# Introduction

In the 1860s, a reporter from the *Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator* described the scene at a local holy well, where '[a] few poor women were fervently repeating their prayers and "going their rounds" about the well'.[1] Several decades later, a special correspondent for the London *Times* observed an interesting phenomenon when he travelled to Ireland. At a mass in 1886, he wrote, a local man 'had counted about 100 women in his parish chapel, but not a single man except himself'.[2] By the 1930s and 1940s, according to oral histories, Dublin's working-class mothers prayed with their rosary beads 'in church, home, on the street, in shops or queues, almost anywhere'.[3] These accounts illustrate that lay Irish women came to represent faith and nation in the modern age. They testify to the central positions that lay women held in the religious worlds of nineteenth and twentieth-century Ireland even as they document both changes and continuities in how women practiced their faith from the post-famine decades to 1950.

In the immediate aftermath of the Great Famine, the Irish Catholic Church remained institutionally weak. Women's devotional worlds thus were syncretic – intensely Catholic but also steeped in vernacular popular traditions including holy well devotions and fairy belief. By the late nineteenth-century 'devotional revolution' (1850–75),[4] when the Church reorganised and rebuilt, lay Catholic women came to occupy the public spaces of the parish and chapel in unprecedented numbers. And in the first half of the twentieth century, Irish women's Catholicism became not only popular but also material and commercial, bolstered by a remarkable flourishing of publications and devotional items including the rosary beads so beloved by Dublin's mothers in the 1940s and 1950s.

Notably, lay Irish women played important yet understudied roles in the Church from 1850 to 1950. Women dominated daily lived religion and challenged the established patriarchy through their traditional socially constructed gender roles: church-goers, managers of the holy household, moral-imparting mothers, consumers and creators of devotional culture, correspondents, gossipers, philanthropists and activists, and community members. Amidst enormous political, economic, and social change, and even within a culture of intensified patriarchy, women persisted in occupying a central position in religious life throughout the period.

This book investigates the roles that lay women played in Irish Catholic life from 1850 to 1950. Nuns, for the most part, have not been incorporated into this study because their religious, material, and physical conditions differed from those of most lay women. Additionally, while several historians have investigated Irish women religious, lay women's roles remain almost entirely overlooked.[5] This book focuses on women in the provinces of Munster, Connacht, and Leinster; Ulster's unique religious, demographic, and political contexts are largely outside the scope of this study.[6] Examining both urban and rural areas across the east, south, and west of Ireland, *Irish Women and the Creation of Modern Catholicism, 1850–1950* analyses women throughout their lifecycles, including the sacred moments that characterised their girlhoods, the rhetorical strategies of Catholic mothers, and the recollections of older women reflecting on their religious memories. My study interrogates the intersections of gender, class, and religion and, whenever possible, integrates the examples of women from various social classes. This book notes key distinctions among women within the wide spectrum of regional, economic, age, and marital variances, yet it also highlights how Catholicism could unify lay women across these divides.

*Irish Women and the Creation of Modern Catholicism* demonstrates that the key moments of change in Catholic women's devotional lives occurred in two stages, first from 1870 to 1890, as the effects of the 'devotional revolution' hit full stride; and second, in the 1920s and 1930s, as the Irish Catholic nation-state came into being. During both of these eras, the institutional Church and, in the latter case, the new state intensified pressure on women to conform to Catholic gender

norms. In the 1870s and 1880s, increased centralisation of the Catholic Church inspired abundant literature urging Irish lay women to confine themselves to the home and thus isolate themselves from the enormous political, economic, and cultural changes of the post-famine era. In the 1920s and 1930s, as the independent Irish state came into being, it linked with the Church, becoming an all-consuming cultural power. As J.J. Lee argues, '[r]arely has the Catholic Church as an institution flourished … as in the Free State'.[7] As a result, by the early twentieth century, a new culture of patriarchy bolstered by the Church–state coalition controlled and contained Catholic lay women. At the same time, however, Irish women increased their public presence in religious rituals, dominated domestic devotional culture, and increasingly controlled Catholic consumerism. The story of modern Irish Catholicism and lay women therefore is complex, marked by losses and gains. The complexity is increased still further because the changes documented by first-hand accounts of Irish Catholicism existed alongside remarkable continuities. From the desolation of the famine years right through the first few decades of independence, Catholicism was central to women's ordinary daily lives, and women actively participated in devotional life and the creation of their religious identities.

