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ABSTRACT

This dissertation traces the constitutive rhetorical strategies of revolutionary Irish nationalists operating transnationally from 1858-1876. Collectively known as the Fenians, they consisted of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the United Kingdom and the Fenian Brotherhood in North America. Conceptually grounded in the main schools of Burkean constitutive rhetoric, it examines public and private letters, speeches, Constitutions, Convention Proceedings, published propaganda, and newspaper arguments of the Fenian counterpublic. It argues two main points. First, the separate national constraints imposed by England and the United States necessitated discursive and non-discursive rhetorical responses in each locale that made it near impossible to sustain transnational consubstantiality for the movement. Second, North American Fenian strategies to gain sovereign recognition for Ireland relied on and helped to further substantiate the palliative Constitutional wishes of equality that undergirded the racial and settler inequalities of the United States. After establishing the exigency and framework for the project, Chapter 2 examines the transnational attempts by Fenian leadership to constitute the “Irish nation” in the diaspora across existing national borders. It argues that, despite the shared vision and motives, the separate national constraints negotiated by each arm of the movement made it impossible to maintain a shared strategy for achieving Irish freedom. Chapter 3 then focuses on the Constitutions created by the North American organization in order to constitute Irish sovereignty, demonstrating how the scenic conditions wrought by these Constitutional enactments contributed to a legitimacy crisis that led to the schism in the Fenian Brotherhood and paved the way for multiple failed invasions of Canada. Chapter 4 examines the constitutive rhetorical

strategies of *The Fenians' Progress*, a propaganda tract used by the wing that sought to invade Canada, and limns the rhetorics of respectability this faction employed as they appealed to the U.S. for recognition of Fenian belligerent status. Chapter 5 juxtaposes the rhetorics of “skirmishing” and “settling” in *The Irish World* in the mid-1870s in the wake of the failed Canadian invasions, tracing the rhetorics of settler solidarity these otherwise anti-imperialist Irish-Americans invoke in print. It concludes by discussing the Fenian case’s implications for rhetorical theory.

MAKING FENIANS: THE TRANSNATIONAL CONSTITUTIVE RHETORIC OF
REVOLUTIONARY IRISH NATIONALISM, 1858-1876

By

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B.A. Pennsylvania State University, 2002
M.A. University of Minnesota, 2010

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric
in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

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PREFACE

“It is never the brothers right next to us, but the brothers in the abstract that are easy to love.”

--Dorothy Day

In 2007, as community and civic engagement student coordinator at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, I had the privilege of helping to organize a Campus Compact Conference themed “Leveraging Literacy.” In one of my roles at Augsburg, I coordinated the Augsburg Reads program that provided an off-campus afterschool tutoring program for neighborhood youth, most of whom were immigrants or refugees from East African countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Oromiyaa, or Eritrea. The “Leveraging Literacy” Conference was about making higher education more accessible for these youth and others like them who often felt marginalized by their schooling experiences: first-generation students, immigrants, students of color. Inevitably, the centrality of identity, racism, and power came to hold a central place in our planning conversations. As a well-meaning, young white male liberal, I fear that I talked more than I should have and listened less than I could have. But it didn’t take long for me to get some free lessons from the other more experienced organizers and educators on the committee. One of our gurus, Dr. Alexander Hines, had worked for years as Director of Inclusion and Diversity at Winona State to help first generation and students of color both navigate the bureaucracies of higher education and find true belonging in college—to see themselves and their stories reflected in the institutional culture at his school.

At one early meeting before everyone else arrived, Dr. Hines found himself alone with me and Samantha Henningson, the two youngest of the conference organizers, both of us newbie tutoring coordinators trying to work through our white privilege and

working to understand how our identities impacted our work. Our conversation turned to how to build solidarity across difference.

“Dougherty. That’s Irish, isn’t it?” Hines asked. “Well, that’s easy. Your people and my people share a similar story of economic marginalization in U.S. history. You start there, Tim.”

This was a simultaneously exhilarating and humbling moment for me. Exhilarating because I’d never thought about racial solidarity this way, never thought of the possibility of a shared historical ground to work from across racial lines. But it was terribly humbling, too. Though I’d nodded in agreement, I had absolutely no idea what he was talking about. My family was serious about our Irish-Catholic identity. St. Paddy’s Day was simultaneously a sacred and bacchanalian feast for us. I had written a terrible poem in grade school that had the refrain, “I’m almost 100% Irish and love to have fun.” I had rudimentarily measured my bloodline for a family tree project in 5th grade—I was 96% Irish by those back of napkin calculations. Despite all this Irish pride, I had no idea what Dr. Hines was talking about. It was time to go back to school.

His invitation led me first to Noel Ignatiev’s classic, *How the Irish Became White*. Later, I added to that foundation with David Roediger’s *Wages of Whiteness*, Eric Lott’s *Love and Theft*, and Thandeka’s *Learning to Be White*. It led me to a master’s thesis in antiracist composition pedagogy. I quickly learned that Dr. Hines had been nice enough to leave out a lot of the gory details about Irish immigrants’ inability to act in solidarity toward African peoples amidst their shared histories of economic marginalization. My reading and research helped me to see how the vast majority of Irish had sacrificed that potential solidarity in order to gain a better footing for themselves in the United States’

racial skin game. These texts helped me to place my family story on this continent into historical and material context. Yet, living in Minneapolis and daily walking by stenciled red graffiti on my neighborhood sidewalks defiantly declaring it “Dakota Land,” I also worried about the omissions in the Irish story of coming to embrace whiteness. Where did the Irish relationship to American Indians’ stories fit in the critical whiteness studies framework, which remains heavily structured along the black-white binary?

This question led me into my doctoral studies with a serious interest in understanding the effects of settler colonialism on identifications in North America, beginning with an intensive seminar in American Indian rhetorics with Malea Powell at Michigan State. Once at Syracuse, I continued in this vein through a semester with Scott Lyons, who introduced me to Andrea Smith’s work with the Incite!: Women of Color Against Violence collective. I also pursued a graduate Certificate of Advanced Study in Women’s and Gender Studies, focusing especially on materialist and intersectional feminist social analyses from Queer and Scholars of Color. I was challenged and urged to growth by a vigorous and fierce community of feminist and rhetorical scholar-colleagues. These explorations helped me to grow my ears as a scholar, and, more importantly, as a human being. I felt prepared for an incisive project geared toward better understanding some portion of the history of identifications on this continent.

Enter the Fenians

As I searched for a project, I felt compelled to find a site that would both help me speak across the intersections of identity performance and white supremacy on this continent while also learning more about the history of my own people. In short, I wanted to find a story that would be as compelling to my family as it might be to the field of rhetorical studies. I was looking for a story to help me better understand how my own

family identity came to solidify in the United States, even as I yearned to find a buried example of solidarity across difference and power in the name of justice.

Lightning struck late in the semester, during Don Mitchell's graduate seminar the Geography of Capital—affectionately known as Mondays with Marx. There, near the end of *Capital, Volume I*, during of the historical chapter detailing the ways the accumulation of capital has wreaked havoc on Ireland, was the quotation:

With the accumulation of rents in Ireland, the accumulation of the Irish in America keeps pace. The Irishman, banished by sheep and ox, re-appears on the other side of the ocean as a Fenian, and face to face with the old queen of the seas rises, threatening and more threatening, the young giant Republic... (666)

Who were these Fenians, and how had I never heard of them before? Given their intense politicization as a group who'd directly experienced oppression in Ireland and worked in North America to make a better world for the Irish, I wondered if they might have been able to see and enact solidarities with other differently marginalized folks in the 19th century United States. If not, why not?

Where I Enter

Needless to say, I entered this project with a standpoint, some “passionate attachments” for the material—as Jacqueline Jones Royster has called them in *Traces of a Stream* (276). As Royster puts it, ethical researchers must foreground these commitments, these embodied ways of being and sensing the world, because they “shape the question of what counts as knowledge” in a given site (280). To be sure, Royster's afrafeminist framework emerges out of her work to broaden the disciplinary landscape to

focus on the literacy and rhetorical practices of African American women in the 19th century. But her ethical framework helps me to articulate how my own embodied commitments have led to particular questions for these Fenian materials, and particular ways of seeing what's most important about their constitutive practices, both transatlantically and in North America.

Ralph Cintron reminds us that this dynamic of selection and emphasis is at work in all "discourses of measurement," whether it be a cartographical map or an academic study. Any representation is necessarily a reduction of reality, a sacrifice of messy complexity for a cleaner picture. Cintron's insight, then, becomes my mea culpa here: "If this map, then, reduces real and ever changing particulars, it amplifies abstract relationships--and this is the service it performs. Loss and gain perform their eternal dance" (*Angel's Town* 17). If this study, then, sacrifices some comprehensive breadth of the Fenian movement's rhetorical practice and circulation, I offer it in the spirit of crystallizing the most salient dynamics of Fenian identifications between the poles of Ireland and the United States during this time period. As Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch put it:

Naturally, any stance inevitably leads to our accentuating some materials and passing over others; we cannot tell everything and move in every direction. What is important is that we do our best to try to uncover the ways our positionality operates and to consider, throughout the historiographic process, how this stance channels us to write one kind of history and directs us away from other possibilities. (22)

Fortunately, my study here need not pretend to comprehensive mastery of the Fenian story, and can instead add a rhetorical perspective to the revived interest in militant Fenian nationalism and the powerfully insightful interpretations of contemporary historians such as Marta Ramón-García, Patrick Steward & Brian McGovern, and Niall Whelehan.

Of course, foregrounding my passionate attachments for a clearer understanding of the Irish relationship to white supremacy on this continent—and the necessarily partial telling of the Fenian story that it entails—does not excuse me from careful archival excavation and principled analysis of the materials. In other words, though this study does not pretend to an ideal of abstract objectivity, it does hold fast to the principles of thorough research and an evidence-based account of the Fenian story of constitutive nationalism. As Jane Tompkins would say, “Being aware that all facts are motivated” does not give the researcher cause for license. Rather, “Reasons must [still] be given, evidence adduced, authorities cited, analogies drawn” (118). At base, then, I’ve worked from archival records, published Fenian rhetorical productions such as constitutions and propaganda pieces, and newspaper accounts to offer what Lynee Lewis Gaillet would call a plausible narrative, a compelling evidence-based story, of Fenian constitutive rhetorical practices. Like Gaillet, “I believe storytelling—with a purpose, based on painstaking research, tied to a particular cultural moment, making clear the teller’s prejudices—is the real task of the historian” (36).

Well, it took me a few years. But this archival story of Irish-American nationalist identifications is my first full-length attempt to fulfill Dr. Hines’s invitation to solidarity. It’s my attempt to mine that shared story of history on this continent for sustaining what

Krista Ratcliffe has called “more conscious identifications across race and gender” in the 21st century (4). May it, in some small way, help us heed Dorothy Day’s warning at the beginning of this preface, to go beyond the abstract and ultimately exclusionary lessons of love taught to us by nationalisms—no matter how emancipatory their intentions. May it help to expand the circle of sisters and brothers we can hear, and love, right next to us.

1. INTRODUCTION: HUES OF GREEN & RED & WHITE & BLUE

“We...do hereby proclaim the Republic of Ireland to be virtually established; and moreover, that we pledge ourselves to use all our influence, and every legitimate privilege within our reach to promote the full acknowledgment of its independence by every free government in the world.”

-- Secret Resolution of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, November 1863 (D’Arcy 38)

In the waning hours of May 31, 1866, hundreds of Irish-Americans gathered at the docks in Buffalo, boarded ferries waiting for them that were loaded with caches of munitions, crossed quickly into the Canadian waters at the mouth of the Niagara River, and landed with triumphant whoops and hollers on British Canadian soil at the abandoned beachhead at Fort Erie. Dressed variably in a ragtag mix of Union Blues, Confederate Grays, and civilian dungarees, each combatant wore a shock of green somewhere on his homemade or recycled uniform to announce their soldierly unity as regiments of the Fenian Brotherhood (Wronski 82). Much more than a drunken rabble of rowdies descended from the nearest grog shop, these men were organized under a Constitution that had already been through three revisions, directed by an elected President and a Secretary of War, and led on the field by trained veterans of the United States Civil War. As far-fetched as it may seem to contemporary readers, many if not all of these insurgents believed that their efforts held the potential to do one of two things: claim a piece of ground from British Canada to form New Ireland, or, at the least,

overextend the British Empire's military forces to enable a successful military uprising in Ireland. By June 3rd, but not before a few deaths on both sides, the Fenian invasion of Canada had been easily repelled and put down by a combination of volunteer Canadian militia, British regiments, and gunships and tugboats commanded by the United States military.

The second such Fenian invasion of Canadian territory in 1866, it would also not be the last.¹ Public reactions to these events were mixed. Historian Brian Jenkins, following the *New York Times's* accounts of the Fenian movement, names this time period in 1865-66 as "Fenian Burlesque" to capture the strange mix of entertained fascination and credulity by which most contemporary observers assessed this Irish revolutionary threat to international diplomacy (*Fenians and Anglo-American* 106). The Irish-American Press was often divided on their support or denunciation of the Fenian combatants. While many nationalist organs hyped the Battle of Ridgeway as a bold Fenian success, a swipe on the nose of the British Lion, others remained lukewarm to the plot and restrained their editorializing to the actions of the English and United States governments (D'Arcy 170-171). And dissensions in the Fenian movement itself, a schism so deep that the North American organization had recently split in two, didn't even guarantee uniform Fenian approval of the action taken by General O'Neill and the stalwarts of the "Roberts faction" in the first few days of June in 1866.

Nevertheless, the Fenian movement was formidable enough to strike fear in the hearts of U.S. politicians eager to corral the Irish vote in the early years after the U.S. Civil War. Founded in 1858 in New York City as the North American arm of the recently

¹ One branch of the Fenian Brotherhood would seek to officially invade Canada through Vermont again in 1870 and unofficially through Minnesota in 1871.

founded Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, the first Fenians were veterans of the unsuccessful Young Ireland Rising of 1848. Learning from the mistakes of a brash but unorganized earlier movement, these radical Nationalists were determined to lay the proper organizational groundwork for a successful military revolution. They planned to coordinate the efforts of the “home” organization with a concerted attempt to unify the diaspora in North America to supply the revolution with money, munitions, and trained soldiers from the United States. Thus organized, they planned to wait for the opportune time to strike England, preferably a moment where British forces were distracted or drawn thin by another military conflict. And as the end of the U.S. Civil War had sprung thousands of eager Fenians from gainful employment, the movement had lost the will to wait for such a kairotic moment and many of them had turned their eyes north to a Canadian invasion, ostensibly hoping to manufacture such a moment themselves.

No doubt, the Fenians faced considerable challenges in their quest to knit such a disparate group of Irish together tightly enough to pledge their lives—both in Canada and Ireland—for their homeland. Union volunteer, loyal Confederate, and undrafted laborer—it’s plausible that many were just a few years removed from participating in the ugly 1863 Draft Riots in New York City—these Irish put aside their considerable differences in politics, religion, and class affiliation to build a militant organization that caused the British to suspend the Writs of Habeas Corpus in Ireland on more than one occasion and U.S. politicians to choose their words and actions carefully in order to avoid alienating the millions of Irish voters they assumed to be loyal to Fenianism.

The contradictions and complexities of this transnational liberation project led invariably to both internecine conflicts and serious tensions with the U.S., Canadian, and

British authorities, all of which hampered their ability to sustain unity of purpose to effect their goals. What's more, it is common knowledge that the organization was crippled by informants and spies on both sides of the Atlantic, whose intelligence to British authorities doomed any attempts to succeed through the element of surprise. Indeed, until quite recently, scholars have rested content in the explanation that both informants and the outsized egos of the leadership were the twin culprits of the Fenian failure. Yet, in this project, I'm less interested in pinpointing the reasons that the Fenians' primary goals of founding a free Irish Republic failed. Rather, I'm more interested in the rhetorical strategies by which the movement sought to constitute itself across borders, attracting adherents amidst separate national constraints, and negotiating evolving tensions between their dual goals of surviving in North America and supporting the liberation of their homeland.

In so doing, my study seeks to answer Malea Powell's standing call for the field to diversify its histories of rhetorical practice on the North American continent. She's called rhetorical studies to form a disciplinary

alliance based on the shared assumption that 'surviving genocide and advocating sovereignty and survival' has been a focus for many of the people now on this continent for several centuries and, as such, should also be at the center of our scholarly and pedagogical practices enacted in these United States" ("Down By the River" 41, quoting Craig Womack).

Of course, Powell is referring primarily to the struggles of American Indians in that quotation. Yet, in the process of creating such an alliance in rhetorical historiography, she underscores that her call goes beyond a mere inclusion of Native American voices or

stories in the disciplinary canon. Instead, she envisions a reinvigorated understanding of the colonial implications of all rhetorical practice on this continent, a lens that would take careful stock of the “meaner events within those histories” to arrive at a “more honest sense of who and what ‘we’ are” as an evolving culture in North America (“Down By the River” 57). While this project doesn't center on the rhetorical practices of American Indians, it undoubtedly centers on a group who understood themselves to be both surviving the recent genocidal economic policies of the British that had exacerbated the Great Famine as well as advocating Irish sovereignty in Ireland and Irish survival in the Americas. To that end, as we'll see, they provide an excellent site to better understand the “meaner events” of a white-skinned immigrant population's own attempts to, as Ralph Cintron puts it in another immigrant community's context, “*create respect [for themselves] out of conditions of little or no respect*” (*Angel's Town* x; emphasis original). In other words, as these politicized Irish sought dignity for themselves in North America and for their remnant at home through nationalist rhetoric and agitation, the impacts and implications of their rhetorical choices has much to teach the field about how immigrants negotiate their place between worlds—as well as the exclusions, often violent, that attend strong nationalist identifications. As we'll see, those negotiations and exclusions required a forgetting of earlier Irish solidarity with North American Indigenous struggles and arguments for transnational social justice and anti-imperialism that largely ignored the similarities between the Irish and American Indian stories in the 1870s.

Following Cintron's broad understanding of rhetoric as encompassing “both discursive and non-discursive practices,” the following study seeks to understand the strategies and practices by which thousands of Irish-Americans came to coordinate and

often subordinate their identifications with the blues and grays and dungarees of their adopted North American home to that shock of green for Eire. Fashioning uniforms, marching and drilling across U.S. cities and, finally, invading the sovereign territory of the hated English empire, these Fenians no doubt used the “gestures and adornment” and violent action of their bodies to “speak” rhetorically, thereby [displaying] the thought systems” they “identified with” and both fought and argued for (“Gates Locked” 6). But they also did much discursive labor to substantiate their actions and displays as the work of simultaneously loyal U.S. citizens and legitimate national belligerents on behalf of Ireland: founding newspapers, writing multiple Constitutions, issuing national bonds, and attempting through their discourse and organizing to birth the free Irish nation in people’s hearts before it could become accomplished fact on the field. In light of such a rich site for further understanding how a counterpublic constitutes itself, and how immigrants negotiated their identifications in the 19th-century United States, this dissertation seeks to answer the following questions: How did the Fenians constitute themselves across numerous international borders and constraints, as well as political and ideological differences amongst the Irish diaspora? What identifications did they employ in order to substantiate and grow their movement? What challenges did they face in pursuit of this goal as a counterpublic operating transnationally, and what rhetorical strategies did they develop to manage this considerable complexity? How were these strategies altered by developments in the wider circumference of domestic and international politics at the time? How did their actions to form a counterpublic nation across existing national boundaries alter the larger public spheres they acted upon, including the conditions of other marginalized groups like African Americans and American Indians? How might the

Fenian story of advocating for Irish sovereignty and survival help rhetorical studies to recenter such practices in its histories of rhetorical practice in North America?

This dissertation seeks to answer these questions and, in so doing, contribute to a number of pressing conversations in rhetorical studies, critical ethnic studies, and transnational studies. By focusing on the rhetorical dynamics of the way this movement of intensely politicized Irish sought to constitute itself across existing national borders, I add further details of the complex identification process that scholars in whiteness and critical ethnic studies have traced while contributing to the growing conversations at the intersection of transnational rhetorical theory and rhetorical history. In what follows, I place the Fenians within these exigent conversations while describing the Burkean constitutive rhetoric framework that methodologically grounds and theoretically informs my study. I then describe the archival materials I've gathered for the project and close with brief chapter breakdowns.

Exigency of Rhetoric & Nationalism

My study of Irish-American nationalist identifications follows other recent explorations of the rhetorical significance and rhetorical foundations of nationalism, both hegemonic versions (Bruner, 2002; Olson, 2009, 2012; Engels, 2010) and counterpublic versions. As Olson puts it, “rhetorical scholars need to understand how strong identifications [including nationalisms and other politicized identities] form, how they change, and the effects they have in setting the scene for public interaction and decision-making” (*Constitutive Visions* 6). Given our field’s abiding interest in rhetorical agency for marginalized groups, many of these studies have focused on the ways that counterpublic nationalisms seek to carve out rhetorical, economic, and political self-determination in the larger national scene (Gordon; Jensen & Hammerback; Stancliffe;

Belchem, Enck-Wanzer; Wanzer; and Kohrs Campbell). In tracing the strategies and tactics of these marginalized rhetors, these studies reveal one key avenue by which hegemonic performances of nationalism change to accommodate the agitation of groups heretofore left out of the frame. Yet John Schilb's "Turning Composition Studies Back Towards Sovereignty" provides a forceful argument for returning at least part of the frame of reference to the rhetorical work of Nation-states themselves, rather than simply doing research to prove or argue for the agency of rhetors. The Fenians provide an interesting bridge between these approaches, as their agitation undoubtedly impacts the national scenes in both North America and the United Kingdom, but their performances are actually seeking to build their own separate nation-state rather than reforming the states they are operating within. As such, it provides both a fruitful comparison to other counterpublic nationalisms while also providing a unique view of the rhetorical machinations of a very nascent sovereign.

Perhaps the most comprehensive study extant on nationalist rhetoric is M. Lane Bruner's book-length treatment *Strategies of Remembrance*. In this three-site comparative study of the rhetorical strategies at play in constructions of National identity, Bruner examines failed speeches and the political, material, and economic contexts surrounding them in pre-unification West Germany, Yeltsin-era Russia in the transition out of the Soviet Union, and Quebec's second vote for secession in the mid-90s for the ways in which public opposition to the speeches reveals the context, constraints, and absences of their particular strategies of remembrance that sought to construct or celebrate a national identity for particular ends. Bruner advocates this contextual, comparative rhetorical method of controversial public speeches to arrive at healthier

forms of strategic remembrances more appropriate to our era of globalizing economic and cultural interdependence. In his final chapter, he offers some suggestions for criteria towards “healthier” constructions of national, collective identity that—while recognizing that all constructions will be partial and contain absences—seeks to minimize the distortive or distracting aspects of such absences and build a healthy interrogation of those absences into the construction. This, of course, is calling for the healthiest possible public sphere, one that will support such measures of transparency and accountability towards the most possible democratic ends. As he puts it, “Social critics would do well to recognize that national identities are discursively contested, and they should seek to continue investigating the rhetorical processes through which those identities are created, maintained, and transformed” (88). In opposition to the absences in the strategies of remembrance in his case studies, Bruner concludes that a strategic multiculturalism and constitutional patriotism are perhaps the best tools currently available for collective identity construction.

While this conclusion is both laudable and plausibly argued, his method of focusing on the public speeches of noted politicians is unable to capture the many everyday performances and other textual, visual, and embodied performances that daily help to constitute a nation’s commonsense of itself. As Christa Olson argues, nationalist identifications are buoyed by the circulation of images, texts, and performances that build up and resonate as commonplaces over time, commonsensical notions that gain force and can be invoked in periods of intense conflict and change. As Olson demonstrates, publics are made less by the crucial speech and more by the accretion of what continually circulates in a given scene. Olson’s approach, built from Jenny Edbauer’s sense of

rhetorical ecologies and Cara Finnegan's insistence on circulation in the study of visual rhetoric, helps me to understand Fenian constitutive performances that range far afield from the prominent speeches advocated by Bruner. But unlike the Ecuadorian visual scene that Olson persuasively establishes as vital to the constitution of elite Ecuadorian nationalism, Fenian rhetorical performances are often not confined to one public. While that's true of all performances—that they circulate beyond their immediate audience—the militant Irish nationalist performances routinely outdistanced the bounds of commonsense in North America and the United Kingdom, simultaneously communicating across the Atlantic as well. In a sense, then, militant Irish nationalist performances had to straddle separate worlds of commonsense, so to speak, a condition that constantly impinged on their ability to build the movement. Concomitantly, to fully understand Fenian constitutive practice requires a transnational rhetorical lens.

Rhetoric and the Transnational

The Fenian case of nation-building in the midst of the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction eras resonates well with Wendy Hesford's call for rhetorical studies to study "how symbols and symbolic practices are appropriated, translated, and rehistoricized, and [to reconsider] earlier transnational thinkers and international rhetorical figures" ("Global Turns" 795). Transnational feminist rhetorical scholars like Rebecca Dingo and Jennifer Wingard have taken up this call, each of them applying M. Jacqui Alexander's term "ideological traffic" in powerful ways to understand how rhetorical practices move and shift and contain the past-in-present during this current moment of transnational configuration. On the one hand, Dingo demonstrates how the discourse of "fitness" at one rhetorical occasion, in this case the World Bank's 2004 Disability Conference, contained competing ideological traffic in three separate

performances, thus producing potential conjunctural moments for shifting hegemonic understandings of disability (*Networking* 2012). Following Alexander, she defines ideological trafficking as "rhetorical 'formations that are otherwise positioned as dissimilar' because of the fact that they might appear within a wholly different time, place, or situation" (69). As we'll see, Fenian rhetoric engages ideological traffic doubly. On the one hand, they often invoke similar topoi from earlier Irish-American nationalist movements such as the Repeal Associations in the early 1840s to galvanize their adherents. On the other, they also often remix republican topoi from the United States. When the Fenians engage either strategy, they're drawing on terms from different contexts that had "circulated without question for decades and thus [had] become ingrained and common sense" (70).

Wingard would ask us to read these invocations palimpsestically, showing how such "discourse is always already imbued with prior, and possibly future, meanings" (*Figuring Others*, 151). In so doing, such a method demands that scholars "[expand] the rhetorical situation temporally...to account for the networked nature of time and space in our analyses" (151-52). Both Wingard and Hesford have separately sought to do so by amending the classical rhetorical term *kairos*, or timeliness. As Hesford puts it in her contribution to Eileen Schell and K.J. Rawson's recent collection on feminist rhetorical methods, *Rhetorica in Motion*, employing *kairos* as a transnational feminist rhetorical analytic would seek to understand the "geopolitical elements of identity and positionality...in terms of the timeliness of certain identifications and their deployment" in the cultural, historical, and political conditions in which they operate ("Cosmopolitanism," 70). Tracing how these topoi are redeployed by different Irish

nationalists over time helps us to gauge and more fully understand the shifting ratios of identifications between Ireland and the United States that the changing diaspora was negotiating as new opportunities for Irish freedom emerged over time.

The majority of recent studies plying the intersections between rhetorical studies and transnationalism have focused more on understanding how this current moment of globalization can be better understood by applying a rhetorical framework and, concomitantly, on how it necessarily extends or challenges rhetorical concepts such as the public sphere or the rhetorical situation (Dingo, 2008, 2012; Dingo & Scott, 2012; Queen, 2008; Kulbaga, 2008; Hesford and Schell, 2008). Though much of the interest in transnational rhetorical and literacy studies approaches the transnational through contemporary sites, my study joins Christa Olson in adding a historical precedent to the current studies of contemporary globalization, thereby providing a site whereby the field can fulfill Hesford's call for "new questions about and new perspectives on the relation between past and present prototypes of globalization" ("Global Turns," 795).

Rhetoric and Sovereignty

Reinvigorated and transnationalized versions of concepts such as the rhetorical situation and kairos help to explain the shifting nature of Irish-American identifications over time in the 19th century. Yet, their ideological trafficking in U.S.-style republican rhetoric requires an additional framework that can account for overt Fenian attempts at discursive nation building. After all, just under three years before these Irish took the field in Canada, they'd begun to take steps to legitimize this resort to violence, working rhetorically to build support for their cause by claiming an already-existing nationhood, one that just needed recognition to assure that it could reemerge and flourish. In 1863, the Fenian Brotherhood secretly announced that the Republic of Ireland had been "virtually

established” and the gathered delegates in North America consisted of its National Assembly. By the time they invaded Canada in 1866, they’d gone even further into this sovereignty rhetoric, deeming themselves a full-blown Senate, establishing a Presidency, impeaching one President and swearing in another. Their efforts to win a piece of ground for Ireland on the Canadian battlefield were everywhere surrounded, then, by calculated rhetorical moves to proclaim and enact their sovereignty as an oppressed nation.

As Scott Lyons reminds us in his germinal 2000 essay “What do American Indians Want from Writing?: Rhetorical Sovereignty,” the conferral of legitimacy promised by sovereignty depends on recognition by power. Lyons’s primary argument in the essay is that American Indians’ pursuit of sovereignty is dependent, in part, on rhetorical sovereignty, which he defines as “the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (449-450). He argues that, in the context of American Indian Nation-peoples’ experience of generations of genocide and genocidal policies at the hands of U.S. political sovereignty, American Indian rhetorical sovereignty is crucial to combating what Lyons calls rhetorical imperialism, which he defines as “the ability of dominant powers to assert control of others by setting the terms of the debate” (452).

While both of these terms in the ways that Lyons applies them to the American Indian context are resonant for the Irish situation in relation to England during the 19th century, Lyons’s essay also demonstrates that “sovereignty” itself is rhetorical, constituted through discourse and recognition by other entities and itself changed over time by the interactions of discourse, ideology, and power (450). In the North American

context, according to Lyons, that has meant two things. First, sovereignty for American Indian peoples has become an elusive moving target, shaped entirely by and severely curtailed by the rhetorical imperialism enacted in U.S. Supreme Court decisions such as *Johnson vs. MacIntosh*, world-changing documents that have redefined U.S.-Indian sovereign relationships with the very stroke of a pen. Thus, while sovereignty is often proved by sword and gun, it is nearly always substantiated first through pen and ink, a reality the Fenians demonstrate through their own discursive nation-building in constitutions, national-bonds, and other nation-to-nation styled efforts at international diplomacy. Second, sovereignty has come to signify different experiences for the United States and the American Indian Nation-peoples whose lands the U.S. is settled upon. Whereas the U.S. understanding—and the European understandings it is founded upon—of sovereignty has increasingly come to be inflected by the individual protections and private property focus consonant with Enlightenment ideology, American Indian invocations of sovereignty include relationships with the land and are designed to support the survival and thriving of the people in toto, not just persons alone as individuals. Interestingly, the Irish themselves seem to negotiate a sort of middle ground between these understandings, what Damian Baca might call a “thinking- between” brought on by centuries of English colonialism.² When they arrive in the Americas and begin to invoke European forms of sovereignty through movements like the Fenians, their appeals tend to

² Baca, in his introduction to his and Victor Villanueva’s edited collection *Rhetorics of the Americas: 3114 BCE to 2012 CE*, states that study of rhetorical practice in the Americas must be “[enacted] by ‘thinking between’ multiple means of identification, between the colonizing West and *te-ixtli*, the ‘other face’ of the Americas” (4).

resemble a syncretic mix between a European-style sovereignty that protects individuals and private property and Lyons's American Indian invocations of sovereignty that privilege the survival of the people and an intimate connection to their homeland. On the one hand, they gesture constantly to the Irish people as a whole, and pen glowing odes to the island of their birth that suggest an intimate and inseparable connection between Irish sovereignty and Irish land. On the other hand, their vision of the Irish Republic is modeled on the French and U.S. models of government. In the coming chapters, I'll trace both of these implications of the term "rhetorical sovereignty" as they apply to the Fenians' evolving strategies for recognition. In many ways, as the Irish at home sought rhetorical sovereignty in Lyons's primary sense, the Irish in the United States pursued sovereignty rhetorically by announcing it in discourse and patterning it after U.S.-style republicanism in the hopes of gaining recognition—and thus legitimacy—from other sovereigns.

My study joins other recent work that seeks to put immigrant and indigenous rhetorical practices into conversation. Jason Peters, for instance, takes up both Malea Powell's and Damian Baca's work in his recent *College English* essay, "'Speak White: Language Policy, Immigration Discourse, and Tactical Authenticity in a French Enclave in New England.'" Peters recovers the history of *La Sentinelle* Affair, in which a French enclave in New England sought to resist the installment of an English-only education policy in Catholic Schools, and uses it to demonstrate how language eradication efforts played a role in the social construction of whiteness through the elimination of diasporic immigrant "borderlands subjectivities," a term he borrows from Baca and reads through Powell's rhetorics of survivance. My study joins Peters and others in seeking to provide a

more comprehensive account of the varied means and ends of immigrant rhetors in the long 19th century in North America, one that takes a diasporic stance to immigrant uses of rhetoric that go beyond the binary of resistance or assimilation to white supremacy.

