

before and the things that they held dear. From now on, in lean years as well as fat, 'every man' would be 'accountable for his own portion' only.

What started as a whisper gradually grows louder as knowledge drawn from family lore, and eventually even the historian's own childhood memories, becomes voluble over that gleaned from nineteenth-century documents. Along the way we learn the Mac Suibhne (rendered Sweeney or McSwine) family's own intimate connections to Gallagher's misdeeds. An evident affection for the place and people makes one wonder at the author's protest that 'genealogy's charms are lost on [him]'. But he is certainly sincere when stating that this is not an exercise in settling scores or 'casting up' the sins of a long dead man.

E. P. Thompson famously sought 'to rescue ... the "obsolete" handloom weaver' and "'utopian" artisan' from the 'condescension of posterity'. Mac Suibhne too seeks to salvage the voices of the vanquished, the hopes that they harboured, and the codes and the values which made them do the things they did. These were people moved by visions of the future that had not yet succumbed to the one that triumphed in the Famine's wake.

Born in 1969, the Beagh of his boyhood had seen the back of landlords and the state that once held sway. And yet in other ways it remained 'that place' that was forged by and imposed upon those who lived through this period of 'adjustment'. Its diminished population clinging fast to the isolated farms that they now owned and from which, for a century, every generation since had seen siblings, sons, and daughters expelled without compunction. Viewed in the longer run, Gallagher's greatest crime might have been to embrace the aspirations of this modern, self-improving, and unsentimental Ireland sooner and more fully than his fellows ever would. While the ripples of those changes have continued to be felt into living memory and our own time, much of the outrage that they once provoked has ended.

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GRIFFINTOWN: IDENTITY AND MEMORY IN AN IRISH DIASPORA NEIGHBOURHOOD.

By Matthew Barlow. Pp 249. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 2017. \$85.

On St Patrick's Day in 1901, the St Ann's Young Men Society mounted their annual play at Théâtre Monument-National. Irish Catholic families, especially from Griffintown – 'a poor inner-city working-class neighbourhood' in Montreal – packed the audience. *The pride of Killarney*, a melodrama, followed the life of Maurice O'Donnell. O'Donnell, an Irish gentleman, angered an English rival by winning the heart of a young Irish woman. To exact revenge, the rival led O'Donnell into a life of drinking and vice. However, the hero triumphed in the end. Evoking the Irish countryside and the virtues of protagonists with typically Irish names, the play marked a symbolic return to a romanticised Ireland. More, the production synthesised a simplified, yet aspirational, Irishness performed not just on the stage, but as part of a wider projection of working-class Irish Catholic identity in Griffintown and Montreal (pp 40–45).

While there is a significant historiography on Irish immigrants in nineteenth-century Montreal, Matthew Barlow's *Griffintown* concentrates on the interconnection of memory and Irish Catholic identity since 1900. The book argues that, despite the neighbourhood's always diverse population, representations of Ireland and Irish culture remained central to both the lived and imagined Griffintown (pp 7–8). In doing so, it draws on the work of cultural geographers and the critical scholarships on memory, performativity, and diasporas. 'Memory work' – defined as presentations of cultural memory – is the book's operative concept (p. 11). Barlow asserts that memory work is embedded in social and cultural processes, as well as rooted in place. Therefore,

the creation of a 'usable past' had a distinctive character in Griffintown. Barlow stresses that working-class residents actively shaped the process (pp 14, 18). The study will appeal to readers interested in memory and ethno-religious identity, as well as the history of the Irish diaspora.

The book progresses chronologically, following three narrative arcs. The first story is about an Irish Catholic neighbourhood forged in the 1900s–1920s; the second focuses on the dissolution of the community in the 1930s–1960s; the third traces the projection onto Griffintown of an imagined history of Irishness in the 1990s–2000s. The three parts of the book offer rather different approaches to the study of memory, though Barlow does little to highlight the divergence. In the first phase, the analysis concerns working-class identity formation. In the second period, oral history is used to reconstruct the character of everyday social life. In the final phase, the book provides a critical reading of nostalgia-tinged commemoration.

The early chapters are the most effective. Blending social and cultural history, they reveal the popular politics and cultural production of working-class residents. Barlow argues that, if the Irish-Catholic proportion of the population declined, residents ensured that Griffintown continued to be seen as Irish (pp 25–7). Chapter one focuses on the activities of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (a fraternal society) and the St Ann's Young Men Society (a parish organisation), as well of the annual St Patrick's Day parade. An essentialised Irishness was repeatedly articulated and reinforced (p. 48). During and following the First World War, as Chapter two traces, residents expressed dual Canadian and Irish loyalties. Neither identity was uncomplicated. If numerous men volunteered to serve in the Irish Canadian Rangers, some Irish Catholics opposed conscription (pp 49, 66–70). Moreover, amid a radicalisation of Irish politics, Irish Montrealers diverged on whether to call for home rule or demand Irish republicanism (pp 73–5). In the 1920s, diaspora politics in Montreal became more muted and the St Patrick's Day parade shrunk in size and importance, suggesting an extenuation of Irish Catholic identity (p. 80). Taken together, these chapters demonstrate the grassroots memory work that went into forging working-class Irish Catholic identity.

