Introduction
'Why do we like being Irish?'

> Why do we like being Irish? Partly because
> It gives us a hold on the sentimental English
> As members of a world that never was,
> Baptised with fairy water;
> And partly because Ireland is small enough
> To be still thought of with a family feeling,
> And because the waves are rough
> That split her from a more commercial culture;
> And because one feels that here at least one can
> Do local work which is not at the world's mercy
> And on this tiny stage with luck a man
> Might see the end of one particular action.
> It is self-deception of course;
> There is no immunity on this island either[1]

Louis MacNeice's epic poem *Autumn Journal*, composed between August and December 1938, was written in reaction to the turbulent events in Europe and to Ireland's growing isolationism as a nation. In this section of the poem, MacNeice's intended audience appears to be Irish: his sardonic attack is aimed at the Irish – and, one assumes, at its government, led by Éamon de Valera, in particular – who deceive themselves into thinking that Ireland's culture and traditions can protect it from the political turbulence of the outside world. MacNeice's summative comment on Ireland's 'self-deception' points beyond those Irish who are complicit in the packaging of Irish culture as an historical, even mythological, artefact, to those outside Ireland who choose to collude in the myth of Ireland's separation from the rest of the world. In *An Age of Innocence* (1998), Brian Fallon questions the one-sidedness of such negative views of Ireland during this period; however, he still

notes that: 'The newborn Ireland was grappling, sometimes hesitantly, and sometimes ineptly, with its role or place in the modern world'.[2] Yet Irish culture – as an export – had arguably never been more popular.

The cultural consequences of the Celtic Revival, instigated by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, J. M. Synge and Douglas Hyde around the turn of the twentieth century, coupled with the growth of Irish nationalism and the establishment of Home Rule in the Irish Free State in 1922, had led to a surge of interest in Ireland throughout Europe and America. American writers and thinkers had been particularly inspired by Ireland's self-determination, which recalled the parallel struggles for independence of the two nations; as Fiona Green puts it: 'In the early twentieth century, as in the eighteenth, the Irish nationalist cause was compatible with the American revolutionary spirit'.[3] But MacNeice's warnings, which might also be extended to those Americans who derived inspiration from Ireland during this period, note the political consequences of Irish nationalism while addressing the cultural ramifications of Ireland's self-determination, as 'Irishness' risks becoming a commodity.

The reasons that MacNeice puts forward for why 'we like being Irish' might be extended to the American modernist writers discussed in this book, as each turned towards Irish culture at various stages during their careers. During the first half of the twentieth century, and into the second, American culture was suffering from a crisis of faith. In his essay 'The literary life', published in Howard E. Stearn's *Civilisation in the United States* in 1922, the contentious but influential critic Van Wyck Brooks denounced 'the singular impotence' of the 'creative spirit' of American writing, and expressed his concern for 'the chronic state of our literature'.[4] Likewise, two of the writers discussed in this book, John Steinbeck and Marianne Moore, questioned the dissatisfaction that they identified at the core of American culture. As mentioned in the Preface, in an editorial 'Comment' in *The Dial* in March 1928, Moore described the 'restiveness' of the American spirit as akin to a disease that had to be cured;[5] similarly, in an essay, 'Paradox and dream', in his *America and Americans* collection (1966), Steinbeck noted that 'we are a restless, a dissatisfied, a searching people'.[6]

Meanwhile, American writers had begun to question the usefulness of English culture to their own work. Paul Giles elaborates on this issue, arguing that one of the 'most common impulses' of American modernism 'involved rejecting the legacy of English culture

as an inappropriate model for the representation of a brazenly new American world'.[7] T. S. Eliot displayed a dismissive attitude towards English literature in his essay 'The three provincialities', its subject the interrelation between English, American and Irish literatures. In one famous passage Eliot claimed that there had been a 'complete collapse of literary effort in England'.[8] As late as 1949, Wallace Stevens was still disparaging British culture: 'A good many of us are at the moment very much bored with Ireland's neighbor. … The truth is that the British flatter themselves at the expense of the world, always have and always will'.[9] In *Yeats and American Poetry* Terence Diggory notes a similar trend, where he argues that 'Once the Americans had determined not to make use of English tradition, they found themselves without any tradition, because America had no past of its own'. Although the latter clause can clearly be confuted, what Diggory's arguments make clear is that American writers actively sought a tradition to 'make use' of – and one that allowed them, as Diggory puts it, to declare 'aesthetic independence' from England.[10]