While I follow Peters in seeking to put the insights of rhetorics indigenous to the Americas in conversation with the Fenians—as Burke would put it, to make such praxis a part of their wider circumference or Constitution-behind-the-Fenians’-Constitution—I also want to draw a crucial distinction from his choice. While he amply details these French-Canadian attempts to maintain language survivance, he spends little time detailing how these French immigrant efforts to retain their linguistic sovereignty through borderlands subjectivities in the northeastern United States were also enabled by settler colonialism. While he notes the distinction Lyons would draw between a diasporic community’s claims to homeland—in this case, the Francophone immigrant’s Quebecois roots (567)—and a claim to indigeneity, and even mentions the differential colonization experienced by the French in relation to the Micmacs and Mohawks in Quebec, his attempt to make a “trickster alliance” with Powell’s insights risks further occluding the ways that French (or Irish) diasporic survivance is often bankrolled by an ongoing and unspoken investment in white settler colonialism. To utilize American Indian contributions to rhetorical studies without foregrounding this important reality risks occluding the very real and ongoing racialized systems of power on this continent, and is a precedent I hope to break from in putting the Fenian story of rhetorical sovereignty attempts within the backdrop of larger violations of sovereignty on this very same land. Nevertheless, Peters’s essay does point out a thirdway between assimilation and separatism that runs throughout the Fenian story as well. As such, I add my voice to

Peters and others like Erika Strandjord who have begun to complicate simple stories of immigrants leveraging literacy and rhetoric to assimilate into and shape a role within United States society.

Constituting a People

Given the Fenians' location in North America, and their steadfast attempts to invoke sovereignty for a heretofore unrecognized "nation" of people, any investigation of their rhetorical activity across this continent must be rooted in a conversation with Lyons's concepts of rhetorical sovereignty and rhetorical imperialism. Lyons's succinct treatment of the thoroughly rhetorical struggle over sovereignty's authority to both locate power and grant recognition or legitimacy on this continent over the past 500 years grounds my exploration of Fenian constitutive rhetorics in the wider geopolitical circumference of colonization and oppression on this continent, a circumference easily occluded if focusing solely on the Fenians' rhetorical productions (Lyons 450). By putting Lyons's important intervention into conversation with the varied strands of the Burkean constitutive rhetorical tradition, scholars working to understand the rhetorical aspects of nation-building on and across this continent can harness considerable explanatory power. In what follows, I'll briefly sketch the main contributions from each Burkean tradition I've employed in the study.

In aggregate, the multifaceted tradition of constitutive rhetoric offers a thorough approach to the study of how, as Ralph Cintron describes the enterprise of rhetorical studies writ large, a group's "social imaginary" or "collective consciousness" is made over time, "including their histories, possible futures, and connections to material conditions" ("Gates Locked" 10). Largely consisting of three main traditions, each is rooted in a major aspect of Kenneth Burke's oeuvre. The first, detailed by James Jasinski

and Jennifer R. Mercieca, comes through James Boyd White's combination of Burke, the "New" Critics and reader response scholars in American literary studies, and language philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Austin, and Searle (Jasinski and Mercieca 314). The second is Maurice Charland's audience-focused approach that unites Burke's work on identification, Althusser's theory of interpellation, and Michael C. McGee's foundational work to bring rhetoric and ideology into theoretical rapprochement (1975, 1980). Charland's approach seeks to account for the ways that discourse calls a subject and, concomitantly, an audience into being, one that can account for the production and material effects of ideological discourse ("discourse that presents itself as always only pointing to the given, the natural, the already agreed upon" (133)). By an examination of the White Paper on Quebecois sovereignty from the Independence movement and political party in Quebec, Charland demonstrates how a constitutive rhetoric calls into being a certain sort of subject, one with certain ideological effects: 1. A collectivized history; 2. A transhistorical subject, where the dead are linked to the living in ongoing community; and 3. A *telos*, or a destiny of sorts, that manifests in action, which he calls the "illusion of freedom." In this sense, a subject is not persuaded to support something like Quebec sovereignty. Such support is inherent to the subject position addressed in the constitutive rhetoric. In so doing, Charland demonstrates a more thoroughly rhetorical understanding of audience, such that an audience does not exist prior to rhetoric; rather, it lives inside rhetoric, constituted by multiple and competing discourses that render a subject replete with motives that make a rhetorical discourse intelligible and possible to identify with at the moment of address. As Charland puts it, such intelligibility also provides the audience a material mandate toward action.

Though Jasinski and Mercieca fruitfully contrast White's and Charland's approach to constitutive rhetoric, finding that White's approach to a constitutive rhetoric is more dialogic than Charland's, the latter approach has gained more traction and uptake in rhetorical studies through the years. For the purposes of this present study, Charland's work has been fruitfully extended by both Jolanta Drzewiecka (2002) and Dexter Gordon (2006). Drzewiecka combines Charland's constitutive rhetoric with theories of diaspora to examine the ways that the Polish-American community strategically constitutes itself in relation to others such as the "Jew," the "West," and the "communist." In so doing, she finds that diasporic identity is not constantly changing and fluid--and hence immeasurable--but strategically enacted to contend with changing political conditions in both homeland and new home in order to mobilize new collectivities for continued identification and action. These constitutive enactments of identity are often contradictory and contested, mobilizing specific histories for specific rhetorical ends in specific moments. Drzewiecka's study is an incredibly useful contrast to my work with the Fenians, as these radical Irish employ similar strategic constitutive enactments as the Polish-American subjects she studies, yet consistently evince more separatist tones in their version of diasporic nationalism.

Dexter Gordon, on the other hand, applies Charland's theory to the rhetoric of 19th century Black Abolitionists in *Black Identity: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Nineteenth Century Black Nationalism*. Gordon first sketches the interarticulations between rhetoric, race, ideology, and alienation in the constitutive rhetoric of 19th century Black Nationalism, thus amending Charland's use of Althusser for its inability to account for race in its theories of alienation. He then examines representative rhetorical examples of white

supremacist justifications for slavery that the rhetoric of Black Nationalism grows out of. He goes on to examine key founding documents of Black Nationalism in the work of Robert Alexander Young's *Ethiopian Manifesto* and David Walker's *Appeal*, then explores the debates between Whipper and Sidney in 1840-1841 over the dialectic between separatism and collaboration with whites in abolitionism. He then examines three crowning abolitionists' discourses at the height of the movement—Henry Garnet, Martin Robison Delany, and Frederick Douglass—noting how each appropriates the American Revolutionary tradition in different ways to serve their desired constitutive ends for black freedom. This chapter's focus on citizenship and black abolitionists' debates over the U.S. Constitution serve as excellent counterpoints to Fenian iterations of Constitutionalism in the decades after these debates. And Gordon's final chapter, wherein he closes with some recommendations for keeping race and alienation central to the frame of rhetorical theory—both to better understand rhetoric in situ as well as to produce better knowledge to overcome our increasing fragmentation here in the USA—help me to both frame Fenian rhetorical activities more fully within the 19th century and articulate the contemporary importance of understanding their nationalist aspirations. Gordon's racial and Drzewiecka's diasporic amendments to Charland's theory are important to understanding the Fenian Irish's transnational attempts at constituting an Irish nation, attempts in which they often invoked an Irish race as a key substance for their unity. Taken together, these scholars' framework is the key avenue by which by which I analyze early transatlantic Fenian constitutive rhetorical practice in Chapter 2.

Though Jasinski and Mercieca's essay detailing the first two major approaches to constitutive rhetoric doesn't mention it, recent scholarship on the constitutive function of

rhetoric has returned to the place in Burke's oeuvre that most directly explores the relationship of rhetoric and Constitutions: Part III of *Grammar of Motives*, "On Dialectic." These contributions have, in effect, established a third growing tradition in the study of constitutive rhetoric that builds directly on Burke's in-depth and wide-ranging thinking on the rhetorical force of constitutions. Indeed, numerous scholars have noted Burke's own dismay that so few folks had paid closed attention to Part III of the *Grammar*, which places the U.S. Constitution as the representative anecdote for his motives trilogy, especially for the ways that it seeks to understand how judgments, persuasion, and identification require a substantiated scene established by rhetoric. After all, a Constitution involves all five terms of Burke's dramatic pentad in its basic structure:

A legal constitution is an *act* or body of acts (or enactments), done by *agents* (such as rulers, magistrates or other representative persons), and designed (*purpose*) to serve as a motivational ground (*scene*) of subsequent actions, it being thus an instrument (*agency*) for the shaping of human relations. (341)

Yet, despite its pretensions to universality, a Constitution is actually a dialectical act arising in history and responding to specific conditions (365), addressed by agents to other agents (360), that codifies the authoring agents' wishes or commands and becomes the scene for other agents' behaviors (362). In other words, he proceeds to show how Constitutions build their own bounded circumference, but can't help but refer to, draw credibility from, or seek to ignore aspects of the wider circumference of the world, the Constitution-behind-the-Constitution.

More recent work, most notably by Gregory Clark (2004), Dana Anderson (2007), and Christa Olson (2010; “Places,” 2012) have taken up Burke’s Constitutive torch in powerful ways. Clark uses it as a launching point to examine how public experiences of a landscape contribute to an identification with national identity. Anderson, on the other hand, uses Burke’s concepts of “circumference,” “the agon of constitutional principles,” and the “audience-addressed” nature of constitutions to build a method for examining first-person identity constitution in conversion narratives. And Olson takes Burke much more literally by displacing his representative anecdote to Ecuador’s much more turbulent Constitutional scene, thereby injecting contingency into the scenic substance-work of Constitutions, all the while making a strong case for approaching rhetorical historiography from the stance of an engaged learner who juxtaposes cherished terms with new places to learn more about both. Though she only touches lightly on the terms Anderson uses, she extends his insights by focusing on another key concept of Burke’s constitutional theory: the Constitution-behind-the-Constitution, or the wider circumference of context that is not mentioned but nonetheless both impacts and substantiates a constitution’s discourse. In Chapter 3, I follow Olson’s choice of more literal sites to the Constitution of the Fenian Brotherhood—specifically four major Constitutions from 1863-1870. In Chapter 4, I follow Anderson’s choice toward the substantiating motivational work of personal narratives in militant Irish nationalist propaganda. But, in both, I draw primarily from both of their approaches to complement and extend their insights.

Finally, Jasinski and Mercieca’s essay “Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the ‘Principles of ‘98’” is simultaneously a

fantastic survey of the origins of constitutive rhetoric, an astute analysis of the most promising directions for future research, and an enactment of their recommended approach on the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798. They find that most studies of constitutive rhetoric concern themselves with invitations to identity formation present in a constitutive text's "interiors," or the form and content of a text as delivered. They urge critics to continue along that trajectory while adding a more robust investigation of a constitutive rhetoric's "exteriors," or its constitutive effects as embraced, rejected, or modulated by the immediate and future audiences of a constitutive rhetoric. To do so, they suggest three key concepts for tracing a constitutive rhetoric's exteriors: reception, circulation, and articulation (319). As for the future of research focused on a constitutive rhetoric's "interiors," they call for an expansion of

interior analysis to include examinations of how texts invite listeners and readers to modify the meaning of a culture's key terms, to reconceptualize a culture's experience of public time (including the past), to reaffirm or reconfigure accepted demarcations of social space, and to affirm as well as challenge established sources of cultural authority, bonds of affiliation, and institutional relationships. (320)

These topoi of a constitutive rhetoric's interiors—invitations to modify key *terms*, to rethink the experience of public *time*, to realign social *space*, and to both affirm and challenge existing social and institutional *relationships*—are crucial touchstones for my present study. And while this project will not engage significantly in the tracing of Fenian rhetoric's exteriors as Jasinski and Mercieca have defined them, it will trace the evolution of interior Fenian constitutive invitations over time, demonstrating the ways that Fenians

circulated and rearticulated their visions to meet changing geopolitical and material conditions.

Irish-American Identity

Taken alongside Lyons's rhetorical sovereignty, Olson and Anderson's reading of Burke provide a productive lens for my reading of Fenian efforts to substantiate their movement, efforts that often relied on the substance of the U.S. constitutional scene for their own legitimacy. By approaching this dynamic from an explicitly rhetorical framework, this study adds to the thorough historical work done on Irish-American identity. For instance, scholars like Noel Ignatiev have long argued that Irish participation in the U.S. Civil War was primarily motivated by the desire to fully solidify their own citizenship position in the white supremacist social order of the United States. As Ignatiev argues, "in becoming white the Irish ceased to be green" (3).³ No doubt, the claim to U.S. citizenship was incredibly salient in the minds of these Irish, but not only to assure their place within the republic they were lately fighting for. Such an explanation misses the main reason continuously claimed by these radicalized Fenians: it was a prelude, a training ground for the *real* war of liberation to come, the one where Ireland would finally overthrow England. These post-potato famine Fenians were clearly trying to remain "green" even as they were no doubt participating in the privileges attending white supremacy.

Ignatiev's account of this dynamic is more akin to a switch being flipped, whereby Irish immigrants choose whiteness (and American-ness) over their Irish identity. Such a metaphor implies fixity over time, a binary decisive moment of solidifying

³ Though the emphasis on white supremacy is toned down somewhat in his account, Christian Samito (2009) also claims U.S. citizenship as the prime mover for Irish participation in the U.S. Civil War.

identity. Yet, Irish immigrants in the 19th century seem to exhibit more of a flickering bulb, dancing between the poles of full Irish and full U.S. American nationalist identity performances to accomplish evolving dual goals for their lives in North America and their passionate attachments to Eire. Kerby Miller, whose *Emigrants and Exiles* proves indispensable to Ignatiev's account, provides a thorough and incisive overview of Irish-American emigration over time, noting the political dynamics on both sides of the Atlantic that drove Irish immigrants—even those voluntary emigrants seeking a better life for themselves as individuals—to identify in North America as involuntary exiles from their suffering island, dear Erin, the ol' sod. Similarly, Timothy Meagher's study of Worcester, MA Irish from the 1880s to the 1920s complicates simple narratives of easy assimilation or absolute separatism in the Irish immigrant community, noting three waves of primary Irish identifications over this time period in Worcester: the temperance societies and a spirit of accommodation to Yankee Protestants in the 1880s and early 1890s; the Ancient Order of Hibernians and a more ethnocentric Irish-first identification (even leading to Gaelic language revitalization efforts) in the 1890s and first half of 1900s; an aggressive Pan-Catholic American identity anchored under membership in the Knights of Columbus from mid 1900s to the 1920s. Though Meagher's study is focused on the next generation of Irish, rather than Fenianism's heyday during the first-generation Famine exiles, it points to the complexity of Irish identifications in the United States over time and in specific space.

Historians such as Thomas N. Brown, Mitchell Snay, and Christian Samito have seen these passionate performances of Irish nationalism primarily as a way to make a place for themselves in the U.S. American scene, an epideictic performative rhetoric to

constitute an Irish-American citizen identity through patriotic invocations of Irish nationalism. After all, the Irish had been in the United States and other British colonies from nearly the beginning of the colonial contact era, first as indentured servants drawn from the ranks of “criminals” and/or political prisoners and later as Anglo-Irish middle-class Protestant participants in the merchant and political opportunities of the British colonies (Beckles, 1985 & 1990; Durey, 2002). Indeed, Ignatiev via Miller notes how the Irish emigrating to the United States are largely middle-to upper-class Protestants until the 1830s, and that the poorest of Ireland’s Catholics—those who largely spoke Gaelic and had little English—didn’t really come in large numbers until forced by the Potato famine from 1845-1852 (45). And though the middle-class Anglo-Irish had to deal with Anglo-American “nativist” biases in the 18th and early 19th century, they could pass much more easily in the United States as “native” than these later waves of poor, Catholic, and often Gaelic-speaking Irish from the 1840s through the end of the 19th century. These undesirable Irish immigrants were marked in multiple ways as foreign and inferior bodies, subject to labor exploitation, mob violence, and vilification as sub-human in the United States press, a dynamic that caused Anglo-Irish to coin the term “Scots-Irish” as a strategy to mark them off as respectably distinct from lowly Catholic Irish (47). These undesirable Irish were the main recruiting ground of the Fenian Brotherhood, which had learned through earlier unsuccessful revolutionary activity that Ireland would not be freed without thorough pre-organization of the diaspora. As Padraig Ó Conubhair notes, the Fenians differed from the earlier notable revolutionary movements The United Irishmen (1798) and Young Ireland (1848), in that “no longer did the leaders of the struggle for freedom come from the intelligentsia and the gentry of Ireland” (13).

As each new wave of emigrants—and, with the Famine exodus—exiles from Ireland arrived in the United States, then, they had to be re-taught the tenets of the U.S. skin-based political economy. Thus, it's difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the moment wherein *the Irish became* white and *ceased* to be green. This is not to discount the weighty truth of Ignatiev's findings, but it is to note that the reality of the changing Irish diaspora's negotiation of its transatlantic heart throughout the 19th century is more complicated than the poetic and final brush strokes of green-to-white can capture.⁴ Rather, a rhetorical, performative lens reveals the shifting ratios of green to red, white, and blue that the Irish, in general, and the Fenian Irish, in particular, employed to achieve their goals of North American survival and Irish sovereignty throughout the 19th century. These ratios cannot be reduced to the light switch metaphor symbolizing total assimilation or absolute separatism, but instead a shifting borderlands subjectivity attuned to kairotic opportunities for Irish freedom in the larger political scene. The Fenians, operating as they were during the U.S. Civil War era, rode the rising tide of anti-British sentiment in the United States in the wake of the Alabama claims. As such, they were a fundamentally different movement in North America, operating in a fundamentally different political moment than those earlier Irish nationalist movements such as the Repeal Associations in the 1840s.

Many hoped to capture that anti-British sentiment in the Union for either international recognition of Irish belligerent status or a full-blown U.S. declaration of war that would virtually ensure Irish victory over England. Others though, such as John Mitchel, found more common ground for Irish consubstantiality with the Confederate cause. Indeed, he analogized the relationship between the industrialized, powerful North

⁴ Interestingly enough, Ignatiev's account doesn't even mention Fenianism or the Fenian Brotherhood.

and the agricultural South as apt to describe England's industrial power and exploitative relationship to agricultural Ireland. Though his writings gained little official favor in New York, where he was forced to resign from editorship of Irish-American paper *The Citizen* for both his racial ideology and remarks against the Pope, he relocated to Tennessee and became crucial to the rhetorical efforts of the Confederate side of the U.S. Civil War. Given Mitchel's ethos and the many Irish who lived in the South and fought for the Confederacy, historians like Bryan McGovern and Patrick Steward have hypothesized that the Fenian movement could have grown more powerful had they either sided with the Confederacy or been more openly critical of Nativist sentiment in the Union (49). Though provocative and plausible, such an account ignores the ways that Fenians saw Union survival as crucial to the substantiation and ultimate recognition of Irish sovereignty. In Burkean terms, the leadership of the Fenian Brotherhood relied too heavily on the Union as the legitimate Constitution-behind-the-Fenian-Constitution that would eventually ensure Fenian sovereignty. Though a goodly number of Irish no doubt identified with Mitchel's account—and though the Irish in the 1850s-1870s faced significant Nativist discrimination, economic exploitation, and dehumanizing stereotypes of their racial inferiority—the Fenian movement pinned its own republican constitutional wishes on the survival of the U.S. republic and their rightful participation in its national life.

Such wrangles over what it means to be Irish and a citizen of the United States recall the ways that black abolitionists like Henry Highland Garnet, Martin Robison Delany, and Frederick Douglass sought to constitute various iterations and ends for Black Nationalism by appropriating the trope of citizenship, both its possibilities and limits for

blacks in the antebellum United States (Gordon 126). And similar to Delany's proposal for separatist emigration as opposed to Douglass's more integrationist stance, the quotation at the top of this chapter demonstrates that Irish privileges in the United States were not always exercised in the attempt to become more full citizen participants in the United States. As we'll see, their U.S. citizenship—and their participation in the white supremacist identifications that confirmed it for “nativist” Protestant Americans—was a key privilege by which they could lawfully organize for militant Irish revolution, a luxury not afforded to their black nationalist contemporaries. Rather than simply becoming white, and fully ceasing to be green, it seems that these Irish were deploying varying ratios of white and green identifications in order to accomplish multiple goals for Irish liberation in the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction eras. A closer look at these ratios, and the implications and outcomes of their deployment, builds on the important work of scholars like Krista Ratcliffe and Frankie Condon who are trying to build more conscious identifications with race and gender into contemporary life. The Fenians provide a fitting historical example of the ways oppressed groups often perform identifications with various logics of othering in order to further their own goals of liberation, not least the invocations of ethnic nationalism that anchored Fenian rhetorical practice. As such, a deeper exploration of the Fenians adds a fourth method to Ratcliffe's “rhetorical listening,” one that uses historical inquiry as both site and teacher for the ways that white-skinned and nationalist racial identifications function in white supremacist societies.

Perhaps most importantly, close listening to the Fenians' attempts to remain green by utilizing “every legitimate privilege within their reach” helps to flesh out and deepen historians' critique of Irish participation in white supremacy. While scholars like Ignatiev

note white supremacy's close relationship to American citizenship, and ably describe Irish attempts to find their own place in the "White Republic," less has been said about the settler colonial logics that such a stance entailed. To be sure, U.S. citizenship clearly encompassed the anti-black aspects of white supremacy. But it also relied heavily on settler colonialism and the erasure of Indigenous presence in North America, a fact lightly touched on—if at all—by Ignatiev and others working in whiteness studies. As Patrick Wolfe has noted, settler colonialism is a distinct form of colonialism that operates on the logic of elimination of the native that rewards sovereign rights over the territory for the permanent settler. Cherokee feminist scholar and activist Andrea Smith describes "three pillars" of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy in the United States. Synthesizing the insights of critical race theory, cultural studies, and Native Studies, she posits a slaveability logic that underwrites anti-black racism, a genocide logic which sanctions settler colonialism, and an orientalism logic that positions "inferior" civilizations as perpetual threats to the United States and thereby legitimizes perpetual war (68). Smith's work helps to draw connections and distinctions between the differential experiences of economic and social marginalization experienced by people of color and Indigenous people in the United States. Her work provides a crucial lens to extend the conversations on Irish identifications in the United States, which have typically limited themselves to discussions of racial formation that are solely understood along a Black-White binary. As we'll see, Irish attempts at substantiating their own nationality are often predicated on replicating the settler logic employed by the United States.

The Archival Materials

Though the Fenian Brotherhood ostensibly existed until 1886, they lost prominence as the premier Irish liberation organization in the mid-1870s with the rise of Clan-na-Gael. As such, my first three chapters will focus on the key years between 1858-1870, tracing their founding by John O'Mahony and James Stephens and ensuing growth into organizations numbering in the tens of thousands on both sides of the Atlantic; the North American Fenians' attempts at Constitutional sovereignty and their negotiation of U.S. citizenship; and the Fenian schism in 1866 into two separate and competing wings aiming at different ends. The O'Mahony wing, as it came to be known, sought to keep the Irish in North America focused on supporting a war of liberation on Irish soil. The Senate Wing, on the other hand, split from O'Mahony's leadership and sought to direct North American Irish support towards the invasion of Canada. At first, these planned invasions were envisioned as supportive tactics to weaken the strength of British forces alongside the Irish rising. But, increasingly, members of the Senate wing hoped to establish a New Ireland on Canadian soil from which they could gain the international recognition and legitimacy needed to build sovereign military alliances against the British. As the movement lost steam in the 1870s, it gave way to a rhetorical wrangle over the best tactics to support efforts toward Irish revolutionary overthrow of the British and the establishment of an Irish Republic. My final chapter will seek to add more understanding to a key aspect of this shift during the time period: the efforts to redefine acceptable notions of violence in resistance to imperialism and oppression.

My account of the Fenian movement draws on archival materials, their own published convention proceedings and Constitutions, newspaper accounts from various New York City papers serving the Irish diaspora, and a considerable body of secondary

sources tracing the movement's history on both sides of the Atlantic. The first archive is located at Catholic University in Washington, DC, and is housed alongside the personal papers of (in)famous Irish militant Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, a man who was arrested on charges of sedition in 1865 as the editor of the Dublin Fenian newspaper *The Irish People*. This archive is anchored by the transnational correspondence between leadership in Ireland and the United States from 1858 until the organization's official dissolution in 1886, and also includes ledger books detailing the financial organizing efforts of the organization as well as some, but not all, of the printed convention proceedings.

The 2nd archive, entitled the Francis B. Gallagher collection of Fenian Brotherhood records, is located at the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center at St. Charles Boromeo seminary. This collection is largely focused on the internal communication of the Fenian Brotherhood's leading Senate Wing members in the United States during the years between the two unsuccessful invasions of Canada, 1866-1870, and includes a number of incendiary published missives against both the O'Mahony wing and, of course, the British.

I draw on newspaper accounts in the *Irish World* that are housed in the New York Public Library (NYPL). In addition, I draw on the NYU library's limited runs of O'Mahony's 1859-1861 newspaper *The Phoenix* and 1868-1870 *Irish People*. In future work, I hope to add insights from the *The Herald*, the *Citizen*, the *Irish-American*, *Freeman's Journal*, *The Irish-Citizen*, and white Democrat and anti-abolition newspapers like *The Caucasian* and *The Copperhead*, as well as New York Historical Society's copies of John Mitchel's *Southern Citizen* and some of Patrick Ford's contributions as editor to Black Reconstruction paper the *South Carolina Leader*. I would also like to add

to this present research by visiting the national archives in Dublin in order to access copies of *The Irish People*, organ of the IRB from 1863 until it was raided and shut down in September 1865.

And, finally, I am indebted to a long list of historians and Irish Studies folks who have sketched various aspects of the Fenian story. William D'Arcy's survey account of the movement has provided an accurate sketch of the major hotspots of the period, not to mention his crucial excavation of O'Donovan Rossa's letters that are now housed at Catholic University. Brian Jenkins's work has thoroughly limned the Fenian influence on Anglo-American relations during the time period, as well as the effects Fenian raids had on Canadian confederation. His accounts are crucial to understanding the diplomatic tensions animating the decisions of the British and U.S. governments in response to Fenianism. Mitchell Snay, in tracing the Fenian organization's growth alongside both the Ku Klux Klan and the Freedmen Union Leagues, reveals these competing Nationalisms to be a powerful lens for understanding the Reconstruction era. Christian Samito, in his *Becoming American Under Fire*, compares the similar and different ways that Irish Americans and African Americans leveraged Civil War Service for inclusion in the U.S. Republic as full citizens. Marta Ramon's thorough biographical treatment of James Stephens, *The Provisional Dictator*, provides a balanced and unparalleled window into the decisions of the Irish branch of the organization. Pádraig Ó Conubhair's local microhistorical account of the Irish rising, *The Fenians Were Dreadful Men*, deepens our understanding of the local dynamics hamstringing the 1867 rising. Niall Whelehan's work on Irish political violence and the dynamiters proved crucial to both my understanding of the transformations in Fenian thought after the failed risings as well as

the transnational influence of Irish political violence as a strategy. John O’Leary’s firsthand accounts, published in two volumes in 1896 as *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, remain authoritative behind-the-scenes accounts of the early years of the organization, providing an especially thorough window into the workings of the *Irish People* newspaper in Dublin from 1863-65.

In addition to Ignatiev’s work on the Repeal-era Irish in the United States, Angela Murphy’s *Irish Freedom & American Slavery* provides a more thorough treatment of this time period. And Kerby Miller’s *Emigrants and Exiles*, a book that Ignatiev thoroughly relies upon, provides a thorough background account of the demographics and dynamics of Irish emigration in the 19th century. Thomas N. Brown’s authoritative *Irish American Nationalism: 1870-1890* helped me to understand the assimilationist dynamics of Irish American nationalism in the time period immediately following Fenian agitation. And John Belchem’s work on the comparative developments of Irish Nationalism in the United States and the United Kingdom during the Young Ireland era provides a crucial precursor to the Fenian iterations of Irish Nationalism a decade later.

Chapter Breakdowns

In Chapter 2, I examine key public statements, the correspondence between the organization’s leadership in Ireland and the United States, and letters addressed to the Fenian Brotherhood headquarters by various organizers throughout North America. Examining these materials provides a key window into the functioning of what Karma Chavez would call the “counterpublic enclave” within which these Irish militants sought to constitute themselves across the ocean. Following Charland’s tradition of constitutive rhetoric, especially as amended by Dexter Gordon’s addition of a racial lens and Jolanta Drziewicka’s addition of a diasporic reading, I trace the way these Irish militants sought

very hard to constitute themselves as a collective and transhistorical subject of the coming-Irish nation. As the movement gained steam, though, their transnational scattering inhibited their ability to remain unified in their goal of a rising in Ireland, thereby splintering the *telos* of Irish liberation prescribed in the movement's original vision as the Fenians in North America and the revolutionaries in Ireland negotiated their own binding national contexts and constraints.

In Chapter 3, I turn to a closer examination of the North American organization, the Fenian Brotherhood. In a reading informed by Lyons's sketch of rhetorical sovereignty and Burke's dialectic on Constitutions as extended by Anderson and Olson, I examine the four major constitutions officially authored by the Fenian Brotherhood from 1863-1870, noting how their acts of drawing an increasingly official circumference of sovereign legitimacy and democratic republicanism came to exert scenic conditions ripe for organizational schism, a legitimacy crisis in the nascent (virtual) Irish republic. This legitimacy crisis leads to multiple failed U.S. Fenian invasions of British Canada before the Fenians reunite under one Constitution and promise not to invade Canada again or to work against the wishes of the organization in Ireland. I argue that their constitutional wishes of sovereignty both rely on and reinforce the United States's own palliative constitutional wishes along racial and settler colonial lines.

In Chapter 4, I carry this same amended constitutive rhetorical framework into a site more akin to Dana Anderson's study of first-person identity constitution, engaging a sustained examination of the conversion narrative *Fenians' Progress*, an anonymous tract communicating a vision of New Ireland in Canadian territory. This narrative was published as the front matter to the 3rd Fenian Constitution, which converted the Fenian

Brotherhood's Head Centre and Central Council into a President and Senate. I analyze the constitutive vision of this conversion narrative, of sorts, to better understand the constitutional wishes of the Fenian Wing most fervently committed to Canadian invasions. Not coincidentally, this was the wing that contained the members who were also most interested in carving a path for themselves in U.S. power politics. This public conversion narrative provides a key window into the militarized, raced, gendered, and settler politics of respectability as they relate to U.S. recognition of sovereignty for Fenians intent on invading Canada.

In the aftermath of multiple failed invasions of Canada and a failed rising in Ireland, a thoroughly chastened North American organization that had constitutionally reduced its circumference from a Provisional Government and National Assembly of Ireland in 1865 to a civic organization with titles more like an NGO in 1870, the more radical Fenians worldwide began to doubt the efficacy of a traditional war for liberating Ireland from England. Thus begins an effort to radically redefine the parameters of acceptable violence for accomplishing revolutionary goals. As documented by Niall Whelehan, these "skirmishers" took to the Irish-American Press, particularly in Patrick Ford's *Irish World* and O'Donovan Rossa's later *United Irishmen*, to identify targeted dynamiting as reasonable and ethical violent responses to British imperialism. In so doing, these journalists make transnational common cause with other peoples fighting against British imperialism around the world. Yet, the circumference they draw for acceptable violence still does not extend to everyone. Chapter 5 examines these anti-imperialist redefinitions of violence as they relate to Fenian and Irish-American participation in the U.S. Sioux Wars happening at the same time. This final chapter

explores how the most avowedly anti-imperialist Irish newspaper rhetors negotiate the U.S. domestic settler colonial and racial “constitutions-behind-the-Constitution” in their attempts to draw revolutionary transnational identifications with other oppressed peoples as they build support for Irish liberation and a redefinition of acceptable violence.

I’ll close the project with a brief concluding chapter that summarizes the main insights of the study, suggests its theoretical and methodological contributions to the field, and gestures towards possibilities for future work.

2. LOST IN TRANSNATION: THE LIMITS TO CONSTITUTIVE IRISH NATIONALISM ACROSS THE OCEAN

“Purely ‘racialist’ or ‘nationalist’ doctrines of emancipation are a more benign transformation of such ‘counterconspiracy’ (or exclusive league of the excluded). And they may even seem like an ultimate solution, until there develop the wrangles within nationalism, and among rival nationalisms” (Kenneth Burke, 194).

Introduction

Perhaps it is best to begin this story at the end, or—to be more specific—the beginning of the end of the transatlantic Fenian alliance that might have posed a real threat to British rule in Ireland.

On May 10, 1866, Irish revolutionary and the Fenian movement’s “provisional dictator” James Stephens stepped onto North American soil, fresh off a steamship from Paris, with a serious rhetorical problem on his hands. As he understood it, the transnational unity he’d worked so hard to cultivate for the past six years between the Irish in North America and Ireland was being destroyed, and with it, the chance at successful Irish revolt against England. The Irish in the United States—so vital to the success of the promised Revolution—were once again stepping out of line. And Stephens was here to take the reins, to persuade them to stick to the original plan: trust their revolutionary brothers in Ireland; send as much money, men, and munitions as possible back to the Old Sod; wait for the perfect time to strike, when success would be assured; beat the wretched English out of Ireland once and for all.

