connect us with the terrible realities of our current world. It challenges us to reject the concept of inevitable victims, and, having done so, to face up to the consequences of that rejection" (ctd. in Gray, The Irish Famine, 183). Mary Robinson also elucidated the linkages between the inadequate provision of relief to ameliorate suffering from the Famine in the 1840s and the passivity of responses elicited by the spectacle of modern hunger through communications technologies and mass-media during her keynote address at New York University's International Conference on Hunger, May 20, 1995.

20. Also important is that Keegan's social, religious, and political profile is ideally suited to Fennell's distinctly Roman Catholic vision of Irish nationalism and the categories of identity that sustain it. The Irish nation, he writes, "as it moved into the 1960s and 70s, possessed an established framework of historical meaning and moral interpretation. Its continuous pattern from the eighteenth century onwards -- the only thread of *national political* expression running throughout this period -- was its liberationist nationalism. This, along with its poverty and its Catholicism, had given Ireland its character in the world" (Ctd. in Deane, 589).

21. See, for example, the "Stop Press -- Publisher's Note" in the second (1992) and third (1994) reprints of the Famine Diary (12) as well as James Mangan's introduction to the recently republished Robert Whyte's 1847 Famine Ship Diary: The Journey of an Irish Coffin Ship (Cork: Mercier Press, 1994).

22. Lord Palmerston engaged nine ships during the spring of 1847 to transport the surplus tenants from his Sligo estate to Saint John, New Brunswick and the Port of Quebec. These ships were the *Transit*, the *Carricks* (wrecked near Cap-des-Rozier, Gaspé, 119 passengers lost -- O'Gallagher & Dompierre, 357), the *Springhill*, the *Numa*, the *Marchioness Bredalbane*, the *Eliza Liddel*, the *Lady Sale*, the *Richard Watson*, and the *Aeolus*. It is worth noting that each of these vessels embarked from the Port of Sligo, one of the busiest Famine ports on the west coast of Ireland during the late 1840s rather than from Dublin, as suggested in the Famine Diary. Mangan quite absurdly has Lord Palmerston's tenants trek across the interior of Ireland all the way to Dublin where they finally embark upon the *Naparima* rather than choosing the closest port at hand (55-64): one more historical inaccuracy, it would seem, to further undermine the plausibility of his narrative.

23. For a judicious summary of the controversy surrounding the Famine Diary, see Robert McGee, "The Diary of Gerald Keegan -- The Uses of History," *Chateauguay Valley Historical Society Annual*, 1993, 26, 73-86.

24. Adam Ferrie regarded the emigration of 1847 as a national and imperial disgrace for Great Britain, akin to the worst atrocities of the slave trade. "I must here... express my deep regret," he writes, "that men pretending to be Christians, and especially that Britons could be guilty of such barbarity, evidently for the paltry purpose of freeing themselves from the natural and just burden of assisting to support and provide for their own poor. Such an outrage on the claims of humanity... might have been committed in the vile and heartless traffic of the slave trade, on which England has set the seal of her just reprobation, and against whose inhuman warfare she has pointed the cannon of her gallant navy; but that such horrible and disgusting scenes as just described should have been enacted under the very flag which should be a protection to her unfortunate and defenceless subjects, is unworthy of England, and throws a dark shade over the bright escutcheon of her well-earned fame and glory" (417).

The great irony here, of course, is that Lord Palmerston, whom Ferrie would repeatedly impugn for the excess mortality caused by the Famine migration he orchestrated from his Sligo estate in 1847, only one year previously had been a vociferous opponent of the slave trade and instrumental in its proscription. In 1846, writes Linda Colley, "when Lord Palmerston was informed of slave trade atrocities in Zanzibar, his immediate response was to instruct the local British consul to 'take every opportunity of impressing upon the Arabs that the nations of Europe are destined to put an end to the African slave trade and that Great Britain is the main instrument in the hands of Providence for the accomplishment of this purpose'" (359-360). British Naval vessels were ordered to apprehend

slave ships, and such extraterritorial maritime intervention on the high seas, Colley suggests, "supplied the British with a powerful legitimation for their claims to be the arbiters of the civilized and the uncivilized world" -- a distinction that, in the wake of the Famine migration, would not survive the decade. "We talk of the Turks and abhor the cannibals," writes Herman Melville in *Redburn* (1849), "but may not some of *them*, go to heaven, before some of *us*? We may have civilized bodies and yet barbaric souls. We are blind to the real sights of this world; deaf to its voices; and dead to its death" (282).

25. "When spoken to for embarking in such a state of debility and want," writes O'Leary, "the unfortunates would reply that they were starving at home, and were induced to take the step they did by being promised many advantages. For instance, upwards of two thousand persons were shipped by the agents of Lord Palmerston, from his Irish estates, who not only promised them clothing but assured them that his Lordship's agent at Quebec, where there was no such person, had been instructed to pay them from 2 to 5 pounds each family, according to their number" (*Catholic Record*, April 9, 1892, 1).