Ireland, on the other hand, could provide a new and exciting locus of inspiration at exactly the time when American and British cultures were falling out of favour. Of the three literatures discussed by Eliot in 'The three provincialities' (American, British and Irish), he presents Irish literature as the most self-assured. Although Eliot is dismissive of the nationalising tendencies of Irish writers, he does credit them with a sense of purpose at a time when other literatures appear to be falling apart. Referring to authors like James Stephens, who advocated a return to the Irish language in their writing, Eliot comments that 'The Irish radicals are commendable in so far as they mark a necessity for a choice' between the traditions of a universal language and the traditions of a nation or race.[11] Although Eliot views this 'choice' as ultimately self-destructive, since universality should be the only aim of literature, he cannot help but admire the Irish writers' self-belief.

Returning to MacNeice's lines from *Autumn Journal*, we are given possible reasons for why one might 'like being Irish' that are pertinent to the example of American modernist writers – and which in turn help inform the critical framework of this study. MacNeice theorises

that the 'small' size of Ireland can evoke 'a family feeling' (l.66), thus extending a consideration of inheritance beyond genealogical lines and towards the significance of familiarity in shaping one's self-identity. Harold Bloom argues in *The Anxiety of Influence* that 'American poets labor' to '"complete" their fathers',[12] while in *Haunted English* Laura O'Connor discusses 'The role occupied by family as an intermediary zone' between the 'individual and inherited discourses of race'.[13] In each case, the 'family' and the 'fathers' are mediators who function literally and metaphorically: generating an idea of family that is racially and culturally nuanced. This reading of 'a family feeling' is the preoccupation of Chapter 1, which discusses the complexities of affiliation and disaffiliation within the responses to Ireland of American modernists Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, Moore and O'Neill – all of whom had some sort of family connection to that country. For example, F. Scott Fitzgerald and John Steinbeck espoused their maternal Irish backgrounds as a means of giving them a 'discourse', which might mediate between their individual voices and their inherited influences as they were embarking on their literary careers. In Steinbeck's early work *To a God Unknown* (1935) the desire to complete the work of the fictional father saturates every page – but more telling is the starring role of Steinbeck's Irish grandfather in *East of Eden* (1952). Conversely, Fitzgerald's semi-autobiographical novel *This Side of Paradise* (1920) is weighed down by the constant absence of a father, manifested in the protagonist's attempts to replace his father with the religious figure Monsignor Darcy. This father/'Father' contrast reveals a sense of loss and a desire for recovery related to Fitzgerald's Irish Catholic background.

Reading further down the passage from MacNeice, we move from a consideration of family to a description of the natural imagery traditionally associated with Irish culture. The lines 'And because the waves are rough / That split her from a more commercial culture' (67–8) suggest sardonically that Ireland's natural characteristics provide a barrier of cultural self-protection from the outside world. Particularly telling is the association between the natural world and a pure, unsullied 'culture' that has nothing to do with commerciality (although we suspect that MacNeice's concerns for the commodification of Irish culture are pointing that way). This emphasis on nature recalls the arguments of the Celtic Revivalists, which drew on Ernst Renan's 'La poésie des races Celtiques' (1859), and on Matthew Arnold's essays *On*

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the Study of Celtic Literature (1867), to advocate an intermingling of the natural and the magical within Celtic culture. Consider, for example, Yeats's essay 'On the Celtic element in literature', in which he cites Renan: 'The Celtic race had "a realistic naturalism", "a love of nature for herself, a vivid feeling for her magic"'.[14] The Celtic Revivalists had even set a precedent for actively drawing inspiration from a tradition that was not, strictly speaking, their own: the Anglo-Irish Protestant playwright J. M. Synge had, after all, travelled to the west coast of Ireland to find 'authentic' material for his plays.[15] Even the cynical Ezra Pound admitted to having been 'drunk with "Celticism"' in the early 1900s.[16]