Stephens was confident of his success. After all, he was the founder and leader of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), the underground radical nationalist organization

based in Ireland that had been building transnational support networks for the revolution among the Irish diaspora since 1858. He had been tapped for leadership by his friends and fellow veterans of the Young Ireland Revolt of 1848 John O'Mahony and Michael Doheny. O'Mahony and Doheny were living in exile in the United States, and both were active in the Emmett Monument Association in New York City that was a precursor to the revolutionary organization to come (Ramón-García 84). Once Stephens agreed to lead the Irish side of the movement, O'Mahony dubbed the North American arm the "Fenian Brotherhood" as a nod to the Fianna, an ancient band of warrior bards known through Irish oral tradition as the staunch defenders of the island. Largely on the backs of O'Mahony and Stephens (Doheny died in 1862, cutting his pivotal role short), the Fenians had become a sprawling organization, rumored to be 50,000 strong with radical Irish emigrants all over the United States. If anyone could bring the Fenian Brotherhood to their senses here in the spring of '66, surely it was Stephens.

Not only had he founded the organizations in Ireland and the United States, he had also been to the States for successful organizing trips before. Both times, he'd used his charisma and his ethos as the first-hand representative of the growing movement in Ireland to galvanize the U.S. Fenians. Twice he'd been here. And twice, the coffers and membership rolls had swelled in his wake, with promises of more money, weapons, and trained Irish veterans of the U.S. Civil War to finally kick John Bull and the Queen out of the Fenians' beloved Ireland. Stephens had been the architect of the constitutive vision that had gotten the movement this far. He had no reason to believe that he couldn't solve this sticky rhetorical situation. Yet, as the months dragged on after the United States's

Civil War, that tenuous identification they had been building these long six years had (once again) fallen into fractious division.

I begin here, with the disembarkment of the movement's provisional dictator from Ireland, because it is such a pivotal moment in the transatlantic development of Fenianism. What had begun in 1858 as a unified transatlantic organization had by now gone through two major schisms, which I will treat at greater length in chapters 3 and 4. The first came in 1863, when O'Mahony decided as Head Centre of the Fenian Brotherhood to officially split from the Irish organization, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). Though disappointing to Stephens, O'Mahony had plausible reasons, and the movement continued to work in tandem across the ocean. But this second split, and the occasion for drawing Stephens across the Atlantic, was a full-blown legitimacy crisis that split the North American organization in two and spelled disaster for the movement in Ireland. A rival faction led by William R. Roberts had seized the Presidency of the Fenian Brotherhood and, concomitantly, control of the North American organization's direction. The O'Mahony faction refused to recognize the impeachment, voted to ouster the ten disloyal senators, and continued to support the rising at "home" by pledging its resources and loyalty to the IRB. But Roberts's "Senate" faction swelled with the ranks of recently unemployed Paddy veterans of the U.S. Civil War and envisioned a Fenian strike on British Canada. Ostensibly, they hoped to claim ground as New Ireland, or to act as a deadly distraction for British forces in Canada—thus enabling a successful rising in Ireland.

Though the goal was the same for all these radicals—Irish emancipation from England and the establishment of an Irish Republic—the tactics for achieving such a lofty

goal had become a point of contention. As we will see, Stephens would be unable to suture this strange counterpublic back together over their tactics for emancipation. While each side had the best of intentions and shared the same pure vision of Irish freedom, their consubstantiality was ultimately undone, in part, by the losses in translation as their radical rhetorics of Irish revolution travelled transnationally through a diaspora that was negotiating different national contexts and constraints.

Before treating the constitutive visions of each wing of the United States organization in the following chapters, this chapter traces the transatlantic rhetorical wrangles of the organization from 1858-1866 leading up to Stephens's visit and (ultimately) failed unification speech at Jones Woods on August 24, 1866. By examining key public speeches, letters, and circulars coupled with the backchannel correspondence of the movement's leadership, I will trace the evolving constitutive invitations of the movement in its early years as it vacillated between the poles of identifications with Irish identity and U.S. identity. I begin by tracing their separatist constitutive rhetoric as it seeks to establish Ireland as the proper homeland and rightful object of true Irish patriotism on both sides of the Atlantic, illustrating the first two ideological effects—constituting a collective subject and positing a transhistorical subject—of Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric. From there, the essay explores how such praxis evinces an ambiguous relationship with the United States, despite their avowed commitment to being loyal U.S. citizens and the heavy Fenian involvement on both sides of the United States Civil War. The essay then moves to examine the ways that this delicate counterpublic consubstantiality is constantly interrupted—and ultimately undone—by the separate national constraints it must negotiate as it travels across the Atlantic. Despite

their best efforts to sustain a purity of purpose and action for Irish emancipation, their transnational context serves to work against their radical identification efforts and dooms the movement to a factionalism that saps their revolutionary potential. Thus, the transnational circulation of the Fenians' rhetoric militates against the successful realization of Charland's third ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric: the illusion of freedom that calls interpellated subjects to fulfill the naturalized narrative in sustained action. While Fenians on both sides of the Atlantic do indeed act, they are unable to do so in the unity required for their original vision of success. I close this chapter with some thoughts on the theoretical and methodological implications of the Fenian case across borders for rhetorical historiography in North America.

Home is Where the Art Is

Stephens's Fenian conundrum—and the larger context of Nationalist wrangles among the Fenians—is a good site to combine the field's emerging interest in transnational rhetorical studies with its abiding interest in rhetorical historiography, thereby answering Wendy Hesford's call to transnationalize rhetorical history (795). In her bibliographic essay, "Global Turns and Cautions in Rhetoric and Composition Studies," Hesford calls for a revised methodological toolset based in a "comparative-historical frame" that can help the field to better account for rhetoric's work in this latest iteration of globalization (791). Studies in rhetorical history have been slow to take up Hesford's call. Christa Olson's recent essay, "'Raíces Americanas': Indigenist Art, América, and Arguments for Ecuadorian Nationalism," though, addresses Hesford's vision of a "comparative-historical framework" in innovative ways. In it, she demonstrates how mid-20th century written and visual rhetorics in Ecuador posited a participation in América, an extra-national and ethno-historical term used by prominent

intellectuals and artists to map an autochthonous spirit to Américan art, politics, and nations—a spirit that empowered the nationalist ambitions of post-colonial mestizaje while relying on assumptions of indigeneity that both appropriated and ignored the actual indigenous peoples living there. By tracing the uses of this term in times of national crises or in the service of Ecuadorian nation-building, Olson demonstrates how such pan-regional arguments of “interconnectedness” could be used counterintuitively to shore up national worth. As such, her study compellingly illustrates Hesford and Eileen Schell’s contention that “transnational publics, which emerge as processes, are bound to and intersect with national publics and their discourses” (467) and vice versa. Whereas Olson finds these elite Ecuadorian mestizaje bolstering their nationalist project in Ecuador through transnational rhetorical gestures toward a larger region, the Fenians find themselves in the opposite predicament: they must build a rhetorical praxis that can harness the diasporic scattering of the Irish people into a unified front for successful revolt in Ireland.

As the field begins to take seriously the demand of transnational theory, though, those of us working in North America must make sure to connect the transnational aspects of the Americas to its historical and ongoing colonial aspects. Read this way, North America becomes an always-already transnational contested ground teeming with multiple overlapping nationalist rhetorical wrangles, a contested ground that has been artificially overlaid with a focus primarily on the United States settler nation-state. This focus on the settler nation-state’s public sphere as the most worthy of rhetorical study and understanding has tended, among other things, to lead to an assumption that immigrants to this continent unquestioningly desired access to full participation in the settler nation-

state. Thus, when white-skinned immigrants are mentioned in rhetorical histories, they are usually figured in one of two ways: (1) as a subaltern group that desires but has not yet been granted access to the public sphere of the United States (Clark and Halloran, 1993, 8); (2) as a group accessing some form of rhetorical education so they can gain access to the material and political opportunities potentially available to them in the United States (Trasciatti, 2009). Though the locus of agency differs in these approaches, the underlying assumption is the same—that immigrants to the United States unequivocally desire access to the hegemonic public sphere and that they themselves at least potentially identify with the United States. As Jay Peters puts it in his recent study of Francophone language rights activists in 1920s New England, “The inevitability of assimilation—and the expectation that the immigrant should *want* to assimilate—is already implicit in immigration discourse. Immigration discourse withholds from the immigrant the agency needed to make use of immigration as a cultural tactic” of survival (565). With the Fenians and their radical Irish Nationalism, we see an immigrant group whose rhetorical praxis is not aimed primarily towards the upward mobility promised by U.S. citizenship, but principally at constituting a more powerful transatlantic nationalist movement for the emancipation of Ireland from England.

Many historians of nineteenth-century Irish-American Nationalism see this pattern in the Irish diaspora in the United States, especially before the rise of Fenianism (Belchem, 1995; Brown, 1966). John Belchem follows Thomas Brown in stating that the failed Irish uprising of 1848 chastened those vocal Irish Nationalists living in North America at the time, causing them to strike a more assimilationist tone in the United States (119). As more historians have recently turned their attention back to the post-

potato famine Fenians, they often see a similar pattern of assimilationist politics in Fenian nationalism as well, especially in their treatment of the Fenian influence on Reconstruction politics (Ramón-García, 2010; Samito, 2009; Snay, 2007). Mitchell Snay, in his *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites*, posits Fenian nationalism as a major influence on Reconstruction politics in the U.S.A., comparing it to the Nationalisms promulgated by the Freedmen anchored by Union Leagues and Southern whites anchored by the terror tactics of the Ku Klux Klan. While Snay makes it clear that the main Fenian goal was Irish emancipation and nationhood, though, his comparative frame sometimes leads him to expand the meaning of the word Fenian to encompass all Irish Americans espousing some form of Irish Nationalism in this time period. Thus, while it might be the case that the broader populace of Irish in America relied on Nationalism as they “developed a consciousness of being a separate people and fought for a place in the American body politic” alongside freedmen and southern whites (6), Fenians provide a more complex case of identifications, ranging from rank and file members who had no interest at all in a “place” in the “American body politic,” to climbers who saw Irish Nationalism as a ticket into American politics. Putting all the different shades of Irish Nationalism under the single banner of Fenianism is a difficult proposition, as we’ll see below that leading members of the Fenian cause had disparaging things to say about those Irish who would use the Irish Nationalist cause for their own political gain in the United States. What’s more, other organizations that cultivated a separate Irish identity for the diaspora in North America, such as the Catholic Church, wouldn’t have appreciated their brand of Irish nationalist pride being lumped in with the Fenians. Snay’s work, though, reveals that the Fenian Brotherhood’s version of Irish Nationalism in the

1860s was one of multiple versions of Irish affinity being promulgated by the diaspora in North America, some of which was more interested in active identification with the United States than many members of the Fenian Brotherhood seem to be.

Marta Ramón-García's treatment builds on this distinction, and most closely limns the differing constraints bearing down on Fenians from both sides of the Atlantic, noting that "American Fenians had to divide their attentions between the land of their birth and the land of their adoption...It is not surprising that this should prove impossible" (89). While our field's rhetorical histories often continue to assume that white immigrants like the Irish were fully invested in identifying as American or that such assimilation was inevitable, Ramón-García's account provides a keen example of the ways that historians have begun to gesture towards a more ambiguous trajectory for immigrant identifications, especially the Fenian Irish. This push-pull between Irish and U.S. identifications is exhibited from the very beginning, both in public displays and within the private letters among the leadership (Ramón-García 87). Indeed, the masthead of O'Mahony's *The Phoenix*, a nationalist newspaper founded in New York City in 1859, announced its dual status as loyal to the United States even as it was dedicated to the cause of Irish national freedom (NYU Tamiment Library). Yet, despite this ambiguity, Fenians on both sides of the Atlantic worked hard to establish the Irish nation as primary in Irish hearts, united as one, across the ocean.

One important constitutive rhetorical strategy many Fenians employed was to define Ireland as the true "home" for the Irish, even despite their diasporic scattering. It's reasonable to expect that James Stephens, who split his time between Ireland and Paris throughout these years and made his livelihood as the "provisional dictator" of the IRB,

would work hard to constitute Ireland as the true home for all Irish. It comes as no surprise, then, when he continually refers to Ireland as “our” country and downplays the American-ness of his brethren in North America. But Stephens and the movement in Ireland are not the only ones to utilize such rhetoric. Indeed, quite similar rhetorical gestures come from the Irish who are living and organizing fulltime in the United States.

For instance, in an open letter from 1861 that likely circulated throughout Fenian Brotherhood circles, Fenian Catholic priest Edmund O’Flaherty decries his U.S. Irish compatriots for their lack of support for Irish nationhood. In true jeremiad form fitting for a man of the cloth, he states, “Irishmen in America have not done their duty towards the movement at home, their periodical fits of action and inaction 'have clogged the wheels of the movement in Ireland’” (1,3,4 – 10/5/1861). From the start, O’Flaherty makes it clear that the Irish are in America, but they remain Irish, not American. What’s more, he clearly figures Ireland as “home,” disregarding any potential nascent affiliations with the United States. O’Flaherty goes on to introduce his solution, which is to support Stephens’s Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood (IRB), an organization he calls the “nucleus of a grand *National Army* which is in course of organization for the liberation of our native land” (1,3,4, 10/5/1861; emphasis original). “Our native land” is another trope designed to remind Irish readers and hearers of their true home. He then leans into his readers again, demanding their allegiance to the “the duties of all true Irishmen both hear [sic] and elsewhere towards them.” These duties, of course, include one’s total allegiance and willingness to part with one’s life:

they [the Irish in America] have not proved themselves to be the ‘Tower of Strength’ which they ought to be and might be, to our brethren in

Ireland...to sustain them and to carry out successfully this movement we must be prepared to give our means and if necessary our heart's blood.

Having reiterated the emphasis that Irish are *in* but not *of* America, he continues his critique of Irish living in North America, stating, "I grieve to say there has been hitherto too much spasmodic patriotism in this country, that is, we love our country but by starts." Here, he once again strategically uses the "our" pronoun to make sure America is figured merely as "this country" and Ireland is really "our country." He continues this figurative property through the "our" pronoun as he delivers his ultimate call to action for the Irish living in the United States:

If we are to redeem our country, we must do it soon, or not at all. I therefore urge all our friends to work energetically, at this side of the Atlantic, for the thorough organization of the strength of the Irish people at home depends upon our exertions here.

Even at the start of the U.S. Civil War, where tens of thousands of Irish soldiers were enlisting in the Union Army and thousands more in the Confederate grays, O'Flaherty's public letter to the Irish in America urges them to "work energetically" to "redeem our country," clearly a concern for the Old Sod and not for the turmoil threatening to tear the U.S. Republic apart.

O'Flaherty's voice was an important one in early Fenianism, as a vocal member of the Catholic clergy. The Catholic Church, and especially the Church leadership in Ireland, was hostile to Fenianism on the whole, and represented a significant barrier to both Stephens's and O'Mahony's constitutive visions for Fenianism. O'Flaherty's dogged commitment likely earned this public letter heavy circulation and public readings

at Fenian Circle meetings in the United States.⁵ Coming from a member of the clergy, and addressed as it was to *all* Irish living in the United States, O’Flaherty’s jeremiad establishes a powerful constitutive foundation that the Fenian Brotherhood would build on as it took on a more public character in the United States.

O’Mahony himself, at the first national convention of the Fenian Brotherhood in 1863, reiterates this sense of true home that O’Flaherty first posits. To do so, he introduces an additional important topos in Irish nationalist rhetoric: exile. In O’Mahony’s opening address to the gathered Fenians, he names the most pressing obstacles overcome by the Fenian Brotherhood in its first five years of existence: direct opposition from famous Young Ireland veterans, denouncement from the English government as an illegal secret society that the United States should act to abolish, challenges from the Irish clergy (O’Flaherty notwithstanding), and the slowed organizing due to Irish enrollment in the Union Army. Having named these constitutive challenges, O’Mahony proceeds to attack them. Referring to the backpedaling of former Young Ireland revolutionaries from the tenets of “physical force” nationalism, O’Mahony declares:

By following [the leaders of ’48, who were less organized] I brought ruin and death upon those I loved dearest upon earth, and condemned myself to

⁵ Indeed, at the first National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood two years later in 1863, one major part of the convention’s business was dedicated to crafting and passing a resolution that honored O’Flaherty’s memory, as he’d recently died. That resolution acknowledged that O’Flaherty had, as State Centre of Indiana, “labored with untiring zeal and indefatigable energy” on behalf of the cause, even publically preaching “a crusade for Ireland’s National Independence” throughout the Western states (24). What’s more, one of their resolutions states “That Ireland may number him among those illustrious ecclesiastics...who labored with zeal and with all the powers of his mind to band Irishmen together so as to be in position to attack and crush the oppression and misrule which have so long prostrated Ireland” (24). Not only do these words sketch the weight that O’Flaherty’s words carried with Irish nationalists in the United States, they also figure him as an Irish Patriot who worked to unite Irishmen everywhere under the cause. There is no distinction made here based on where he lived. His actions and words have united him across time and space with other Irish Patriots.

a life of bitter exile. I, like many other '48 insurgents, was not of their party till they took the field. I expected all from them. Up to this time I have been sadly disappointed. When one of them attacks the Fenian Brotherhood and its plans and policy of Irish Revolution, I feel thoroughly indignant, not alone for the sake of my country, but for my own. I consider that they owe a debt to Ireland that is still unpaid. I consider my own personal claim upon them to be no light one. I trust indeed I shall never again see a young Ireland leader come out to America, and then strive to crush out from the hearts of my fellow-exiles the hope of our country's redemption by armed force (9-10).

This passage accomplishes numerous important rhetorical goals. First, it establishes O'Mahony's ethos as an insurgent going back to the last failed rising in 1848. Second, he reiterates O'Flaherty's position of continued ownership and allegiance to Ireland above all, as O'Mahony performs "indignance" on behalf of "my country." Third, by employing the trope of exile, O'Mahony sutures his own life to the fate of Ireland. Note the parallelism in construction, where he is indignant for both himself and his country. Indignant for his country, that such feeble leadership would have failed it. Indignant for himself, that those leaders' feeble planning resulted in his exile. His final line draws these threads together, admonishing these failed leaders even as he replaces them with the Fenian Brotherhood as the new vanguard. This framing positions O'Mahony with the ethos as the true Irish Patriot, given his ongoing commitment to armed revolution and his ongoing work to pre-organize the Irish so as to make that revolution successful, thus superseding those '48 leaders still living in Ireland who come to the United States

seeking to dissuade exile Fenians from their cause. Finally, calling upon his fellow-exiles and naming them as such, he draws all Irish living in America into a consubstantial circle of exile-ship, regardless of the circumstance of their emigration.

O'Mahony's performance here works to accomplish two key tasks that Jasinski and Mercieca have described for a constitutive rhetoric. On the one hand, he "challenges" an "established sourc[e] of cultural authority" represented by the earlier revolutionary leadership of the 1848 Young Ireland movement (320). This is important constitutive work, as it both galvanizes the recent post-Famine emigrants around own their felt sense as exiles from their homeland, while also challenging more established Irish emigrants who came to the United States in earlier eras to redouble their commitment to their home country.

On the other hand, he also affirms the "bonds of affiliation" that exiled Irish have for Ireland and for each other as true Irish people (320). Invoking the topos of exile to cement that bond becomes a powerful constitutive invitation amongst a room full of Irish folks, especially those who came to North America post-Famine. It also underscores a second theme running through Fenian constitutive invitations, closely related to invocations of Ireland as "home" or "ours:" to identify across the ocean as one Irish "people." Taken together, these themes of "home" and "people" fulfill what Charland has called the first ideological effects of a constitutive rhetoric: the constitution of a collective subject. Indeed, in the very same passage excoriating these '48 revolutionaries, O'Mahony claims them "blind to the advantages of the present position of the Irish nation, taken as a whole, at home and abroad" (9). Clearly, in the Fenian constitutive vision, the Irish people who comprise the Irish nation are bound together by blood and

experience, not by their mailing address. And just as an invocation of home seeks to transcend the divisions of geography into a collective unity, the Fenian invocation of “the people” seeks as well to transcend time, promoting a sense of the Irish people as an oppressed nation unified for centuries and destined for future regeneration. In their resolutions emerging from the first Constitutional Convention, they proclaim that the

Irish Race is everywhere pervaded by an intense and undying hatred towards the monarchy and oligarchy of Great Britain, which have so long ground their country to the dust, hanging her patriots, starving out her people, and sweeping myriads of Irish men, women, and children off the paternal fields, to find a refuge in foreign lands, bringing with them thither a burning desire for the destruction of British tyranny, and bequeathing this feeling as an heirloom to their posterity (36).

This passage clearly illustrates Charland’s second ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric, the positing of a transhistorical subject, a “‘consubstantiality,’ to use Burke’s expression, between the dead and living” Irish (140). Though Irish people have been “swept” from home and many blessed to “find a refuge in foreign lands,” they remain consubstantial with their ancestors, and pass that unity—and enmity for the British—to their progeny.

Indeed, the Fenian transhistorical subjectivity unites the dead, the living, and the *future* Irish, those on both sides of the Atlantic who’ve yet to be born. Here’s James Gibbons, State Centre for Pennsylvania, at the same inaugural Fenian convention:

We resemble somewhat the silk-worm. We are industrious, and we are gathering around us material, which, when woven, will make a garment of

prodigious splendor for regenerated Ireland; although we, like the silkworm, may pass away. We can however look into the future with a prophetic eye and behold Ireland walk forth from the long night of slavery, clothed in the robes of liberty woven by the hands of the sorrow-stricken exile (18).

Reinforcing the exile's bonds of affiliation with Ireland, Gibbons here is also reinforcing the permanence of these Irish identifications, and the inevitability of success. What's more, he establishes the centrality of the exile to the redemption story of their country. They must gather material for war. They must be willing to work, and if necessary, to die. But they are also the ones who are fashioning liberty's garments for the Irish people.

These constitutive visions in public Fenian texts invite those Irish living in the United States to rally around their identities as Irish people and their bonds of affiliation to their home country. What's more, an archive of letters from Fenian organizers and members throughout the United States demonstrates that the message was circulating with success. In Davenport, IA, Richard Quinn writes to O'Mahony in 1864 about the feasibility of shipping arms from "this country" to Ireland, and mentions that his membership wished that Mr. Daly [code name for James Stephens] could have personally "come and given an account of the state of our organization at home." (1,6,14, 6/28/1864). Richard Doherty, writing from Lafayette, Indiana in 1864, also utilizes a similar approach when he refers twice to Ireland as "home" as he wonders about the "present condition of the organization at home" and refers to Philip Coyne's recent journey back to Ireland as an "envoy sent home for personal experience" of the situation in Ireland (1,6,31 – 11/22/1864). These are but a few instances throughout this archive

wherein Fenian writers, on both sides of the Atlantic, unequivocally refer to Ireland as their real “home,” demonstrating that the Fenian constitutive rhetoric had currency beyond the immediate leadership.

Such identifications are no doubt common in diasporic communities grappling with the geopolitical complexities of what Sara McKinnon—in her work on the rhetoric surrounding court judgments about female refugee asylum-seekers to the U.S—has called “transnational subjectivity” (2011, 179). For instance, Jolanta Drzewiecka has noted the ways that Polish Americans carefully balance identifications with Polishness and American-ness as they seek to maintain or build rhetorical authority in both contexts (7-8). The simultaneous dual identification with homeland and host country that Drzewiecka traces certainly resonates with the historical scholarship mentioned earlier on the complex identities forged in Irish diaspora communities in North America. And Fenian public statements abound where they reiterate their intentions of upholding the U.S. Constitution.⁶ Yet, the rhetors in Drzewiecka’s Polish-American diaspora also willingly claim their “American-ness” as their own, not just their Polishness (16). In these backchannel letters, it’s clear that many Fenian Irish are working hard to maintain a dogged attachment to an Ireland-first identification. While the larger story of the Fenians helps to reiterate Drzewiecka’s insight that the active identifications of a diaspora populace are contested ground and, thus, open to the rhetorical action that emerges from struggle and changing material conditions, these early constitutive efforts in the counterpublic enclave show Fenians working hard to stay true to their Irish home.

⁶ Though space doesn’t allow for it here, I apply the Constitutional theories of Burke, Dana Anderson and Christa Olson to an analysis of the Fenian Constitutional scenes for the ways that they are both responsive to the U.S. Constitutional scene and mutually constitutive of it.

Rather than celebrating the hybrid identity and expansion of Irishness that could arise from their diasporic scattering, then, the Fenians instead note that the transhistorical subject of the Irish are threatened by such indulgence in hybridity. For instance, when Fr. O’Flaherty laments the “flagging patriotism” of the Irish in the United States who “love our country but by starts” in the passage above, he closes by introducing an ethnic aspect to his patriotic nationalist rhetoric that privileges racial purity and abhors assimilation to England’s “Saxon” culture. As he puts it, if the Irish in the United States do not step up to support the Fenian cause, “then is Ireland doomed—doomed to become as integral a portion of the British Empire as Scotland, once Celtic and now Saxon, more Saxon than England herself” (1, 3, 4, 10/5/1861).

For Fenian leaders like Stephens, such capitulation to Saxonism happens through a too-easy assimilation to the United States as well, itself a country whose hegemonic nationalism paradoxically prided itself on its simultaneously Anglo-Saxon roots and its political resistance to them. In Stephens’s diary from his first organizing visit to the United States in 1859, he makes it quite clear what he thinks of those supposed Irish Nationalists who seem too comfortable participating in the culture and politics of the United States. Impatient with the posturing of some of the “uneducated” and “unknown” American Irish men he met in New York who seemed to think they spoke for the Irish in the United States, he quips:

We have far too much of this deplorable pretension in Ireland (bear witness the Regenerators of Kingstown!), but here it is incurable idiocy [sic], that is, the moment an Irishman becomes an American politician; and I am sorry to learn that too many of them are such. (16-17)

Irish participation in the Tammany Hall democratic machine politics in the United States has been well-documented elsewhere, and historians such as Snay and TN Brown have documented the ways that Irish emigrants sought to gain footholds for themselves in the United States by turning to politics. But for Stephens, the Fenian chief, nothing could be worse than giving in to the “corrupting influences” (17) of the United States, which he later refers to as “this land of Self, Greed, and Grab” (64).

Stephens contrasts this sense of degraded transformation into American-ness with his assessment of John O’Mahony, the man he entrusted to lead the Fenian cause in North America. He calls O’Mahony, a scholar of the Gaelic language and ancient Irish culture, “far and away the first patriot of the Irish race” (8). Rather than being tainted by life in the United States, Stephens declares that O’Mahony’s

residence here, in spite of all its debasing influences, has only developed, intensified, brought into brighter relief, that faith not only in the justice of the Irish cause, but in the manhood and power of the people to make it triumph, without which there cannot be the real love and devotion of a real patriot. (8)

Patriotism here takes on religious and gendered overtones as Stephens sounds O’Mahony’s faith in “the people,” constituting an Irish race who transcend time, ocean, border, and boundaries, a transhistorical subject who are destined to prevail. Indeed, Stephens sees this spirit even in some Irish who’d long been in the United States, as he writes to O’Mahony in 1860 of one Edward Boyle, ““Would that you had many such natures as his about you—that bigger patriots had only preserved (if they ever possessed), and during a few years' exile, the sacred feeling which half a century has left so fresh and

vital in him” (1, 2, 7, 9/13/1860). Boyle, a successful businessman in the United States who’d emigrated in the early 19th century, had recently visited Ireland to get a sense of the growing movement, and Stephens had been impressed by his commitment to the cause of Ireland despite such a long exile.

Boyle’s commitment, in Stephens’s eyes, presents a strong contrast to other successful Irishmen who have succumbed to “the influence” of life in the United States. Writing to O’Mahony on the occasion of their friend and fellow Irish revolutionary Michael Doheny’s death and funeral in New York in 1862, Stephens questions O’Mahony’s willingness to let certain U.S. Irish fund the funeral celebration. No matter the amount of money, no matter the pomp and circumstance, no matter the support to Doheny’s family that might come from allowing the sponsorship of a more materially successful Irish emigrant, Stephens laments

‘Would that the effect to make some provision for his family had fallen to the duty of an Irishman. *Nothing* could have brought me to allow the initiative to that miserable hybrid, Richard O’Gorman. (1,4,4, 4/29/1862; emphasis original)

Framing O’Gorman as a “miserable hybrid,” Stephens sets up a discursive dichotomy between true Patriots like O’Mahony and Boyle and those U.S. Irish like O’Gorman who’ve succumbed to the corrupting influence of the United States. Stephens goes on, decrying O’Mahony’s public identification with the likes of O’Gorman as “a *national crime* to forgive such a wretch, and especially so to cooperate with him in any public way.” For Stephens, then, a shared ethnicity is not enough to sustain the transhistorical

subject of the Irish patriot. It also requires a purity of action, of a disciplined dedication to the cause of Ireland above all else.

Such appeals to purity of action invite comparisons with Charland's third ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric, the illusion of freedom by which an interpellated collective and transhistorical subject can choose to act for the cause. As Charland puts it, following Althusser, such freedom is an illusion because the constituted subject is itself an effect of a narrative that has a preordained *telos* (140). In other words, the subject addressed in the constitutive rhetoric "is constrained to *follow through*, to act so as to maintain the narrative's consistency" (141). Ostensibly, the act demanded from the constituted Fenian subject, was to ready themselves to support or actively participate in armed revolution on Irish soil.

Indeed, after a glowing epideictic speech proclaiming the transhistorical unity between his exile "silk-worms" and the Irish at home, Gibbons closes with a stark warning that such transhistoric unity of the collective Irish subject is not a foregone conclusion. Rather, it requires follow-through to support armed action in Ireland, else the Irish in America "will be as Cain" to the Irish in Ireland.

For many Fenians at this time, such a demand called for training on the battlefield of the United States's Civil War so that they would be ready for this more important uprising promised in Ireland. While many Irish emigrant soldiers undoubtedly looked forward to the U.S. citizenship such military service promised, as Christian G. Samito suggests in his *Becoming American Under Fire*, the Fenians who fought on both sides of the war tend in their letters written to Fenian headquarters to minimize their interest in the war's outcome. In Fr. O'Flaherty's 1861 jeremiad mentioned above, for instance, he

refers to the American war as “the unhappy contest,” while referring to the Irish movement as “the cause.” Just over a month later, O’Mahony writes to “My dear friend” that “vast numbers of my best men have gone to this infernal war, while not a few of them have gone home to Ireland” (1,3,5 – 11/19/1861). Six months later, in a letter to O’Mahony from Charles U. O’Connell, the writer introduces O’Mahony to a young man from Ireland who’s come to New York in hopes of getting military experience in the Union’s Irish Phoenix Brigade, which was led by O’Mahony. This, of course, has nothing to do with the “American contest,” but everything to do with building military experience for the real war that was to come in Ireland. In an 1863 letter from Stephens to O’Mahony, he introduces a rich Irish Nationalist recently landed from Ireland who hoped “to see some of our military friends in *their* element and, should an opportunity offer, *do* enable him to avail of it.” This, of course, was Stephens’s way of recruiting more money for the cause by showing committed nationalists honing their chops in a mercenary war!

These sentiments about the true importance of Irish participation in both sides of the U.S. Civil War—to ready themselves for the real fight in Ireland—are not limited to the leadership of the Fenian movement. The archive of letters shows similar sentiments emanating from soldiers themselves. In an 1864 letter from Patrick Downey, a member of the 42nd NY Infantry, he dedicates most of his remarks to the current factionalism growing in the Fenian Brotherhood leadership. His only mention of the Civil War is as a glancing reference to the possibility he might die. Casually, he closes the letter saying that he “hopes to come out of the next affair.” But, “If I fall,” he desires that provisions will be made so that his son can be raised by an Irishman who is “a man of the same opinions and sentiments his father entertained. God Bless you, the cause, and my friends”

(1,6,2, 4/20/1864). Once again, the pressing war in which these men are fighting for their lives is reduced to an “affair,” while the Irish “cause” is that which he seeks God’s blessing over and hopes to secure fealty to in his son’s eyes. John Cosgrove, a Fenian from the New Albany, IN Circle, writes on July 4, 1864 that “There is some of us here who would like to get the chance to go fight for Ireland at the present time instead of having to go in the next draft” (1, 6, 17 7/4/1864). Composed on the hallowed day of Independence for United States citizens, this Fenian Irishman living in Indiana only mentions the United States to commend Stephens’s recent fundraising trip there. Matter of factly, he states, “was happy to hear of [Stephens’s] good success through the country he traveled over” (ibid). This phrase puts the writer’s relationship to the United States in stark relief, as it becomes figured merely as the “country” a Fenian organizer “travels over” in order to, in the words of Stephens, help “masses of our race...[turn] their hearts toward the old land” (1,6,3, 4/28/1864). As late as 1866, another Paddy U.S. Civil War veteran vehemently declared, “I do not want any favour from you all that is [*sic*] ask is to be send on board a vessel of war and have the pleasure of saying i served my own country in the capacity i was brought up” (1,9,8, 3/12/1866).

