

indispensable to the political and social dynamic' (p. 16). In a society experiencing radical change, 'the rhetoric of honour tried to create an order, and to provide a menu of general references that were minimally shared' (p. 17). But this is an unsatisfactory explanation, since the most relevant changes related to honour were located not only in political and social dynamics, but also in the new model of masculinity advanced by the ethos of competition that dominated the culture of the last part of the nineteenth century. It is for this reason that in most 'civilised' parts of the world we see the emergence of codes of honour, even when the political and social circumstances were different from those affecting Argentina. Besides, the recognition of honour codes as a 'natural' expression of manhood did not, for the most part, originate in purely political discourse, but in scientific discourse. Since Gayol barely addresses the contradictory ideas about manhood that existed during this period, one of the most relevant elements of her topic's dynamic is absent.

This may explain why we find what seem to be striking contradictions. For example, in an early chapter the author states that her book is not proposing the existence of one kind of honour for men of the general populace and another for men of the elites, since there were no differences in 'substance or principles' (p. 19). In a later chapter, however, we learn that there was a popular form of duel that was not recognised as a 'natural' expression of men's honourability and that did not operate under the same principles. In fact, popular expressions were not recognised as honourable because they were associated with an old masculine model (p. 163). The fact that this model is never explained or contextualised confuses the reader, and leaves one wondering why the argument was not structured more around the competing notions of what it was to be a man.

The existence of such contradictions only exposes the limits of the ambitious goals that Gayol has set for her book, without in the least erasing the important contributions that it makes to our understanding of the period. The precise and excellent account of the world developed around new notions of honourability, and their social and political impact, will remain indispensable for understanding the culture of modernity in Argentina.

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Helen Kelly, *Irish 'Ingleses': The Irish Immigrant Experience in Argentina 1840–1920* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), pp. xx + 250, €60.00, €26.95 pb; £40.00 hb.

Research on the Irish in Argentina – smaller in quantity than on the Welsh but greater than on the Scots – is based on the work of Eduardo Coghlan. He assembled plausible data on the origins of Irish immigrants by province and county; he calculated the volume of nineteenth-century Irish immigration and its gender division; he identified the distribution of the migrants and their immediate descendants in the province of Buenos Aires. Coghlan demonstrated that most emigrants to Argentina originated in the province of Leinster, from the counties of Westmeath, Wexford and Longford, in that order. They arrived in Argentina principally in the 1820s, 1840s and 1860s. Of the three decades, the 1840s, when the Irish settled as sheep farmers, was the most important. Coghlan estimated Irish male and female immigrants at a little more than 7,000 in total.

Dissenters from Coghlan's conclusions inflated the numbers of Irish immigrants but failed to submit any proof. Letters of Irish settlers recently published by Edmundo Murray illustrate the wealth, respectability and moderate outlook of the nineteenth-century rural Irish. Another scholar found numerous Irishmen among the deserters from the invading British armies of 1806 and 1807. Many works on the Irish focused on Father Anthony Fahy (or Fahey), the community leader in 1843–71. In the 1880s, Irish-Argentiniens appeared in Congress and as local mayors, although in very small numbers. Several scholars narrated the life of Eduardo Casey, a great land speculator whose fortunes crashed in 1890. In the twentieth century the Irish grew less visible, although their influence survived in private ethnic schools – Irish priests led the great annual procession to Luján on St Patrick's Day. Prominent Irish-Argentiniens included members of leftist political movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

Helen Kelly's excellent work on the nineteenth-century Irish community in Argentina displays a sound reliance on Coghlan. She notes the principal origins and destinations of many migrants, the relatively large numbers of women, and the migration peaks of the 1840s and 1860s. More could be said on these two decades. The Famine era of the 1840s prompted migration to Argentina mainly among middling groups of rural tenants impoverished by the way in which the Irish Poor Law forced local communities to support the starving poor. Thus high taxes induced emigration to Buenos Aires from areas such as County Westmeath, and the role of the infamous blighted potatoes became more indirect and complex. The emigrants comprised people of relatively high status, some with enough capital to rent or even buy land. In the 1860s during the American Civil War, some Irish preferred to head for Argentina rather than face the military draft in the United States. They arrived in Buenos Aires during the wool boom (triggered by the Civil War), but their fortunes differed from those of their predecessors of the 1940s. They had far less easy access to land. Land prices and rents rose during subsequent decades too, as the wool economy of Buenos Aires stagnated, and Irish migration to Argentina almost ceased. Kelly omits discussion of the origins of emigration, which possibly began in favourable reports about Buenos Aires from returning former military deserters of 1806–7. She emphasises female emigration but fails to explore endogamy in creating an English-speaking ethnic community.