26. Michael Driscoll, for example, the captain of the *Aeolus*, a vessel chartered by Sir Robert Gore Booth in May and June 1847 and then by Lord Palmerston later in the year, affirmed in a letter to the former that "the cleanness of the Ship the Style of order Kept up the Health and Cleanness of the Passengers, the Good Diet, the Superior Medicine and the Supplying of Clean Bead Cloaths The pure Ventilation all combined to Make her Superior to Any of her Magesty's Thransports" (122); "The Governor was in Town [Saint Johns, New Brunswick] whin wee arrived," he adds, "and the Health Officers Reaport to the Governor was that Sir Robert's Passengers or Tennants could not be classed as Common advintururs,... or his Brothers Ship Classed among the dirty old Emigrant hired Vessels." These sentiments are echoed by a committee of passengers on board the vessel, who on behalf of all the steerage express that "the passengers are thankful to Henry Gore Booth Esq, for the good Store of provissions and good quality put on board the Ship *AEolus* of Greenock" (123). Finally, estate agents and cabin passengers John Robertson, John Purden, and Richard Yeats all send Gore Booth relatively favourable accounts of the ocean voyage (122-125).

However, none of the individual emigrant accounts of the voyage listed in the collection of Gore Booth letters appear as unequivocally supportive of emigration or enamored with the New World and the opportunity to escape from Ireland as the letters above would suggest (125-132), although they all embarked much later in the season and were not commenting upon the same particular voyage.

27. One of the functions of the emigrant letter during the Famine era would seem to be the notification of deaths on the trans-Atlantic voyage to loved ones back home. "My Dear and loveing Father and Mother & Brothers," write John Mullawny, Mary & Margret from Saint John, "thanks Be to God we arrived safe on land we had about 35 Deaths on board Mathew Feeny Died and John Gillin of Ardtarmond and John Leadens son James Currid of Donaveny and so forth... as soon as we landed the Captain sent them all in to a old poorhouse and provided them with plenty provisions William Clancy died there And Robert hendry of Rahally thanks be to God all our friends arrived safe" (July 14, 1847, 127). "I am very glad you did not come out here," writes Ference M'Gowan to her parents, also from Saint Johns, as "they are coming here and dieing in Dozens their is not a vessal comes here but the feaver is on Board... Catherine M'Gowan of Gurthnahowle died of feaver also Paddy M'Gowan of Drynahon Paddy Glanceys Daughter Biddy Frank M'sharey's wife, Paddy M'Gowan of Gurthnahowle is Lyin ill of the Feaver" (October 13, 1847, 130). "Dear Father Pen could not write of the distress of the Irish Passengers which arrived here thro Sickness death and distress of every Kind," writes Catherine Hennigan, "the Irish I know have suffered much and is still suffering but the Situation of them here even the Survivors at that awful time was lamentable in the extreme there are thousands of them buried on [Partridge] Island and those who could not go to the States are in the Poorhouse or beggin thro the streets of St John" (February 15, 1848, 130). In a similar vein, Mary McBride notifies her friend William Gifcut about the deaths she witnessed on the ocean voyage and also at Saint John, although she switches register very quickly to also comment upon agricultural practices in New Brunswick: "I want you to let Mrs. Gefcut know that old Mrs. waker died on st paterick [Partridge] Isiland one side of st Johns and her son an daughter laid sick with a fever at the same time I want you to let John gordan know that his son died on the passage Denis Meally and his Sister inlaw and Child died when they came a shore and Patrick carway and James Meglothland of balacanard. ..the most of the people that came out in your vessels have died in st johns I thought you would like to hear how the crops are

in this country they are generally very good except the potatoes... will you be so kind as to let briget rock know that I saw her Brother Mickeal he was well his wife and all his family died on the psage except his eldest daughter" (October 23, 1847, 131). Finally Owen and Honr. Henigan summarize the feelings of despair and disillusionment that many of Gore Booth's tenants must have felt after suffering through the trans-Atlantic voyage upon their arrival in the New World: "we left miserable St Johns," they write to their son, "it is allmost as bad as Ireland" (March 17, 1848, 131).

28. Eliza Quin, for example, combines eager enthusiasm for the new land of her adoption conjoined with admonitions for her parents not to follow her when writing to them from New York: "i dont wish you to part your property for some time to i send you more account i am verry glad for leaving there [Saint John] and coming to this Country this is the best Country... We had five weeks passage This is the best Country in the world it is easy making money in this Country but hard to save it" (January 22, 1848, 128). Likewise, Thomas Garry cautions his wife about the hazards of the trans-Atlantic voyage, writing that "I was ready to go to york to pay Passage for you and the children but I consider yous would not stand the wracking of the sea till yous be nourished for a time" (March 8, 1848, 129). "Let none of you attempt to come here this season," writes Ference M'Gowan to her mother and father from Saint John, "as there are so many here and the Feaver in every House almost." "It is a good place for young people," she adds, "but there are Enough at present until next summer... Let come next Summer the People are Lying out here on the shores under sheads and going to the grave numbers of them every day" (October 13, 1847, 130).

29. Catharine Bradley, for example, expresses cautious enthusiasm for the new land of her adoption coupled with feelings of acute homesickness in the very same breath, writing to her uncle "that I am quite well and in a good Situation, and so far, I can not say that I am sorry that I left home, except that my heart aches now and again, to see those faces which I loved and yet left them behind me"; "I am very glad that I did come, for I do feel most content here [in Saint John,]" she adds, so much so that I sometimes forget Old Ireland for a time" (October 6, 1847, 125).

Chapter Two

30. This view of the Famine Irish in Canada is especially pronounced in Cecil Woodham-Smith's classic history The Great Hunger: Ireland, 1845-1849 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962). "It is the prevalent idea", suggests Woodham-Smith, "that an emigrant necessarily possesses some of the qualities of a pioneer, but the famine emigrants were the reverse of pioneers. They had not set out to find wider horizons but had fled from hunger and pestilence. They were miserably poor, and many were forced to stay where they landed because they had not a penny to go further... A group of people can hardly have existed less fitted, physically and mentally, to subdue the wilderness than the Irish of the famine emigration" (267).