The middle chapters, which draw on oral history, are the least persuasive. Chapter three offers a sketch of popular social life. It insists that residents retained a sense of community despite population decline, deindustrialisation, and transformations in the built environment. Barlow maintains that the St Ann's church, and its parochial organisations, were central to Irish Catholic community (pp 84–6, 94–5). Chapter four discusses postwar urban redevelopment and goings-on in the parish. Strikingly, 'Irishness' is scarcely a theme of these chapters. Barlow does go partway in explaining this absence. Intriguingly, he argues that Irish Catholics assimilated into a generalised Anglo-Montreal identity in the 1950s and 1960s (p. 85). This contention is not sufficiently sustained with evidence, though. Barlow's repeated proclamation of Griffintown's coming 'death' is grating (e.g., p. 105). Here, the author adopts the language of urban ecology, a model (originating in the 1920s work of sociologist Robert Park) comparing the city to the body and the natural world. Martial metaphors, like the recurring insistence that Griffintown was 'under assault' from an 'infrastructure onslaught', are also prominent (pp 87, 91, 121). The figurative language focuses attention on the physical landscape, and the net effect is to reify a place called Griffintown. However, the parish-based attachments described in these chapters unsettle Barlow's insistence on Griffintown as the unit of analysis. If the book foregrounds a story of Irish-Canadian neighbourhood 'death', a subtler counter-narrative of outmigration and declining church attendance in an Irish Catholic parish in Montreal is also evident.

Chapter five shifts attention to memorialisation. Through a critical analysis of oral histories, it argues that former residents contributed to a re-Irishification of Griffintown in vernacular memory (pp 144, 153). Barlow works to trouble the essentialist portrait, but also suggests that the popular effort to insist on Griffintown as *the* Irish neighbourhood in Montreal largely succeeded (p. 185). For a book titled *Griffintown*,

only the memory work in this last chapter is definitively ‘Griffintown’-specific. Yet the ways in which civic working-class Irish Catholic identity, parish-based social memory, and neighbourhood commemoration overlapped speaks to some of the book’s complexity.

Engagingly, and to his credit, Barlow situates himself relative to his text. He has been involved in commemorating the neighbourhood and opposing its gentrification (p. x). While he distinguishes his study of public memory formation from participation in that same process (p. 148), he still expresses ambivalence over change and concern over the loss of Griffintown’s memory (p. 192). An example of active history, *Griffintown* certainly walks a line between historical scholarship and invoking the memory of one neighbourhood.

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TRINITY IN WAR AND REVOLUTION, 1912–1923. By Tomás Irish. Pp vii, 300. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy. 2015. £17.50. €30.

In *Trinity in war and revolution*, Tomás Irish offers a consideration of the struggles of Trinity College in the intense social, cultural and political changes in Ireland in the turbulent early years of the twentieth century. In the course of seven chapters, the book explores Trinity’s role during the home rule crisis, First World War, Easter Rising, War of Independence, the Irish Civil War and beyond. It also looks at the impact these events had on the college, its staff and students.

Trinity College occupied a peculiar position in Ireland. A bastion of Protestantism and the Ascendancy, the college was as much the object of long, covetous glances from nationalists and the Catholic church as it was the butt of their vilifications. Irish navigates confidently the twists and turns in the history of the college; from the pomp and celebration of its three-hundredth anniversary to the fearful uncertainty of Ireland in the post-revolutionary period. This period witnessed, as Irish skilfully narrates, a process wherein Trinity’s social and cultural pre-eminence diminished, leaving the institution financially crippled, adrift and dislocated in post-partition Ireland.

Trinity College was, as Irish argues, a conservative institution with a propensity for producing radical figures such as John Redmond and Douglas Hyde (p. xvii). However, its role in the home rule crisis went beyond providing one of the central figures of the period in Sir Edward Carson. Trinity was a stronghold of Irish unionism and its provost, Sir Anthony Traill, placed the college squarely against home rule, going so far as to demand the college be excluded from any settlement and remain a British enclave in the heart of Dublin (p. 49). Irish argues that the college was never divorced from political and social reality. But its intervention in events was seldom without controversy. During the Dublin Lockout, for example, the efforts of college clergy to provide relief for the families of strikers were condemned as proselytising. The Catholic church in Dublin characterised the college’s intervention as a ‘fight for souls’ (p. 65).

Like other universities across Britain and Ireland, a significant number of staff and students, some 500 men from the college community, died in the First World War (p. 203). The book offers a vibrant and poignant discussion of the impact of the war on the college. Irish provides a forthright discussion of Trinity’s role in the escalating political violence in Ireland during the war and after. The college, he points out, had a leading part in the theatricality of Easter week, ‘playing out its historic role as pantomime villain’ by locking its gates and providing a base from which the army could suppress the rebellion (p. 148). The political convulsions of the period left Trinity floundering as its political and social influence withered away (p. 205). Even so, the college sought ‘quietly to do right by all parties’, dutifully sending its M.P.s to the short-lived southern Irish parliament established by the Government of Ireland Act (p. 212).