The role that Catholicism has played in creating modern Irish identities cannot be overestimated. Ireland's reputation in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries as one of the most religiously observant Catholic countries in the Western world caused many to equate 'Irish' and 'Catholic'.[8] Oliver Rafferty writes that

> for a large part of our history the two primary components in Irish identity, for the great majority of people who have lived on the island of Ireland, are a sense of 'Irishness' often conceived in broad terms and subject to fluctuating understanding of what constitutes such an identity, and adherence to the Catholic faith. The influence, authority and role of the Catholic Church in shaping Irish Catholic consciousness are, therefore, paramount as a template for understanding Ireland and the Irish historically.[9]

Early twentieth-century observers agreed. 'Ireland', asserted the Jesuit W. J. Lockington in 1920, 'is Ireland because of her Catholicity'.[10] The

government of the new Irish state in the 1930s famously modelled its Constitution on Catholic doctrine and specifically recognised the 'special position' of the Catholic Church 'as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens'.[11]

Scholars have documented that the decades following the Great Famine of the 1840s were predominantly responsible for transforming Irish Catholicism. In 1972, when the notable scholar Emmet Larkin characterised Ireland's nineteenth-century religious transformations as a 'devotional revolution', he created a revolution of his own, igniting a historical debate that continues today. Larkin maintains that '[t]he great mass of the Irish people became practicing Catholics' only in the late nineteenth century due to Ireland's previous small population of priests (compared to a growing population of parishioners) and a lack of both chapels and available devotions.[12] Only after the rural poor were decimated by the 1840s famine did a numerous and disciplined priesthood, supported by a prosperous, powerful middle class, emerge and make Ireland's people truly Catholic. In Larkin's view, the 'devotional revolution' was a top-down phenomenon led by male members of the Church hierarchy. This 'revolution', he argues, gave way to greater episcopal control over the clergy and clerical control over parishioners, and, in turn, a more observant laity, increasingly well-run parishes, and a unique convergence of national and religious identities.[13] Despite the attention that Larkin's thesis has garnered over almost half a century, the historiography of modern Ireland's Catholic parish life and local religion is still in its infancy. To date, scholarship on Catholicism overwhelmingly concerns the relationships between the members of the Church hierarchy, the Church's institutional development, or its influence on politics and nationalism.[14] Only recently have social history, devotion and practice, and Catholic parish daily life gained attention.

Scholars who have laid the foundation for illuminating the lives of ordinary Catholics have enhanced our understanding of religious life. Nicholas Wolf's *An Irish-Speaking Island*, for example, sheds light on the linguistic worlds of ordinary Catholics in the nineteenth century. He argues that Irish speakers actively contributed to the 'forging of modern Catholicism', and that they should thus be recognised – and portrayed – as conscious actors rather than passive bystanders.[15]

In *Knock: The Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, sociologist Eugene Hynes, focusing particularly on the pre-famine world, depicts vibrant local religious communities that often conflicted with the Catholic hierarchy. Hynes asserts that the Virgin's appearance at Knock in 1879 is an example of what James C. Scott has called 'weapons of the weak', allowing parishioners to challenge priestly authority.[16] Similarly, Donnelly's work on the Knock apparition and Marian devotion across a century unveils the complexities of popular Catholicism, including the interactions between priests, people, and members of the Catholic hierarchy.[17]

Yet, it is the serious analysis of lay women that represents the most conspicuous gap in the historiography of modern Irish Catholicism. This omission is particularly remarkable given the centrality of both Catholicism and gender to modern Irish identities, the historical convergence of the ideal of womanhood and the Irish Catholic nation, and the popular presumption, since the late nineteenth century, that Irish women are the staunchest Catholics.[18] Most major studies of modern Catholicism ignore the fundamental roles of lay women in a clearly feminised religious revival.[19] The existing scholarly work on modern lay Irish Catholic women, meanwhile, is myopic, describing women's near catastrophic loss of autonomy in the age of the 'devotional revolution'.[20] According to Hynes, the post-famine advent of an 'authoritarian and puritanical' Catholicism denigrated women, further exacerbating their declining economic and familial statuses.[21] Carolyn Conley argues that it was the Catholic hierarchy that determined women's positions in nineteenth-century Ireland, and that this new social schema be 'even more rigid than … the most Victorian thinkers in terms of the proper role for women'.[22] In his examination of Irish Catholic motherhood and the relationship between women and priests, Tom Inglis concludes that women effectively bestowed public power on religious authorities by the late nineteenth century, ensuring in return their own dominance in the private domestic sphere.[23] By the early twentieth century, independent Ireland bolstered its patriarchal consensus by legislating against 'deviant' female sexuality as well as creating oppressive Church/state-run institutions such as Magdalen asylums.[24]