31. Sellar's manuscript for "Summer of Sorrow" is classified: MG 30 D 314, volume 10, file number 15, in the National Archives of Canada.

32. Thus, in his editorial note appended to "The Summer of Sorrow," Sellar declares it "humiliating to state that no effort was made by officials at Quebec to punish the captains and mates who had maltreated passengers... There is only one case on record of a captain being brought into account[:] the master of the Birnam [sic] was charged with cheating in the allowance of water" (460). De Vere corroborates this in his unpublished diary account of the trans-Atlantic journey where he writes that upon his arrival in Quebec (17 June, 1847), he

Lodged complaints before Buchanan agst Capt Guthrie for false measures of water. Cap. wants to compromise

I refused except in presence of Buchanan -- accompanied Capn before him -- made him pay 10 [pounds] which I handed to Red[?]....

for the use of destitute Emigrants.

(Trinity College Library, Manuscripts Department, MS 5061, 4-5)

33. A year after his arrival in British North America De Vere would reiterate in a letter to Sir G. Wilder how unsanitary the steamers serving the emigrants were when he first travelled upon them. "I have frequently travelled upon them since," he writes, "+ I found them comfortable; but I do most strongly maintain that they were "small, ill-ventilated, + incommodious" if considered with reference to the numbers + conditions of those whom they carried, those squalid masses of filth and disease whom they disgorged daily." "The effect of ill ventilation and infected air upon those in health," he adds, "was distinctly visible. I saw one poor fellow beginning to droop, took a cabin passage for him at once, put him into a clean airy berth, + had the pleasure of seeing him land at Toronto in perfect health" (Trinity College Library, MS 5075a, 178-179).

34. Of the 507 steerage passengers who embarked on the *Sisters* for Quebec, 119 of them died, 58 on the passage, 44 at quarantine, and then another 17 in the quarantine hospital at Grosse Ile after they had been disembarked from the vessel (O'Gallagher & Dompierre, 345).

35. It is worth noting here that in "Summer of Sorrow" Keegan's description of the hold of an emigrant vessel is even closer to De Vere's account. "The first time I went below [deck]," he remarks, "I was reminded of a cavern -- long and narrow and low in ceiling. Today it was a place for the damned. Three blinking oil lanterns cast light enough to show the outlines of forms that lay groaning on the floor, and give glimpses of white stony faces lying in the berths, a double tier of which surround the sides of the ship. A poignant wail of misery came through an atmosphere of such deadly odour that, for the first time, I felt sick, and had to beat a retreat up the narrow ladder" (386). Later Keegan returns to the hold to visit his sick aunt: "The column of heated air that rose from the hatchway," he writes, "was peculiarly fetid, but I did not hesitate to descend. Except for the cries and groans of the sick stillness prevailed... On getting to [my] uncle's berth, I found him sleeping heavily, his wife tossing by his side with the restlessness of her disease. She was dosing and muttering, showing that she was not herself. I tried to catch the words she uttered, and found in her delirium she was back in Ireland and to the happy days when uncle was a wanter [suitor] and was coming to see her" (391). Like De Vere before him, Keegan notes that "to the other horrors of the steerage is added the cries of those in delirium" (405).

36. Christopher Morash has cautioned that when Aubrey De Vere converted to the Roman Catholic church, his aristocratic brand of Catholicism should not be identified too closely with the popular religion of his tenants at Curragh Chase -- a proviso to keep in mind for Stephen De Vere and his own conversion to Roman Catholicism (see Writing the Irish Famine, 134-142).

37. It is clear in the Famine Diary that Keegan's decision to leave Ireland is motivated primarily by paternal concern for the welfare of his fellow emigrants. Thus, after discussing the matter with his fiance Eileen, he notes that "we both want to do something for our people and the choice is a difficult one to make. The vast majority of the tenants in this district have made the decision to risk emigration. They are our kith and kin. And once they sign a paper they will be at the mercy of the landlords and their agents. We feel that they are the ones who will be in great need for help. These considerations make us feel that we should join them" (34).

38. It is true that in a letter written later to Sir G. Wilder (June 8, 1848) De Vere does disavow the extraordinary nature of his sacrifice as "but trifling and transitory" -- "as nothing when compared to those [hardships] so frequently encountered by the clergy, + by that noble army of martyrs, the nuns" (Trinity College Library, MS 5062, 174) -- but in previous correspondence (December 23, 1847) he admits that while on board the *Birman* he "was subjected to privations and hardships such as few men in my rank are ever subject to" (MS 5075a, 50).

39. De Vere also assiduously opposes any potential legislative restrictions upon emigration that might break up familial units through selection criteria that favoured only able-bodied labourers. Any such laws that might break up familial units, he argues in a letter to Lord Monteagle (February 29, 1848),

would be fatal to Ireland because it would throw upon the miserable country crouching under hunger +

taxation the permanent expense of supporting in workhouses the wives children and parents of able bodied emigrants; fatal to Ireland because it would increase the spirit of lawless violence, resulting from her poverty; doubly fatal to Ireland, because it would sever the holy tie by which the law of god and man connects the members of one family; -- injurious to Canada, because it would deprive her of that large movement of labour which her soil requires; -- because it would render the emigrants who reached her soil less obedient to the law, as being separated from those who should be the natural hostages for their good conduct -- because it would weaken the strongest incentive by which she can be urged to contribute to works of commercial and national importance because, lastly, Canada, if she continues a province, must rise or fall with the prosperity of England; and pauperization, famine, and bloodshed cannot desolate Ireland, without paralyzing English commerce, and convulsing the foundations of her national existence.