Coupled with their framing of Ireland as the real home and proper patriotism as a purity of intention and action for Ireland, a picture emerges of a nascent Irish nation seeking to constitute itself on United States soil, right in the midst of the warring U.S. nation-state. To be sure, these Fenians were not antipathic toward the United States. They fought largely for the Union, and their rhetoric—as we will see in Chapters 3 and 4—always invoked a loyalty to the United States Constitution and laws. But it’s also clear

that these Irish radicals envisioned utilizing their rights and privileges in the United States as a powerful tactic for building their own Irish nation's freedom.

In perhaps the boldest invocation of their governmental status, by 1865 these Fenians in the United States began to issue bonds that pronounce an Irish Republic, replete with a seal of arms and the mention of James Stephens as President. Figures 1, 2, & 3 below refer to the official documents commissioning a member of the Irish Army, the Irish Navy, and a maritime vessel working for the Irish Navy.

These documents are remarkable in their official bearing, especially since they anticipate an actual internationally-recognized sovereign Irish Republic by over 80 years, and an actual internationally-recognized independent Ireland possessing home rule by almost 60 years! Yet these Fenians had the audacity to issue documents stating, "By virtue of the power vested in me as President of the Irish Republic..." (Figure 1). Issuing such bold inartistic proofs of their imagined reality seems the ultimate act of audacity in declaring separate nationhood. These documents read like the Irish Nation's *Field of Dreams*: "If you print it, they will come." Or, more to the point, "If we print it, the Republic will *become*."

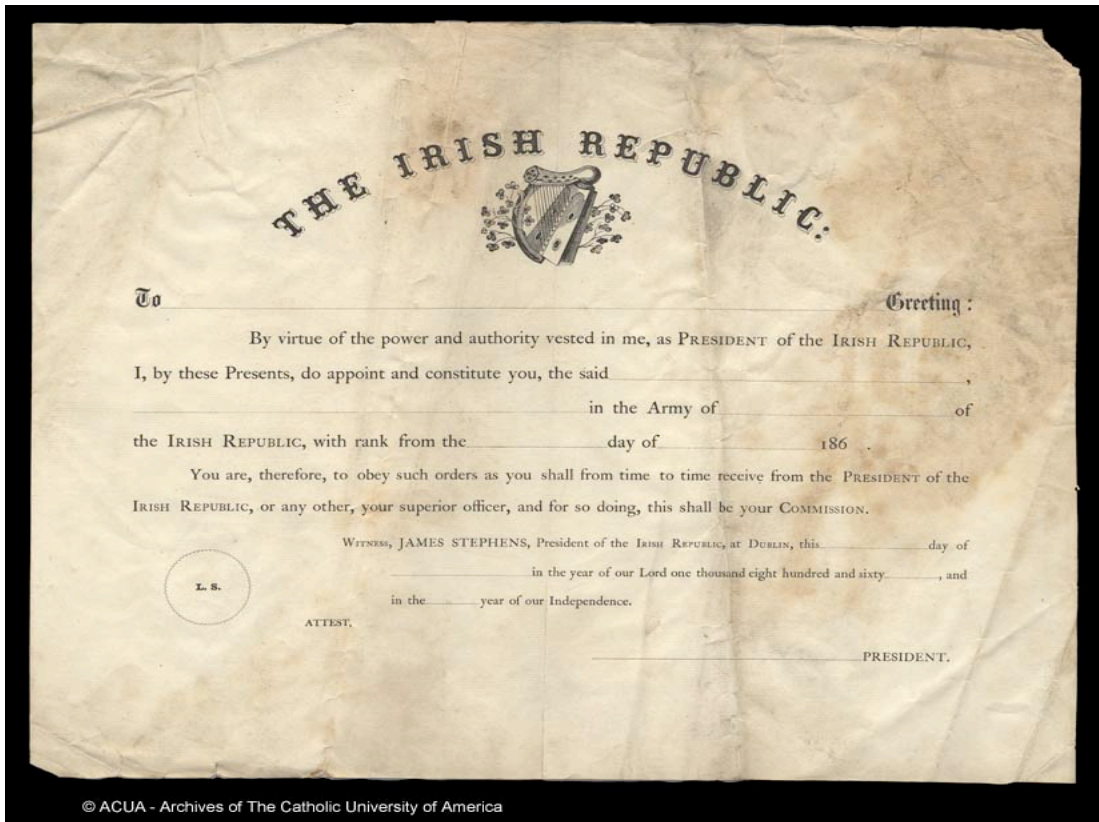


Figure 1: Blank form letter for commission in the Army of the Irish Republic

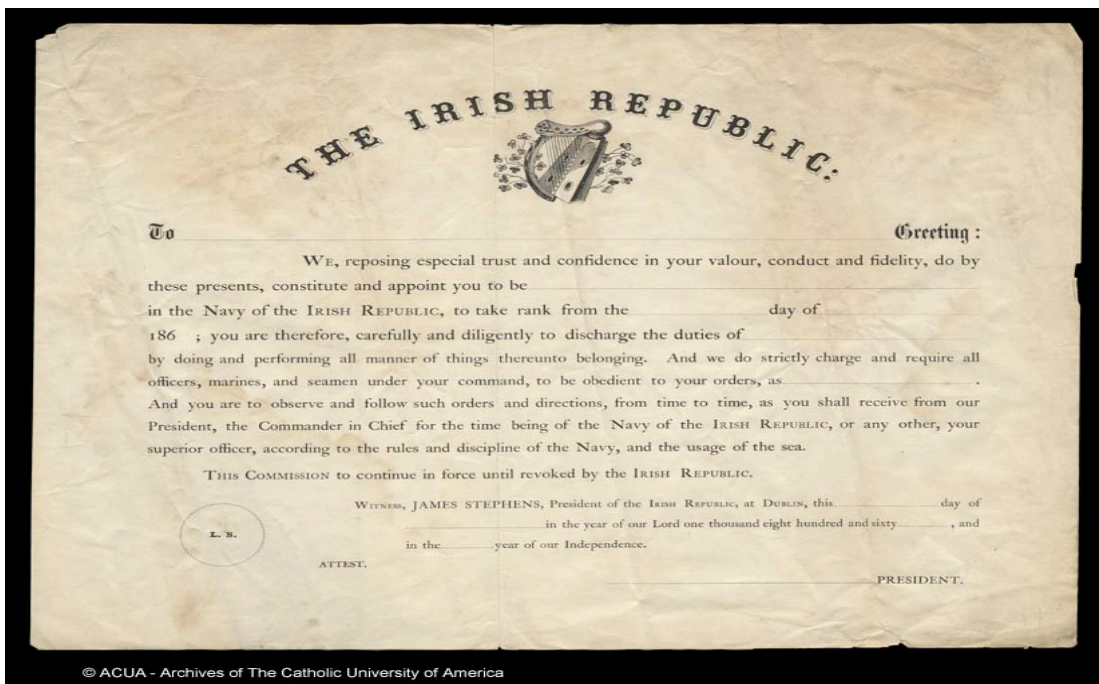


Figure 2: Blank form letter for commission the Navy of the Irish Republic

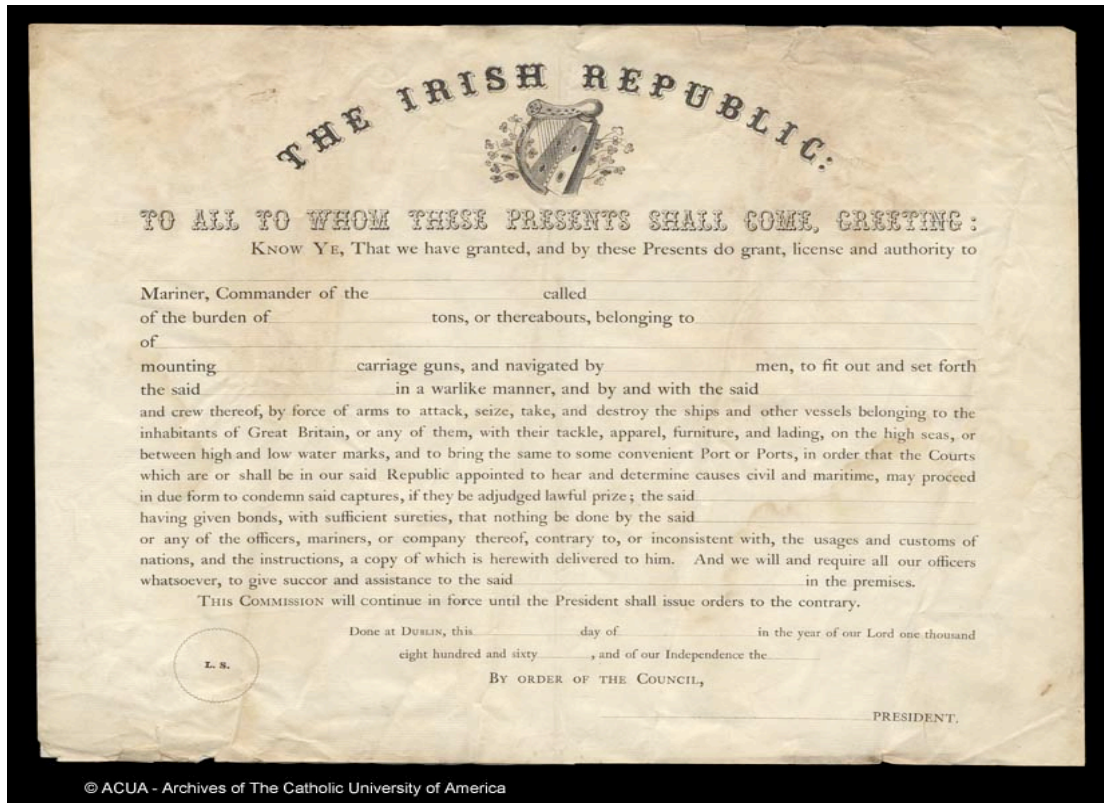


Figure 3: Blank form letter for the commission of a naval vessel of the Irish Republic

It seems clear that committed Fenians worked hard alongside Stephens to build a compelling constitutive rhetoric amongst themselves, one that constituted a radicalized collective subject with transhistorical unity of purpose for Irish emancipation. Such constitutive rhetoric grew in strength from its inception in 1859 and demanded from its adherents a dogged attachment to completing the constitutive narrative through armed uprising in Ireland. Pure as these intentions were, though, their unity of purpose and action was constantly undone by the transnational reality that was at once their greatest strength and their greatest liability. While the consubstantial, radicalized, collective and transhistorical Irish revolutionary subject remained, the national constraints operating on the movement over its first seven years eventually fractured its constitutive *telos* into

separate factional endings to the narrative, one that remained committed to armed action in Ireland, and another that saw its proper culmination in a strike against British Canada.

Constitutive Telos Interrupted, or Troubling Transnational Translations

As the movement grew on both sides of the Atlantic, so did the growing U.S. memberships' impatience with the seeming inaction in Ireland, especially once the U.S. Civil War ended. To his credit, Stephens had been pushing for the revolution in Ireland for months in correspondence with the leadership in the United States. But Fenian leaders in the United States needed continual hard proof that the organization in Ireland was ready, sending a stream of envoys to take the pulse of things and report back. In the meantime, many war-hardened and hawkish Fenians were eager to put their newfound military training to work for Irish Independence and had begun booking passage back into Erin at the end of the U.S. Civil War, prompting the British to suspend the Writs of Habeas Corpus and arrest some of them on arrival for fear of sedition. With such foreboding news of these arrests making its way back to the States, and despite all of Stephens's assurances to the contrary, the Fenians had begun to doubt once and for all the viability of an immanent revolt on Irish soil. And with some of their brethren serving hard time in British work prisons, the American organization fell into a wrangle over the best way to support the old sod.

But Stephens, coasting on the memory of his past successes in America, seems to have had no idea what he'd be up against. In a letter to his compatriots in Ireland before embarking from Paris, he had boasted, "I know no such thing as doubt, and difficulties must go down before me. If I regret anything, it is not to have abler and nobler adversaries. But noble or ignoble, able or incapable, as the case may be, I pledge my word that every Irishman who stands in our way shall go down" (1,9,33, 4/26/1866). He

planned to barnstorm the country, pressing his Fenian brethren for unity and a reinvigorated single-ness of purpose: to bring armed uprising to Irish soil. But the confidence conveyed in the above passage also belies the fundamental paradox of identification. Ostensibly committed to restoring pan-Irish unity through rhetorical acumen while touring the states, he establishes IRB identification in this letter by way of division with Fenian dissidents: “Every *Irishman* who stands in *our* way shall go down” (emphasis added). Much as he knows that the IRB can ill afford the reduction of material resources that would come with truly cutting out a portion of the Fenian movement in America, he promises unity by a ritual “killing” of the Canadian invasion ideology, an absolute division whereby Irish nationalism will be restored to its transnational unity (Burke, *Rhetoric* 20). Similarly, his tongue-in-cheek barbs at the expense of men he would soon be trying to woo seems iconic of what Burke calls “the purest rhetorical pattern: speaker and hearer as partners in partisan jokes made at the expense of another” (*Rhetoric* 38).

Soon enough, Stephens would find how difficult his task truly was. Despite Stephens’s confidence, no amount of rhetorical agency could have stopped the Fenians’ disintegration into factionalism. Though there is little doubt that Stephens’s trips to the United States always resulted in a flurry of activity and an energized organization, his trip in 1866 was ultimately doomed to failure. While his embodied presence always helped to increase the volume of conversation among the Fenian Brotherhood, it was increasingly unable to overcome the transnational context that imposed its own will on the development of the organization in each location.

To understand how their transnational context ultimately militated against the consubstantial radical Irish Nationalism they worked so hard to cultivate, we have to go back to the beginning of the movement in 1859 when Stephens came to America the first time to found the organization. The Irish Nationalist sentiment in America had never wavered in the decade since the failed uprising of 1848, but it had grown wary of overconfidence in the promises of revolutionary idealists. Historian John Belchem has noted that the rhetoric of Irish Nationalists operating in the United States leading up to the failed Irish uprising of 1848 toed a careful line between constituting separatism from the United States and integrating themselves into it. As they raised their voices in 1848 to mirror the fever pitch in Ireland, the ultimate failure of the movement led to hardening of nativist sentiment against the Irish in the States, and a concomitant tempering of republican nationalist rhetoric. Building off the work of historian TN Brown, Belchem argues that

the outcome of 1848 aggravated the sense of inferiority, sensitivity to criticism and longing for acceptability among middle-class Irish-Americans, prompting them to seek justification and uplift through an apologetic, assimilationist, and inward-looking nationalism, premised on the Irish contribution to the American epic (a chronicle which began with St. Brendan the Navigator). (119-120)

These pre-potato famine Irish were the same ones who held money and power and influence in the Irish diaspora in 1859 when Stephens stepped off the boat that first time. Undoubtedly, these were the Irish that Stephens privately excoriates in his diary for having succumbed to “the influence” of America. And, undoubtedly, given their

memories of the pain of '48, they would be a difficult lot to convince. Still, a movement was brewing in the United States on the heels of the mass immigration of Potato Famine refugees. Marta Ramón notes in her introduction to Stephens's diary that the Emmet Monument Association in New York had actually been instrumental in bringing Stephens over in 1859 to begin the necessary organization in the United States. Ramón notes that this pre-planning of a long-term revolutionary project was unprecedented in early Irish Nationalist projects, which had tended in the past to be more responsive to crises than well-planned foment. She states of Stephens's first organizing journey in 1859 that, "It would be Stephens's task to seize this opportunity, work his persuasion powers on Irish recruits and potential American backers alike, infuse them with confidence in the project's long-term possibilities, and help to make Fenianism a durable political entity rather than a crisis-driven, perishable movement" (xiv).

Stepping off the boat for the third time in six years, then, Stephens had undoubtedly done that, building a transnational movement that counted thousands of Irish in its ranks. But the distance involved—coupled with the distrustful memories of the pre-potato famine Irish—constantly bedeviled his ethos construction and subjected him to ongoing surveillance and distrust that ultimately hampered the organization's efforts. The archive is filled with letters that are either answering American distrust of Stephens's representations of the movement's strength in Ireland, or seeking a more reliable report of what's going on. As early as April 1860, a letter from a writer in Ireland addressed to O'Mahony states, "stories of alleged extravagance are pure calumnies; life here is most frugal" (1, 2, 2, - 4/28/1860). This writer seems to be responding to stories being

circulated in North America that Stephens is being loose with the funding coming from America, using it to line his own pockets and not build the movement in Ireland.

Financial mismanagement is not the only worry that the Irish in the United States harbored due to uncertainties borne out by the distance between North America and Ireland. There's also the sneaking suspicion that there aren't really that many Irish enrolled in the Brotherhood and willing to fight. In a letter written to O'Mahony a month later by Putnam and Diarmuid, two other Irishmen in Stephens's circle, we find them answering U.S. Irish distrust of their brethren's resolve to fight:

It may be important for you to know that we are not spineless, but on the contrary that we have served [?] the cause of truth and justice with triumph to the end. There are impediments in the way, of the nature, extent, and importance of which you will be fully apprised in due course. But tho' they may sway, they will not retard, our exertions towards the advancement of a better spirit of unanimity amongst our people. (1,2,4 – 5/25/1860)

Distance engendered this distrust as money, revolutionaries, and rhetoric traveled transnationally across the Atlantic. While Stephens had weathered this distrust with aplomb and resourcefulness since he'd first experienced it in 1860, the resources of his ethos for suturing the movement together had finally been exhausted in 1866. Standing before the crowd, pleading with them for unity in the movement, he pleads, "I think that my opinion—I, who have lived in Ireland and worked for Ireland all my life—I think, I say, that my opinion on this subject ought to be worth more than the opinions of people who have not seen Ireland since the greenness of their youth" ("The Fenians," *New York*

Times, 16 May 1866). Offering his own subject position up for scrutiny, he's pleading with the gathered Irish American crowd to renew their bonds of affiliation with his constitutive vision while simultaneously challenging the authority of those men in the United States who've come to direct the movement in a different direction.

If it had only been the distance-derived distrust to his ethos he was seeking to overcome, perhaps these words spoken in the context of his plain talk about the history of the movement—what he calls “more of a narrative, and I meant it to be so, than a speech”—would have been enough to galvanize the giant crowd. But he was also dealing with a fundamentally different geopolitical context here in the States, a context that required the organizations to ultimately develop in different ways. Beginning as early as 1861, consubstantiality was constantly interrupted by the tension between the need for public shows of Fenian strength in the United States and the need for utmost secrecy in Ireland as they built power under the thumb of British rule.

As early as July 1861, a letter addressed to O'Mahony from IRB operative William O'Carroll tries to answer the U.S. Irish's need for more public assurances of the organization's growth in Ireland. Answering O'Mahony's “lengthy complaint” that he's been “kept in the dark” about the strength of numbers in Ireland, O'Carroll writes, “how could an organization, 'whose life breath is privacy,' publicly recognize any man as its head or even as its agent?” (1,3,2 – 7/1861). In this rebuttal, he reminds O'Mahony of the “great difficulties, both financial and otherwise” that attend any tour taken to ascertain more exact numbers in Ireland. And while O'Carroll promises more “direct and plain information instead of the mysterious hints” he'd been getting, he cautions O'Mahony to remember that “he must not expect to be given always 'precise details and strictly

accurate numbers.” Given the dangers in the field and the lack of training the field agents of the IRB have, O’Carroll states that “there is more to do than call the roll; the reports they send in are not always precise, punctual, and exact.” O’Carroll and the IRB are asking here for O’Mahony’s trust that the organization is growing, but they are unable to offer the fixed surety of exact numbers due to the conditions on the ground.

On the other hand, O’Carroll makes gestures to recognize O’Mahony’s opposite predicament in the United States. O’Mahony is being asked to organize the U.S. Irish, a group whose influential middle-class members felt badly discredited by their vocal support for the failed Young Ireland rising in 1848. Noting this difficulty, O’Carroll tells O’Mahony that he “recognizes that 'the onerous nature of your charge forces you to be more or less exigent.'” Rather than apologize for this, though, he turns the crisis of faith back on the Irish in the United States:

'Is it not in trust in what are called our Brethren in America [sic] that we have lived and toiled and live and toil still ?—though I should say that many of us have determined sometime since to toil on even though totally unencouraged by them for the future '. Many of their promises remain unfulfilled; less reliance on America would have strengthened the position in Ireland. 'They are unembarrassed by the eternal struggle against the Law and against poverty that we have to maintain. They can do much, and if they had faith they would do much. Alas, we cannot work miracles to give them this faith. I fear that if tomorrow the mail bore to them the news of a Rising here they would, many of them, even then

require us to prove we were in earnest by being hewn in pieces before they would be convinced.' (ibid)

O'Carroll's words here undoubtedly show that the trust in each sides' ethos was being continually strained by the distance involved. What's more, the U.S. Irish's need for public and exact numbers to bolster their faith in the IRB was not only taxing on the Irish organization's limited resources, it actually directly threatened their work by drawing unnecessary premature attention to it. As the members of the IRB attempted to grow the power of the organization under constant surveillance and the "eternal struggle against the Law and against poverty," the U.S Irish who formed the potential recruiting pool for the Fenian Brotherhood seemed to demand too much proof while offering too little support.

This tension and distrust continued to grow as both organizations grew. In 1863, it came to a head as the U.S. members of the Fenian Brotherhood were putting pressure on O'Mahony and O'Mahony felt undermined by Stephens's undue influence over the North American branch of the organization. In separate letters to Charles Kickham and Stephens on October 19, 1863, O'Mahony resigned from his position as Head Centre of the Fenian Brotherhood as appointed by Stephens in 1859. What's more, he advocated that

The F.B. requires, for efficient action, to be placed on a basis more in accordance with the habits and customs of the American Republic than that whereupon it has hitherto stood. The chief officer thereof must hold his position by *election* and his office must be *terminable* within a period to be fixed at the aforesaid Convention [coming up in Chicago].

Feeling pushed to the limit by the demands of his own constituents for greater public shows of strength and the lack of control he felt over the interventions made by Stephens and his representatives in FB business in the States, O'Mahony proposed the dissolution of the Fenians as a secret society and their incorporation as a more official political organization that operates in ways more akin to US-style politics. In so doing, O'Mahony suggests that continuing as an arm of a secret society based in Ireland is harmful to their prospects for growth in the United States. One of these reasons is the clergy in the United States:

One great advantage to be derived from this is that it will put the Fenian Brotherhood beyond the reach of hostile *churchmen*. Becoming an American association and basing our right of action upon our privileges as *American citizens* and keeping within the laws of these states, we can place ultramontane plotters against human freedom in a very awkward predicament, and a very *unsafe one for them* if they presume to assail us. The pretext of "secret society" being taken away from them they will-be forced to assail us as a political organization.

By making themselves a more secular, American-style voluntary organization with elections and by-laws, the priests would have to presume to be meddling in American secular society. This, of course, is something that the priests wouldn't want to do as it would undermine their own authority over their congregations. By becoming more recognizably "American," then, the Fenians would assure themselves greater credibility in the larger U.S. public, which would allow them much more latitude in their actions:

According to the laws of America the Fenian Brotherhood is a strictly legal and constitutional body. If sin is in any way connected with the breach of the statutes of the country we live in, even that charge does not lie against us. We are free and sovereign [sic] citizens of the American Republic, and priests would be as much justified in attempting to control our votes as such, and of making us their political tools in the internal affairs of the Union, as in preventing us for [sic] taking whatever measures we deem right for the liberation of any oppressed nation under the sun...”

Of course, O’Mahony realized that this more official incorporation as a U.S.-style political organization might be threatening to the secrecy needed for the IRB to be successful. To assuage such fears, he states,

This, and it is a great one, churchmen being our most formidable enemies, will be a benefit to be derived from having the Fenian Brotherhood independent of our fellow-laborers in Ireland, where the organization must be "secret" for some time to come, Here, all the good effects of secrecy may be realized by having none but the *executive* officers in communication with our Irish Brothers. The priests may assail those officers personally, if they please, as connected with secret societies in other countries. But an association of American citizens has a right to employ any persons it pleases to transact its lawful business, and the business of the F.B. being to free Ireland its executive corps may be

legitimately empowered to treat with all parties likely to forward that object,

Throughout these passages, O'Mahony employs American citizenship as a way to defend against those who would interfere with the shared object of the organizations. This is a tactic the Fenians will later employ to prevail on U.S. President Grant to pressure England to let their brethren out of British workcamps on the basis of their American citizenship. U.S. citizenship in these instances becomes a malleable tool to further the prospects of the Irish Nation, lending the Fenians in the United States credibility that will be useful in protecting the growth of the organization, allowing them to demonstrate more openly and therefore attract more sympathizers in the United States.

O'Mahony would be unanimously (re)elected as Head Centre of the Fenian Brotherhood at the Chicago Convention later that year, and he continued to serve his post and work closely with Stephens. While making the Fenians more public in North America seemed to serve the necessary purposes for organizing in the United States, it came into constant tension with the Irish need for secrecy. In 1864, Stephens once again toured the United States to aid in organizing efforts. But, as usual, he did so under an alias so as to protect his identity from British scrutiny. In writing to O'Mahony about his experiences throughout the United States, he cites this as an impediment to collecting funds from Fenians in Indiana, saying that the Indiana leadership "could not get in more than half the amount subscribed" and that one of the reasons was "that I had been introduced under a name which, they had been informed, was not my real one" (1.6.32, 12/11/1864). Stephens states here that "the chief officers only knowing my real name" is

a standard and necessary practice, and that the onus is on those head organizers in each location to assure their constituents of Stephens's authority.

In this same letter, Stephens closes by allowing that such secrecy is a potential detriment to the cause in the United States. Despite having opened this long report letter by saying, "As this is mainly a private letter—it is only intended *as a whole* for Mr. O'M. [John O'Mahony], Mr. McC. [Henry O'C. McCarthy], and the Central Council..." he reverses course by the end of the same letter. After giving a lengthy report of the conditions he met in the United States as he toured the country, as well as an updated account of the numbers of the IRB in Ireland, he concludes that as much of the letter should be made public as the U.S. Fenian leadership deems necessary:

I have done for the present. Though sensible of never having written a letter on which so much depends, I am but too conscious that I write under the most unfavorable circumstances. I am aware too that while my brothers expect a comprehensive and powerful document I can only give them the most hurried scrawl. Still, this letter or whatever you may call it has much pith in it, however feebly explained ; and it would only require time to make it something that many might admire and none be ashamed of. You will of course show it to Mr. O'M. and the Central Council. The substance of it might even be communicated to the Convention ; or for that matter you may read it all for the Convention, such as it is. And this is not my opinion only, though no friend of mine would take this as a sample of what I should write. There is no need of withholding documents of this kind through motives of policy. It is likely enough that we have lost

considerably through this fear of telling too much and shocking people.
All that could possibly be told *should* be told to all true men. (1, 6, 32,
12/11/1864)

This admission that secrecy has perhaps cost the movement time and resources in the United States comes a bit too late to reverse the inevitable course towards greater factionalism between the two allied organizations. At the Jones' Wood speech, Stephens's narrative performance is an iconic recognition of the need in the United States for forthrightness. Indeed, the whole speech is a public retelling of his side of the events from 1858 until that moment. Yet, though he recognizes the need to be more public, his rhetoric shows the extent to which he misunderstood the exigencies that attended being a public organization in the United States: that is, the need for transparency in leadership, and republican-style representative government as the Fenian Brotherhood had developed in 1863 (see Chapter 3). Instead, in the midst of his narrative, Stephens makes a jab at their decision to become an independent organization. Speaking about his first trip to the States, in 1858, he states, "At that time, the organization in America was a secret society as well as in Ireland. It has been found proper to change it here since; it has been changed, but whether for the better or not the future only can tell" ("The Fenians," *NYT*, 16 May 1866). Couching his statements throughout as appeals to unity, this statement here once again subtly challenges the authority of Fenian leadership in the United States, appealing to the gathered crowd to reinstate his constitutive vision.

Stephens's answer, of course, is to reunite under his sole leadership:

I did expect that Col. Roberts would act like Mr. O'Mahony. I believe it was patriotic and wise on the part of Mr. O'Mahony to give in his

resignation, and I believe it would be patriotic and wise on the part of Mr. Roberts to do the same...if both those gentlemen were here to stand by me and endorse me to-day [sic], I believe that in a single month our organization would be ten times as powerful as it has ever been, and the freedom of Ireland would be a certain thing. [Loud cries of “Never mind them.” “We don’t care for either of them.”]

Hoping by his mere presence and hopeful invocations to suture an organization that was in utter disrepair, his constitutive invitation is quite literally ignored by Roberts, who was not in attendance. And, given the answers in the crowd, his performance of unity actually inspires more division in the gathering, as they convert his appeals to unity-through-obedience into calls to cut these divisive elements from the movement altogether. This call and response sequence points up a major limit to a Charlandian approach to constitutive rhetoric, one that understands a speaker as interpellating the hearer into an “illusion of freedom” that ends in fulfillment of the singular constitutive narrative. These gathered Irish embody the reality that such a constitutive vision is often, at best, an instance of conditional persuasion. In place of an assured telos of unity for Ireland, Stephens is met here by a dialogic cacophony. Some are talking back, urging a different solution. Others, like Roberts, have literally turned their back. Charland’s framework seems too rigid to account for the countless ways that an inscribed subject of a constitutive narrative might speak back to the text, whether by voice or by body.

It’s important to attend to this shortcoming in the theoretical framework, especially since Stephens’s speech at Jones’ Wood repeatedly invokes the same constitutive themes of a unified people and the true homeland that characterize Fenian

rhetoric from the beginning. Speaking in the United States, he makes it clear that he's addressing the Irish people, not Irish-Americans:

Let any man who has come here to bring discord into our ranks...let such a man go home, let him go home [Cheers.] Let him go to England, that is the place for him. [Laughter and cheers.] Let him go to the British Minister—there he will be well received, but let him not stand here with Irishmen who have sworn before God and men they will free their land or die. [Loud cheering. Voices, "That's the talk."]...Your motto today should be union...You can make it to be done; you are the people, you are the power; you can make men, you can direct men, you can force men into the right path even if you should find them go astray from it.

Stephens here is no doubt still speaking to the "Irish people," a collective subject possessing transhistorical unity that crosses borders and oceans. And the hearers seem to be in agreement on this point. Indeed, as he invokes this constitutive invitation of "the people," the newspaper account purports it to be the loudest and most positive affirmation from the gathered crowd during the whole speech. Yet, it's clear that Fenians of all stripes never doubted their Irish peoplehood. What the Charlandian tradition cannot adequately account for is the real ways that these inscribed subjects did not find themselves in a teleological narrative leading only to revolt in Ireland. Rather, they seem to be in a dialogical constitutive choose-your-own-adventure that refracted through changing material conditions and produced multiple valid endings to the people's destiny.

Constitutive Refraction Across Borders

By the time of this speech in 1866, Stephens is dealing with an additional radical contextual change in the United States. The Civil War is over, and Fenian Irish veterans

of the war are becoming far too impatient to wait on the words of their leaders. Coupled with the distance-derived challenges to ethos and the public/private conundrums of national context, this new constraint to Stephens's authority ended up being too much to bear. As Stephens spoke here in New York, determined to muster his rhetorical authority to stop this madness and reinstate the original constitutive vision of armed action in Eire, these Roberts-led U.S. Fenians were less than one month from attacking Canada by way of Buffalo. While Stephens successfully galvanized a portion of the U.S. movement to redouble its efforts for the coming war in Ireland, the factionalism that hardened in the wake of the Fenian schism and failed invasions of Canada would ultimately skewer what sliver of hope remained for successful revolt in Ireland.

Feminist rhetorical scholars Wendy Hesford and Eileen Schell have argued for a transnational rhetorical perspective that can interrogate the ways the field has too easily assumed nation-states as discrete entities. But rather than replacing this outmoded model of rhetoric as neatly contained by national borders with a romantic vision of globalizing hybridity, Hesford and Schell urge the field to interrogate the transnational at the nexus of the national (467). This re-territorialized and grounded sense of the transnational movement of rhetoric, one that pays attention to the ways that rhetoric must be translated through and morphed by its encounter with the particular constraints imposed by national publics, discourses, and laws, is echoed by Kate Vieira when she states, "As Writing Studies continues its explorations of transnationalism, I believe we would do well to put as much emphasis on the *nation* as we are beginning to put on the *trans*" (458; emphasis original). Numerous scholars have followed suit in transnationalizing contemporary

rhetorical studies without dismissing the importance of nation-states to the neocolonial dynamics of this latest round of globalization (see Dingo, Dingo & Scott, Queen, Schilb).

The Fenian case reveals similar dynamics operating historically: an early transnational counterpublic-in-process that sought to transcend existing Nations in order to constitute an emancipated Irish Nation. As the movement grew, the National contexts prevailing on them from both sides of the Atlantic ultimately helped to doom their attempts at a constitutive rhetoric that could sustain the revolution across borders. Despite their attempts to remain aloof from the national contexts pressing in on their diasporic consubstantiality, their efforts at the ethos construction necessary to sustain trust across such distance were undone in part by the separate contexts of rhetorical action in the United Kingdom and North America, the former demanding absolute secrecy and the latter demanding public displays of power. In the upcoming chapter, I'll turn more specifically to that latter context of the United States to look at the ways the Fenian Brotherhood sought to substantiate their movement by enacting a republican Constitution. As we'll see, they will seek to leverage this transnational constitutive vision of an "Irish people" to announce a more sovereign vision of a legitimate Irish nation-state.