The fact that the Revivalists' idealised Ireland of myth and legend – 'Baptised with fairy water' (l.64) – is, according to MacNeice, 'a world that never was' (l.63), does not necessarily hinder American writers' attraction towards it: indeed its unreality allows them to construct Ireland as their imagination dictates. The modernist period in America coincided with a surge of interest in the Celtic Revival, thanks to the publishing efforts of Elizabeth Yeats's Cuala Press; to the Abbey Theatre tours in the USA in the 1910s; to the dissemination of writings by and on the 'Celtic' in American periodicals; and to the efforts of revivalists such as W. B. Yeats and Æ (George Russell), who made tours of America in the 1920s and 1930s to celebrate what Moore termed, in a 1928 review of the first of Æ's talks in New York, the place of poetry at 'the core of reanimation in Ireland'.[17] Chapter 2 therefore takes as its focus the impact of the Celtic Revival on American modernism, and considers also the mythmaking that was involved in this transmission of 'Celtic' ideals to the USA.

This idea of mythmaking is also extended to Chapter 3, which concentrates on one of the products of the Celtic Revival – a return to the land and an idealisation of rural communities. In the USA, meanwhile, the vogue for travelogues and travel writing, which Nicola J. Watson traces back to the mid-nineteenth century – and to the (largely) American writers who instigated this 'transatlantic sub-genre' – was only increasing. Accompanying this relatively new trend was the tendency for American writers to view idealised landscapes, taken from their reading experiences, as more inspiring than the real thing: as Watson points out, literary locations can be seen as a 'fictive landscape awaiting imaginative (re)possession and (re)discovery'.[18]

Marianne Moore acknowledges the paradox of irony and imaginative potential in this attitude in her 1941 poem 'Spenser's Ireland'. By describing Ireland, a place she has only read about, as 'the greenest place I've never seen',[19] the poet/speaker derives poetic inspiration from her geographical distance from a country that exists mainly in her imagination. Meanwhile in 'I go back to Ireland', his account of a trip to Ireland made in 1952, Steinbeck acknowledges his initial 'powerful reluctance' to see 'the home place', as if he knows it will not live up to his idealised view of his Irish ancestors' home town.[20] Another writer who makes use of the Irish landscape is Wallace Stevens, whose late poems 'Our Stars Come From Ireland' and 'The Irish Cliffs of Moher' rely on a transatlantic translation of the idea of rural Ireland across the Atlantic. What these writers' responses to Ireland's landscape reveal is a process of mythmaking that is generated as much by the stories told by Irish writers as by the deliberate processes of self-enchantment that their American counterparts enact in order to remain attached to the 'green' idyll of the Emerald Isle.

Behind MacNeice's lines, with their emphasis on the 'natural' within Irish culture, lies a more savage reading of Ireland's desire for cultural self-protection. Linked to the potential dangers that MacNeice perceives in the packaging – and commodification – of Celticism is a concern about the growing culture of mistrust that is apparent within Ireland itself. MacNeice's description of Ireland's separation from a 'more commercial culture' (l.68) brings to mind the Irish government's increasingly xenophobic attitude towards external cultural influences, which had developed in the years following the passing of the Censorship of Publications Act in 1929. Donal Ó Drisceoil views the passing of the Act as 'part of a general process of "Catholicization" that became the primary element in the forging of a separate identity';[21] as a Protestant Northern Irish writer, MacNeice would have felt deeply this drive for separation. The Boards appointed between 1930 and 1947, who decided which books could be published in Ireland, consisted of prominent Catholic figures, with one 'hostage Protestant' included as a 'decoy', as banned writer Francis Hackett put it in 1936.[22] Ó Drisceoil notes that 'most of the leading writers of modern fiction from Britain, America, and Continental Europe' were banned, 'leading cynics to dub the *Register of Prohibited Publications* an "Everyman's guide to the modern classics"'. But in fact the Board was crueller still

to Irish writers; as Ó Drisceoil puts it, 'the list of banned authors in the 1930s and 1940s reads like a "Who's Who" of Irish literature', and includes Joyce, Beckett, O'Casey, Liam O'Flaherty, Austin Clarke, Frank O'Connor and George Moore.[23]