(MS 5075a, 98-99)

40. De Vere recommends in his letter to T.F. Elliot that was brought before the Colonial Office imperial finance for colonial public works as a buffer to facilitate the acculturation of emigrants in the New World so that they "will be employed until they have acquired Capital and Skill enough to become good Settlers" (47). "Having become settlers," he continues,

they will soon become Capitalists by the increased Facilities of Transit and the enhanced Value of Produce which will result from the great Works at which they have themselves assisted. Having become Capitalists, they will soon become Employers of other Men's Labour, because they will find that that Labour can be profitably employed. Their Produce having found its Way to the Ports will stimulate Commerce, and generate that commercial Capital which will again by its Re-action become the Mainspring of social Improvement and extended Civilization.

(48)

41. In his letter to T.F. Elliot, De Vere expands upon how an increased and more regulated emigration would both offset congestion and discontent in Ireland and accelerate the pace of colonization in British North America, all the while stimulating the mercantilist economy. "If prompt and sufficient Measures be adopted," he writes, "for the Regulation of the Passage Economy, if the Arrangements for Emigrant Relief be liberally improved, and if an Impetus be given to extensive and valuable Works in Canada, I have no Doubt that the Government may safely give a direct Assistance to Emigration, and that the Consequence will be a present and growing Relief to the Distress of the Parent State, the Foundation in Canada of an extensive social Reform, and the rapid Increase of her commercial Wealth and agricultural Activity, ensuring to England large Importations of Provisions at a Period of the Year when they would be most valuable" (48).

42. The British "state as a whole," writes De Vere in a letter to Lord Monteaigle (December 23, 1847), "is as much interested in relieving Ireland by diminishing the redundancy of her population, as by preventing the influx of Irish pauperism into England" (MS 5075a, 38).

43. Ironically, Smith O'Brien himself had regarded assisted emigration in precisely these terms only eight years previously in a speech he delivered to the House of Commons, on June 2nd, 1840: without recourse to assisted migration, he exclaimed, "it may not be in our power at once to relieve the necessities of the population of the mother country, and, at the same time, to extend the resources and promote aggrandizement of our colonial empire" (2). He argues that the British government should send Ireland's indigent population abroad "instead of circumscribing their patriotism within the limits of a parish or a province" (12), for "we ought rather to teach them to indulge the more expansive nationality of regarding every portion of the British empire as the house of the enterprising and the free." However, the Famine proved a grizzly catalyst for O'Brien, leading him to reverse his ideas about emigration from Ireland where it only confirmed De Vere in his support for assisted migration schemes.

44. "I believe most fervently," De Vere writes in the same letter, "that a relaxation of the grinding taxation for the repayment of advances [for the Poor Law Extension Act] would do more to render her [Ireland] peaceful than the

concession of her political demands[,] because the way to a nation's heart is through its pockets; and I think the imposition of these taxes impolitic, unjust, and contrary to the spirit of the act of Union" (119). The grinding taxation that De Vere is referring to here is the Poor Law Extension Act, imposed in August 1847 on the premise that Irish property should pay for Irish poverty and that the "relief of distress was a local rather than a British or even an imperial responsibility" (Kinnealy, *This Great Calamity*, 183), the brunt of which should be born by the Anglo-Irish landlords. In other words, De Vere interprets the failed Young Ireland rebellion to be a reaction against England's perceived transgression against the spirit of the Act of Union rather than a popular mandate for its dissolution. Moreover, he adds that "the poor-rate taxation might be diminished by a liberal and well arranged emigration." Thus, as noted, De Vere turns to assisted emigration as a countervailing force to the revolutionary upheaval in Ireland and remedy for the unrest.

45. "Appropriating and accepting the cultural nationalist belief that Ireland has a metaphysical "spirit," and combining this with the Mitchelite thesis that England was the cause of the Famine, [Aubrey] De Vere filters both ideas through a theology of suffering already latent in nationalist poetry, and thereby transforms the whole constellation into a supernatural justification of imperialism:

Hate not the Oppressor! he fulfils
Thy destiny decreed -- no more:
What cometh, that the Eternal wills:
Be ours to suffer and adore.

This is a remarkable act of discursive conjuring, and one that we might think obscenely strategic -- which, in a sense, it is. But we should be wary of denying the sincerity of [Aubrey] De Vere's religious beliefs about the value of suffering" (Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine*, 140).

In the case of Stephen De Vere, surely no greater proof of sincerity could exist than his willingness to undertake the trans-Atlantic voyage, at considerable risk to his own life, to safeguard his former tenants and witness for himself their suffering while at sea and then in the colony, although to what extent Stephen De Vere shares his older brother's political and religious beliefs awaits further, more comprehensive analysis.

46. As noted, De Vere thus opposes "wholesale colonization" from Ireland because he fears that it "must fail from want of leaders; from the absence of the spirit of voluntary enterprise; and because it would bring with it the seeds of future disunion by transplanting old prejudices which unchecked by sufficient authority, would increase with overwhelming force in Canada where already the spirit of political and religious bigotry runs furiously high and the old slogans of "Orange" and "Green" have a more real existence and a more powerful influence than in Ireland" (40-41).