While these claims still hold true, they are only part of the story. For many women, reality was not as simple as co-existing with an

oppressive Church, which occupied a complex and, occasionally, contradictory role in the lives of Irish women, variously offering succour and self-agency. Furthermore, many lay women refused passive acceptance of the Catholic Church's dictates, making significant contributions to their faith even as they skilfully revised and resisted Catholic patriarchy. Drawing upon recent work in Irish women's history,[25] this book asserts a new historical narrative for lay women's roles, responsibilities, and influence, further elucidating the nuances of female resistance and negotiation within patriarchal structures. Historians' invaluable work on women, infanticide, and abortion reminds us that women did their best to control their reproduction even in an age that defined them almost solely as mothers.[26] Through philanthropy, meanwhile, as Maria Luddy has shown, middle-class and elite women invaded the public sphere even in an age that characterised them as purely domestic.[27] By the mid-nineteenth century, Catholic women – mostly nuns but also a significant number of middle-class lay women – gained unprecedented access to public worlds through charitable activities.[28] As in Britain, feminist activism followed hard on the heels of philanthropist organisation. During the first wave of the Irish feminist movement, women campaigned not only for suffrage but also for access to higher education and the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. Many also became involved in nationalism, both constitutional and republican.[29]

Still, we know little about Irish women's religious lives. In the revision of his seminal *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland* (1984), Sean Connolly admits he did not 'properly addres[s]' gender or women's experiences in his study of popular religion. In 2000, he called for more research, arguing that revisionist readings of sources and the opening of new archival depositories 'will eventually make it possible to fill this gap in our knowledge'.[30] *Irish Women and the Creation of Modern Catholicism* attempts to begin to fill the gap. It is grounded firmly in an analysis of primary documents from archives across Ireland. Catholic Church documents, including bishops' visitation questionnaires and diaries, clerical and episcopal correspondence, sermons and pastorals, priests' journals, unpublished manuscripts, and female parishioners' petitions and letters comprise a significant portion of this source base. Also examined are newspapers,

Catholic conduct literature, a wide variety of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century printed materials, and the prolific Catholic material culture of the time. This book privileges the words and writings of lay Irish women from different backgrounds. Published oral histories afford a window into the daily lives and religious practices of many women, particularly those absent from some Church documents. Other life-writings, including memoirs, diaries, and letters, allow us to interrogate the ways in which Irish women constructed, interpreted, and, in some cases, complicated their religious identities. Folklore narratives and oral traditions provide access to poorer and rural women's cultures and help us explore how Irish women both experienced and shaped Catholic rituals, traditional practices, and parish life.[31] While these sources cannot always be taken at face value, they do, when interpreted carefully, shed valuable light on world-views and women's cultures.

Chapter One, 'Women and Catholic culture', analyses the construction of nineteenth and twentieth-century lay Irish Catholic womanhood. It demonstrates that women and girls were bombarded with messages on Catholic womanhood from an early age and reveals that the Church hierarchy's sustained and determined attempts to define the ideal woman were linked not only to the evolution of Catholicism but also to the creation of the modern Irish nation. Chapter One also exposes the ideal as pervasive but essentially fragile: constructions of Irish womanhood sometimes were more wishful thinking than reality and might reflect deep-seated anxieties about women's changing roles in the modern world.

A deeper exploration of Catholic girlhoods is the focus of Chapter Two. This chapter posits that from 1850 to 1950, Catholicism served as the major influence in Irish girls' identity formation in the community and the family, and that girls were integral to the creation of Ireland's Catholic culture. Through an analysis of Irish women's autobiographical writings and Catholic material and print culture, this chapter explores girls' devotional experiences, such as the bishop's visitation and First Communion. Devotional artefacts figure prominently in women's autobiographical writings, a reminder that Catholicism was a material religion with a tangible physical presence, often lending itself to fantasy and the imagination. Chapter Two also highlights the

significant interrelationships between girls and women: nuns, grand-
mothers, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and especially mothers emerge as
girls' principal religious influences.