The concluding lines of the passage from MacNeice, 'It is self-deception of course; / There is no immunity on this island either' (73–4), note the willed 'self-deception' of the Irish in thinking that their culture will somehow provide them with 'immunity' from the harsh reality of an encroaching international situation – the latter line echoing John Donne's famous maxim 'No man is an island' (from *Meditation XVII*). However, whereas MacNeice's Irish seem able to endorse their continued separation from the rest of the world – a fact that would manifest itself in their majority support of de Valera's policy of neutrality during World War Two – American writers with Irish sympathies or interests would not have been able to continue so easily with this apparent 'self-deception'. John F. Callahan questions the tendency of modern American writers to 'seek mythologies of fraudulent innocence':[24] although this is strongly put, we might see how for MacNeice, Irish culture as it stood in 1938–39 might have offered such a mythology. Nevertheless, those Americans who had been attracted previously to the apparent innocence of Irish culture and Celtic mythology would have had to reassess their attitudes once America entered the Second World War in 1941.

Chapter 4, therefore, deals with the knotty issue of politics in relation to individual poets' patterns of enchantment and disenchantment regarding Ireland. Although W. B. Yeats wrote famously in 1915 in 'On Being Asked for a War Poem' that 'I think it better that in times like these / A poet's mouth be silent',[25] following the events of Easter 1916 he felt compelled to respond to political events in Ireland – troubled by a desire simultaneously to condemn the violent direction that nationalism had taken and to inscribe himself into the mythology of events. Facing similar questions concerning public responsibility and also experiencing a desire for poetic self-assertion, Marianne Moore displayed in her two political poems about Ireland – 'Sojourn in the Whale' (1917) and 'Spenser's Ireland' (1941) – a shift from a metaphorical, romanticised celebration of 'Irishness' to a troubled, complex response to the global situation of World War Two and Ireland's continued policy of neutrality. Another New-York based poet, Lola

Ridge, wrote her 1916 poem 'Tidings' in response to the Easter Rising in terms of her own socialist ideologies, imagining herself in Sackville Street, Dublin with the rebels.[26] Each poem displays a nuanced response to the political events in Ireland that tells us as much about the poets' self-identities as Americans (and as women) as about the parlous political situation that their writings aim to record and report.

But even when dealing with political issues, the same American writers remain enchanted by the promise of Ireland: in 'Spenser's Ireland', for example, where Moore's poet/speaker asserts a sense of being 'troubled' by her Irish affiliations, she still seeks solace in the 'enchantment' of Ireland's culture and traditions.[27] In his oft-quoted Preface to *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), J. M. Synge famously asserted his confidence in the cultural promise of Ireland, connecting it to the inspirational nature of 'local life': 'In Ireland, for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery and magnificent, and tender; so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the springtime of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks.'[28] The more cynical Irish critic John Eglinton noted in one of his regular 'Dublin letters' for *The Dial* in 1923 that 'our [Irish] authors are fond of making the special claim for Ireland, that almost alone of European nationalities it has remained affiliated to antiquity'.[29] Yet in an earlier letter he had expressed a grudging pride in Irish literature, for its 'proud consciousness of belonging to a secret order, with incommunicable beliefs and traditions'. Moreover, as if in answer to the opening statement of his 'letter' – 'I sometimes think that it is very nice of American readers to be interested in Irish literature' – he had noted that as Irish authors were for the most part 'true and disinterested interpreters of Irish nationality', 'what would the poets and artists of other lands not give to belong to a country in which literature and art are the instrument of national expression?'[30] The importance placed on literature and art within Ireland still holds considerable currency, as acknowledged by the American poet and critic Ben Howard in an essay of 1986. Howard noted that despite having 'no Irish heritage', he still felt 'drawn' to Irish poetry, persuaded as he was by the 'natural eloquence of Irish writers', their 'gift of fluency', and 'the historical capaciousness of Irish poetry, its power to contain and transform its melancholy past'.[31] Who wouldn't want to 'draw' on a culture that promised so much?