47. "I am leading a quiet economical and not useless life," De Vere writes to his mother on November 12, 1847, "and I feel convinced that I am taking a calmer truer and more comprehensive view of Canada, and one of more practical utility to my countrymen than if I had entered into political society. Politics at home have somewhat of the grandeur of an ocean roll; but Canadian politics are but a vexed and petulant eddy, impeding, with their upstart and clashing turbulence, the progress of the good ship, whose noble freight is the relief of the old World and the civilization of the New" (MS 5075a, 7).

48. "I have not invested any capital in land," De Vere writes to C.J. Goold (December 23, 1847), "the price of which, in any district near markets or society, is exorbitantly high as compared with the price of produce" (50).

49. "For some time back," De Vere writes in his journal on November 23, 1847, "the manner of P Neill, J Hanly, + R Kennedy has been most disrespectful to me. + they have avowed to others their determination never to work for me except at \$10 a month + to provide for themselves as soon as they have earned enough money to leave this" (MS 5061, 55).

50. De Vere anxiously awaited his brother's reply, noting in his journal on March 14, 1848 that "the English mail arrives, but again, brings me no letter from home. I cannot but surmise that this continued silence may result from my communications on the subject of my change of religion god grant that if an evil tidings be the cause, they may be of a nature affecting myself alone. I could be unworthy of the blessing of the faith I hold, if I did not consider it a glorious privilege to suffer for the very cold-furious north wind, with clouds of drifting snow" (MS 5061, 23).

De Vere's journal entry here attests to the strength of his religious convictions but hardly seems a positive endorsement for emigration to Canada. Lady De Vere's reaction to her son's religious conversion is not yet known and awaits further investigation, although it is worth noting Stephen De Vere did return to Ireland early in 1849 and that only two years later another one of her sons, Aubrey De Vere, also converted to Roman Catholicism.

Chapter Three

51. Even the term "Famine migration" itself is somewhat of a misnomer: although the Famine migration encompasses a six year span (1846-1852), "the horrors of the "coffin ships" were virtually restricted to vessels making for Quebec... in 1847" (Fitzpatrick, "Flight from Famine", 179), with a mortality rate of approximately thirty percent (Miller, p 292); in 1847 the principal cause of death on board ship was Typhus or "ship-fever", in 1849 it was cholera; the preponderance of the Famine migrants embarked for the United States and particularly New York City, although a significant minority -- especially in 1847 -- also emigrated to British North America, and flow-through migration and (less frequent) reverse flow-through migration between Canada and the United States -- of which the narratives of Langford and Johnson are representative -- considerably complicate the picture.

52. In his "Treatment of Passengers on Board the *Washington*," Foster records how he "gently remonstrated with one of the mates, who was cuffing and kicking the poor steerage passengers, observing to him that such treatment was highly improper and unmanly, and that he would save himself a great deal of trouble and annoyance, and win, instead of alienating, the hearts of the passengers, if he would avoid foul language and brutal treatment, and use civil treatment, and institute regularity in the serving out of the water, &c.; but he, in reply, said that he would knock me down if I said another word" (3). Compare this with "Summer of Sorrow" (392-394; 419-423) and Famine Diary (73-74; 81-83) for their respective account of Gerald Keegan's confrontation with the captain of the *Naparima* and his fisticuffs with the mate, after he brutalizes one of the Irish boys in the crew.

53. Kirkham has argued that widespread illiteracy, especially among Irish Catholics, effectively inhibited Catholic migration to the New World and hence the creation of extensive documentation and commercial literature about the migration progress -- "letters sent home by previous emigrants,... newspaper advertisements, handbills, and perorations in favour of emigration" (86) -- until the mid-nineteenth century; Schrier, on the other hand, uses Irish census statistics and US postmaster general records to contend that by the 1850s Irish emigrants were predominantly literate (at least six out of ten) and responsible for sending hundreds of thousands of letters back to Ireland (22). Even so, Scally cautions that such documents are probably representative only of a "special class of emigrant": "literate, English-speaking survivors wrote virtually all of them, which might eliminate as much as seventy percent (arguably) of all emigrants of this early period, most likely leaving a preponderance of those from the eastern counties and towns or those with some modicum of status -- though that might be only in the microscopic hierarchy of Irish peasant life" ("Liverpool Ships", 8). Furthermore, he notes that of all of the extant letters of the Famine migrants, "not more than a few make specific mention of the voyage itself, though it was the most important recent event in the emigrants' lives" (27). Whatever the extent of literacy among the Famine migrants, clearly a number of factors intrinsic to the trans-Atlantic voyage effectively inhibited all but a tiny minority of them from recording their experiences.

54. Catharine Parr Traill complains, on the other hand, not so much about the physical impediments to writing while at sea as the lack of subject matter to write about. "I left off writing, my dear mother," she says in a letter of August 6, 1832, "from this simple cause, -- I had nothing to say. One day was but the echo, as it were, of the one that preceded it; so that a page copied from the mate's log would have proved as amusing, and to the full as instructive, as my journal, provided I had kept one during that fortnight" (18).

55. In "Can there be an Archaeology of the Great Famine?" (in Morash and Hayes, 1996) Charles Orser further illustrates the cultural and historical affinities between Irish cottiers and American slaves (82-84) and insists upon the utility of a historical archaeological methodology to elucidate the material cultures and everyday lives of these "inarticulate" peoples "who had little lasting voice in the officials records of the past" (78).

