NOT IRISH ENOUGH: AN ANGLO-IRISH FAMILY'S THREE CENTURIES IN IRELAND. By Sara Day. Washington D.C.: New Academia. 2021. £34.

Sara Day's *Not Irish enough* begins with the iconic scene of the burning down of the author's ancestral home, Derrylahan Park, in County Tipperary, after the failed assassination of her grandfather, Charles Head, a local unionist, in the troubled 1920s, a period that is often remembered in Ireland as if it were far more recent than a hundred years ago. The author goes on to explore the thorny issue of the legacy of the Anglo-Irish, a group that has often been reviled in popular culture, and whose legacy can reasonably be considered to be chequered, by exploring the history of her own family, whom she describes as having been 'minor gentry'. She provides a detailed picture of the historical background to the family's arrival and role in Ireland, carefully annotated with detailed notes such that even a reader with no prior knowledge of Irish history, and in particular the troubled seventeenth century, would be left with a clear understanding of the context and circumstances. The style, blending a conventional historical take with a more narrative style, follows the vicissitudes of the family, which had a noteworthy presence in Waterford, then an important market centre, from the late seventeenth century.

Most readers will find themselves in more familiar territory from chapter 16 onwards, as the author traces the Head family's experiences through a period marked by the rapid growth of nationalism, at a time when there were growing numbers of educated, politically astute people among the Catholic majority of Ireland. While well-to-do, the family was not among the biggest landowners, and was, therefore, somewhat insulated from growing resentment. However, they remained firmly unionist in outlook and loyalist in ideals. Ultimately, the troubled years of the 1920s placed the family in a difficult situation, as political loyalties and popular interest in the redistribution of landed estates to small farmers made the environment increasingly difficult for members of the gentry, even those who were more modestly-off than some. When the family seat was burned down, they struggled to obtain reasonable compensation from the new Irish state and were finally compensated with a sum far smaller than its value.

It is gratifying to note that the author deals with the experiences of both male and female members of the Head family, as women's experiences are so often overlooked, or referenced only briefly. For example, chapter 10, entitled 'Revolution, the Irish parliament and the 1798 Rebellion', provides an interesting discussion of the marriages of the daughters of the family, and how these could serve to consolidate the family's power in a variety of ways, against the background of the stormy political waters that would lead to the rising of 1798 and, ultimately, to the move towards Irish independence. Chapter 15, '"Phoenix": challenging fate in Tipperary', discusses, among many other things, the marriage of Isabella Biddulph, aged just twenty, to William Henry Head, aged fifty, in terms of the greater freedom she would enjoy as a married woman, and the pragmatic reasons why women of her social class often entered relationships in the context of a society in which even wealthy women rarely had much property of their own. Also covered is the fact that infant mortality rates remained high, and that even the well-nourished wealthy classes often buried many children.

Justice is not always done to the author's impressive body of research in the tone of the writing, which can be excessively anecdotal and rather defensive at times. She draws extensively — perhaps to excessive length — on family memoirs that are often engaging, particularly when they evoke Edwardian times before the family's fortunes in Ireland faltered, and she quotes at length from judiciously selected historical material. In both cases, a careful editorial hand might have reduced the length of these extracts while allowing the author to focus more carefully on the point she is making. A tighter volume, a quarter to a third shorter than the current version, would make the story of this fascinating family more accessible, without losing any of the valuable content.

Notwithstanding these minor issues, *Not Irish enough* will be a treasure-trove to the researcher with an interest in the Anglo-Irish or indeed in Irish history generally, providing not just a wealth of historical material, but also the human face of both much- and

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less-studied periods in Irish history. The author's gaze upon her own family is refreshingly objective, notably in the epilogue, in which she discusses the fact that her own grandfather's view of Irish history was just as partial, in its own way, as the nationalist view taught in Irish schools when the Irish state was young.

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Subscription theater: democracy and drama in Britain and Ireland, 1880–1939. By Matthew Franks. Pp 258. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2020. US$89.95.

We are currently seeing a new wave and era of cultural/entertainment subscription. Subscriptions globally are increasing as we join in our chosen (and sometimes multiple) streaming service — from Netflix to Spotify, yet in Ireland there is a dismal rate of compliance with the television licence payment for R.T.É., the Irish national broadcaster. We, it seems, gladly pay and subscribe for some content while choosing or expecting it for free from others, even if one is providing a public service. Often what we choose to pay for depends on who or what influences us. 'Subscribe here' is the familiar button on the screens of our daily online interactions and regarding how we consume culture. We are all subscribers now.

But what cultural forms utilised subscription within its financial model in the past? Subscription and various iterations of 'Friends' schemes for theatre and performing arts are common in contemporary theatre, with a rise in the independent company model, most recently seen since the 1970s and 1980s in Ireland. Previously, and historically, subscription was a means for theatres and theatre managers to engage audiences and build networks of support. But did the building of such subscriber lists and supporters interfere with programming and artistic direction? Did subscription allow for an independent model of production? A singular answer to these questions may not be possible for each but the system of subscription is one that has considerable presence (and as is argued) a weighted presence in the politics of theatre in Britain and Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century and in the decades that followed.

In *Subscription theater: democracy and drama in Britain and Ireland 1880–1939,* Matthew Franks explores the intersections between subscription of the theatre in Britain and Ireland in the period that straddles the late nineteenth century to the the mid twentieth century. The time period in question illuminates some of the context for the book's wider consideration. The former date of 1880 lends itself to political and theatrical significance (terms not exclusive of each other throughout the book), as, for instance, 1880 is dominated by events of the Irish Parliamentary Party election success in April, and only weeks earlier in February, Dublin's Theatre Royal burnt down. The later date of 1939 alludes to international political events, such as the beginning of the Second World War, or in Irish theatrical terms at least, the death of W. B. Yeats.

The book outlines an original and innovative survey of the role of subscription, lists and the cultural as well as social politics of their role in the theatre, sometimes functioning as both exclusive and/or inclusive clubs. In utilising such club models, subscription theatres were able to avoid the often-censorious pre-production vetting and potential enforced closures of Britain's Lord Chamberlain's Office, which was in force until the 1960s. In mid twentieth-century Ireland, the subscription/club model became associated with the 'pocket theatre' movement, synonymous with the likes of the French 'Le Théâtre de Poche' model of bohemian Paris, and reflective of a new, innovative, experimental and provocative theatre, at venues like the Pike Theatre on Dublin's Herbert Lane, in the early 1950s. Franks's book begins with the examination of private subscription theatres in London at the end of the nineteenth century, including the Independent Theatre Society (1891–7) and the Stage Society (1899–1939). Further attention is then given to public subsidised theatres, mostly regional repertory companies across the U.K.

As Franks outlines the context to British and Irish subscription theatre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the lists for a particular theatre was an important