During the modernist period, much of this poetic promise was contained within the figure of W. B. Yeats – the subject of Chapter 5. As a main instigator of the Celtic Revival, as a visitor to the USA with the Abbey and on solo trips as a lecturer,[32] and as a poet who saw American sales of his poetry increase from the early 1910s onwards, Yeats provides a cultural epicentre for many of the writers with whom this study is concerned. In a 1934 review of Yeats's *Collected Poems* for *The New Yorker*, the poet and critic Louise Bogan made great claims for Yeats's writings, noting that 'His native gifts – the extraordinary ear underlining his technical brilliance, his heritage of blood in which run wit, bitter intelligence, and a fund of beautiful common speech – always stood him in good stead'.[33] Bogan's view of Yeats as a writer whose 'gifts' are derived from his 'native' identity and 'his heritage of blood' finds parallels with the opinions of the Jewish-American writer Babette Deutsch, an avid reader and critic of Yeats, who claimed in a letter to the Irish poet and critic Thomas McGreevy that Yeats's 'wisdom' was learned from his father, 'that grand old man, John Butler Yeats'.[34] But Bogan's comments also tap into a persuasive view of Yeats within American literary circles as the 'ageing' poet of brilliance – the one to beat. Thus the last chapter – to borrow Philip Coleman's phrase concerning John Berryman's relationship with Yeats[35] – deals with 'the politics of praise' surrounding the nuanced ways in which American modernists responded to Yeats within their criticism and poetry, considering also his lasting legacy as a continued source of influence in American culture.

As discussed in the Preface, a main aim of the book is to consider why American modernist writers might have become enchanted by Irish culture, or disenchanted at other times, and to describe how they responded to these moments of (dis)enchantment. But beyond this, we need to ask what it is about American literature that allows it to absorb and reshape cultural influence to its own ends, according to the affiliations (and disaffiliations) of individual writers. Other studies have discussed this topic in relation to other sources of influence; Paul Giles, for example, has treated this subject in *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (2002). In the introduction he

outlines his ‘main concern’ for his project as ‘looking at ways in which American writers from Herman Melville to Thomas Pynchon have compulsively appropriated and reinvented aspects of English culture to advance their own aesthetic designs’.[36] Why this ‘cultural appropriation’ and reinvention? What is it in American culture that allows American writers to carry out such acts of imitation – or plunder – for the pursuit of personal literary aims?

We might contend that American writers are more open to the idea of transnational cultural appropriation, because the relative lack of history in America, when coupled with the complex ethnic and cultural make-up of the country itself, renders traditional notions of nationhood both irrelevant and inaccurate. In its earliest use, ‘nation’ is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as ‘A large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, or occupation of the same territory, so as to form a distinct people’; from its very outset, then, America could not have claimed to have many of these common ‘factors’. In *American Crucible*, Gary Gerstle makes a deconstructionist claim for the idea of a nation, with the American nation particularly in mind: ‘That nations are invented and variable underscores how much they are socio-political creations and, as such, historically contingent. Their origins may be purposive or accidental. They can gain or lose strength, expand their territory or lose it, fortify their myths of origins and belonging or see them undermined or altered, celebrate aspects of their literary history or repress them’.[37] If a nation is ‘invented and variable’, a ‘socio-political creation’ contingent on historical change, then there is no reason why a writer might not borrow ideas from another nation’s culture, as no nations are stable, and all are in constant flux. Looking back across the twentieth century, Paul Jay has noted that although ‘the old narrative’ perpetuated by such critics as F. O. Matthiessen ‘has a coherence’, this coherence ‘is derived from an idealized myth of national origins and identity’. In *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941), Matthiessen celebrates the flowering of a national American literature in the mid-nineteenth century. Instead Jay proposes the view, as first propounded by the Mexican philosopher Edmundo O’Gorman in *The Invention of America* (1958), that ‘we cannot separate the history of the Americas from the history of modernity’:[38] helping to explain, perhaps,

American modernists' open-minded and sometimes iconoclastic views of national literature and cultural influence.

Gerstle's claim that nations can 'celebrate aspects of their literary history or repress them' is particularly useful for this study, which assesses the degrees to which American writers engaged and disengaged with Irish culture at various stages in their literary careers. Again this reading is appropriate to American modernist writers in particular, as we are reminded of the culture of experimentalism encouraged by Pound's dictum to 'make it new': in these writers' often fickle literary experiments with Irish culture we perceive both the modernity of the American experience and its uneasy relationship with history and tradition. Of course, the irony is that for some of these writers, the very qualities that they were seeking in Irish culture – permanence, coherence, continuity – were the same qualities that they were prepared to break with in their understanding of nations and national literatures. However, what I am careful to stress here, additionally, is the idea that some of these 'breakages' found their models in the activities of the Irish writers themselves – through the mythmaking, and cultural constructions, that informed the activities of the proponents of the Celtic Revival.