56. In his letter to Lord Monteagle and the House of Lords Select Committee on Colonization from Ireland, Stephen De Vere contends that "Disease and Death among the Emigrants, [even] the Propagation of Infection throughout Canada, are not the worst Consequences of this atrocious System of Neglect and Ill-usage" in their transportation. For "A Result far worse is to be found in the utter Demoralization of the Passengers, both Male and Female, by the Filth, Debasement, and Disease of Two or Three Months so passed. The Emigrant, enfeebled in Body and degraded in Mind, even though he have the physical Power, has not the *Heart*, has not the *Will* to exert himself. He has lost his Self-respect, his Elasticity of Spirit; he no longer stands erect; he throws himself listlessly upon the daily Dole of Government, and, in order to earn it, carelessly lies for Weeks upon the contaminated Straw of a Fever Lazaretto" (46).

Scally argues that the debilitating and demoralizing effects of such a system of mass transportation "may have contributed to the same passive and unresisting frame of mind" amongst Irish emigrants that prevailed on board African slave ships and the trains of the Holocaust. "Aboard the *Intrinsic*," he notes, "nearly two stormy weeks out of Liverpool [in 1836] with 178 emigrants in the steerage, none but a solitary woman defied the ship's orders against opening the hatch in rough weather as the vessel broke up on the rocks one hundred yards off the Galway coast, as a whole village watched helplessly from the cliffs above. Despite exceptions, the numerous reported incidents of stunned slaves dragged from the steerage into the tropical sun to be drowned unresisting suggest a similar victimology. The case of a middle-aged man from Riga (a fictional account) also suggests one way in which the personal impact of the journey on the traveller might be seen as having a purpose in these systems, the purpose both of cowering the cargoes into inertia and obedience and of anaesthetizing the more squeamish witnesses from the horror of what was taking place. As the man recalled, "On a Tuesday I was walking on a street in Riga in a suit, a tie, a white shirt, pressed trousers and fedora. On Friday, I was disembarked from a cattle car packed with reeking feral beasts. And I was one of them" ("Liverpool Ships", 9).

57. "Lunacy, the catch-all of every serious mental disease of the time as well as many forms of recalcitrant, violent, desperate or absurd behaviour," notes Scally, has "not been examined in the context of emigration. The sudden dislocation of life which it entailed for so many must be expected to have raised insupportable mental pressures in some proportion of cases... But recording methods and symptomologies were inadequate to leave any clear picture of the kind or scale of mental disorders among the travellers... Needless to say, opinions about the rationality of Irishmen were bound up with other perceptions and presumptions of cultural origin whether in Liverpool or New York. It is also likely that the more lasting psychological traumas of the emigrants were neither visible nor of great concern to medical authorities who were often overwhelmed by the physical wreckage and contagion of quarantines to give any attention to longer-range problems, such as the incipient symptoms of mental illness among the emigrant children who, it seems safe to assume, suffered the most lasting damage" ("Liverpool Ships", 15).

58. Robert Scally, "The Movable Famine: Liverpool in Black '47," presented at New York University's "International Conference on Hunger," May 19, 1995.

59. In "Summer of Sorrow" Gerald Keegan records that "the fever spreads and to the other horrors of the steerage is added the cries of those in delirium. While I was coming from the galley this afternoon with a pan of stirabout for some sick children, a man suddenly sprang upwards from the hatchway, rushed to the bulwark, his white hair streaming in the wind, and without a moment's hesitation leaped into the seething waters. He disappeared beneath them at once. His daughter came hurrying up the ladder to look for him. She said he had escaped from his bunk during her momentary absence, that he was mad with the fever. When I told her gently as I could that she would never see him again, she could not believe me, thinking he was hiding. Oh the piercing cry that came from her lips when she learned where he had gone; the rush to vessel's side, and the eager look as she scanned the foaming billows" (405).