3. CRISIS, LEGITIMACY, & EVOLVING CONSTITUTIONAL WISHES

“...it is high time for us to meet in council, and, having compared our experience of the past six years—for so long has the Fenian Brotherhood been in existence—to adopt such measures as will place our organization in a position more suitable to its vast extent, and to pass such rules for its direction and management as will render it more efficient and more ready to the hand than it is at present; for the time seems fast approaching when we will have to strike a blow for the Independence of Ireland—a time for which we have been preparing ourselves for years.”

-- John O'Mahony (1863), 5-6

At the close of 1863, Head Centre John O'Mahony stood at the helm of a vastly expanded Fenian organization and delivered those words to the gathered delegates of the 1st National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood (*Proceedings of the 1st* 5-6). From their modest founding in New York City in 1858, the organization had grown to over 63 circles spread throughout the United States and parts of Canada. Yet, to attain their objectives of Irish independence, the gathered delegates knew they needed to grow much more quickly. As alluded to in the previous chapter, they needed to overcome a number of obstacles to their growth beyond the naysaying of the '48ers. First, some Roman Catholic clergy in the United States had begun to refer to the Fenian Brotherhood as a “secret society.” Seemingly innocuous, this nomenclature presented dire consequences for Roman Catholics, as Pope Pius IX would soon (1864) reaffirm the Catholic stance on the sinfulness of secret societies that dated back to Pope Clement XII's 1738 stance against Freemasons and had been continued by Leo XII against the Carbonari in 1825. Given the large number of Roman Catholics in the Fenian Brotherhood's recruiting base, it was essential to counteract such a smear with their own side of the story. Second, O'Mahony was convinced that an official organization operating in North America

needed to more clearly reflect the Republican values of the United States in order to, as he put it, “secure for [our association] a greater popularity than heretofore, among our fellow citizens born in this country” (11).

Thus, the gauntlet was thrown. Meeting in Convention for the first time, the Fenian Brotherhood would declare itself on the world stage through resolutions and an official Constitution. And O’Mahony’s words at the top of this chapter are a harbinger of the two main strategies they’d use to substantiate their constitutive vision of a better-funded, well-organized, and formidable North American revolutionary organization: topoi of revolutionary crisis and sovereign legitimacy. In sum then, the Fenian Brotherhood sought to grow their movement by planting it upon the solid ground of a constitution espousing what Burke would call two main “constitutional wishes” or “voluntary principles:” “War is fast approaching. And we will be prepared to meet it as a nation.”

In the previous chapter, I traced how the movement sought to constitute itself transatlantically as an Irish nation in the hearts of its diaspora, and how the transnational context, in part, militated against the movement’s ability to remain tactically unified. In this chapter, I build from that more global overview and zoom in on North America, tracing the Constitutional trajectory of the Fenian Brotherhood through the intertwining wishes of crisis and sovereign legitimacy in their Constitutions from 1863-1870. As the crisis topoi loomed larger, the rhetorical strategies to constitute national legitimacy grew more official. Yet, as Burke would remind us, Constitutions are more than mere symbolic acts of sovereignty. Their symbolic action also creates a scene that bounds the possibilities for future action. These constitutional wishes become crucial places to stand

within that scene, urging Fenians, other Irish expatriates, and sympathizers to mobilize on behalf of the suffering, yet legitimate, Irish nation. But, as we'll see, as the Fenians continue to intertwine these topoi in their Constitutional scenes, the interrelationships of principles set in motion by the evolving Fenian Constitution created the scenic conditions for a legitimacy crisis of leadership and vision in the nascent national assembly.

Examining the Fenian Constitutions through Burke's framework and the tradition it has inspired helps us to see how the constitutive discourse of the Brotherhood itself set the scene for the movement's coming schism. This teaches us more about the Fenians, as it shows the ways that Fenian constitutive rhetorical practice itself contributed to the conditions for the organization's division, beyond simply the warring egos of leadership that are often blamed. But the Fenians' unique location as a transnational "nation," operating within but beyond the United States, and therefore subject to both U.S. law and the changing material conditions in Ireland, presses on Burke's constitutional theories as they have been developed by contemporary rhetoricians. For instance, Christa Olson has called the field to displace Burke's representative anecdote from its peculiarly fixed U.S. location. She turns to Ecuador's troubled constitutional scene in order to return contingency to the anecdote, to remind us that there is a "constant negotiation between scene and act," that a Constitution and its wider circumference are in a "fundamentally dialectical relation to one another, providing imperfect motives and conditional persuasion" (95). The Fenians' evolving Constitutional wishes and the shifting wider circumference they helped to create certainly amplify Olson's insights, yet they do so without having to travel nearly so far. Whereas Olson's anecdote removes from Burke's original scene altogether in order to temper it, the Fenian Constitution reveals one

moment in the Constitution-behind-the-U.S. Constitution where an immigrant population is using its own substance-defining words to invoke a new sovereign power that extends beyond the borders of the United States.

By returning to the very same geopolitical scene of Burke's U.S. representative anecdote, examining Fenian Constitutional wishes provoke us to *unsettle* Burke's "over-determined scene" (88) while giving insight into the rhetorical dynamics in the wider circumference by which the U.S. Constitutional wishes continue to seem particularly fixed. This is a step toward answering Scott Lyons's call for the field of rhetoric and composition to examine and teach the rhetoricality of U.S. geopolitical sovereignty, including teaching U.S.-American Indian treaties as rhetorical documents or examining the Tribal Law and Government Center's annual re-arguments of bellwether decisions whereby the U.S. has used rhetorical imperialism to further circumscribe American Indian sovereignty (463-465). This study of Fenian constitutional rhetoric prompts scholars to inquire about the other substance-defining geopolitical Constitutive enactments that have occurred on the same contested ground as the U.S. Constitution, and at the very same time. As such, I join Olson in calling the field to reenvision and amend Burke's anecdote, and do so through a small answer of Scott Lyons's call for broadening the study of rhetorical sovereignty on this continent (465).

In what follows, I'll first provide a brief review of Burke's thoughts on Constitutions and the recent work it has inspired, most notably by Dana Anderson and Christa Olson. I'll then utilize a hybrid of Burke, Anderson, and Olson's insights as a lens to view the origination and development of the Constitution of the Fenian Brotherhood. To do so, I'll begin with its original in 1863, using an in depth discussion of its 21

resolutions to explore the wider circumference—what Burke calls the constitution-behind-the-Constitution—that called it forth. I’ll then move to its 1st minor revision in early 1865, and then to its major revamping in late 1865, tracing how the Constitutions are affected by the wider circumference while also creating their own scenic conditions for transformation. This second 1865 revision keeps its major Constitutional wish intact—to create an organization capable of freeing Ireland—but uses vastly different God-terms for its membership and the larger public to think by, setting the scene for an all-out legitimacy crisis that leads the North American organization to schism. I then examine the fallout of these decisions by providing some brief historical details of the failed invasions of Canada and the failed rising in Ireland. I close the chapter with a description of the updated Constitution that becomes finalized when the two Fenian factions reunite in 1870. By tracing the Fenian constitutional trajectory, what Burke might call the movement’s scenic enactment, we gain new insight about the North American Fenian movement’s evolving relationship to the United States. As we’ll see, what begins in 1863 as an imagined country-to-country alliance will, by 1870, have reduced its scope of vision to a mere civic organization operating wholly within the United States.

Making an “Is” out of an “ought”

Fenian Constitutions were the central way by which they legitimized their vision and existence, which makes them a fitting site to extend the field’s reviving interest in Burke’s Constitutional theorizing in Part III of *Grammar of Motives*, which places the U.S. Constitution as the representative anecdote for his motives trilogy, especially for the ways that judgments are given substance. As Burke puts it:

Men's conception of motive, we have said, is integrally related to their conception of substance. Hence, to deal with problems of motive is to deal with problems of substance. And a thing's substance is that whereof it is constituted. Hence, a concern with substance is a concern with the problems of constitutionality. And where questions of constitutionality are central, could we do better than select the subject of a Constitution and its typical resources as the anecdote about which to shape our terms? (337-338)

Having established the centrality of Constitutions to a discussion of motives, Burke's wide ranging treatment begins with an exploration of his rejected choices for a sufficiently representative anecdote to analyze motives in human relations; Grand Central Station, war, and peace are each explored and dismissed. Burke argues that a Constitution is the best choice for such an ambitious project.

As you'll recall from the literature review, Burke notes that a Constitution involves all five terms of his famous dramatic pentad in its basic structure:

A legal constitution is an *act* or body of acts (or enactments), done by *agents* (such as rulers, magistrates or other representative persons), and designed (*purpose*) to serve as a motivational ground (*scene*) of subsequent actions, it being thus an instrument (*agency*) for the shaping of human relations. (341)

Yet, despite its pretensions to universality, a Constitution is actually a dialectical act arising in history and responding to specific conditions (365), addressed by agents to other agents (360), that codifies the authoring agents' wishes or commands and becomes

the scene for other agents' behaviors (362). In other words, he proceeds to show how Constitutions build their own bounded circumference, but can't help but refer to, draw credibility from, or seek to ignore aspects of the wider circumference of the world, the Constitution-behind-the-Constitution.

Dana Anderson has crystallized three crucial parts of Burke's thoughts on Constitutions: Circumference, the audience-addressed nature of Constitutions, and the agon of Constitutional principles. For Circumference, he notes that Burke sees Constitutions as drawing a boundary and setting a God-term that directs audiences to think by one set of coordinates as opposed to another. Second, Anderson keys on Burke's notion that Constitutions are strategic and audience-addressed, in that they are calculated enactments to make certain people think or act or see a certain way. Finally, in terms of the agon of Constitutional principles, Anderson notes the ripe tension that Burke sees between voluntaristic principles—the Constitutional wishes that announce an “ought” in terms of an “is”—and necessitarian principles, or the antagonism that emerge from the interactions and conflict of the wishes. As Burke states in the *Grammar*,

In sum: There are principles in the sense of wishes, and there are principles in the sense of interrelationships among the wishes. Principles as wishes are voluntary or arbitrary, inasmuch as men can meet in conference and decide how many and what kind of wishes they shall subscribe to. But once you have agreed upon a list of wishes, the interrelationships among those wishes are necessary or inevitable.” (375)

In other words, you can make as many wishes as you want in your constitutional document. But the interaction of those wishes will lead to necessary and conflicted

interrelationships, which are the breeding ground for substantive transformation. As Burke tells it, there are two main types of constitutional wishes, the hortatory and the admonitory. While each substitutes an “is” where an “ought” resides, the underlying “oughts” of a stated Constitutional “is” are really either “Let us strive to become” (hortatory) or “Watch out or we might become” (admonitory). The main two topoi of Fenian constitutional wishes fall broadly into each category, as the Fenian wish of sovereign legitimacy is hortatory, while their topos of crisis is typically utilized as an admonitory constitutional wish.

Olson, in her Burkean reading of Ecuadorian constitutions, adds the possibility of insincerity to the types of Constitutional wishes, a wish that might best be called the “palliative” wish—one that seeks to soothe the symptom of unfreedom, for instance, with no intention of fixing the cause (in the U.S.’s case, white supremacy and settler colonialism) (90). Though Olson touches only lightly on the principles that Anderson keys on, she masterfully focuses on the Constitution-behind-the-Constitution of the Ecuadorian Constitutional scene. She notes how the visual scene of Ecuadorian art both reinforced and challenged the changing Constitutional scene, in which Ecuadorian elites sought to simultaneously define Ecuadorians broadly to include its majority indigenous population while withholding the rights of citizenship from Indigenous people. By focusing on the Constitution-behind-the-Constitution, she reminds scholars to see the wider circumference as more than simply scenic, but often as strategies themselves in shifting ratios between the Constitution and the constitutions-behind-the-Constitution (88).

Taken together, Olson and Anderson's reading of Burke provide a terrific lens for my reading of the Fenian Constitutions. As the wider circumference changes, the audiences addressed change slightly too. And as the strategies and circumferences of these documents change to meet the shifting constitutions-behind-the-Constitutions, the necessitarian principles set forth by the Fenian wishes toward greater sovereignty have powerful consequences for the organization's leadership as well as the future direction of militant Irish nationalism in North America and beyond. What's more, the Constitutional wishes of the Fenians helped to further naturalize and reinforce the Constitutional wishes of the U.S. Constitution, whose hortatory—or more likely palliative—wishes the Fenians relied on heavily for their own sovereign legitimacy.

Act: “Let There Be the Nation of Ireland”

Meeting in Congress, the Fenian Brotherhood drafted and unanimously adopted a set of 21 resolutions and a Constitution consisting of 29 sections. A perusal of their resolutions quickly yields a powerful sense of the historical context and contemporary conditions they saw themselves responding to. As mentioned above, they needed to clarify their relationship to the United States as well as diffuse critiques from clergy and others that they were a secret society or illegal organization. Their first moves in the Constitution seek to clarify these relationships in an incontrovertibly public way, responding to their critics and staking a claim for their legitimacy. To do so, their first seven resolutions practice what Malea Powell might call a rhetorical alliance with the United States. Powell defines alliance in her study of Omaha rhetor, Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte, who adapted her rhetorical practice to meet the expectations of white Indian reform progressives who were funding her medical education and work. As Powell puts it, La Flesche Picotte learned to speak to what these reformers valued even as

she never compromised her ultimate responsibility to the survival and thriving of her Omaha people. Such alliance, adaptive and resourceful, helped La Flesche to “use the means available to her in order to keep the Omaha community intact *as a community*” (“Down By The River” 55; emphasis original). And that same adaptive alliance is on display in the constitutive vision of the Fenian Constitutional resolutions, whereby the Fenians seek to leverage their placement—and sometimes citizenship—for the goal of ultimate freedom for their people *as a people*.

Resolution 1 states their organizational objective, their demographics as American citizens, and their legal right to exist. Given these crucial points, it’s worth quoting at length:

We...do hereby emphatically proclaim our organization to consist of an association having for its object the national freedom of Ireland, and composed for the most part of Citizens of the United States of America, of Irish birth or descent, but open to such other dwellers on the American continent as are friendly to the liberation of Ireland from the domination of England, by every honorable means within our reach, collectively and individually, save and except such means as may be in violation of the constitution and laws under which we live and to which all of us, who are citizens of the United States, owe our allegiance. We furthermore boldly and firmly assert our unquestionable right under the said constitution and laws to associate together for the above named object, or for any similar one; and to assist with our money, our moral and political influence, or, if

it so pleases ourselves, with our persons and our lives in liberating any
enslaved land under the sun. (31)

In other words, they are a North American association, made up mostly of U.S. citizens who are either Irish or sympathize with the Irish, who aim to help Ireland attain independent nationhood by every lawful means possible under the United States Constitution, which they both swear allegiance to and cite as their authorization for creating such an organization in the first place. This first constitutional wish situated the Fenian Brotherhood as both subject to the United States nation-state's own constitutional scene, but also beyond it, as their members may be drawn from locations that exceed the U.S.'s geopolitical boundaries. These members include Canadian subjects for whom such organizing would be patently illegal. Locating their center in the United States even as their organization was transnational, this wish both assures the United States of their bonds of affiliation while extending the geopolitical reach of the U.S. Constitution. In so doing, it invites readers and hearers to reconceptualize sovereign space, both for the nascent and scattered Irish nation, but also for the United States republican democracy.

As if anticipating the credulous objections of Anglo-Americans, their second resolution engages a constitutional wish of rhetorical alliance even more emphatically. First, they flatter the United States with gestures towards its own God-terms of freedom and equality for all: "WHEREAS, The exiles of every country, and especially of Ireland, have ever found a home, personal freedom, and equal political rights, in this American republic" (31). Next, they equate the preservation of the United States with social progress for the entire human race: "WHEREAS, We deem its preservation and success of supreme importance, not alone to ourselves and our fellow citizens, but to the

extension of democratic institutions, and to the well being and social elevation of the whole human race” (32). These planks in place, they then proclaim in capital letters,

Resolved, THAT WE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FENIAN BROTHERHOOD IN THE UNITED STATES, DO HEREBY SOLEMNLY DECLARE, WITHOUT LIMIT OR RESERVATION, OUR ENTIRE ALLEGIANCE, TO THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. (32)

In light of their strident commitment to Irish nationality—and the findings of the last chapter that found a distinctive attempt to foster Ireland-first identifications in the diasporic Irish “race” and nation—these emphatic and vocal assertions of U.S. allegiance no doubt seem jarring. Yet, as Burke states, Constitutions must always point to a “wider circumference...the social, natural, or supernatural environment in general, the ‘Constitution behind the Constitution’” (362). Burke details the wider circumference that the U.S. Constitution used to legitimate itself—namely, the European traditions of natural and positive law. The Fenians, on the other hand, had no international recognition as a nation. They were, quite literally, dependent on United States recognition to both authorize their movement and protect it from British claims of illegality and treason. In other words, to substantiate their hortatory constitutional wish of sovereignty, they needed to craft an alliance with the United States. As Scott Lyons notes of sovereignty, it refers to a “sense of locatable and recognizable power. In fact, the location of power has depended upon the crucial act of recognition—and vice versa” (450). The United States was the power most likely to recognize—and thus assure the reality of—Irish sovereignty.

In true alliance form, the Fenians actually state whose power they recognize as legitimate in Resolution 6, where they simultaneously deny allegations that they're a secret society or illegal organization. In the former charge, they state, "there being no pledge of secrecy [sic], there can be no sin in becoming a Fenian brother" (34). This move assures potential Fenians that you can be a loyal Catholic and an active Fenian at the same time, renewing Irish bonds of affiliation to the Church even as it simultaneously challenges Church authority over political matters. As for the latter charge, they contend:

we protest most emphatically against the casuistry of the charge made against us of Illegality, inasmuch as the members of the Fenian Brotherhood contemplate no breach of the laws of the United States...we nevertheless fully admit that our association may possibly be open to the charge of being illegal, if tested by the laws of England, but these we have repudiated on taking the oath of allegiance to the United States, an act which we know to be illegal, according to the latter code, but not on that account the less right and just. (34-35)

The Fenians, then, repudiate English law as a valid Constitution-behind-the-Constitution of their association, replacing it with recognition of the validity of the United States Constitution and legal system. This decision would become increasingly contentious as Fenian agitation grew, actually forming the main sticking point in diplomatic relations between England and the United States during the time period. Via their doctrine of indefeasibility of allegiance, England maintained that anyone born on British-controlled soil was a British subject for life, whereas the United States maintained the policy that people could voluntarily alienate their citizenship duties to a home country in choosing to

swear allegiance to a new host country. As U.S.-citizen Fenian soldiers began to be arrested on Irish and British-Canadian soil in coming years, this wrangle would come to a head repeatedly.

But the Fenians weren't just practicing alliance with the United States in order to advocate for U.S. versions of citizenship over British(-Canadian) ones. They were also hoping that the United States would go to war with Britain once the Civil War was settled. Resolution 3 states, "WHEREAS, From the hostile attitude assumed by the English oligarchy, merchants, and the press, towards the United States...it is all but certain that war is imminent, or at least fast approaching, between our adopted country and England, our hereditary enemy" (32). Here, in the midst of making alliance with the United States to assure recognition of their sovereignty wish, they introduce a version of their crisis topos. As we will see, their employment of the crisis constitutional wish will most often serve as an admonitory wish indicating imminent danger in need of action. Here, though, placed in the midst of their alliance with U.S. power, it serves as a hortatory wish. They announce a coming war, a crisis of absolute division between England and the United States, as surefire fact, hoping to will the conflict into being.

Such a hortatory "ought" having been firmly announced as an "is", they therefore resolved that younger Fenians should learn the arts of combat and organize drilling militias so they'll be ready to "offer their service to the United States government, by land or sea, against England's myrmidons in that event" (32). The "hostile attitude" they attribute to England can be traced to 1861's "Trent" incident, whereby a Union warship intercepted an English mail steamer in international waters, boarded it, and found two Confederate envoys being carried to Europe. The Union Captain, Charles Wilkes,

arrested the Confederate envoys and conveyed them to Boston, where they were imprisoned (D'Arcy 21). The English press was incensed by the event, and demanded the envoys' release. After all, England had already recognized the Confederate States' belligerent status (21). Though the event was resolved peacefully, many Irish took a greater interest in the Union cause thereafter, enlisting in the Union ranks on the hopes that England would be the next target once the Civil War was settled (21).

The Fenians saw the "Trent" incident as a catalyst for U.S. and Irish coalition against England, one that might spark U.S. recognition of their shared historical story. After all, the Fenians found deep ideological affinity with the United States' status as a former colony of England that had successfully founded an independent, republican government. Resolution 4 plays on this similarity, pronouncing:

WHEREAS, We deem the resurrection of Ireland to independent nationhood to be of immediate interest not alone to Irishmen but to all sincere lovers of human freedom, as well as of especial advantage to America, whose vanguard she stands even to-day against British aggression...*Resolved*, That every man of Irish birth or descent who lives on the American continent is admissible to the Fenian Brotherhood without distinction of class or creed, provided his character be unblemished and his devotion to Ireland unquestioned; and that we earnestly invite every American who is loyal to the principles of self-government to aid and sustain us by his moral influence against our enemies (32).

That this reads like a profound case of wishful thinking is, given its location in a Constitutional document, no surprise. As Burke puts it, constitutions are “legal substances designed to serve as motives for the shaping or transforming of behavior” (342). And motives are often given substance by appeals to the hortatory wherein, as I’ve said before, an *ought* is rephrased as an *is* (334). And this subtle substitution of the ontological for the futuristic becomes one of the key “motivational assumptions” that “implicitly or explicitly [substantiates] human decisions, hence [shapes] human relations” (335). Of course, the Irish cause *ought* to interest “all sincere lovers of human freedom” and may someday *actually* become the “vanguard” of American-style republicanism against the monarchical governments of Britain and continental Europe. Yet, one would have been hard-pressed to find an American statesman who would place Ireland’s national question at such a central place in the unfolding story of the United States, beset as it was in 1863 by a protracted Civil War motivated in part by the dispute over the Confederate States’ asserted right to base an economic system on ownership of human beings. And one has to wonder where “sincere lovers of human freedom” on the American continent were to place the Irish question in relation to demands for freedom by African peoples, and, for that matter, to separate nationhood for indigenous peoples.

The Fenian Constitution immediately addresses such questions about other freedom struggles in resolution 5, by declaring such wrangles to be wholly outside the scope of their organization:

WHEREAS, Certain questions connected with the general politics of the United States, with local partisanship foreign to Irish freedom, or with differences in religious faith, are the great obstacles that impede the

successful working of the Fenian Brotherhood, and delay the redemption of Ireland, by perpetuating in this country, the ancient dissensions of her sons, though upon issues for the most part peculiar to America, be it *Resolved* That every subject relating to the internal politics of America and the quarrels of American partisans, together with all subjects relating to differences in religion, be absolutely and forever excluded from the councils and deliberations of the Fenian Brotherhood, and be declared totally foreign to its objects and designs; and that we furthermore invite every sincere friend of liberty, without distinction of party or creed, to join cordially and harmoniously with us upon the neutral platform of Irish Independence. (33)

Of course, the very issues deemed “peculiar to America” and blamed as “delaying the redemption of Ireland” dealt directly with struggles for African human freedom, struggles that a “sincere friend of liberty” might also be expected to be profoundly engaged with. Rather than risk the divisions that may come from taking such a stand, though, the Fenian Brotherhood here excludes issues of American politics or religion from the circumference of its Constitution, thereby enabling them to utilize the same palliative God-term of “liberty” that the United States does without having to take a stand on the most pressing issue of human liberty facing North America at the time. The stark division evinced in a declaration that such concerns are “totally foreign” to the Fenian preoccupation with Irish freedom reveals the fragmented nature of the Irish counterpublic in the United States at the time, a fragmentation which posed a significant problem for swelling the ranks of the Fenian Brotherhood. First of all, many Irish were fighting for the Confederacy during the

Civil War, and famous Irish nationalist writer John Mitchell had been continuously writing about the analogous similarities between the agrarian south's economic subjugation to the industrialized north and the oppression of Ireland by England. Indeed, such a feeling ran so strong among many Irish in the United States that Steward and McGovern have hypothesized that O'Mahony hurt the cause of Fenian recruitment by remaining so doggedly pro-Union in the midst of the prejudices facing the Irish in the north, "who were frequently used as cannon fodder on the battlefield and as disposable employees in the workplace" (Steward & McGovern 49).

True to the circumference the Fenian Brotherhood had drawn, though, O'Mahony only hints at such divisions in his opening address to the First National Convention in 1863. He notes that the Civil War had halted almost all communication between the New York Headquarters and recently established Southern circles. And he laments this state of Affairs in his opening address amidst a largely epideictic celebration of the organization's growth:

Outside of [New York City], there was not a single enrolled member of our Brotherhood in all America [when I was elected your President in 1858]. Setting out from such humble beginnings, it has since then put forth its branches from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific. Stretching northward, it has crossed the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, spreading widely over the Provinces of Great Britain. Towards the South, it had reached the mouth of the Mississippi ere the present deplorable civil war had cut off communication with our Southern Circles, of which that at New Orleans

alone still keeps up an understanding with your Central Office in New York. (*Proceedings of the 1st* 8-9)

Indeed, the only delegates from Southern states were: T. Constantine from Bowling Green, KY; Thomas McCarthy, from Nashville, Tenn; J.P. McGrath from Louisville, KY, and James McDermott, also from Louisville, who didn't attend but signed through McGrath as a proxy. Since Kentucky itself was a divided state that seceded but was never controlled by the Confederates, it's difficult to ascertain if three of these four even actively worked under the Confederate cause. In any case, only four of the 102 signers of the 1863 Constitution hailed from Confederate States (43-45).

But this was also November, 1863, less than four months after the infamous draft riots in New York City, where a working-class white mob erupted into a week of violence over the Union draft laws. Many Irish workers, especially Longshoremen, participated wholeheartedly in the rampage, helping to ransack the Colored Orphan Asylum, to destroy all businesses that catered to Black workers along the docks, and to lynch 11 Black men (Harris 279-288). This Irish worker reaction to Union conscription—cultivated by shock journalists who consistently prophesied the mass influx of Black freedmen into New York City to take Irish and German jobs—provided a stark contrast to the other Irish who voluntarily enlisted in the Union Army, especially after the Trent Incident. As O'Mahony recollected two years later 1865, “Some thousands of our most ardent and best working members had also rushed to the defense of the Union from all our circles...In fine, no less than fifty of our branches had become extinct or dormant...through the absence of their choicest spirits in the field” (2nd National Congress, 6).

Tellingly, the draft riots are not even mentioned in the 1863 proceedings, and little mention is made of the fact that Fenian Irish were currently serving in the Confederate Army as well. By explicitly drawing any talk of American politics outside the Fenian Constitutional circumference—in addition to the age-old dissensions over religion—the Fenians sought here in Resolution 5 to restrict their constitutive vision to the one thing all Irish could agree upon: English hatred. Burke would call this an attempt at establishing motivational fixity, and sees it as a basic function of Constitutions. As he tells it, “Constitutions are agonistic instruments. They involve an enemy, implicitly or explicitly...In all such projects, the attempt is made, by verbal or symbolic means, to establish a motivational fixity of some sort, in opposition to something that is thought liable to endanger this fixity” (357). Just as Anderson notes that Constitutions organize under a bounded circumference and a God-term that titles their motivational aspirations, then, the Fenians here demonstrate that a devil-term is also a useful strategy for fixing motivation. Their God-term, Irish Nationhood, was threatened by contentious debates dividing their constituents. So they generalized their wishes to a level of granularity that all Irish could agree on—England is the enemy—while excluding all other potential contentions from the sphere of Fenian concern. This devil-term served to push Irish contention over racial politics, over labor, over the U.S. Civil War, and over religion back toward the sure fixity of English enmity, excluding these other concerns from the official Constitutional circumference of the Fenian Brotherhood. While Steward and McGovern do note that one major reason for such ardently pro-Union efforts was the eventual recognition of the IRB as a legitimate belligerent from the U.S. State Department in 1865, their account skims over the very real need to build the case for Irish sovereign

recognition from the U.S. as early as 1863 in this Fenian Constitution (74). That is, the Fenian Brotherhood's constitutional wish of (trans)national Irish sovereignty demanded that they place their utmost faith in the survival of the Union—the only internationally recognized sovereign powerful enough to wrest recognition of Irish national sovereignty from the British. The interrelated pillars of power and recognition at the heart of political sovereignty made it clear that the United States, embroiled as it was in its own Civil War, was still the only safe place for Irish national constitutional wishes to stand.

Certainly, by restricting American politics from the Fenian circumference, they hoped to foster Irish unity and attract more Irish into active involvement. But just as important, it also signals their constitutive vision as a separate nation, one that makes alliance with the U.S. Constitution and its laws, but does not meddle in the internal affairs of another sovereign. In moving from announcement of their allegiance to the U.S. Constitution and laws to an active disregard for U.S. political and moral conundrums, the Fenian Brotherhood shifts their constitutional wishes from alliance with the United States to an invocation of Ireland's national status, and its primacy in their role as Fenians. Indeed, in their Resolution 7 that creates an official pledge for the Fenians, there's no mention of the United States at all:

I _____ solemnly pledge my sacred word of honor as a truthful and honest man, that I will labor with earnest zeal for the liberation of Ireland from the yoke of England, and for the establishment of a free and independent government on Irish soil; that I _____ will implicitly obey all the commands of my superior officers in the Fenian Brotherhood;

that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my membership, as laid down in the Constitution and By-Laws thereof; that I will do my utmost to promote feelings of love, harmony, and kindly forbearance among all Irishmen; and that I will foster, defend and propagate the aforesaid Fenian Brotherhood to the utmost of my power (*Proceedings of the 1st* 35-36).

Having established the grounds for recognition from their stated ally and country of refuge, their next seven resolutions proceed to wholeheartedly enact the constitutional wish of Irish national sovereignty, which included invocations of worldwide Irish unity, as well as a clarification of their relationship to the revolutionary organization at home. Since they had already excluded from the Constitution's circumference the very real divisions existing among Irish people in the United States, Resolution 8 proceeds to assert that the "whole Irish race, at home and abroad" is pervaded by both a deep love of Ireland and a similarly deep hatred of the English colonial government (36). With such *oughts* of unity converted to an incontrovertible *is*, they therefore resolve that it's the Fenian Brotherhood's role to unify the Diaspora with "a common policy upon the Irish question" so that "their force [will] become irresistible, guided by one will and one purpose, in one undeviating system of action" (36). Such an epideictic vision of pan-Irish unity, working in lockstep to achieve national independence, is a powerful constitutional wish. And Resolution 9 takes this teleological narrative a step further, asserting that since the Irishmen now living in North America "hold, at present, a more powerful position among the peoples of the earth, in point of numbers, political privileges, social influence and military strength than was ever before held by an exiled portion, not alone of the Irish nation, but of any subjugated nation whatsoever" (36), they resolve to wholeheartedly

work “to organize, combine, and concentrate these great elements of Irish national power, which an all-wise Providence has, it would seem, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE, placed within the reach of the present generation of Irishmen” (37; emphasis original). Not only does this wish invoke the topos of Irish sovereignty, invoking a scattered nation of Irish who are building power in other lands that will be useful for kicking the British out of Ireland, it also grounds this wish in the ultimate authority of God. This is, in Burke’s parlance, the paramount Constitution-behind-the-Constitution, in that God’s absolute law has ordained the substance of the Fenian constitutional wish to be right and just. In such a wish, the arc of the universe has been bent by Providence toward Fenian success and Irish freedom.

Yet, the Fenians wanted to make sure that such providential grounding didn’t devolve into Irish complacency. And what better way to spur action than through an admonitory constitutional wish of impending crisis? To do so, they claim that the balance of Irish at home and abroad has reached a tipping point, a kairotic height that must be taken advantage of before it’s too late. Resolution 10 states that “Irish power” in the U.S. and other foreign nations, as well as at home “[has] reached their greatest development, and that henceforth, they must rapidly decrease by the natural decay of humanity” such that “this declension of the Irish people abroad, must be accompanied by the almost total extinction of the Irish race at home” (37). They therefore

call upon and exhort every true Irishmen...to aid us in preparing Ireland for freedom’s battle, and in hastening the day of her deliverance; and that we, with equal fervor, exhort our brothers in Ireland to hold by our

beloved land to the last extremity, nor flee from it to foreign countries...for the inevitable struggle that is approaching (38).