A counterpoint to Gerstle's and Giles's more deconstructionist approach can be found in Ron Ebest's introduction to his *Private Histories: The Writing of Irish Americans, 1900–1935*, in which he asserts the importance of 'ancestry' to an Irish-American identification, despite the question of 'desire':

> It is also a question of self-identification: to be Irish American, in other words, is to some degree a matter of choice. That does not mean that Irish-American ethnicity is arbitrary or fictional; not anyone, after all, can be Irish; ancestry, no matter how elastic intermarriage may make the definition, remains the crucial element. What it does mean is that to some degree, for those descendants of Irish Protestants of the eighteenth century, or of Irish Catholics of the famine generation, ethnicity is an expression neither of nationality nor of religion nor of class nor of race. It is an expression of desire.[39]

Adding complexity to Ebest's arguments, this book emphasises the importance of 'desire' in American writers' use of Irish cultural models while exploring instances of cultural appropriation and interaction that

exceed the boundaries of an Irish-American paradigmatic framework. Whereas Ebest contends that 'to be Irish American' is 'to some degree a matter of choice', we might complicate this statement by adding two further categories of Americans: those whose background leads to a desire for identification or affiliation with Ireland, and those who simply express an interest in Ireland at certain times, and for certain reasons. For neither of these categories would the label 'Irish American' be accurate.

What an avoidance of terms such as 'Irish American' allows is the acknowledgement that for certain American writers, although their connection with Ireland might have provided inspiration at certain times, it always came second to their self-identification as American. As William Vincent Shannon puts it in *The American Irish*, 'To describe one group of Americans in terms of their ancestry and background is not to say that they are any less American for what they did and are'.[40] Fiona Green comments on this issue when discussing the peculiar case of Marianne Moore, who despite claiming to be 'Irish by descent, possibly Scotch also, but purely Celtic' in an oft-quoted letter to Ezra Pound in 1919, was actually a mixture of English, Anglo-Irish, and Ulster/Scots-Irish Presbyterian.[41] Describing Moore's 'flexible approach' to Ireland, Green notes that Moore's 'own generational ties prompt her at certain times to call herself Irish, but to call that identity into question if it compromises what she regards as her proper position as an American'.[42] Of course, it is not the same thing to describe oneself as 'Irish' as to term oneself 'Irish American'. Moore's 'desire' to describe herself as 'Irish' is related less to ancestry, and more to 'a matter of choice' within her self-framing as 'American'. Although Ebest argues that 'not everyone, after all, can be Irish', it seems that certain American writers thought they could be, if they so chose.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, another subject of this study, might fit more comfortably into the 'Irish American' bracket, thanks to his maternal Irish immigrant background. Nevertheless, the change 'from Irish zeal to abandonment of the idea' that his early letters and his semi-autobiographical novel *This Side of Paradise* (1920) display marks Fitzgerald as a compulsive appropriator of Irishness, rather than a dedicated Irish American. Ebest comments that Fitzgerald 'reconceptualised Irishness as a collection of abstract personality traits', therefore 'divest[ing] the term (and its traits) of any historical, cultural or geographical punctuation'.[43] While Ebest's claim is perhaps reductive

as an overall assessment of Fitzgerald's responses to Ireland, it does show how by making 'Irishness' appropriate to his literary endeavours, Fitzgerald was able mould it into his individual American expression.