60. "A young married man sick with disease and desponding made a sudden rush for the stern and jumped overboard," the article reads; "one of the sailors jumped over to save him, but he was never seen to come up. After the boat returned from picking up the sailor the wailing of the poor young wife was heart-rending." "An Awful Voyage on the *Sir Henry Pottinger*" can be found in the same file in the National Archives of Canada as *The Catholic Record* articles that Sellar used more extensively in devising "Summer of Sorrow" (MG 30 D 314, volume 10, file number 15).
61. "Besides that natural tendency, which hurries into oblivion the last woes of the poor," Redburn writes of his ill-fated voyage on the *Highlander*, "other causes combine to suppress the detailed circumstances of disasters like these. Such things, if widely known, operate unfavorably to the ship, and make her a bad name; and to avoid detection at quarantine, a captain will state the case in the most palliating light, and strive to hush it up, as much as he can" (281).
62. "The "American letter" was no naive travelogue or candid self-revelation," suggests Fitzpatrick, "but a carefully coded political statement, rich in half-articulated signals and warnings which were minutely studied by its audience. The writer's enthusiasms or reservations about American life were not and should not be taken at face value: a hint of disappointment at male earnings might act as a deterrent to emigration by brothers but also as a covert encouragement to sisters" ("The Irish in America", 274). "It should also be noted," writes Scally, "that, in the pre-famine period, the writing of a letter may have been an act performed once or twice in a lifetime by a literate peasant and so the letters convey a nearly ritual form and style which separate them from ordinary forms of communication. They are replete with a) "how is ...," followed by a list of the entire family and half the neighbors, to assert that ties and duties continued; b) the author is enjoying good health; c) an enquiry about ailing kin; d) a brief catalogue of recent successes and virtues of the new land -- often including excuses for not enclosing a remittance; e) a prayer usually beginning with "May the Lord....," often crowded in the margin of the last page, imploring help in overcoming vicissitude; and almost invariably, hopeful references to future reunion, either vague or less vague" ("Liverpool Ships", 8).
63. Patrick Finan's Journal of a Voyage to Quebec in the Year 1825 (1828) and Standish O'Grady's long poem The Emigrant (1842) both supply belated examples of eighteenth century travelogue and its digressive style of narration. In his critical edition of The Emigrant, Trehearne adduces Charles Batten's observations on the genre and the role of the narrator in such texts: "by reflecting on the moral, political, economic, or cultural implications of various foreign and domestic settings," he writes, "the eighteenth-century traveller often characterized himself as a philosophic, splenetic, or sentimental traveller without resorting to detailed autobiographical narratives. But since reflections -- like aquetints -- do not form an essential part of every travel book, the amount of space devoted to such matters varies greatly from one account to another. Nevertheless, the traveller who chose to include reflections usually strove for four essential qualities: his opinions should not be too numerous, they should arise naturally out of the places described, they should be original, and they should not prejudicially conflict with accepted moral or political opinions" (xxviii). In Famine migration narratives, however, a singular account of Irish desolation and enforced expatriation is grafted onto this established template, thereby leading to a collision of narrative conventions.
64. The timber ships that frequently carried emigrants as human ballast on their return trips to British North America, notes Simpson, were particularly vulnerable in high seas and susceptible to capsizing (104, 119; also see Mackay, 206-215): they would become identified in the Victorian popular imagination and numerous maritime ballads as a fleet of lumbering, derelict, waterlogged vessels, and associated with countless shipwrecks and incidents of violence and even cannibalism among survivors on the high seas -- a macabre "custom of the sea" that Simpson has explored in all of its social and juridical ramifications (95-145).
65. When his vessel was threatened with immanent destruction during an ocean gale, Johnson records how he "took the matter coolly enough" (35), setting a standard for courageous resignation and equanimity that few of his Roman Catholic fellow passengers -- most of whom were gathered on deck "like sheep in a pen," "praying and crossing themselves" and "crying on the Captain to save them" (34) -- could hope to match. John Burke too stresses his personal bravery and the leadership role he played under adverse conditions, when his vessel entered seas that were

"always very squally[, --] and ours was no exception no picknic -- I'm free to say I acted as Cap'n between decks and a most uncomfortable and trying position it turned out to be" (24). However, it remains Standish O'Grady's "self-image" and self-serving account of his heroism during a storm at sea (despite his advantaged age of sixty) that must seem, as Trehearne notes, most "far-fetched" (133). Thus, O'Grady records how, as "the breakers madly pressed the sea," he

sprang aloft, disposed in time to see,
 Then through the mist protruding rocks appear,
 Scarce three short cables forward as we steer.
 With eager haste I glide and seize the helm,
 Steer back our course while fractured waves o'erwhelm.
 We pipe all hands, all eager shift her sail,
 And steer our course obedient to the gale;
 Meanwhile the seamen from the quivering mast
 Proclaimed aloft the dangers that we passed.
 Then floating wide with sea-room and good cheer,
 O'er mountain waves our course we safely steer,
 Whilst all regard with kindness as they view
 The *chance protector* of a dexterous crew --

(ll 232-244)

In all likelihood, the only thing that O'Grady can truthfully be credited with saving in this dubious account is its precarious rhyme scheme and meter.

66. Indeed, so overwhelming is the experience of an ocean gale that Smith protests the inadequacies of his powers of representation, adverting instead to literary convention and the prior "description of "A Storm at Sea," written, I believe, by a missionary, [as] such a faithful statement of facts, that when you have read it, you will be able to form some idea of a storm" (9).

67. William Smith records a similarly favourable impression of the pilot as the *India* approaches New York harbour: "about nine o'clock next morning," he writes, "the pilot came on board amid the huzzas of those who were able to shout for joy. Early in the afternoon, the exciting cry of "Land!" "Land!" "Land!" ran through the ship like a wild fire. A number of passengers came down from the deck to tell their sick relatives and friends that they had seen it, and yet such were my feelings, vacillating between hope and fear, that I could scarcely believe it. The effect it had on some of the passengers, baffles all description. Some fell on their knees and thanked God for his mercy to them, some wept for joy, others capered about, exhibiting extravagant demonstrations of joy" (23). "Early on the morning of the 27th May we sighted land," writes John Burke of his own arrival at New York City, "and to the weary, Emaciated, forlorn Emigrants [it] is about the happiest moment of his life no words can describe it. Thanking the lord for our deliverance and full of hope in the future" (28).

68. Keegan's paradoxical collocation of pristine wilderness and human degradation becomes even more prominent as the *Naparima* moves downstream, the serenity and tranquillity of his natural settings clearly offset by the continuing spectacle of Irish death and misery. His journal entry for May 23, 1847, describes how "The landscape continues to be a feast for the eyes. The clear, deep, blue water of the St Lawrence reflects islands while the bold, stately forests stand out in marked contrast with the gently rolling landscapes to the southeast. A few billowy clouds floating in the tender blue sky complete the picture. We succeeded in getting most of the passengers on deck to enjoy the show. Scenes like this should help cancel out the memory of the dark, sorrowful days and nights that we have gone through.

Eileen and I were leaning over the bulwark this afternoon when we spied a dark looking object floating by us. It was a hideously wasted body of a victim from one the vessels ahead of us. The body didn't even have any kind of a burial shroud" (93-94).