Rather than encouraging more emigration for their oppressed brethren, the Fenians were pleading for the Irish at home to hold their ground, to get prepared, to trust that the battle cry would soon sound. This concern would grow to a fever pitch in the months and years ahead, as secret reports from the I.R.B. would repeatedly invoke the specter of emigration as one of the main threats to the coming revolution's chances at success.⁷ Thus, the crisis of manpower in Ireland would occupy more and more of the wider circumference weighing on Fenian Constitutional action. In 1863, though, this crisis topos was confined to Resolution 10, as Resolution 11 immediately returns to constitutional wishes of legitimacy, this time on the international stage. Invoking generations of Irish resistance to English invasion stretching back seven centuries, they resolve "THAT WE DECLARE THE SAID IRISH PEOPLE TO CONSTITUTE ONE OF THE DISTINCT NATIONALITIES OF THE EARTH, AND AS SUCH JUSTLY ENTITLED TO ALL THE RIGHTS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT" (38; emphasis original). The ultimate hortatory "ought," the Fenian Brotherhood declares Irish nationhood directly here. And this grounds their next three resolutions, which were redacted from the published account in order to protect the revolutionary organization at home. Yet, their contents were intercepted by English authorities and later entered as Queen's evidence against Thomas Clarke Luby in 1865 (D'Arcy 38). The sovereignty wish of these "secret" resolutions is undeniable, as they proclaim as fact the Republic of Ireland: "We...do hereby proclaim

⁷ Though there were many economic reasons for this, Steward and McGovern mention that New York archbishop John Hughes had publically advised Irish folks to immigrate to states in the Union (45). The U.S. Congress had also offered guaranteed U.S. citizenship in exchange for one year of military service, and was even willing to underwrite fare across the ocean (61). Coupled with bad agricultural return in the 1860s due to rainfall, conditions were ripe for Irish emigration.

the Republic of Ireland to be virtually established; and moreover, that we pledge ourselves to use all our influence, and every legitimate privilege within our reach to promote the full acknowledgment of its independence by every free government in the world” (D’Arcy 38).

The next secret resolution proclaims Stephens as the recognized Chief Executive of the I.R.B and organizer of the Irish people, and the next entrusts Charles Kickham to convey these proceedings and pronouncements to Stephens in Ireland (38). After Resolution 15, which proclaims solidarity with the Poles in their national struggle for Independence, the final six resolutions clarify the internal chain of command and workings of the Fenian organization, much of which is repeated in the 29 sections of the Constitution proper.

These 21 resolutions thus laid the groundwork for the legitimacy of the Fenian Brotherhood by responding to the complex and transnational wider circumference that the Fenians had to negotiate. In sum, their first constitutional wish of sovereign legitimacy was bolstered by a number of hortatory voluntary principles. First, they substantiated their own nascent nation’s sovereignty on the authority of the U.S. Constitution and laws to which they pledged allegiance, and invoked a hortatory wish of U.S. allyship in a coming war with England. Having made overt alliance with the United States, which constitutively challenged British claims to authority over Irish-born people living in the United States, they then invoked a voluntary principle of pan-Irish unity in North America that erased the very real factionalisms of Confederacy and Union, Republican and Democrat, Protestant and Catholic, abolitionist and white supremacist existing among Irish in North America. This sought to cement the bonds of affiliation

among Irish by fostering benign disinterest in the heated political divides animating the U.S. public on both sides of the Mason-Dixon. At the same time, it also projected an Irish consubstantiality that made them a political force to reckon with in the United States. Finally, they invoked a principle of Irish nationhood that spans all borders, placing both exile and remnant in a hortatory wish of ongoing transhistorical unity. While this was also meant to renew worldwide bonds of Irish affiliation, they also invoked principles to challenge the authority of the IRB over the exiled nationalists in the Fenian Brotherhood and, thus, the primacy of the Irish remnant in the unfolding story of the Irish nation. Given their access to U.S. citizenship and relative freedom compared to their lot in Ireland, they invoke a hortatory principle that imagines leveraging these divinely-led privileges to finally topple Britain's hold on Ireland. They also invoke a principle of confederation with the IRB, elevating the Fenian Brotherhood from subordinate status to a separate and equal partner in the rejuvenation of their shared nation.

Coupled with this multifaceted hortatory wish of recognized sovereign legitimacy, they also invoke an admonitory wish of revolutionary crisis by purporting a rapidly closing window of opportunity. They substantiate this admonitory wish through nods to both the aging of trained military men in North America as well as the increasing emigration of young men from Ireland. Thus, they sought to realign the global Irish nation's experience of public time, compacting it into the "now or never" knife's edge of fleeting kairos.

These resolutions formed a good foundation for substantiating their Irish nation, striking a careful balance in their constructions of legitimacy: open and democratic enough to be recognized by the United States, yet secretive enough to protect their

partners in Ireland. To be sure, this balance required a dance between openness and secrecy, but it also demanded a careful calculus to balance the ratio of power between the American and Irish organizations. Until now, Stephens had been the unquestioned shot-caller for both organizations. But with O'Mahony's decision to declare the Fenian Brotherhood a separate, equal organization operating in partnership with, rather than simply in service to, the IRB, the Fenian framers had to make some careful decisions about how to codify the chain of command with their brothers in Ireland. What's more, they also needed to generate a governmental structure for the North American organization that was fit for their rhetoric of republican values and representative democracy.

To do so, they carried their constitutional wishes into the creation of a Constitution with 29 sections. The first two announce their purpose, membership demographics as mostly U.S. citizens, and membership pledge. Section 3 outlines the organization's chain of command, from the Head Centre to a 5-person Central Council, to State Centres, Local Centres, Sub-Centres, and rank-and-file members in local circles and sub-circles. Sections 4-14 go into greater detail about the roles and responsibilities of each position, describing also roles for National and local treasurers and secretaries, as well as local "Committees of Safety" who will vet new members and vote to remove members in bad standing, subject to Circle approval (50). The ensuing sections denote a 2-week waiting period for new members' initiation (Sec 15), definitions of members in good (Sec 16) and bad standing (Sec 21), a definition of perfidy and its punishment of expulsion (Sec 20), minimum dues and initiation fees (Sec 18), rules for meetings (including a ban on discussing American politics or Religion) (Sec 17), and rules for

correspondence with superiors marking any communication with the Irish organization that circumvents the Head Centre as a traitorous offense (Sec 19) (50-52). The following sections establish protocols for receiving members from abroad (Sec 22) or from other Circles (Sec 23), as well as setting election terms (Sec 24) and protocol for resignations or dismissals of superiors (Sec 25) (52-53). The final four sections encode the power of the Head Centre and Central Council (Sec 26), establish an annual Congress for elections of leadership, reviews of finances, and necessary amendments to Constitution and by-laws (Sec 27), mark the foregoing 21 resolutions as part of the Fenian Constitution (Sec 28), and establish protocol for local by-laws (provided they don't conflict with the General Constitution) (Sec 29) (53-54).

Such mundane and thorough explanation of the balance of power and organizational protocol, at first glance, seems arhetorical. Yet, its enactment reinforces a scene of Fenian legitimacy as an organized, committed, nation-in-exile. Though not bombastic, its bureaucratic tone and thorough detail becomes the crowning moment of the Fenian constitutional wish of rhetorical sovereignty. Where there had once been a secret society traversing the ocean, there was now an independent yet IRB-affiliated organization modeled on democratic principles and codifying the chain of command. This act, to use Burke's terminology, created a new scene that redefined power relationships both transatlantically and within the organization in North America.

Crucially, it established an electoral process for leadership, thus supplanting Stephens's provisional dictatorship with a Head Centre elected by the Irish people in North America. O'Mahony was unanimously re-elected Head Centre after a decorous speech where he stepped down from the "almost absolute authority which, with your

assent, I have held for nearly five years” in order to fulfill their Constitutional mandate to make the Fenian Brotherhood a “thoroughly democratic, self-governing institution” (25). Further, it enacted a thorough organizational framework that created a 5-person central council to “assist” O’Mahony in leading the organization (46). Nominated by the Head Centre and elected in General Congress, the Central Council would, “in whole or in part, be subject to the call of the Head Centre when he may deem it expedient” (47). In the past, O’Mahony had to make decisions nearly alone, perhaps with the advice of a guarded few confidantes, in the face of Stephens’s transatlantic insistence. Now, he had an official structure to help his thinking and to back his decisions. As stated in Sec. 26 of the Constitution, “The decision of the Head Centre, shall, with the written consent of the majority of the members of the Central Council be absolute and conclusive upon all points that are not specially provided for in these By-Laws, until the next annual session of the Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood” (53). It also extended authority to State Centres, granting them the latitude to grow their local organizations as they saw fit, allowing each man to “control entirely the organization in his state” (48). Such democratized constitutional wishes challenged the insular authority that had previously fallen to Stephens and O’Mahony alone. And where Stephens once commanded supreme deference as they head of the organization in Ireland, his agency in this new North American scene had been substantially reduced. On the one hand, the Head Centre election was made “subject to the acknowledgment of the C.E. of the I.R.B.” (47). And any member convicted of perfidy would also have their name and description sent to each Circle throughout the United States and “to the C.E. in Ireland, to be there kept on record” (51). From supreme dictatorship to merely Head Centre confirmation and

record-keeping, the Irish “national” scene was changing right under the provisional dictator’s nose.

Armed with a legitimate structure, an air of officialdom, and designated roles for growing the organization, the Fenians in North America now had a place to stand. They were poised to begin vocally prevailing upon their North American Irish brethren in order to round them into one, muscular and formidable Nationalist movement. And what better way to overcome distance and diffusion of passion than with a crisis, an impending revolution that could begin at any moment? The Fenians wasted little time in ratcheting up their constitutional wish of revolutionary crisis. James Gibbons, Pennsylvania State Centre and elected member of the Central Council, kicked it off in the published minutes of the Convention. In Session 3, as preamble to presenting the 21 Resolutions to the assembled Congress, Gibbons proclaims,

Cast your eye across the Atlantic, my countrymen, and behold your ancient and venerable mother sitting with her head bowed in grief, her hands in manacles, amidst the ruins of her now departed glory. Hear her appeals calling upon you to turn your eye towards your ancient Jerusalem, and asking you to wipe the death-sweat from her brow, to clothe her in her national garments, and send her forth redeemed and disenthralled (18).

Gibbons here establishes a powerful pathetic appeal, gendering the landscape into a long-suffering mother. Such a constitutive vision invites the gathered delegates to understand their homeland as the land of their nurture, conjuring bonds of affiliation for the place that both gave them life and raised them to adulthood. But even more pressingly, it relies on patriarchal understandings of women as passive. A mother can give life, can suffer,

can mourn. But, in this framework, she cannot free herself without the action of her scattered sons. She needs you to act, and soon, to rescue her.

Having established this powerful emotional appeal to action, Gibbons takes things a step further:

Remember that the sun of Ireland's departed glory is gilding the eastern horizon, and you don't know the hour when the battle-cry of the old race will sweep across the Atlantic, announcing in tones of thunder that the long-looked for hour of vengeance is come. Oh! My countrymen, will you be ready? (18).

Gone is the hopeful, idealistic vision of Ireland's freedom in some distant hour. In its place is the expectant hush of dawn, the waning moments of darkness before sunlight pierces the horizon, the silence soon to be pierced by the crash of battle. And, with it, the admonishing question: will you be ready? Gibbons, of course, has a vision prepared for those who've not yet grasped the urgency of their work: "If you are not ready when that cry is heard, mankind will despise you, your people will despise you, and I say to you, woe, woe, and ten thousand woes upon you, for you will be as Cain" (18).

Gibbons' hyperbole epitomizes the interrelated planks of the Fenian constitutive vision. Crisis: War is inevitably coming. Legitimacy: And we are prepared to meet it, otherwise history and our brothers in Ireland will see us as traitorous wretches. They would stand on their sovereignty topos, a hortatory voluntary principle that creates a scene of harnessed and directed power. And they would move and build through the crisis topos, an admonitory voluntary principle that warns that the day of judgment is approaching, so we must work and act now to be ready.

Confident in their newly defined relationship as equal and independent partners of the Irish organization, their final act in their brand new scene was to compose a letter to the “People of Ireland.” In the letter, they urge similar preparation and pre-organization for the coming battle before ramping up the crisis rhetoric: “The fate of the country trembles in the balance...Let us falter now, and Ireland’s doom is sealed; a grand old nation—grand even in her chains—is blotted from the map of the world” (57).

In the letter, they promise that they will not falter. They promise that they have their brethren’s back. And they close in all caps: “BROTHERS, RELY ON US. WE RELY ON YOU” (58). Energized, the Fenian Brotherhood left the 1863 Convention with knowledge of a coming revolution in their homeland, and the pre-organization of the vanguard diaspora in order to create the best possible conditions for success. They held no illusions that it would be easy, and they freely offered up the sense that they’d very likely die in the process. But they had a place to stand, and they now had to mobilize on this newly invigorated field of action.

A Competing Scene of Legitimacy and Crisis

On the other side of the Atlantic, Stephens had begun his own brand of legitimizing and crisis-building rhetorics. On November 28, 1863, the IRB launched a newspaper, *The Irish People*, to help fund their efforts (D’Arcy 31). By making their own news organ, they were violating their vaunted principle of secrecy, but the need to grow their revenue-stream and control their message outweighed the drawbacks of putting themselves overtly on the authorities’ radar. As Stephens put it in a letter to O’Mahony:

The paper will give us from L1500 to L5000 a year. It will, I need not say, be a useful weapon of attack and defense. It will also of course, be a

powerful organ of propagandism. Other advantages might be stated. Still, it has such serious DISadvantages that, had you been able to supply the necessary funds, I should never have had anything to do with it. I found it, then, through sheer necessity. (1, 5, 5, 10/4/1863)

What's clear from Stephens's strategy here is that the admonitory crisis in Ireland wasn't readiness for the impending war. The crisis in Ireland, as Stephens frames it, is the lack of promised funding support coming from the U.S. Fenians. Writing a year later, on the eve of the next Fenian Brotherhood Convention, he credits the paper with nearly everything: "Now mark this—the very first service rendered by the paper was *to save the organisation*. The proposal and the effort to bring it out kept us alive for months. Had I failed to bring it out *nothing* could save us" (CUA, 1,6,32, 12/11/64; emphasis original). He goes on to explain why:

Many men—and important men too—may be defended and enabled to hold their ground by a single article or letter, whom without a paper you could only defend, and possibly ineffectively, by sending several emissaries at great expence through the country. The paper, too, is a rallying-point for all who, ignorant of our move or abandoned as sometimes happens by their officers, would otherwise fall off or escape us. (ibid.)

Stephens here notes that a more reliable report of the struggle would be a powerful boon to the movement. First, it would attract readers and, hopefully, subscription revenue. Second, it would help to drum up funds from distant locales like North America by supplying a more steady stream of reliable revolutionary reportage to counteract

disparaging invective from mainstream writers on both sides of the Atlantic. Finally, and perhaps all importantly for Stephens, it was also a way to reduce the isolation that could often be felt in the Irish side of the organization. Organized strictly according to a hierarchical cell structure, many of the rank and file had no idea how many folks were in the organization. Level A's would recruit 9 B's, who would then each recruit 9 C's, and so on. But each group would be kept separate, like a tree whose branches did not touch, so that infiltration of one cell would not endanger the entire organization.

Thus, the Fenian Brotherhood sought to legitimize itself through elections and a Constitution, while the IRB sought the same through the Press. And the FB sought to grow the organization through a public admonitory crisis wish of imminent revolution, while the IRB sought to grow through a backchannel admonitory crisis wish of "lack of supplies," what Stephens often called "the sinews of war."

At first, these rhetorics worked quite well together. The FB could utilize the direct reportage of the IRB's *Irish People*—as well as the very existence of a revolutionary press on the Old Sod—to sell new members on the growing power of the movement at home. This wouldn't be like the Young Ireland revolt in '48, which had been disparaged as the "Battle of *Widow McCormack's Cabbage Patch*" by the British press. The IRB meant business this time. And despite the disappointment in North American contributions of the sinews of war to date, the IRB "men in the gap" could be confident in the future returns of the North American organization, replete as it now was with a Constitution, an annual Congress, and a public vow of support to the organization at home. What's more, the crises topoi on both sides were also mutual reinforcing. The Fenians' "War is coming. Will you be ready to help your brethren?" was nicely

complimented by the IRB's "We are ready in numbers, both body and spirit. We only sorely lack the money and munitions to sustain us for the inevitable push."

In March of 1864, Fenians from the Midwest decided to ramp up the organizing with a Grand National Irish Fair, inviting Stephens to attend. After a highly successful gathering, Stephens stayed on in the States for his second organizing tour. Coming out of the energy and momentum built from the Chicago Fair, he began to amp up the crisis constitutional wish considerably, proclaiming a gospel of "WAR OR DISSOLUTION IN '65" (D'arcy 48). By the end of 1864, in fact, Stephens began to frame his latest call for money as the final push, which became translated in Circles into the "Final Call." Most interestingly, Stephens here begins to combine the Irish and U.S. topoi of crisis together, merging the IRB's lack of funds narrative with the need to overcome North American inertia by telling of an impending, imminent revolution so as to grow the movement.

To assist this process before he left the States and had less direct influence, Stephens authored a new organizing agreement and presented it to O'Mahony to more quickly build capacity and get money to Ireland: they'd appoint a deputy Head Center—Henry O'C McCarthy—and either he or O'Mahony would then always be on the road actively rallying circles. Each State Centre would be empowered to appoint a deputy State Centre for the same purpose, and each State Centre would also be empowered to send new funds directly to Stephens and the IRB, rather than forwarding it through the Headquarters in Manhattan.

Historians have interpreted O'Mahony and Stephens's clashes and disagreements as the product of two competing egos, easily bruised and easily prone to exaggeration. And this event has been described as simply a power move of Stephens trying to regain

his hold over the organization. Less has been said, though, about the rhetorical constraints facing them in their respective scenes. Stephens was beset in Ireland by a membership that doubted the resolve of their North American benefactors. From their angle, they'd consistently received far less material support than promised, and the archive at Catholic University is littered with notes from Stephens deploring their tenuous, hand-to-mouth conditions. O'Mahony, on the other hand, was now answerable to an annual Congress that would be investigating the organization's finances, not to mention a membership who doubted the readiness of the Irish organization for the battle to come.

Stephens's request was honored by O'Mahony, who'd been empowered as Head Centre to make binding decisions that would be enforced until the next Convention could officially set new policy. Yet, Stephens's new constitutional wish conflicted with other key voluntary principles established by the Fenian Brotherhood in 1863—namely that no one besides the Head Centre would have direct communicative access to the IRB. What's more, this new Constitutional wish directly conflicted with the 1863 wish that had starkly circumscribed Stephens's influence over the Fenian Brotherhood. By accepting Stephens's request, O'Mahony authorized a profoundly shifted constitutional scene that substantiated further democratization of the Fenian Brotherhood. Conversely, it also substantiated Stephens's return to a place of prime agency within the Fenian Brotherhood Constitutional scene. These voluntary principles brewed a necessitarian principle of conflict—the strengthening of the Fenian Brotherhood's demos with a concomitant strengthening of the movement's provisional dictator did not bode well for O'Mahony or organizational unity going forward.

A New Wish: Provisional Government

Thus, when Stephens called “war or dissolution in ‘65” and prevailed on O’Mahony to alter the current funding structure, he traded on both the crisis and sovereign legitimacy constitutional wishes circulating in the North American organization to excite new Brothers, raise the profile of the FB, and get resources to Ireland more quickly. Yet, this provoked the leadership—O’Mahony and the Central Council alike—to demand verification of Stephens’s assertions about the fighting shape of the home organization, chafing under Stephens’s return to partial control of the Fenian scene in the United States. They commissioned businessman Patrick Coyne to depart for Ireland, do a full experiential audit of the shape of the organization throughout the Country, and to prepare a full report at the next convention, which they would delay until January, 1865 so that he could accomplish his mission.

Coyne came back singing the praises of the men in the Gap, and matching Stephens’s “final call” invocations of crisis and Irish readiness. His glowing report of coming war led O’Mahony to ratchet up his constitutive vision of impending war in the opening address to the 2nd National Fenian Congress, held in Cincinnati beginning on January 17, 1865. O’Mahony, though, matched this crisis topos with an equal dose of the sovereign legitimacy topos, amplifying the Fenian assertion of rhetorical sovereignty to its boldest declaration yet:

Our fellow citizens will not forget that this Brotherhood is virtually at war with the oligarchy of Great Britain, and that while there is no Fenian army as yet openly in the field—such an army nevertheless exists, preparing and disciplining itself for freedom’s battle, ambushed in the midst of its enemies, watching steadily its opportunity and biding its time...The Fenian

Congress acts the part of a national assembly of an Irish Republic. Our organized friends in Ireland constitute its army. (5).

Bolstered by the rapid growth of the organization over the past 14 months,⁸ O'Mahony invokes here the ultimate notes of both crisis and sovereignty constitutional wishes: We are now at war (at least "virtually"). And this gathered assembly of the diaspora is no longer simply a political club of concerned Irish. It's now the "national assembly of an Irish Republic." This marks a distinct shift in one of the God-terms of their Constitutional proceedings. Where they had before secretly proclaimed the Irish republic "virtually established," they were now publically calling themselves its national assembly. In effect, they are inviting adherents to renegotiate their understanding of authority completely. In their previous constitutional act, they had rendered a scene of equal partnership with the IRB, thereby renegotiating senses of Stephens as supreme authority on both sides of the Atlantic. Here, just 14 months later, O'Mahony's prefatory remarks are inviting hearers to place the Fenian Brotherhood in the primary position, the sovereign government to the IRB's military.

O'Mahony goes on, noting that prior to their 1863 Constitution, they "had more the nature of a military organization than a civic and self-governing body" and that "The practice of self-government, and the consciousness of the right of supervision over the conduct of its Executive has diffused new vitality and energy through every branch of our body politic" (6). He closes by exhorting his gathered Congress to deliberate in unity, and to respect the finality of consensus decision-making: "There must, of course, be freedom

⁸ Indeed, the organization had grown from 63 Circles at the 1863 Chicago Convention to 273 at the Cincinnati Convention (Proceedings of 2nd National Congress, 23).

of opinion and of suffrage; but when a question is once decided by vote the will of the majority must be the universal law of all." (10)

Such republican rhetoric was quite befitting for the Head Centre of a nascent national assembly founded on the principles of representative government. Indeed, O'Mahony's opening address the next afternoon urged the gathered Congress to establish nothing less than a "Provisional Government," as the organization is "now in a position, in point of numbers and respectability, to take this course" (14). Just as the God-term had turned the Fenians instantly into a national assembly, so does this sense of provisional government vastly expand the circumference of their Constitutional powers. Tellingly, to accomplish such magic, he implores them to amend the Constitution with an eye toward decreasing ambiguity in the document, thereby increasing their autonomy from other organizations—no doubt a slight dig at Stephens's continued attempts to direct the course of the Fenian Brotherhood. He also urges an increase of the Central Council to 10 members, and that their powers be increased in key ways over the Head Centre, authorizing them to call conventions and even impeach the Head Centre if necessary (14). Finally, he urged them to exercise wisdom in the elections of the organization's new leaders, as the future of the movement depended on choosing not by "faction and favoritism" but by those who are "most capable and trustworthy" (15). Such assertions from the mouth of the outgoing Head Centre must have been incredibly invigorating to the gathered Congress, assuring them of the collective nature of the leadership they were now assuming. Yet, little did O'Mahony know, such commitment to abiding by the wrangles of the gathered assembly would soon steer the organization into some very

troubled waters, and precisely because the gathered Congress of 1865 abided by his recommendations, nearly to the letter.

To put it in Burke's terms, by altering the ratio of Constitutional wishes to more greatly reflect the checks and balances of a sovereign republican government, he invited an unintended necessitarian principle—an organization no longer answerable to the men in Ireland and no longer deferential to O'Mahony. For instance, chief among the changes in the Constitution, the Congress chose to seriously decrease the power of the Head Centre. In many instances, such power curtailment was coupled with an increased power for the Central Council. In 1863, the Central Council was "subject to the call of the Head Centre when he may deem it expedient" (47). In 1865, that subservience clause is removed and replaced with a host of new powers for the Central Council, including the ability to elect their own President from their 10 members (expanded from 5 in 1863) and "such other officers as they may deem necessary for the business of the Council" (*Proceedings of the 2nd*, 36). Rather than being subject to the call of the Head Centre, the Central Council now subjected the Head Centre to their power of "impeaching and removing any officer in the organization" (36). The President of the Central Council—a new position—was also given the rite of succession to Head Centre if the sitting Head Centre dies or is removed. And the Central Council was now invested with the authority to call conventions of State Centres or a General Congress, to audit all accounts of Head Centre and Central Treasurer as well as all financial transactions of the Brotherhood, and to report to the annual Congress rather than the Head Centre (36).

The Head Centre's authority is also curtailed in other ways. For instance, the 1863 Constitution authorizes the Treasurer to pay the Head Centre. But 1865 adds a check to

this clause by saying "provided the disbursements be for the objects of the Fenian Brotherhood" (37). In a similar vein, the Head Centre is still empowered to appoint the Central Secretaries of the organization, but the choice is now subject to "the advice and the consent of the Central Council" (37). In the midst of a crisis constitutional wish that has declared war openly for the first time, the Fenian Brotherhood had responded with a sovereignty wish that more closely mirrors the United States republic, balancing power between an executive and council branch.

Even more striking, the 1865 Constitution also cuts all official mentions of IRB Chief Executive authority from Ireland. In 1863, the election of the Head Centre was "subject to the acknowledgment of the C.E. of the I.R.B" (*Proceedings of the 1st* 47). That line is cut completely, as is the only other mention of the I.R.B.—the section on Perfidy. In 1863, any members convicted of perfidy would have their names and descriptions circulated to every North American Circle "and to the C.E. in Ireland, to be there kept on record" (*Proceedings of 1st* 51). In 1865, that clause was struck, thereby removing all vestiges of official deference to Stephens and the I.R.B. At the eve of war in Ireland then, the Fenian Brotherhood had struck the IRB completely from its Constitutional scene; the nascent national assembly and provisional government had placed their comrades in Ireland outside the circumference of their constitutive vision altogether.

In lockstep with that shift, the 1865 Constitution also took away some of the local power that had been heretofore granted to State Centres and local Circles. In 1863, State Centres were empowered to "control entirely the organization in his State" (48). In 1865, such power over state organization was reduced from "control entirely" to "supervise"

(37). In 1863, State Centres were empowered to mark out a route for organizing agents to traverse in their district (48). In 1865, they can only do so “with the approval of the H.C. and C.C.” (37). Finally, the ability for local Centres to create sub-Circles and appoint sub-Centres is done away with. The official Constitution of 1865 no longer acknowledges sub-Circles, which also used to be subject to the authority of State Centres.

No doubt, these changes were partly in response to Stephens’s attempt to gain direct funding sources through the State Centres. The gathered delegates actually adopted a resolution submitted by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, that stated, “We are of opinion, that it would be exceedingly unsafe to establish communication with the I.R.B., otherwise than through the Head Centre; and we reprobate the practice of communication between the unauthorized members of the F.B. with their friends in Ireland or elsewhere on matters pertaining to the organization” (29). Thus, Stephens had become a primary audience for this updated Constitution’s agonism, finding his suggestion for organizational changes indirectly “reprobated” by the nascent national assembly. Coupled with the overt decoupling of IRB power relationships in the Constitution, the Fenian Brotherhood was beyond asserting their independence from the Irish organization in 1865, instead establishing themselves as the proper locus of governmental authority for the fledgling nation.

This change in their enactment of wills, so to speak, recalls Burke’s insight that a constitution is an audience-directed act, motivated by shifting conditions in the material world or the Constitution-behind-the-Constitution. And more than just responding to shifting conditions in the wider circumference, Constitutions are agonistic documents. As Christa Olson puts it in her study of “the more contested scene of Ecuadorian

Constitutions,” a constitution’s circumference “can as easily be a tool of internal management as exterior defense” (91). Here, we see the Fenians in North America brandishing that weapon against their fellow members of the Irish nation, Stephens and the IRB. Though they remain the army in the field, the Irish men in the gap are cut off from all access to “governmental” decision-making.

In so establishing their “Provisional Government,” and announcing a vastly expanded circumference for their Constitution, they were also shifting the ground of legitimacy from Ireland to North America. Though this updated Constitutional wish continued to invoke a unified nation of Irish people, the substantiation for their nationality moved from the eternal struggle on the sod to the governmental machinations in North America. For instance, in its newly expanded number and empowered mediating role between the local Circles and the Head Centre, the Central Council was beginning to resemble the Senate of the United States. The local Centres, more a House of Representatives, and the Head Centre ever more like the President or Executive Branch of the Fenian national assembly. Tellingly, even as they were scrubbing the Constitution of official ties to the I.R.B., they were also lessening their distance from the politics of the United States. In their Constitutional section on Meetings, they soften their 1863 ban on all “subjects connected with Religion or with American Politics” (50) to a ban on “discussions upon religious or upon political matters foreign to the cause of Irish nationality” (39).

As they closed their 2nd National Congress, then, the Fenians in North America were employing a serious constitutional wish of sovereign legitimacy. This rhetoric of sovereign, “provisional government” positioned them as leaders in the governmental side

of the Irish revolution, not simply as assistants to the Revolutionaries at home. And their softening of the muzzle on discussions of American politics signals a growing reliance on the United States's version of republican democracy as a model for that governmental leadership. It also reveals an increasing recognition that the fortunes of the Fenian "national assembly" and their "army" in Ireland would be greatly blessed by the United States' active endorsement of their cause. Thus, in just over one year, the wider circumference of Fenian concerns began to shift considerably toward a more North American focus in both concerns and structure, even as they looked toward Ireland with ever-more assuredness of impending war.

Grounded with a more legitimate governmental structure fitting of a nascent national assembly, the delegates also went home with a growing dose of crisis wishes to distribute to the growing Fenian membership. Based on Patrick Coyne's report, and the deliberations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, they acted to answer Stephens's own crisis call for material support: "in view of the pressing and well supported call of the I.R.B. there be made an immediate levy of \$5 upon each member in the various circles" to "create a revenue that will supply fully the immediate want, and will convince the members of the I.R.B. that we are up to a sense of our responsibility and duty" (29). What's more, they noted that such calls would likely pick up speed as the revolution continued to race toward armed denouement, "as the calls which may be made upon [the various Circles] may come unexpectedly and quickly" (30).

And things did pick up considerably as 1865 lurched forward. Indeed, with the coming end of the Civil War, and the subsequent unemployment of thousands of Fenian Union (& Confederate) soldiers, the war cries and belligerence would only continue to

intensify. And Stephens—sensing the kairotic knife’s edge of opportunity, insisted that the organization was ready for the field. Letter after letter pleads for more materials—money, munitions, soldiers. But the Fenian Brotherhood, newly enacting its fiscal and governmental authority provided by their new Constitutional scene, began to flex its muscles. Rather than plunge into the “final call” on the word of Coyne and Stephens, the F.B. chose to exercise its prerogative as self-appointed national assembly and fiscal war chest and send another envoy for verification of Stephens’s claims. This time, it was TJ Kelly, a decorated Union soldier. He was instructed to ascertain the real strength of the men in the gap, and sent forth in April 1865. On June 21st, Kelly writes a glowing final report with the same ardent fervor—the same kairos-crisis rhetoric—as Stephens’s earlier missives. In fact, he was so convinced of coming war in Ireland that he stayed there to help them get organized.

Still, the nascent national assembly had their doubts. So they send another military man, Francis F. Millen (D’Arcy 53). His report is the same as Kelly’s and he too chooses to stay in Ireland to organize the troops. Still, the provisional government—O’Mahony and the Central Council alike—is unconvinced. They send yet another military man, William Halpin, and he returns letters saying that the I.R.B. is ready to go (69). But like the Apostle Thomas, the fledgling bureaucrats of the Irish “national assembly” needed to see for themselves. On July 22, 1865, PW Dunne and Patrick Meehan arrive on Irish soil as “plenipotentiaries,” empowered to make the final judgment. They, too, concur with Stephens’s assessment and issue the final call (D’Arcy 70).

By this time, Stephens is beside himself, as each visit further confirms the lack of trust being shown by the Fenians in North America, and his ultimate lack of authority to direct the course of the movement. With good reason, too, as these verification delays proved fatal to the chances for a successful rising in Ireland. Each visit required incredible amounts of tact, strategic savvy, and legwork in order to assure that the Americans weren't caught by British authorities or, in being under surveillance, that they didn't prematurely reveal the identities of key leaders and other I.R.B. members throughout the country. Epitomizing this difficulty and danger, Meehan actually lost some important secret letters and money on arrival in Dublin, a fact which would later cause Stephens to blame him for what happened next. The British authorities, on a tip from informant Pierce Nagle who'd infiltrated the paper as a staff member, raided the *Irish People* offices on September 15, 1865. Stephens swore, wrongly, that it was Meehan's fault.

Meanwhile, with the newspaper shut down and American citizen-soldiers being arrested on Irish soil under suspicion of revolutionary activity, the growing crises and legitimacy rhetorics set in motion by the 1863 Constitution and amplified by the 1865 Constitution would soon explode into an all out legitimacy crisis for the North American Fenian leadership.