Catholic memoirists and diarists from the 1850s through the late
twentieth century affirmed their affection and awe for their mothers,
whom they depicted as self-sacrificing and martyr-like. In recent
decades, however, scholars have assigned to the Irish mother a more
sinister role, indicting her for priestly collusion and instilling a
repressive and damaging Catholicism in future generations. Chapter
Three, 'The Irish Catholic mother', debunks the martyr/villain trope
through a detailed analysis of Irish Catholic motherhood. It compares
constructions of motherhood (both contemporary and scholarly) with
mothers' real-life experiences. Mothers' own words, particularly
evident in their letters to bishops, demonstrate that they did not
always work in tandem with the Catholic clergy but frequently nego-
tiated the authority of clerics. Women asserted their autonomy within
the home and over their children even as they made use of their
maternal status to demand that priests and bishops respond to their
needs and wants.

As Irish culture increasingly identified women with the home and the
private sphere, as Catholic devotions gained favour throughout Ireland,
and as household prayers increased in popularity in the late nineteenth
and early twentieth centuries, Irish women welcomed their new role as
guardian of religion in the home. How this worked in practice, though,
remains obscure. Chapter Four, 'The holy household', offers a case
study of the Irish Catholic home and material culture. This chapter
looks further at religious iconography and Catholic artefacts. Exploring
gender and consumption, it reveals that the growing power of home-
based Catholicism depended on women's consumerism and financial
management. It also examines the central roles that mothers and grand-
mothers played in household devotions and prayers. The ways in which
Irish women shaped religious experiences for themselves and their fam-
ilies during several key moments, such as the rosary and the sta-
tion-mass, show how lay women created and maintained Catholic
households and thus ensured the future of the Catholic nation.

From 1850 to 1950, Irish Catholic women not only led home-based
devotions but also, in overwhelming numbers, made themselves

dominant actors in public religious spaces. The landscape of the Irish town, village, or city was both fundamentally a Catholic and a feminised landscape. Chapter Five, 'Gender and space', investigates women's place in devotional places and spaces. This was an age in which Catholic officials urged women's roles to be domestic and private, and when women's bodies were increasingly contained and controlled in disciplined spaces, including the Catholic chapel. Still, women resisted the civilising mission of the 'devotional revolution' by maintaining their commitment to vernacular landscapes and traditions. They also made themselves indispensable to the construction and upkeep of newly built chapels and became the main congregants at the chapel-mass. By demanding a central place in religious spaces, women complicated the divide between private and public and challenged patriarchal consensus.

Chapter Six, 'Women, priests, and power', illuminates the relationship between lay Catholic women and priests through case studies of women's correspondence and oral traditions. Scholars have argued either in favour of the clergy's complete control over lay women or conversely that lay women maintained close connections, even collusions, with priests from 1850 to 1950.[32] This chapter challenges both dichotomous interpretations, arguing instead that the relationship between priests and women was one of both closeness and conflict, involving complex interactions often defined by struggles for power and influence. Priests and lay women denounced each other at mass; meanwhile, in rural areas, women used oral traditions and legends to poke fun at their priests and undermine clerical authority. In their letters to bishops and priests, for example, denouncing the behaviour of their own parish priest, literate women used their epistolary words to challenge the authority of the Church.

*Irish Women and the Creation of Modern Catholicism* solidifies a growing scholarly consensus confirming the agency of Irish women: they were active in philanthropy (both lay women and nuns), worked for wages, participated in the new feminist movement, and sought improved lives by emigrating in extraordinarily high numbers.[33] In *The Hidden Tradition: Feminism, Women, and Nationalism in Ireland*, Carol Coulter challenges the notion that Ireland's early twentieth-century politically active feminists '[came] from nowhere' and

contends that even after independence, women utilised pre-existing community networks to assert themselves.[34] This book argues that a powerful and determined body of lay women built on traditions of female empowerment to not only help create a popular modern Catholicism but also to complicate and challenge it. This project therefore contests views that the increasing power of the Church caused a uniform decline in Irish women's status after the Great Famine of the 1840s. Instead, my book reveals the era's complexities, highlighting how lay women rejected, negotiated, and reworked Church dictates to become principal actors in the trajectory of modern Irish history.