Most significantly for this study, the avoidance of racial or cultural labels allows in turn for an avoidance of their associated assumptions. By expanding traditional investigative parameters beyond ethnic or racial lines to consider individual instances of cross-cultural pollination, I am able to discuss instances that might have little to do with genealogical 'desire', and additionally to incorporate the one-way traffic of cultural appropriation. This is why I do not cover the same ground as Ron Ebest's *Private Histories*, or Charles Fanning's studies on Irish-American fiction and the literature of the Irish diaspora, or Daniel Tobin's recent studies on Irish-American poetry.[44] There will be some overlaps, however. Although the present study discusses some of the same writers as Ebest's study – such as Fitzgerald and O'Neill – the critical perspective shifts to their interests in Irish and American culture and the relations between them, rather than focusing just on their responses to Irish America: an important distinction. Similarly, by discussing Stevens's interests in Ireland, I cover similar ground to Daniel Tobin in his recent work on Stevens; however, my focus is on Stevens's use of Ireland, from which he is necessarily *separate*, as a model of enchantment for his modernist American expression. I am less convinced by a reading of Stevens's late poems on Ireland as preoccupied with the routes of emigration and return, through what Tobin perceives as Stevens's response to 'the Irish experience of historical disinheritance, emigration [and] diaspora', as what I emphasise throughout is the imaginative potential that Stevens derives from his distance from, and lack of real experience of, Ireland itself.[45]

Edna Longley has discussed the need for a new focus, which extends the study of Irish and America beyond narratives of exile, immigration and return, and focuses instead on Ireland as a cultural resource for American writing. In her essay 'Irish bards and American audiences' (2000), Longley notes that questions of 'American-Irish literary interaction' have remained 'largely untouched' by critics on both sides of the Atlantic.[46] Some critical work has been carried out in this area; for example, John Harrington has written on Irish drama and the New York stage, Joseph Kelly on the reception of Joyce in America, and Terence Diggory on Yeats and American poetry.[47] This book will open

out these (and other) areas of study by describing and contextualising instances of American-Irish cultural interaction and appropriation taken from a broad range of American modernist writing.

Rachel Buxton points out in her introduction to *Robert Frost and Northern Irish Poetry* that 'the reception of literature can depend upon who is reading it, the community to which they belong, and the contemporary political and cultural situation'.[48] Meanwhile Patrick Ward links the 'migratory' and 'modernist' experiences, where in both cases the experience might be as much imagined as real: he describes 'the migratory artists of modernism; migratory in the literal and the metaphoric modes in a loose, transnational association of highly self-conscious artists, imposing their narrative order on culture and experience'.[49] This book will consider both of these contentions, describing how American modernist writers appropriated Irish culture in relation to their contemporary political and cultural situation – and illustrating how the 'migratory' aspects of American modernism (literal, yes, but most often metaphorical) are peculiarly suited to this act of appropriation.

Notes

1 Louis MacNeice, *Autumn Journal*, XVI, ll. 61–74, in *Collected Poems*, ed. E. R. Dodds. London: Faber, 1966, pp. 101–53 (131–4).
2 Brian Fallon, *An Age of Innocence: Irish Culture 1930–1960*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1998, pp. 1–2.
3 Fiona Green, '"Your trouble is their trouble": Marianne Moore, Maria Edgeworth and Ireland', *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations*, 1.2 (October 1997), 173–85 (174).
4 Van Wyck Brooks, 'The literary life', in *Civilisation in the United States: An Enquiry by Thirty Americans*, ed. Howard E. Stearns. London: Jonathan Cape, 1922, pp. 179–98 (179, 180).
5 Moore, 'Comment', *The Dial*, 84.3 (March 1928), 269–70 (269).
6 Steinbeck, 'Paradox and dream', in *America and the Americans*, reprinted in *Of Men and Their Making: The Selected Non-fiction of John Steinbeck*, ed. Susan Shillingshaw and Jackson J. Benson. London: Allen Lane, 2002, pp. 330–8 (330).
7 Paul Giles, 'From decadent aesthetics to political fetishism: The "oracle effect" of Robert Frost's poetry', *American Literary History*, 12.4 (Winter 2000), 713–44 (720).
8 T. S. Eliot, 'The three provincialities' (first published 1922), reprinted in *Essays in Criticism*, 1.1 (January 1951), 38–41 (39).