69. Ironically, however, while Moodie and Traill both perpetuate a set of colonial stereotypes that describe the Irish in Canada as being in need of English education and civil refinement, more laudatory appraisals of them can be found in the writing of contemporary English parliamentarians and political economists, including Wilmot Horton, William Smith O'Brien, Thomas Malthus, Nassau Senior, and E.G. Wakefield (see Johnston, 69-90; MacKay, 56-69). Indeed, what few critics of Moodie or Traill consider is that they settled on lands that were initially opened up for Irish emigrants only a decade prior to their arrival by Wilmot Horton and Peter Robinson (for whom the town of Peterborough was named), who led two contingents of voluntary Irish migrants into the Upper Canadian wilderness in 1823 and 1825, laying the foundations for settlements that subsequent proponents of assisted emigration would consider highly successful. "Throughout all his publications, as well as in the Reports" to the British Parliament, declares William Smith O'Brien in an address to the House of Commons on 2nd June, 1840 (eight years before he himself would lead an unsuccessful rebellion against that very House in Ireland), "Sir Robert Wilmot Horton refers, with great pride, to the success of the Irish emigrants who were located in Canada, at the public expense, during the years of 1823 and 1825" (12). O'Brien notes "the happy change which has taken place in their condition, and the gratitude which they feel towards the British Government for having enabled them to obtain it." "Assuredly, there is no sentiment of the human breast," he proclaims, "more truly estimable than the love of one's country... [But] it seems almost as if we were mocking the sensibilities of the poor when we tell them that they ought rather to perish in wretched indigence at home than to live in comfort and independence in the colonies. No, Sir, instead of circumscribing their patriotism within the limits of a parish or a province, we ought rather to teach them to indulge the more expansive nationality of regarding every portion of the British empire as the home of the enterprising and the free" (18).

The influence of the Irish community in Peterborough upon Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Trail, and the ways in which their pejorative representations of the Irish belie more favourable assessments of them in English parliamentary discourse, would seem a fruitful avenue for research that must await further investigation.

70. "What ordinance," Redburn asks, "makes it obligatory upon the captain of a ship, to supply the steerage passengers with decent lodgings, and give them light and air in that foul den, where they are immured, during a long voyage across the Atlantic? What ordinance necessitates him to place the *galley*, or steerage-passengers' stove, in a dry place of shelter, where the emigrants can do their cooking during a storm, or wet weather? What ordinance obliges him to give them more room on deck, and let them have an occasional run fore and aft? -- There is no law concerning these things. And if there was, who but some Howard in office would see it enforced? and how seldom is there a Howard in office!" (282). Nevertheless, despite his scepticism about legislation designed for the protection of emigrants at sea, Redburn does feel that at least limited steps should be taken for the prevention of loss of life. "To be sure," he writes, "no vessel full of emigrants, by any possible precautions, could in case of a fatal disaster at sea, hope to save the tenth part of the souls on board; yet provision should certainly be made for a handful of survivors, to carry home the tidings of her loss; for even in the worst of the calamities that befell patient Job, some *one* at least of his servants escaped to report it" (285).

71. "To throw starving and diseases paupers under the rocks at Quebec, ought to be punishable as murder," reads Whyte's frontispiece; he sympathetically records the wrath of a distraught Irish emigrant who, having just lost his wife, declares: "By that cross, Mary, I swear to revenge your death; as soon as I earn the price of my passage home, I'll go back, and shoot the man that murdered you, and that's the landlord" (86).

72. For a detailed and nuanced consideration of O'Grady's conservative politics, see Trehearne's commentary, xlvi.

73. Her faction's leaders yet may lend an ear
 And aid their poor to find subsistence near;
 Religion's chieftains one day may relax,
 And bounteous nobles grant the good they ask,
 Wisdom restrain and goodness overawe,
 Give labour recompense, and mend the law.

(*The Emigrant*, // 2103-2108)

74. Michael Quigley, "Grosse Ile: The Most Important and Evocative Famine Site Outside of Ireland," conference paper presented at New York University's International Conference on Hunger, May 20, 1995.

75. Michael Quigley, "Grosse Ile: The Most Important and Evocative Famine Site Outside of Ireland," conference paper presented at New York University's International Conference on Hunger, May 20, 1995.

Conclusion

76. Jim Jackson has expressed scepticism about the figure of Robert Whyte and the authenticity of The Ocean Plague. He notes that the full title of the narrative is The Ocean Plague: A Voyage to Quebec in an Irish Emigrant Vessel, Embracing A Quarantine at Grosse Isle in 1847. With Notes Illustrative of the Ship-Pestilence of that Fatal Year, By a Cabin Passenger, and that Robert Whyte only surfaces in the marginalia of the text, as the person who entered it, "according to Act of Congress, in the year 1848,... In the Clerk's office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts" (private correspondence). His doubts have been further exacerbated rather than mitigated by Mangan's recent edition of Robert Whyte's 1847 Famine Ship Diary: The Journey of an Irish Coffin Ship, and especially his contention that Whyte's narrative "confirms Keegan's [authenticity] in the similarities of experiences met by the passengers in the coffin ships" (9). However, whether or not The Ocean Plague has a single author or was compiled from composite emigrant accounts and dockside stories, as Jackson suspects, there can be no doubt that it was published in 1848 on the subject of the Famine migration, making it an authentic Famine migration narrative for my purposes.

77. I have been unable to consult two other unpublished journals, listed by Kerby Miller in his endnotes for Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America as "contemporary accounts of the Famine voyage" (621-622). These are the W. N. Lyster manuscript, 29 December, 1848 (Lyster Mss., Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor); and S. Harvey's Voyage Journal (Maureen McVea, Newtownards, Co. Down, Northern Ireland).

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