## Notes

1  *Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator*, 25 August 1863.

2  Special Correspondent of the Times, *Letters from Ireland*, 1886, cited in John P. Harrington, ed., *The English Traveller in Ireland: Accounts of Ireland and the Irish through Five Centuries* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1991), pp. 303–4.

3  Kevin Kearns, *Dublin's Lost Heroines: Mammies and Grannies in a Vanished City* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006), p. 157.

4  Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *American Historical Review* 77: 3 (1972), pp. 625–52.

5  For scholarship on Irish nuns, see Caitriona Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987); Mary Peckham Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women, Religion, and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1750–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Yvonne McKenna, *Made Holy: Irish Women Religious at Home and Abroad* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).

6  For more on Northern Ireland, see Marianne Elliot, *The Catholics of Ulster* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2001).

7  Joseph J. Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 159.

8  Brian Girvin, 'Social change and moral politics: the Irish constitutional referendum 1983', *Political Studies* 34: 1 (March 1986), p. 63; Emmet Larkin, 'Introduction', in *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism*, ed. Emmet Larkin (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), p. 2.

9  Oliver P. Rafferty, 'Introduction', in *Irish Catholic Identities*, ed. Oliver P. Rafferty (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 1.

10   William J. Lockington, *The Soul of Ireland* (London: Harding and More, 1920), p. 7.

11   Constitution of Ireland, 1937, www.constitution.ie.

12   Larkin, 'The devotional revolution', pp. 58, 71.

13   In the years following the publication of Larkin's article 'The devotional revolution', several scholars attempted to modify Larkin's thesis, mostly questioning the timing of the revolution he describes. Desmond Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A Sociological Study* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983); Patrick J. Corish, *The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dublin: Helicon Limited, 1981); and David W. Miller, 'Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine', *Journal of Social History* 9 (1975), pp. 81–98.

14   John Newsinger, 'The Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland', *European History Quarterly* 25 (1995), p. 247. See also James O'Shea, *Priests, Politics and Society in Post-Famine Ireland: A Study of County Tipperary, 1850–1891* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1983); and Eugene M. Hynes, 'The Great Hunger and Irish Catholicism', *Societas*, viii: 2 (spring 1978), pp. 137–56.

15   Nicholas Wolf, *An Irish-Speaking Island: State, Religion, Community, and the Linguistic Landscape in Ireland, 1770–1880* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), pp. 196–7.

16   Eugene Hynes, *Knock: The Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008); James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

17   James S. Donnelly, Jr, 'The Marian shrine of Knock: the first decade', *Eire-Ireland* 27: 2 (summer 1993), pp. 54–99; 'The peak of Marianism in Ireland, 1930–60', in *Piety and Power in Ireland, 1760–1960: Essays in Honour of Emmet Larkin*, ed. Stewart J. Brown and David W. Miller (Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), pp. 252–83; 'Knock shrine, the worst of times: the 1940s', *Éire-Ireland* 48: 3&4 (fall/winter 2013), pp. 213–64; 'The revival of Knock shrine', in *History and the Public Sphere: Essays in Honour of John A. Murphy*, ed. Tom Dunne and Laurence M. Geary (Cork: Cork University Press, 2005), pp. 186–200.

18   For examples of women's piety, see Kearns, *Dublin's Lost Heroines*; for a sociological analysis of the links between women and religion in modern Ireland, see Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: The Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987).