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9 Wallace Stevens to Thomas McGreevy, 9 September 1949, in *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, ed. Holly Stevens. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996, pp. 646–7 (646).
10 Terence Diggory, *Yeats and American Poetry: The Tradition of the Self*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983, pp. 4, 8.
11 Eliot, 'The three provincialities', p. 39.
12 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 68.
13 Laura O'Connor, *Haunted English – The Celtic Fringe, The British Empire, and De-Anglicization*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 160–1.
14 W. B. Yeats, 'The Celtic element in literature' (1897), collected in *Ideas of Good and Evil*. Dublin: Maunsel & Co., 1905, pp. 270–95 (270).
15 See J. M. Synge, *Travelling Ireland Essays, 1898–1908*, ed. Nicholas Grene. Dublin: Lilliputt Press, 2009.
16 Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. with an introduction by T. S. Eliot. London: Faber and Faber, 1954, p. 287.
17 Marianne Moore, 'Comment', *The Dial*, 84.3 (March 1928), 269–70 (270). See also further discussions on this in the Preface.
18 Nicola J. Watson, *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic and Victorian Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 10, 4.
19 Moore, 'Spenser's Ireland', *Complete Poems*, ed. Clive Driver. London: Faber, 1987, pp. 112–14, l. 4 (counting title as first line, as was Moore's practice).
20 Steinbeck, 'I go back to Ireland', first published in *Collier's*, 31 January 1953, reprinted in *Of Men and their Making*, pp. 262–9 (263).
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22 Francis Hackett, 'A muzzle made in Ireland', *Dublin Magazine* (October to December 1936), 8–17 (15).
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25 W. B. Yeats, 'On being asked for a war poem' (initially entitled 'A reason for keeping silent'), *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach. New York: Macmillan, 1966, p. 359, ll. 1–2.
26 Lola Ridge, 'Tidings (Easter, 1916)', *The Ghetto and Other Poems*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1918, p. 101; see ll. 11–12.
27 See Moore, 'Spenser's Ireland', ll. 67, 20.
28 Synge, 'Preface', *The Playboy of the Western World*, in *Collected Works, Volume IV: Plays, Book 2*, ed. Ann Saddlemyer. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1982, p. 54.
29 John Eglinton (W. K. Magee), 'Dublin letter', *The Dial*, 76.1 (January 1924; letter dated December 1923), 53–7 (54).
30 Eglinton, 'Dublin letter', *The Dial*, 75.2 (August 1923; letter dated July 1923), 179–83 (179).
31 Ben Howard, 'The pressed melodeon' (1986), *The Pressed Melodeon: Essays on Modern Irish Writing*. Brownsville, Oregon: Story Line Press, 1996, pp. 3–27 (3–4).

32 For example, Roy Foster discusses in some detail Yeats's tour of the United States in January to May 1920, during which he gave lectures and readings in New York, Washington, Yale, Chicago, California and Oregon; addressed two Mormon universities in Utah; and by April was 'introducing the poets of the 1890s to Waco, Texas'. See Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life. Volume II: The Arch-Poet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 163–6.
33 Louise Bogan, review of Yeats's *Collected Poems*, *The New Yorker*, 7 April 1934; collected in *A Poet's Prose: Selected Writings of Louise Bogan*, ed. Mary Kinzie. Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press / Ohio University Press, 2005, pp. 200–1 (200).
34 Babette Deutsch to Thomas McGreevy, 17 February 1948, Trinity College Dublin ['TCD'] MS 8120.
35 See Philip Coleman, '"The politics of praise": John Berryman's engagement with W. B. Yeats', *Études Irlandaises*, 28.2 (Automne 2003), 11–27.
36 Giles, *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002, p. 1.
37 Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 11–12.
38 Paul Jay, 'The myth of "America" and the politics of location: modernity, border studies, and the literature of the Americas', *Arizona Quarterly*, 54.2 (Summer 1998), 165–92 (166, 177).
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40 Willam Vincent Shannon, *The American Irish: A Political and Social Portrait*. New York: Macmillan, 1966, p. xiii.
41 Moore to Pound, 9 January 1919, in *The Selected Letters of Marianne Moore*, ed. Bonnie Costello, Celeste Goodridge and Cristanne Miller. London: Faber, 1998, pp. 122–5 (122).
42 Green, '"Your trouble is their trouble"', p. 181.
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44 See Preface for further discussion of these texts.
45 See Daniel Tobin, 'The westwardness of everything: Irishness in the poetry of Wallace Stevens', in *Awake in America: On Irish American Poetry*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011, pp. 87–112 (104).
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47 See John P. Harrington, *The Irish Play on the New York Stage, 1874–1966*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1997; Joseph Kelly, *Our Joyce: From Outcast to Icon*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1998; and Diggory as referenced above.
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