New God Terms, A New Enemy

The scene authorized by the 1865 Constitution empowered the Central Council to call an emergency convention and to lay the inaction of the preceding months on O'Mahony's lap. With the closure of the *Irish People* offices, the F.B. saw their kairotic window of crisis closing almost as soon as it had opened. And they responded with the boldest voluntary principles of rhetorical sovereignty yet, completely re-drafting the

Constitution into terms that overtly codified their heretofore subtle but steady transformation into a U.S.-style National Assembly.

First, they added a preamble to the Constitution that borrowed heavily from the classic U.S. version:

We, the Fenians of the United States and other portions of America, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity [sic], and secure the blessings of liberty for the Irish race in Ireland, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Fenian Brotherhood in the United States and other portions of America. (*The Fenians' Progress* 68)

In this statement, they invoke some of the United States's most cherished constitutional wishes of justice and freedom for all. Jasinski and Mercieca would note that this is a diachronic articulation of these U.S. constitutional wishes, wishes that were not only hortatory in the United States, but also palliative—meant to soothe through rhetoric the U.S. constitutional scene's encoded realities of enslaved labor and colonization of Indigenous lands. In invoking these palliative constitutional wishes, the Fenian Brotherhood are striking a careful balance between indebtedness to the wider circumference of U.S. recognition and the sovereignty of their own provisional government. They claim to be “of” and “in” the United States but also proclaim that they exceed it with members in “other portions” of North America. They also encode the same Constitutional wishes that the U.S. preamble does, aiming for a more perfect union of Fenians, of establishing justice, and ensuring their own domestic tranquility in addition to securing the blessings of liberty for the Irish race in Ireland.

Their constitution also reorganizes their 29 original sections into an article and section format that closely resembles the United States' Constitution. In place of the 29 equally weighted sections, there are now four main articles with the sections interspersed among them. Article I unites the original first three sections of the Fenian Constitution which describe the goals, membership, general pledge, and basic organization of the Brotherhood. Like Article I of the U.S. Constitution, Article II is now dedicated to the description of the "legislative powers" of the Fenian Brotherhood, which now consists of a "Senate and a Representative body," the Senate being a new name for the former Central Council and the representative body the gathered delegates of the annual Fenian Congress (70). Section 1 of Article II borrows the U.S. Constitution language almost verbatim: "All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood of the United States and other portions of America, which shall consist of a Senate and a Representative body" (70). Article III of the Fenian Constitution now matches Article II of the U.S. Constitution, as it's now dedicated to a description of the "executive branch" of the Brotherhood, once again using nearly the same language as the U.S. document: "The executive power of the Fenian Brotherhood shall be vested in a President, who shall hold his term of office for one year, and be elected for said term by a General Congress of the Senate and House of Delegates" (74). The President, of course, is the new title for O'Mahony's role of "Head Centre." Since the Fenians had no official judicial branch, their Article IV is more closely analogous to the 4th Article of the U.S. Constitution, which describes the prerogatives, jurisdiction, privileges, and duties of the States in relation to the Federal government. The Fenian Article IV aggregates all the previous sections that referred to the roles, jurisdiction, and

format of the organization at the State and local Circle levels. What's more, this new Constitution prescribes new roles that are akin to cabinet-level positions, nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate: a Secretary of Military Affairs, a Secretary of the Treasury, and a Secretary of Civil Affairs (75). Under the Secretary of the Treasury, the President is also authorized to nominate an Agent of the Irish Republic, who is in charge of signing all bonds once the Treasurer (also nominated by the President) has received the monies (86-87), as well as a Subscription Agent who receives the orders for bonds and distributes the signed bonds to those who've ordered them (87-88).

O'Mahony, as chief architect of the Fenian Brotherhood over the past 7 years, now found that the democratic scene he'd authored over the past two years was coming more and more to usurp his authority. As the Fenian Brotherhood sought to increase its governmental legitimacy in the estimation of its coveted ally, the United States, it authored a Constitutional scene that increasingly mimicked the U.S. form of Republican government, often encoding the very same Constitutional wishes of legislative or executive power into its language.

In Burke's sense of Constitutions as acts addressed to agents—what Anderson calls the strategic and audience-addressed aspect of constitutions—it's interesting to trace the presumed important audiences for this new document. Though the Fenian membership clearly remains the primary audience for the new Constitution, the secondary audience of this document seems to have changed fully from the I.R.B. to the U.S. government and its citizens. In like fashion, as an agonistic instrument directed toward an enemy, these Constitutions reveal a changing sense of who needs to be kept in check. While England clearly remains the primary enemy of this new document, the

secondary target seems to have shifted from Stephens—who'd seen nearly all traces of the C.E. of the I.R.B. removed entirely from the January 1865 Constitution—to O'Mahony, who found his role transformed from an I.R.B.-style Head Centre into a full-on U.S.-style President.

With the increased official bearing of the role, though, he also found his authority increasingly subject to the newly expanded Central Council-turned-Senate. For instance, though he has the prerogative of appointing cabinet level positions, the Senate gave itself the power of confirmation. Further, if the “President fail within a reasonable period to nominate such heads of bureaus, the Senate by a vote of two-thirds of their body shall fill such positions, having previously given the President twenty-four hours' notice of their intention to do so” (75-76). What's more, if the president has a disagreement with any members of his cabinet-level “board of advisors,” the Senate's “decision on the point shall be final until the assembling of the next Congress” (76).

Rather than a mere check on the Executive powers, then, the Senate here has enacted a scene in which it has the final say. It is given the “sole power to try all impeachments,” and their judgment by a two-thirds vote, “in cases of impeachment, shall be final, and at the discretion of the Senate” (73). Moreover, the Senate has the ultimate power of the purse, in that “all propositions for raising revenue and fixing salaries...shall originate in the Senate,” which the President will then have 24 hours to ratify or return with amendments (73). If he doesn't return it within 24 hours, or if the Senate rejects his amendments by a two-thirds vote, “the action of the Senate...shall become a law” (74). In this Fenian Constitutional enactment of wills, the President has no power of veto, and thus, ultimately, no check on Senate power. As D'Arcy eloquently puts it, “The Fenians

failed to realize that an effort to organize for revolutionary activity cannot be carried out by democratic means" (102-103).

As the Senate gained power and established a wider circumference for itself, O'Mahony increasingly found himself against the wall. Within six weeks, O'Mahony had been impeached by the Senate, on the grounds that he'd improperly named himself as the Agent of the Irish Republic against their consent (102-103). Naming such action a "high misdemeanor," the Senate had cleared O'Mahony from their path as rightful directors of the growing Irish Republic. To O'Mahony's defense, he had a letter from Stephens that declared him the sole I.R.B.-authorized agent in North America allowed to sign official bonds in the name of the Irish Republic. But the new Constitutional scene permitted the Senate to refuse to acknowledge Stephens's authority. After all, in the January Congress, O'Mahony himself had declared the I.R.B. merely the provisional government's "army in the field." And this Constitution, building from the earlier scenic enactment, had taken the raid on the *Irish People* offices as an opportunity to write Stephens and the I.R.B. out of the Fenian Brotherhood's Constitutional scene altogether.

The material implications of this Constitutional power shift were very much important. Whereas O'Mahony remained committed to the original vision of helping the revolution to occur in Ireland, the Senate and a growing number of Fenian veterans of the U.S. Civil War had become enamored with invading Canada. Indeed, when the Senate published this latest version of the Constitution, they did so in a larger book prefaced by an extended narrative detailing a premonition of planting—with U.S. help—the flag of New Ireland in Canada, and thereafter proceeding to help liberate Ireland using their footing as an actual recognized nation-state in North America (see Chapter 4). It seems

that the newly empowered Senate had decided that the North American Irish were the locus of both the Irish national assembly AND its army in the field. By removing all God-terms referring to the I.R.B.—Head Centre, Central Council—and replacing them with U.S. governmental position titles, they'd in effect made the full switch from a provisional government straddling the ocean to a mini-me of the United States, focusing all its energy on North America.

Scene Set for Schism

With this most U.S.-centric constitutional wish, the scene was set for full organizational schism. And with schism—the ultimate in legitimacy crisis—failed skirmishing in Canada and a feeble rising in Ireland were soon to follow. Over the next few pages, I'll fill in some of these historical details, describing the ways these events alter the Fenians' wider circumference, the Constitution-behind-their-Constitution. The acts of invasion, coupled with the sovereign responses of both the United States and England, would demand significant changes from the Fenian Constitution that will rein in a chastened, yet reunified, organization in 1870.

Immediately after O'Mahony's impeachment, pro-Senate wing newspapers like Fenian Senator Patrick Meehan's *Irish-American* began to run stories impugning O'Mahony's character, questioning his money-management and his resolve to lead. Rather than submitting to the outcome of the scene he'd helped to create, though, O'Mahony refused to recognize the action. On January 3rd, 1866, he called his own Congressional Convention (D'Arcy 107). The assembled delegates voted to dismiss 10 of the 15 Senators from the organization for perfidy. They re-adopted the Constitution of January 1865, thus removing more overtly republican sovereign wishes like a President and Senate. They also announced an amendment denouncing any attempts at a

diversionary raid against Canada. And to counteract the slander in the *Irish American*, the Congress also authorized the founding of a newspaper—aptly named *Irish People*—to act as an organ for the O’Mahony wing (D’Arcy 110). Both papers set themselves the task of discrediting the opposing wing, as the legitimacy crisis continued to unfold in the papers. The Senate wing, now led by former Senate President William R. Roberts, authorized Roberts and Secretary of War Thomas W. Sweeny to go on a stump speech tour evangelizing the vision of a raid on Canada.

With the crisis rhetoric of imminent revolution already in place, this new strategy was not as far-fetched as it seems. For two years, the Fenian Brotherhood had been seeking to attract adherents by saying the window of opportunity for a strike would not stay open forever. With so many well-trained Irish soldiers in North America, the story went, the Fenian Brotherhood could best aid their countrymen by striking in Canada. A sparsely populated outpost of the British Empire with a fuzzy border along the northeastern edge of the United States, Canada seemed a logical place to provoke and perhaps even wrest territory from Britain while the I.R.B. simultaneously commenced a rising in Ireland. What’s more, it made tactical and fiscal sense, as the time and material costs of sending troops and munitions to Ireland was much more dear than massing Fenian soldiers on the Canada border. At worst case, the Roberts wing told it, even an unsuccessful raid would help to draw British forces dangerously thin in order to destabilize the occupation in Ireland. At best, they figured, the United States might be drawn into the conflict due to lingering anti-British sentiment over the Trent Incident, literally assuring an Irish victory in Canada and Ireland.

As 1866 wore on, the competing topoi of crisis came to a head, each wing using their constitutive vision as a battering ram to question the resolve of the other. O'Mahony was especially susceptible to this, as Roberts and Sweeny's speeches and Meehan's *Irish American* took every opportunity to question his credentials as a "man of action."

Roberts, particularly, had a knack for whipping a crowd into a frenzy:

Irishmen in every quarter of the land seeing that we are working instead of talking, the cause will go triumphantly forward until there will not be left a single Saxon cutthroat. Now what is the best route? Let that be decided on, then in two months we shall get a foothold of our own, the Irish flag will be raised, and Ireland, free Ireland, will be recognized among the nations of the earth. (cheers). (D'Arcy 112; *Irish American*, 2/3/66)

With the saber-rattling reaching climax, the O'Mahony wing was in danger of losing the legitimacy battle, especially as more and more Fenian veterans clamored for a strike against Canada in the wake of the Roberts wing's national congress in February of 1866. At said Congress, Secretary of Military Affairs Sweeney publically laid out his plan for a raid on Canada (D'Arcy 114). In response, O'Mahony's faction organized a military convention of its own, bellowing loudly for a strike in Ireland. Meanwhile, due to the ongoing influx of Yankee Civil War veterans, the British government decided to suspend Habeas Corpus on February 17, 1866, and the O'Mahony faction released a circular on March 2 celebrating this as proof that the rising in Ireland is coming—and that the British are scared (D'Arcy 123-24).

Both sides began to beat the war drums ever louder. O'Mahony's faction organized a March 4, 1866 rally at Jones Wood that is claimed to have been attended by

over 100,000 supporters (D'Arcy 126). Meanwhile, the Roberts wing took their cause to DC, dropping all secrecy and beginning to lobby the U.S. Government to recognize the Fenian Brotherhood as legitimate belligerents for the Irish cause (127).

In the wake of this development, the Irish paper *The Citizen* in New York started imploring the O'Mahony wing to strike Canada, thinking the time for a rising in Ireland has passed (127-128). Interestingly enough, O'Mahony's trusted advisor Doran B. Killian, a Fenian from St. Louis, had actually been one of the first to float the idea of a "diversionary raid" against Canada. At the time, Killian had utilized U.S. government connections to hold secret conversations with Secretary of State Seward to sound out whether the United States would recognize a Fenian invasion on Canada as legitimate—if in concert with a rising in Ireland (84). In a recollection from 1868, O'Mahony claimed that both President Johnson and Secretary of State Seward intimated that, as D'Arcy put it, "the [U.S.] government, in such a contingency, would acknowledge accomplished facts" (84). These conversations had no doubt been part of the impetus behind the Canada plan gaining steam at last October's pivotal convention. Now, in light of the tipping power scales towards the Senate wing, Killian convinced O'Mahony to strike before Roberts and Sweeny could.

Thus, on March 17th, O'Mahony authorized a plan to take Campobello, a small island between Eastport, Maine and New Brunswick province that was supposedly claimed by both the United States and Britain. They began to gather Fenians in civilian attire in Maine in mid-April, and ship the necessary munitions to meet them. Both the British and U.S. governments were aware of this, and Secretary of State Seward issued a private order to intercept the munitions ship. On April 15th, the Fenians seized a customs

house on Indian Island, adjacent from Eastport, and plant an Irish flag there. But on April 19th, U.S. General Meade confiscated the munitions on the arrived ship, thus ending the threat. *The Irish People* hailed it as a major coup, but everyone else—especially the Roberts wing—ridiculed it (D’Arcy 139).

In the wake of the “Eastport Fizzle,” as the Roberts Wing called it, Sweeney’s plan went into full swing at the end of May. On May 31, Fenians led by General John O’Neill invade by night from Buffalo and land in Fort Erie. On June 2nd, they engaged the Canadian volunteer militia in the Battle of Ridgeway. The U.S. government prevented the arrival of reinforcements from Buffalo, and Fenian brigades in Detroit and Cleveland never showed up. On June 6, President Johnson finally issued a proclamation against further skirmishes, and proclaimed that the United States will abide by the neutrality laws with England. U.S. forces arrested and dispersed over 1000 Fenian soldiers on June 7, 1866.

These failures led the Roberts wing to hold rallies denouncing the neutrality laws and the U.S. response as both unexpected and deceitful. Given the backroom negotiations and the persistent public anger against England for their part in supporting the Confederate campaign, the Fenian leadership felt assured that, at the very least, the United States government would not intervene on Fenian military actions. The more optimistic among them wholeheartedly believed the U.S. would back the Irish and even join a war. Johnson’s proclamation drew ire from Fenian Irish while members of the U.S. House of Representatives were able to pad their bonafides in the Irish immigrant community by introducing resolutions supporting the Irish revolutionary effort—

resolutions they all knew would never make it to a vote (D’Arcy 174-175).⁹ In the meantime, Stephens had arrived in the United States, O’Mahony had stepped down, and their wing set about trying to raise the funds for an actual rising in Ireland. Before the fighting was done, the I.R.B. had led a highly unsuccessful rising in Ireland in March 1867. And the Roberts wing, by now led by the same General O’Neill who’d led the troops at Ridgeway, made one final raid against Canada from St. Albans, VT in early 1870. From jail, he was visited by delegates from the O’Mahony wing—now led by John Savage—and agreed to re-unite the factions. Finally, after four years of diverging military paths and differing Constitutional wishes toward governmentality, the Fenian Brotherhood was reunited under one Constitution at their Convention in 1870.

Civic, Not Sovereign: A Chastened Constitutional Wish

Despite their strongest constitutional wishes of sovereignty, the Fenian Brotherhood learned the limits of invoking a nation without the backup of a more powerful nation’s recognition. Indeed, once it became clear that the United States would choose to honor neutrality with England rather than recognizing the Irish as a legitimate belligerent, the Fenian constitutional scene of nascent nationality crumbled. Though the rest of the 1860s found the two factions still vying to make their constitutive vision stick among the increasingly small number of the Irish diaspora willing to fight and finance the revolution, their fate had been sealed the moment that U.S. President Johnson issued his proclamation against the invasion of Canada.

⁹ The first resolution, introduced by Reader W. Clarke of Ohio on June 4, pressed for recognition of the Fenians as legitimate belligerents. The second, introduced by Sydenham E. Ancona the week after Johnson’s proclamation invoking the Neutrality Act, pushed for Repeal of the Neutrality law and recognition of the Irish as legitimate belligerents (D’Arcy 174-175)

Concomitantly, as the Fenians regrouped in the United States after the final official invasion of Canada, their constitutional wishes for reunification exhibited a much more bounded circumference. In this unifying Constitution, for instance, gone are any mentions of a legislative branch like a Senate and Congress. And gone is an entire Article focused on the President as solely the executive branch. In their place, we have a description of the “Great Circle” for the former, and the “leadership council” led by a “Chief Executive” in the latter. What’s more, there is a greater emphasis on the local behavior of the organization, with the protocol for local circles coming immediately after the revised oath instead of at the end of the document. This emphasis on local circle business helps to downplay the 1865 Senate Constitution’s deeply sovereign rhetoric of legitimacy.

While vestiges of governmental jargon remain—the Council now has a judiciary committee, for instance (38)—many of these roles are fully transformed into corporate language more fitting for a business than a government. The Council is referred to as a “Board of Trustees” rather than a Senate (38). The leader who communicates with the I.R.B. is no longer a President, or even a Head Centre. Instead, he’s now the Chief Executive (38). Gone is a Secretary of the Treasury and other financial officers fitting of a sovereign nation’s cabinet. In their place, those duties fall to “Auditors of the Finances” (38). While both 1865 Constitutions empower the Head Centre or President to “treat” with other “powers,” utilizing a rhetoric of sovereignty, the 1870 Constitution allows the Chief Executive to “negotiate” with “parties” likely to help further the cause (38). All other cabinet level positions, such as Secretaries of Military or Naval Affairs, are

eliminated. The Constitution even announces in its heading that it was adopted in “Convention” rather than in “Congress” (33)

Interestingly enough, certain vestiges of the Senate Constitution remain in the 1870 version. The Preamble that borrows language from the U.S. Constitution survives in 1870, albeit with crucial distinctions. The 1865 Senate Constitution preamble states “in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity [sic], and secure the blessings of liberty for the Irish race in Ireland,” using a paratactic structure that places all four goals on equal temporal footing (*Fenians’ Progress* 68). The 1870 Constitution preserves the 4 parts with subtle yet crucial changes, “in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice and insure fraternal harmony, as means to secure the blessings of liberty for Ireland” (33). Gone are pretensions of geopolitical sovereignty that would require a striving for “domestic tranquility”—especially for a provisional government who’s drawn its circumference at the entire borders of North America. Such sovereign governmental Constitutional wishes are now replaced by the humbler social graces of “fraternal harmony.” Even more tellingly, the first three goals become the means to serve a later end of Irish liberty, such that the Fenian Brotherhood are no longer working for Irish liberty, but instead for unity, justice, and fraternal harmony “as means to” attain Irish liberty at some future date. Chastened by their more official Constitutional wishes and the failed military fallouts, this hypotactic construction belies a realization that they must rein in their aspirations and seek first to unify all Irish Nationalists—a task they had learned was quite difficult in and of itself.

Their re-arranged pledge belies a similar realization, as they change the word order of the clauses to alter the emphasis of the pledge. In their more bellicose and

sovereign iterations of 1865, their second clause pledges obedience to the commands of superior officers. In 1870, that clause is moved down to the 5th clause. 1865's 4th and 5th clauses read, "that I will do my utmost to promote feelings of love, harmony, and kindly forbearance among all Irishmen; and that I will foster, defend, and propagate the aforesaid Fenian Brotherhood to the utmost of my power" (70). In 1870, those clauses are amended and moved to 2nd and 3rd position. What's more, the 1870 version alters the end of the first statement to promote love, harmony and forbearance among "Irishmen and all lovers of liberty," adding a more ecumenical flair to their work. And the latter clause has members foster, defend, and propagate the Brotherhood to the utmost of their "ability" rather than their "power" (33). Finally, 1870 adds two new clauses to the pledge, inspired by the wider circumference of infiltrated ranks and failed invasions of Canada: "that I will keep inviolate all matters of importance confided to me by my superior officers; and that I will, at all times, heartily co-operate with the Men in Ireland" (33). To reinforce this lack of ambiguity, they also create a Constitutional by-law that further distances them from operating as their own sovereign, belligerent, military power. The 22nd by-law states emphatically:

That the policy of the Fenian Brotherhood, in regard to the support of the I.R.B. and their operations, can never be changed; nor can the Fenian Brotherhood, or any of its members, ever join any organization or man in an attack on Canada, or on any other territory on this side of the Atlantic, except with the consent of the Government of the United States. (43)

To further clamp down on the possibility that the organization's direction could again spin out of focus, their meetings section returns a full ban on politics. And not just

American politics, all politics: “All discussions upon religious and political matters shall be peremptorily excluded from every meeting of a Fenian Circle” (35). Their prescribed meeting agenda—resurrected from the first 1865 Constitution—no longer provides space for “patriotic readings.” Such overtly political styling is replaced by a space for “Addresses, Remarks, Reading, and Recitations” (35).

All in all, with their 1870 Constitution, the Fenian Brotherhood had come through the Constitutional Crisis of their “provisional government,” its disintegration into a legitimacy crisis and two wings vying for credibility, into a still-public but decidedly tamer Civic organization. Their Constitution resembles more of an NGO or a business entity than a government, and they work assiduously to assure that there can be no chance of mistaking their object—freedom for Ireland—or their path to that goal: by working in a supportive role to the I.R.B in Ireland.

In Burke’s “Dialectic on Constitutions” in the *Grammar of Motives*, he refers to the U.S. framers of the Constitution as “able-wishers” since they were able to generalize principles, Constitutional wishes, in ways that could survive profound changes in the national condition and the surrounding wider circumference (366). As he tells it, they had generalized their wishes enough that the necessitarian principles that emerged from those wishes’ inevitable conflict wouldn’t be enough to break the Constitutional scene. Yet, the Fenian Constitutions conversely exhibit an arc towards greater specificity, towards banishment of ambiguity so as to temper any attempts to wrest the direction of the organization from its true North. Beginning with their first Constitution in 1863, they announce a Constitutional Wish of Irish sovereignty as a united transhistorical people and two separate organizations working towards the same national goal. They also introduce

an admonitory constitutional wish of revolutionary crisis, declaring that the window for action is closing. By 1865, responding to Stephens's own constitutive pleas of revolutionary crisis as well as his attempt to regain some authority over the organization, they invoke an even larger wish of sovereign legitimacy, espousing a hortatory vision of the North American organization as the actual National Assembly of Ireland, albeit in exile. By the end of 1865, responding to British crackdowns in Ireland and John O'Mahony's perceived inaction, the now fully empowered democratic assembly enacts a fully sovereign constitutional wish modeling the Irish Republic on the structure of the United States government. After U.S. government betrayal, spy infiltration, and failed risings in Canada, the chastened Fenians enact a more humble constitutional wish of a civic organization aiming at fostering Irish unity on the Irish national question. Tracing this dialectic between the Constitutions and the Constitutions-behind-the-Constitutions reveals the ways that Fenian scene-setting through their constitutional wishes constrained and directed their possibilities for action. The more they invoked wishes of U.S.-style sovereignty, the more the organization's democratic foundation came to funnel Fenian attention toward North American military goals. And the more they invoked Constitutional wishes of impending revolutionary crisis, the more they primed their membership for doomed military engagements and an economy of attention that began to focus more on North America than Ireland.

Tracing these changing ratios of alliance that the Fenians employed with the United States in order to achieve their own national goals helps to reveal how tenuous the foundations of national sovereignty truly are, how rhetorical the act of sovereign recognition truly is. Indeed, just as the U.S. Constitution provides the stable scenic

backdrop for the evolving Fenian Constitutional wishes, the repeated iterations of U.S.-style Constitutional wishes by the Fenians helps to further cement the authority of the U.S. Constitutional scene. That is, there's no question the United States' Constitutional wishes for human freedom remained very much a palliative "ought" in the war-torn 1860s, as they invoked an "is" of equality while its most powerful agents worked very hard to deny that equality to its peoples of the African diaspora. As these Irish, struggling in their own right to negotiate their relationship to this new scene, continually repeat that same palliative "ought" as an "is" in their Constitutional wish, they further cemented the commonsense illusion of equality and freedom in the U.S. scene. Just like Olson's visual art in Ecuador, the Fenian Constitutions become crucial "rhetorical acts" that help the U.S. Constitution "build toward a sense of persistent substance" (96). Just as Christa Olson calls the field to travel in order to find more flexible Constitutional scenes that would help us "[build] elasticity and complexity into an otherwise over-determined scene" of the U.S. Constitution (88), the Fenians help us to unsettle Burke's settled scene of North America. In place of one Constitutional framework eternally flexible and full, we begin to see multiple constitutive visions operating palimpsestically upon each other, sometimes working together to achieve similar goals and other times clashing, conflicting, and canceling each other out.

Even so, a Constitution is still just the rhetorical foundation of a nation's edifice, a wish of substance that must be continually renewed through identification and action in its citizenry. And, as we see with the Fenian rise and fall in North America, a Constitution's substance can only go so far toward motivating adherents toward particular ends. In Chapter 4, I move to examine a text that sought to build on the Senate

Wing's constitutional foundation in order to secure more Irish identifications with the Canadian Invasion ideology. Having substantiated their sovereign wishes, *The Fenians' Progress* sought to induce identifications with those dreams of Irish destiny in British Canada.

4. “WALK INTO CANADA:” KAIROTIC CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN FENIAN CIRCUMFERENCE

“Nor did I rest my victorious columns until I planted the Sun-Burst of my country, and its foster Starry Banner, on the Irish Castle of Dublin, which was done amidst the ringing of bells, the shouts of the populace, the thrilling cheers of my gallant army, and the deafening salutes of two hundred pieces of artillery.

“Here a legion of mute martyrs passed before me, each bearing a small Irish flag, and inscribed thereon this motto: ‘My death is avenged.’” (The Fenians’ Progress 23)

“Walk into Canada. There is already there a strong element opposed to British dominion. Unite with it, and let the provinces be the first slice from the British empire. Make that the base for future operations, and the rest will follow in good time.” (29-30)

These words come from *The Fenians’ Progress*, an anonymous composition published as front matter to the decisive October 1865 Constitution that paved the way to Senate power within the Fenian Brotherhood—and, as we saw in the last chapter, a concomitant change in focus from war in Ireland to an invasion of Canada. Though the scenic work of their Constitutions proved crucial to the movement’s substantiation of its evolving goals, they don’t fully account for the constitutive invitations the Senate wing conjured to persuade Irish folks to invade Canada. To more adequately account for the Senate wing’s constitutive vision, this chapter turns to this curious document that functioned as an act of propaganda for the Senate wing’s late 1865 constitution. Consisting of nearly 70 pages of material, three chapters, and 17 addenda, this document serves as a powerful constitutive companion to the U.S.-style rhetorical sovereignty proclaimed in the Fenian Brotherhood’s Senate Constitution. Given its publication with the Senate Wing’s much more U.S.-style constitution, it’s little surprise that *The Fenians’*

Progress exhibits a strong identification with the United States. Published right after the successful raid on the Dublin *Irish People* offices, and a rising sentiment that the Irish organization had been crippled by the British government's crackdown in Ireland, many Fenians were eager to turn the organization's attention to Canada as a feasible destination for invasion and a proper first-step towards full Irish nationality. *The Fenians' Progress*, with its unique blend of seemingly objective reportage and personal vision, serves as both blueprint for success and substantiation of Irish potential. In the process, it seeks to persuade two separate audiences that the Canadian strategy is correct: the Irish living in North America who need to join the fight with their bodies, and the non-Irish United States citizens who can convince their government to recognize the Irish as allies and legitimate national belligerents.

Using this document as a central text, this chapter will focus on the evolution of the North American Fenian Brotherhood's dominant ideological commitment from one of supporting the Irish organization in their revolutionary efforts to one of instigating armed conflict with the British themselves by invading Canada. At the same time, it will focus on the first-person identity constitutional strategies that both augmented the constitutional strategies detailed in chapter 3 and helped to usher in this change in rhetorical commitments. In the last chapter, I noted how the Constitutions of the Fenian Brotherhood exhibited an alliance with the United States, both to dispel notions that their organization was illegal and to encourage the U.S. to recognize the Irish as legitimate belligerents. With the publication of *The Fenians' Progress*, the stakes for U.S. participation were being considerably raised: the U.S. citizenry and government were being asked to—at the least—condone an invasion of their Northern neighbor launched

from their own country. More likely, if the Irish were to be successful, the U.S. would need to actively facilitate the invasion of Canada and further support the Fenian designs to raise a navy and take Ireland by force. It is a giant step from non-intervention to active facilitation—from benevolent alliance to full identification—and one that required a fair bit of substantiation. *The Fenians' Progress* attempts to cement this move by widening the circumference of the Irish conflict with the British to include North America.

Whereas the most vocal Fenian rhetorics before the rise of the Senate wing had been focused solely on a traditional battle in Ireland, *The Fenians' Progress* seeks to establish the British Canadian provinces as fair game for a military strike. Indeed, it goes a step further and makes North America the new epicenter of action for this widened circumference of Irish-British conflict.

To justify this widened circumference and successfully re-constitute the Fenians as invaders of Canada, *The Fenians' Progress* invokes a few key voluntary principles. First, the United States is fully added to the transhistorical Irish unity that the Fenian Brotherhood had been cultivating amongst itself. In *The Fenians' Progress*, the Irish are undoubtedly united through time in a way that echoes the transnational letters of chapter 2. But the Americans are added to this unity here, widening the inclusive transhistorical bond to accommodate Ireland's "foster *Starry Banner*" (23, italics original). Second, *The Fenians' Progress* subtly details the respectability of this version of the Irish nationalist movement, powered by rich merchants, decorated military statesmen, and even virtuous and industrious women. The author(s) reinforces this point through rich literary allusion that draws on, of all things, famous British and Scottish playwrights and poets. Finally, *The Fenians' Progress* makes direct appeals to the United States' Manifest Destiny

ideology, and works to constitute the Irish nation as a worthy and natural participant in the blessings of North American consolidation under the United States. In so doing, though, the materials they employ to cement these voluntary principles introduces some conflictual necessitarian principles that, Burke might say, become inevitable when vision gets put into practice. In the process, they sought to convince Fenians who'd been preparing for the inevitable bloody battle in Ireland to relax and simply "walk into Canada" (29). Through its mix of objective reportage and personal vision, *The Fenians' Progress* works to constitute such changes in these numerous audiences: committed Fenians who needed convincing to join the Canada movement; Irish immigrants who hadn't yet been converted to active support of Fenianism; and the larger U.S. populace, who the Fenians needed to actively sign their government on as allies.

In what follows, I'll first provide a refresher on Anderson's constitutive method and provide more context about the publication of *The Fenians' Progress*. I'll then focus my analysis on the audience-addressed, circumference-setting, and conflicted principle performance of *The Fenians' Progress*. After sketching some of the historical fallout of the successful rise of the Canadian invasion ideology in North American Fenianism, I close with a brief analysis of preparations for a St. Patrick's Day march in 1870 that demonstrates the ways that the constitutive strategies set down in *The Fenians' Progress* continued to resonate in Irish-American nationalist performances even after the Canadian-invasion side of the movement lost steam.

Exigency and Theory of First-Person Identity Construction

Published in late 1865, *The Fenians' Progress* contains a first-person narrative vision as the anchor piece to nearly 65 pages of front matter prefacing the Senate wing's new Constitution. As you'll recall from the last chapter, this Constitution made the

decisive steps toward American-style republican governance, in essence creating the substantive, scenic ground for the organization to drastically change course and focus on Canada as a prime military objective. Placed in front of such a world-making document, *The Fenians' Progress* reveals itself as a strategically persuasive companion piece that communicates the Senate wing's Fenian pedagogy for proper revolutionary subjectivity and telos. James H. Adams, in his essay entitled "The Negotiated Hibernian: Discourse on the Fenian in England and America," calls *The Fenians' Progress* "perhaps the best example of rhetorical freedom in the history of the movement" for its brazen call to arms in Canada (57).

In his essay, Adams examines the public rhetorics of both pro-Fenian and pro-Empire publications on both sides of the Atlantic to argue that the notion of Fenianism was as much a rhetorical construct as it was a transnational independence movement, threatening the British more by its incitement of further resistance through a persistent construction of the Fenian in the public sphere. Adams's major contribution is noting the ways that particular themes are employed by both corpuses of texts for different ends: racial unity; links to American democracy and republican revolutionaries; and an unbroken link of resistance that spans time. These themes certainly reinforce my own findings, and help to detail the ways that similar constitutive rhetorical strategies can be used by different actors for very different ends. At the same time, Adams's focus on a wide view of the movement's rhetorical production leads him to attribute all Fenian rhetorical productions to the same end: that of sustaining the resistance movement transnationally through rhetorical practice as opposed to actual revolutionary activity. Indeed, he places his analysis of *The Fenians' Progress* in the service of that stated goal.