19   See, for example, Emmet Larkin, *The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860–1870* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan,

1987); *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1976); *The Making of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1850–1860* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); *The Roman Catholic Church and the Creation of the Modern Irish State, 1878–1886* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1975); *The Roman Catholic Church and the Emergence of the Modern Irish Political System, 1874–1878* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996); and *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule Movement in Ireland, 1870–1874* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990); Patrick J. Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience: A Historical Survey* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985); David W. Miller, *Church, State, and Nation in Ireland, 1898–1921* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973); and John Henry Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923–1970* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971). Other works, such as sociologist Tom Inglis's *Moral Monopoly* and short articles by Joseph Lee, Séamus Enright, and Patrick Corish, have only begun to examine the links between women and Catholicism in modern Ireland. See Inglis, *Moral Monopoly*; J. J. Lee, 'Women and the Church since the Famine', in *Women in Irish Society: The Historical Dimension*, ed. Margaret MacCurtain and Donncha Ó Corráin (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), pp. 37–45; Patrick J. Corish, 'Women and religious practice', in *Women in Early Modern Ireland, 1500–1800*, ed. Mary O'Dowd and Margaret MacCurtain (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 212–20; and Séamus Enright, 'Women and Catholic life in Dublin, 1766–1852', in *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin*, ed. James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 268–93.

20  Lee, 'Women and the Church'.

21  Eugene Hynes, 'Family and religious change in a peripheral capitalist society: mid-nineteenth century Ireland', in *The Religion and Family Connection: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. Darwin L. Thomas (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), p. 166.

22  Carolyn Conley, 'No pedestals: women and violence in late nineteenth-century Ireland', *Journal of Social History* 28: 4 (1995), p. 801.

23  Inglis, *Moral Monopoly*.

24  Una Crowley and Rob Kitchin, 'Producing "decent girls": governmentality and the moral geographies of sexual conduct in Ireland (1922–1937)', *Gender, Place, and Culture* 15: 4 (August 2008), pp. 355–72; James M. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment* (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2007).

25 Joanna Bourke, *Husbandry to Housewifery: Women, Economic Change, and Housework in Ireland, 1890–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 1. C.f., Caitriona Clear, 'Women in de Valera's Ireland 1932–48: a reappraisal', in *de Valera's Irelands*, ed. Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (Cork: Mercier Press, 2003), pp. 104–7, who challenges the consensus of 'an oppressive, stagnant, uncomfortable social environment' for women in de Valera's Ireland. She argues that many women held comfortable public roles 'as long as they were upholding Catholic principles' and rejects the notion that the 'injustices' perpetrated against women at the time resulted from 'a prevailing ideology of domesticity'.

26 Elaine Farrell, *'A Most Diabolical Deed': Infanticide and Irish Society, 1850–1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Cliona Rattigan, *'What Else Could I Do?' Single Mothers and Infanticide, Ireland 1900–1950* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012); Leanne McCormick, '"No sense of wrongdoing": abortion in Belfast 1917–1967', *Journal of Social History* 49: 1 (Fall 2015), pp. 125–48.

27 Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1–2. See also Rosemary Raughter, 'Introduction', in *Religious Women and Their History: Breaking the Silence*, ed. Rosemary Raughter (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), p. 4.

28 Margaret H. Preston, *Charitable Words: Women, Philanthropy, and the Language of Charity in Nineteenth-Century Dublin* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004).

29 Maria Luddy, 'Women and politics, 1860–1918', in *The Field Day Anthology of Women's Writing Volume V: Irish Women's Writing and Traditions*, ed. Angela Bourke, Siobhán Kilfeather, Maria Luddy, Margaret MacCurtain, Gerardine Meaney, Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, Mary O'Dowd, and Clair Wills (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2002), pp. 71–3.

30 Sean J. Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780–1845* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), p. 27.

31 The National Folklore Collection at University College Dublin houses approximately one and a half million pages relating to Irish folk culture. The majority of those documents are the result of projects beginning in the late 1930s, when folklore collectors interviewed older Irish men and women about customs and traditions and when the Irish state encouraged schoolchildren to collect folklore and stories in their own locales. These interviews and questionnaires describe life as far back as the end of the famine years and shed light on post-famine worldviews. Mícheál Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission, 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2007).

32  Inglis, *Moral Monopoly*, p. 179, and Mary Kenny, *Goodbye to Catholic Ireland: How the Irish Lost the Civilization they Created* (Springfield, IL: Templegate Publishers, 2000), pp. 47, 56.

33  See Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*; Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1996); Sinead McCoole, *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years, 1900–1923* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Jason Knirck, *Women of the Dáil: Gender, Republicanism, and the Anglo-Irish Treaty* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006); and Mary Pierse, ed., *Irish Feminisms: 1810–1930* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009).

34  Carol Coulter, *The Hidden Tradition: Feminism, Women, and Nationalism in Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993), p. 3.