Numerous writers have previously emphasised the political moderation of mid-nineteenth-century Irish emigrants. Before 1850, settlers in Buenos Aires rarely went further than endorsing the moderate Daniel O'Connell; a generation later they became staunch opponents of radical Fenianism. Kelly emphasises the willingness of the Irish to be treated as British (*'ingleses'*, she prefers to call them). To acquiesce in an 'English' identity mirrored the aspirations and self-perceptions of a predominantly rural middle class. The term connoted a high status that few Irish of Buenos Aires disdained. The Irish enjoyed privileged consular protection under the commercial treaty of 1825. During the civil wars of the mid-century, the consular register contained many more Irish than English and Scots names; the main motives for registering lay in avoiding military service and protecting rural property against pillage.

In this book, Anthony Fahy appears as a resourceful defender of the Irish ethnic community. Kelly shows how he wrangled with his superiors in Dublin when he endorsed the regime of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Fahy turned to Rosas, however, only when the British spurned his request for a subsidy. His pledge of allegiance to Rosas

proved no more than a short-term technique of ethnic manoeuvring. He found his chief benefactor in Thomas Armstrong, an Irish Protestant and one of the richest 'Anglo' merchants of the era. Armstrong funnelled funds to Fahy, who bestowed them on aspirant Irish landowners. The ties between the two men illustrated Fahy's relentless but pragmatic pursuit of methods to consolidate the Irish community and his willingness to exploit non-Catholic Irish linkages.

Kelly has an interesting chapter on William Bulfin, a fine Irish author who wrote several appealing pastoral narratives about Argentina and Ireland. During the Boer War of 1899–1902 Bulfin sought to promote Irish nationalism in Argentina and published numerous vitriolic anti-imperialist tracts in *The Southern Cross*, his newspaper in Buenos Aires. The campaign failed, and Bulfin returned to Ireland. The writing might have attracted a wider readership were it not for Bulfin's decision to publish in English alone, a clearly misguided tactic on his part. Bulfin's son had a leading role in the Easter Rising of 1916, after which he faced execution. Like American-born Eamon De Valera, he escaped death because he was foreign, namely Argentinian-born.

On Bulfin's era, Kelly might have considered social and cultural change in the community more extensively. By this point, access to land had disappeared; the Irish Argentinians were seeping into the capital; Irish girls, once the chattels of families on remote farms, now worked in the city as chambermaids or laundresses. The Bulfin era coincided with the onset of community urbanisation, exogamy and greater assimilation. Little scope existed for Irish republicanism; instead, the moderately inclined, sober-minded Irish Argentinians appeared far more likely to join the *Unión Cívica Radical* and to become Argentinian Radicals.

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Brian S. McBeth, *Dictatorship and Politics: Intrigue, Betrayal, and Survival in Venezuela, 1908–1935* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008), pp. xiv + 578, \$60.00, hb.

Writing in 1995, historian Steve Ellner observed an emerging trend in modern Venezuelan historiography. He noted that some had begun to re-evaluate traditionally positive portrayals of the post-1945 democratic governments, as well as the commonly held negative images of the military/dictatorial governments of the first half of the twentieth century.¹ Brian S. McBeth's masterful study of the government of Juan Vicente Gómez represents a signal example of this new trend. In his encyclopaedic analysis of the politics of the Gómez regime, the author depicts Gómez as neither a simple tyrant nor a puppet of foreign interests, but as a consummately skilled politician who enjoyed broad domestic support. The author also provides a detailed and thoroughly researched account of the evolving opposition to the regime.

Known for his in-depth analyses of early twentieth-century Venezuelan politics, in *Dictatorship and Politics* McBeth challenges widely held beliefs about

¹ Steve Ellner, 'Venezuelan Revisionist Political History, 1908–1958: New Motives and Criteria for Analysing the Past', *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 30, no. 2 (1995), pp. 91–121.