I argue, alternatively, that the Fenian transnational counterpublic was itself a shifting set of competing publics. *The Fenians' Progress*, in this more fine-grained sense of audience address, was less about sustaining the resistance in Ireland than it was about the Senate faction gaining control over the immediate future of the North American version of the movement. Nevertheless, Adams's sustained attention to *The Fenians' Progress* as a centerpiece in his argument marks the text as an abiding major work of Fenian rhetoric.

As Wendy Hesford puts it, a transnationalized version of the rhetorical concept of kairos requires scholars to “recognize transnational publics not as static but as always in the process of becoming, and audiences as waxing and waning as publics form and disperse” (62). The public sphere that Adams analyzes on both sides of the Atlantic was far more partial, fragmented, and shifting than Adams's account lets on. For instance, he overlooks the split in the North American side of the organization. So, when he reads *The Fenians' Progress* and other Fenian rhetorical production in the time period, he is unable to account for the ways these documents were addressing or excluding shifting factions in their audiences. Just as I demonstrated the scene-shifting that led to slightly different audiences and substantially different goals for each iteration of the Constitution in the last chapter, *The Fenians' Progress* issued from the Senate wing of the North American Fenian movement with a very specific goal: to convince an existing counterpublic to change its constitutive vision from revolution in Ireland to revolution in Canada. Thus, whereas Adams see *The Fenians' Progress* as iconic of the Fenian movement writ large, I see it as a timely, audience-addressed instrument of the Senate faction that was directed primarily—if not exclusively—at calling forth a revised North American counterpublic. My account, then, marks *The Fenians' Progress* not as a representative anecdote for the

whole Fenian movement but as a situated utterance from one faction of the North American movement that was gaining ascendancy in 1865.

As you'll recall, in chapter 2 I harnessed the constitutive rhetorical tradition begun by Charland's work to understand the discourse circulating across the Ocean between the Fenian Brotherhood and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. I then moved to the Constitutional revisions in the North American Fenian Brotherhood, using Burke's Constitutional theory as read through Olson and Anderson. In this chapter, as I turn to the power of personal narrative for constituting the Fenian movement, I also make a slight methodological turn to Dana Anderson's approach in *Identity's Strategy*. Even so, as I turn to Anderson's modification of Burke, it's less an abrupt change of direction than it is a modulation of the Constitutive theme. This chapter still carries Olson's focus on the wider circumference forward, and the Charlandian tradition will continue to echo here as well. Taken together, these lenses of constitutive rhetoric help me to better situate and understand the variety of Fenian practice as they seek to constitute themselves amidst the constraints and opportunities present in the shifting material conditions of this post-Civil War moment in the United States.

In his book, Anderson argues persuasively that presentation of identity is a rhetorical strategy as much as it is autopoetic. As stated at the outset of this study, Anderson's book applies Burke's constitutional theories to the study of conversion narratives. Rather than positing identity as a subjective experience too fuzzy to study, Anderson's work directs scholars' attention to the rhetorical function of specific performances of identity. By studying conversion narratives, Anderson is able to isolate a moment of extreme performance, the retelling of one's own experience of profound self-

transformation, to explore the specifically rhetorical function of what he calls first-person identity construction—as an audience-addressed narrative performance that is calculated to change the coordinates that others think, act, or see by.

While Anderson focuses on conversion narratives as a particularly acute version of first-person identity constitution, his interest is less in the dynamics of conversion itself than in their “nature as private experiences made public in text for a world of potential readers—and for a range of specific purposes” (17). As he puts it, “Like all symbolic action, the expression of identity is a strategy, a way of addressing a situation in order to transform it” (56). Finally, “narratives of conversion are more than just interesting stories about identities in transformation. They are stories of transformation that would transform us as well” (57).

You’ll recall that Anderson notes three major themes of Burke’s constitutional theory. Using Burke’s principle of circumference in constitutions, Anderson sketches how such first-person constitutive accounts draw a boundary on the scene, often setting certain God-terms. He then notes the ways that such sketched principles set up an “agon of Constitutional principles,” the teeming middle-ground where the announced principles of the person’s construction—Burke’s voluntary constitutional principles—necessarily interact and conflict. Burke calls these relationships the necessitarian principles of a Constitution, and sees them as the fruitful site for substantive transformation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Anderson endeavors to keep firmly in view the audience-addressed nature of a telling of identity.

While *The Fenians’ Progress* is by no means a traditional conversion narrative, it undoubtedly contains a “private experience made public in text” to effect a

transformation in its readers. And one of the most interesting means by which *The Fenians' Progress* addresses its numerous audiences is through its author's choice of subject positions: an anonymous, non-member of the Fenian Brotherhood, yet an Irish-American who sympathizes broadly with their end goal of Irish freedom. This move creates a highly effective authorial ethos for the anonymous author of *The Fenians' Progress*. As readers, we're not told the author's identity, but we are instead introduced to his subject position: a "true son of heroic, unhappy Ireland" who would love nothing more than to see "our dear Poland of the Seas" liberated from England (5).¹⁰ Importantly, though, this person is not a member of the Fenian Brotherhood despite being sympathetic to their aims. This authorial position establishes the writer as quite similar to the most important and largest audience for the booklet: those Irish who'd been unaware or uninterested in the Fenian cause during the U.S. Civil War, and whose active conversion to a Canadian-invasion version of Fenianism would both consolidate the Senate faction's hold over the direction of American Fenianism and hasten the United States' endorsement of the movement. It is no accident, then, that the author asserts this relationship to Fenianism at the outset, performing solidarity with this most important audience of undecided Irish. "Like you," he seems to be saying, "I want to see my country liberated, but I have been unsure of the best way to accomplish such a dream. Like you, I've read the headlines from the British Press demeaning my fellow expatriates who have chosen to express their healthy Patriotism through Fenianism, but until now I've not actively joined their cause."

¹⁰ For sake of clarity in this chapter, I refer to the anonymous author(s) with the singular masculine pronoun "he," since that is the subject position that the author stakes out in the text.

Beyond performing a similarity to an undecided Irish compatriot, such a detached subject position also potentially places the author as objective enough to evaluate Fenian prospects in a way that can be relied upon by U.S. citizens seeking to understand and pass judgment on the righteousness of the Fenian movement. This two-fold strategy recalls the distinction drawn between instrumental and constitutive ethos as theorized by Michael Leff and Ebony Utley in their examination of Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. Their analysis reveals that construction of ethos goes beyond the mere instrumental means of persuading an audience through ethical appeal. As they put it, King's identity construction in the *Letter* also serves as a constitutive identity that simultaneously invites white moderates into reasonable action and blacks into an agentic role of power through nonviolent and reasoned resistance. These instrumental and constitutive aspects of authorial identity construction are on display in *The Fenians' Progress*, as the non-member status invokes the objectivity to be ethically credible while the conversion narrative models the epiphany in identification that the Senate wing hoped to inspire.

Even after he moves from the dreamscape setting of the opening pages to a more journalistic account of the movement, he preserves this anonymous, non-member subject position throughout the text. Constantly, he positions himself with the inquiring reader rather than as a member of the organization, employing savvy pronoun use to reinforce his distance from the organization and echo the tone of objective, investigative reportage. For instance, in the "Origins" section of the front matter, the author writes, "The Fenian Brotherhood, we are told, is an entirely Irish-American organization" (42). This is a curious level of ignorance for the author of the front matter to the Senate's newly updated

Constitution! But such references continue throughout the text, as he repeatedly refers to the Fenians as an external organization while he reviews its history and leadership, using pronouns “they” and “their” throughout the treatment. As the author moves to the section that details the “objects” of the movement, he takes an academic tone: “Let us take a survey of its objects, and the means relied on for their accomplishment” (47).

This choice of an unaffiliated subject position that can both represent a first-person conversion vision in a dream as well as an objective reporting of fact on the Fenian movement becomes a powerful way to instrumentally and constitutively address their multiple audiences. With this effective strategy at the front of our minds, I’ll now turn to the new and wider circumference that the anonymous author draws for the Fenian movement.

Drawing a Widened Circumference for Irish Nationalism

In order to describe the widened circumference by which the author seeks to transform the ends and aims of the Fenian Brotherhood, it’s best to return to the action at the very beginning of *The Fenians’ Progress*. Once the author establishes this personal position as an interested but unaffiliated sympathizer for the cause of Irish freedom, he then notes his anger at a certain article in the *London Times* that pokes fun at the Fenian movement. This causes him to channel his anger through a prayer composed in rhyming verse, and he goes to bed secure in God’s eventual work for justice in Ireland. Within moments after falling asleep, the author is transported to “his native heath” on the battlefield with fellow Irishmen. What began, then, as a disinterested yet sympathetic account of the Fenians now reveals itself as premonition, as prophecy of a divine vision of Irish deliverance! Tellingly, that vision widens the geopolitical circumference of acceptable violence against the British to include North America. To do so, he invokes a

number of voluntary principles that permanently unite the interests of Ireland and the United States. In the process, he also cements, through a first-person conversion experience, the updated proper subjectivity of an Irish-American revolutionary. No longer a journeyman ready to hop a boat for Ireland, a true son of Ireland must now be ready to invade Canada for his motherland—and to annex Canadian “New Ireland” to the U.S. once it helped to free Ireland. The author is inviting readers to share his constitutive vision, one that vastly expands the Fenian conception of legitimate Irish revolutionary space.

Transhistorical Unity

Perhaps the most striking new voluntary principle invoked to substantiate their widened geographical circumference of acceptable violence is the transhistorical unity established by the author’s choice of characters. Even as he finds himself a brave and swarthy commander on the battlefield, fashioned after Byron’s Suvarrow from *Don Juan*, the author of the vision is soon joined by Lord Edward Fitzgerald and General Richard Montgomery, two military statesmen who’ve been dead over 60 years. Fitzgerald was a noble Irishman who was one of the leaders of the United Irishman uprising in 1798, tried and executed as an Irish martyr. Montgomery was an Irish-born soldier in the U.S. Revolutionary Army. He fought in the British Army during the French and Indian War, married and settled in the colonies as a farmer. He died as a U.S. general and revolutionary martyr during the Siege of Quebec in 1781. Besides their military background, the only similarity between these men is their Irish blood. Fitzgerald actually fought for the British in the U.S. Revolutionary War before being wounded, returning to Ireland, and eventually joining Montgomery in a soldier’s death—but for the Irish nation

instead of the United States. Fitzgerald seems an easy fit for a tract espousing revolutionary Irish nationalism. Montgomery, though, seems a more difficult fit. Yet, in this dream sequence, they join each other on horseback to meet the anonymous author's "avenging angels" as they gather for battle.

It doesn't take long to understand why Montgomery has been brought into the circumference of this dream. Montgomery speaks first, and in booming voice lauds the impulse to fight for and, if necessary, die for the Irish cause. As he puts it, "Oh! it is a glorious thing to fight, and, if needs be, to die for Ireland. But, my friends, if you would be finally triumphant, the fight must not be begun, but must be ended, here" (11). In other words, anyone can die for Ireland in vain. But the point is not just to die, but to win freedom. To do that, Montgomery continues, "in a voice that thrilled [the author's] very soul: '*You must place the Atlantic between you and your powerful enemy!* FOLLOW ME!'" (11, italics and caps original). He beckons the Angels to follow him, and in an instant they are whisked into the heat of battle in the Canadian provinces against the British Redcoats. The battle is looking dire, until, of course, the American Fenians arrive, at which point the tide turns. When they prevail and take the city of Quebec for New Ireland, Montgomery proclaims his death avenged.

This sequence demonstrates a powerful circumference being drawn by the author of *The Fenians' Progress*. On the one hand, the ravages of time are overcome by the unbreakable bonds of Irish unity that tie the author and the Fenian Avenging Angels together with both Fitzgerald and Montgomery. This recalls Charland's description of transhistorical unity, the second ideological effect of a constitutive rhetoric, whereby the narrative offers "'consubstantiality'...between the dead and the living" (140). Indeed,

rather than a simple invocation of the Irish “people” here, the author of *The Fenians’ Progress* quite literally assures that “time is collapsed” and “transcends the death of individuals across history” by using the dreamscape to bring them together again on the same field (Charland 140).

But this invocation of unity is explicitly different than earlier iterations of the Fenian call to unity. As you’ll recall from Chapter 2, the early Fenian movement’s correspondence demonstrates a performance of timeless unity across the Atlantic Ocean between the Irish living in the United States and Ireland. With the Irish branch now reeling from the British crackdown in September 1865, and the North American Fenians locked in a struggle for power and direction, this constitutive vision of transhistorical unity introduces an important wrinkle to those earlier invocations. In prior versions, Irish unity was achieved in spite of or indifferent to their placement in the United States. In this telling, though, bonds to the United States somehow strengthen Irish unity. Montgomery is invoked here as an Irish *and* American martyr. This is a new circumference for Fenian Irish unity, one that includes the active participation of the United States in its interests in place of a simple benevolent alliance. Such a strategy both sets the scene for identification with the United States, and also aims to persuade those Irish-American citizens who are wary of seeming too active in support of their home country for fear of U.S. “nativist” backlash. Similar to Hesford’s insights about the importance of a kairotic understanding of transnational feminist identifications, this Fenian evolution of positions marks a U.S.-Ireland identification that “is adaptable, opportune, and contingent on material circumstances” (“Cosmopolitanism” 56). Rather

than strengthening Irish-only bonds, Montgomery's presence here signals the timeless unity between the Irish and the United States.

Though Montgomery embodies this newly established circumference of Irish-American unity, the unfolding dreamscape continually reinforces the bond. The American Fenians arrive in droves to turn the Canadian battle into an Irish victory. And they march together into Quebec City "to the enlivening strains of 'The Green above the Red' and 'The Star-spangled Banner'" (12). After Montgomery proclaims his death avenged, he calls to the victorious Irish Army in an epideictic speech that invokes the United States, "Proceed in the great work. Merge these provinces into one State, to be called New Ireland. Be friends with the great Republic, and delay not in building up a modern Navy. Then will Ireland take her place among the nations of the earth" (12). And as the dreamscape narrative continues, the author sees his Irish fitted with a powerful army *and* navy, ready to "contest the dominion of their native land, but also the dominion of the high seas, with their savage plunderers" (15). They then meet the British on the sea, and win a "terrible naval engagement" through the work of their "American fifteen-inch guns" (15). They then take to land outside of Dublin, and prepare themselves for battle with the English army, who we're told is "committing their usual barbarities, and spreading terror all around" (16). Taken together, these lines simultaneously reinforce the geopolitical circumference of U.S. allegiance and English enemyship, noting the way that U.S. manufacturing has assisted Irish victory while British malfeasance substantiates the justness of Fenian calls for violence.

What's more, after the first land battle, the Fenian Avenging Angels emerge victorious: "The country-people came thronging to our standard from all directions, and

under the magical influence of Hardee's tactics, were soon formed into excellent troops" (22). "Hardee's tactics" refers to William J. Hardee's *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics*, published in 1855 and prepared "under direction of the War Department" (from title page). This book was widely used by both sides of the U.S. Civil War. And Hardee himself, born in Georgia, was a lifelong U.S. Army soldier who resigned from the Union and immediately enlisted in the Confederate Army when Georgia seceded. After the U.S. Civil War, in which he was given the nickname "Old Reliable" for his skill at drilling and forming soldiers, Hardee settled in Alabama and co-wrote an 1868 tome entitled *The Irish in America*. This seemingly throwaway reference further solidifies the circumference of solidarity the author of *The Fenians' Progress* is seeking to establish between the U.S. and the Irish, as now both American weapons and U.S. military knowledge and thought leadership are being bestowed upon Ireland.

In keeping with the martyr's vengeance motif, after the Irish victory on the field, Lord Edward Fitzgerald "exclaimed in joyful tones, '*Sic semper tyrannis*; my death is avenged'" (22). And the author's Avenging Angels do not stop there. After sleeping on the field and gathering the country-people into their disciplined army, they march into Dublin 80,000 strong (23). And the dream's denouement is a telling picture of Irish-U.S. unity:

Nor did I rest my victorious columns until I planted the SUN-BURST of my country, and its foster STARRY BANNER, on the *Irish* Castle of Dublin, which was done amidst the ringing of bells, the shouts of the populace, the thrilling cheers of my gallant army, and the deafening salutes of my two hundred pieces of artillery" (23, italics and caps original).

The Irish and U.S. Flags now waving proudly together from atop the most important building in Dublin, a “legion of mute martyrs passed before me, each bearing a small Irish flag, and inscribed thereon this motto: ‘My death is avenged’” (23). Our hero, the author, then takes up his quarters in the Castle. As he lays his weary bones down for a rest, he promptly wakes from his dream and relates that

“for some time after I could scarce believe but that all I have described was real.

“‘Such terrible impression made my dream.’

“I need not tell the well-informed reader that ‘there is something in dreams.’ Will the Fenians note it?” (24)

This last sentence sneakily re-asserts the author’s position as a sympathetic Irishman, but a non-Fenian. He’s just a regular Irish emigrant, like most of his readers, who’s been gifted with a divine vision. Though he’s not been converted to Fenianism by his dream—at least just yet—it’s absolutely clear that he’s been converted to the Senate faction’s constitutive vision of Canadian invasion and the simpatico relationship between the nascent Irish nation and its foster Republic, the United States, that such a vision entails.

As *The Fenians’ Progress* makes the turn from personal vision of divine Irish deliverance into a tone of investigative reportage describing the history, background, plan, and current events of the Fenian movement, these important themes are further reinforced. For instance, here’s a long quotation from the section entitled “Objects of the Movement, and Means for their Accomplishment:”

Not very long ago, the Head Centre of their organization proclaimed an expectation, in which he feels assured there is little chance of his being

disappointed, that President Johnson will give to the Irish the same facilities for procuring material of war which the Confederates obtained in England, and that Ireland would be recognized as a belligerent by the American Government; and the New York press are not slow to favor this Fenian notion. (49)

Having moved from dreamscape to “realtime,” the author here asserts confidence of U.S. reciprocation and their willingness to support the Senate wing’s constitutive vision of invading Canada. Historians such as D’Arcy have pointed out that the Johnson camp went to great pains to avoid publically confirming or denying such Fenian claims, hedging their bets about the Fenian control over the Irish vote by trying to remain as purposefully ambiguous as possible (129).¹¹ And the Senate wing exploited such ambiguity, utilizing it here in *The Fenians’ Progress* to lend their vision ethos and gravitas. The United States is drawn fully into the circumference of the Irish nationalist cause, suggesting that Senate wing Fenian entreaties toward identification with the United States are reciprocated by their “foster *Starry Banner*” at the highest levels of government. This appeal functions instrumentally to lend the Senate vision credibility and constitutively, becoming a powerfully suggestive invitation to join a cause that is gaining steam.

Yet, this assertion is not just a simple invocation of Irish-United States unity, which had been employed by the earlier versions of the Fenian movement as well. In addition to fully drawing the United States into the Senate wing’s circumference of identification, the tract also makes subtle divisions with the movement in Ireland. For instance, the

¹¹ Of course, the actual Fenian invasion of Canada would eventually force Johnson’s hand, and he would finally issue a proclamation against further skirmishes into Canada on June 6, 1866, less than a year after the publication of *The Fenians’ Progress* (163).

author goes to great pains to distinguish the separateness between American Fenianism and Irish revolutionary activity. As he puts it,

As a matter of fact, the Fenian Brotherhood does not exist in Ireland at all. Nevertheless, it is not denied that the Fenians base much of their hopes, in the success of their desperate enterprise, on the existence of some form of revolutionary organization in Ireland. It is not denied that the Irish organization is a secret one, to which the American society is an auxiliary."
(51).

Whether deliberately disingenuous or not, this assertion masks the reality that Irish veterans of the U.S. Civil War had been commissioned by the Fenian Brotherhood and sent to Ireland to support a rising there. Its emphasis on division between the movements also leaves out the reality that U.S. citizens of the Fenian Brotherhood were even then being arrested by the British authorities on Irish soil. By framing the matter this way, this Pro-Senate tract reinforces a subtle division with the organization and events in Ireland, emphasizing instead more U.S.-centric identifications.

Building from that subtle division with Ireland, the tract also communicates a distinct disavowal of qualities that are perceived to be uniquely Irish by the populace in the United States. Most importantly, Catholicism is subtly rebuked and American freedom of religion celebrated: "The Brotherhood had its assailants. A portion of the Catholic clergy of America at first opposed its operations; some were its virulent denouncers, while some ardently espoused its cause. But in America it is notorious that clergy, of whatever denomination, have little or no political influence with their congregations." (44-45) This quotation forms the entirety of the "Early Difficulties"

section subheading. It's telling that difficulties here are pinned solely to the Catholic Church, which happened to be an institution much reviled in the United States at the time and often served as a representative anecdote for the absolute foreignness of the Irish expatriate community. This representation scrubs, as you'll remember, the other difficulties O'Mahony mentioned in his opening address back in 1863, which included, for instance, recalcitrant opposition from certain famous veterans of Young Ireland's failed 1848 revolution. Here and other places it's clear that the Catholic Church serves as useful "enemyship," to use the term coined by Jeremy Engels, around which the U.S. Fenians can consolidate support and expand their reach in the United States.

A Respectable Irish "Nation"

But that begins to describe the second voluntary principle in the tract: a nationalist respectability politics aimed to raise Irish nationalism's reputation within the Anglo-American creole culture of the U.S. elite. The author of *The Fenians' Progress* repeatedly finds ways to subtly mark the movement as respectable. In a description of the recent Cincinnati convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, "attended by some three hundred delegates from the United States, representing two hundred and fifty thousand members," the author notes, "American newspapers state that its proceedings were conducted with all the dignity and courtesy of a national representative assembly" (46). Striking here is the gross inflation of the numbers, casually claiming an allegiance of 250,000 for the Fenian Brotherhood, a number that dwarfs most historians' conservative estimates of 50,000 or less Fenians in North America at the time. But the point is driven home that this vast horde is no unruly mob. Instead, it's a dignified national assembly, a sovereign nation working in exile.

One of the ways that *The Fenians' Progress* reinforces this sentiment of

respectability is through class markers. While few would have questioned that poor unskilled laborers who understood themselves as Famine exiles could be attracted to a freedom movement for Ireland, the author works to show that this movement has clout in the United States. As *Fenians' Progress* seeks to make clear, “There are many men of undoubted standing at present in the organization. The State Centres are, for the most part, wealthy Irish merchants; many Catholic clergymen are in its ranks” (50). These are men who matter. Business leaders. Religious leaders. As you’ll recall from chapter 1, the Fenian movement was markedly different from its predecessors, the United Irishmen and Young Ireland, because it was powered far more by working-class and undereducated Catholic members. Rather than drawing largely from intelligentsia, artisans, and the middle-class Protestant leadership of the previous movements, it had attracted the famine exile, poor Catholics who very well hoped to return to Ireland someday. This passage, though, isn’t disingenuous. After all, there were wealthy merchants who had found success in the United States. President Roberts of the Senate wing had himself become a very successful business owner in New York City. And there were certainly some Catholic clergy who had followed Father O’Flaherty into Fenianism even though the most powerful clergy in the United States came out against the movement. Rather, the passage simply emphasizes that part of the movement, however small, that would be most recognizable to U.S. society as accomplished—the part of the movement like Roberts.

This strategy also explains the next emphasis: Statesmen and military commanders. The author states, “[U.S.] General Meagher is one of its members, and the late General Smith, of the United States army, whose death was recorded by the

American papers with strong expressions of regret, was, at the time of his death, a member of the Fenian Central Council” (50). And, the author would have you know, it’s not only accomplished generals who are involved. What of those many Irish who fought valiantly to preserve the Union? The author of *Fenians’ Progress* assures you: “Nearly every Irish officer and every Irish soldier, with scarcely an exception, are members of the organization” (50). In other words, the author is trying to dispel any notions that solely the “wrong” types of Irish people are members of the Fenian Brotherhood. Rather, these are leaders of U.S. institutions—business, military, clergy. These are, we are assured, the types of people who have proven their ability to be upstanding contributors to the United States nation, people worthy of the responsibilities of Irish nation-building. What’s more, they are the types of people who have friends in even higher places: “it is no secret that many United States senators and government officials are its avowed friends” (50).

Lest the reader assume that elite Irish attraction to Fenianism is contained to North America, the author of *Fenians’ Progress* quotes from the British press to sound a similar tune in the British Isles. Quoting a British newspaper describing a Fenian gathering in Liverpool, the author notes: "It was attended not alone by men of the lower ranks, but by some persons of considerable means" (59). Not only does this brief quotation seek to demonstrate the widespread influence of the movement in the heart of the English empire, it also attempts to discomfit anyone who would dismiss this movement as appealing solely to the disaffected. Enthymematically, it argues that the Fenian movement is a credible, respectable nascent nation, since those “of considerable means” are now spending their time in secret rooms with “men of the lower ranks” on both sides of the Atlantic. Interestingly enough, this voluntary principle of transnational

respectability that would draw consubstantiality between Fenians on both sides of the Atlantic actually introduces a conflict with the earlier assertion that the Fenian Brotherhood doesn't exist in Ireland or outside North America. Even as the author seeks to establish clear separation between the movements, they recruit transatlantic Irish Fenianism to further demonstrate the ways that physical-force Irish nationalism has come to embody and perform the restrained, congenial, middle-class sensibility of Ireland's best.

Having established the Fenian membership as both powerful and respectable, the author of *Fenians' Progress* also works to cement respectability for the movement's leadership. Once again, he seeks to do so by quoting from others' estimations:

"O'Mahony, the Head Centre, is spoken of, even by the bitterest clerical enemies of the movement, as a man of highly cultured mind, chivalrous nature, and great determination of character" (47-48). Risking hyperbole, the laudatory description continues, "No one speaks or writes a word derogatory to [O'Mahony's] personal character, and among the Irish in America he is idolized, while by the disaffected in Ireland he is looked upon as their future deliverer" (48). Such unanimous praise for O'Mahony seems out of place in a tract that is publically delivering the Constitution that further marginalizes O'Mahony's influence over the movement. But O'Mahony's character as a person is more important here than his credibility as a national commander. And it helps to paint the movement itself with the sheen of respectable revolutionaries: chivalrous, cultured, and high in character.

O'Mahony, of course, was an Irish scholar who chose the name Fenian Brotherhood. This choice of names helps to cement the vision of cultured and principled

warriors, an opportunity not lost on the author of *Fenians' Progress*. Detailing the deep Irish history contained in the name, the author launches into a long description of the incredible character supposedly demanded as qualifications for joining the Fianna—"an ancient militia or standing army"—who formed the namesake of the movement:

Every soldier was required to swear: that, with-out regard to her fortune, he would choose a wife for her virtue, her courtesy, and her good manners; that he would never offer violence to a woman; that as far as he could, he would relieve the poor; and that he would not refuse to fight nine men of any other nation. No person could be received into the service unless his father and mother, and all his relatives, gave security that none of them should revenge his death upon the person who might slay him, but that they would leave the matter to his fellow-soldiers. The youth himself must be well acquainted with the twelve books of poetry and be able to compose verses. He must be a perfect master of defence" (54-55).

According to "Irish tradition," the author assures us, these were the qualities of the bands "employed only on home service for protecting the coasts from invasion" (54). The author goes on to describe the required otherworldly feats of strength, speed, and composure that were used to test ancient Fenian recruits, before closing with a long quotation from Reverend Geoffrey Keating's 1630 history of Ireland that claims the Fianna weren't confined to Ireland. Instead, it says, some believe that its members were of an ancient Celtic race that had bands in Scotland as well as Northern Europe—the modern day regions of Scandinavia and Germany (56-58).

Steeped in chivalry, charity to the poor, the utmost courage, resolved obedience,

and possessing both artistry and rhetorical prowess, we are led to believe that these are the qualities being constituted by the modern day Fenian Brotherhood. The Fenians both were, and now *are*, admirable men worthy of emulation, as these Nationalist revolutionaries are painted as the continuation of an ancient race forming an Irish protectorate.

The traditional lore above, of course, contains directions for women as well: that a woman worthy of being a Fenian wife must be exceedingly virtuous, courteous, and well-mannered. What's more, she would not be violent (54). Importantly, *The Fenians' Progress* makes mention of the growing movement of the Fenian Sisterhood, supposedly founded around the timing of the Cincinnati convention in early 1865, "which bids fair to rival the masculine fraternity" (47). While there's no record of women actually participating in the coming invasions as soldiers, they undoubtedly supported the war effort as financial organizers. The author of *The Fenians' Progress* mentions this in passing, likely as a rhetorical device to signal the overwhelming outpouring of financial support in the Irish-American community:

"Money and war material are freely subscribed; and so great is the ardor manifested in this portion of the Fenian programme, that in two months from its foundation the Fenian Sisterhood alone returned upwards of 200,000 pounds sterling to the Fenian exchequer for the purpose of supplying arms." (48-49)

This framing enthymematically suggests the incredible amount of money that must be there, for surely the men of the Brotherhood are raising infinitely more than these women who have so lately entered the game. What the author of *Fenians' Progress* neglects to mention is the fact that key organizers in the Fenian Sisterhood were, according to ledger

books kept in the Catholic University archive, some of the most impressive financial contributors to the whole movement.¹² Here, they stand in *The Fenians' Progress* as a device to testify to the widespread support of the movement in respectable circles, relying on Victorian values of ideal womanhood to connote that even the most chaste and well-mannered among us are diligently readying for war. Thus, this is not senseless violence, an undignified display of chaos. To the contrary, it is the latest embodiment of a long Irish tradition of homeland defense, partaken in a neat division of labor among chivalrous men and chaste women of culture.

This mythological and gendered invocation of the Fenian ideal mobilizes a strategic remembrance of Irishness that takes respectability to its absolute extreme, portraying a tradition of Irish male and female perfection that would stand in glaring contrast to the existing scripts about Irish men and women in the mid-19th century United States. Beset by popular Anglo-American stereotypes of Irish men as drunken, pugnacious, and uneducated Paddys, and Irish women as credulous, dirty, and bad-cooking washerwoman Bridgets (Diner 117; Whelehan, *The Dynamiters* 222), this constitutive vision borrows from U.S. normative gender ideals to assert the Fenian men as chivalrous, well-read, courageous, militant yet ethical warriors. It frames women as chaste wives supporting their men in the national project through social uplift, conveniently leaving single Irish women's economic independence and mobility as domestic servants out of the frame of proper Irish national womanhood. This dynamic of borrowing such gender scripts from the hegemonic U.S. national scene echoes Nikol

¹² This is an understudied reality of the Fenian movement in these years. Women are listed in the ledger books as returning some of the largest sums of money, yet most published histories make little mention of them—except as likely points of infiltration by British spies (D'Arcy). While Steward and McGovern rectify this disservice to the Fenian Sisterhood, a comprehensive history of Fenian women waits to be written.

Alexander-Floyd's incisive analysis of the ways that contemporary Black Nationalism has tended to constitute itself on similar ideological assumptions as White Nationalism, leading both to utilize similar metaphors of Black cultural pathology in order to constitute "outsiders" to their vision of the "nation" (161). This Irish nationalist vision replicates similar aspirations to hegemonic respectability that would be recognizable as virtuous in the larger U.S. public sphere. To be sure, these nineteenth century Irish nationalists had to do much less work to overcome tropes of Bridget and Paddy than Black nationalists overcoming persistent stereotypes of Black welfare queens and absentee fathers in the contemporary U.S. national discourse, but the tactic remains quite similar: challenge prevailing notions of your deviance by making yourself over into an image of respectability. The author of *The Fenians' Progress* seeks here to portray an Irish nascent nation of statesmen and respected military men being supported by diligent wives and chaste women forming social auxiliaries, images they hoped to resonate with the U.S. nation-state they hoped to rely on in their coming hours of invasion.

Perhaps the subtlest form of these respectability politics comes in the literary references made by the author of *The Fenians' Progress* himself. It quickly becomes a who's who of allusion and British high culture. The name itself, of course, echoes *Pilgrim's Progress*, a classic Protestant conversion tract and known British literary masterpiece. The dream sequence that leads the narrator to a divine vision is patterned after Bunyan's framing in *Pilgrim's Progress*. One could draw further parallels: just as Evangelist urges Christian to leave the City of Destruction, General Montgomery orders the Fenian Avenging Angels to flee Ireland for Canada. What's clear is that the author of *The Fenians' Progress* wants his American and Irish-American readers to recognize his

cultural literacy. This echoes Fanon's insight on the formation of African national cultures, wherein intellectual cultural workers seeking to build a nationalist vision first attempt to demonstrate how well they've "assimilated the culture of the occupying power" (179). And the authors' choice of works to cite certainly confirms this stance, displaying a vast command of English classics that would impress his American audience. In the dream sequence, for instance, he sees himself as the swarthy commander Suwarrow in Canto VII of Lord Byron's *Don Juan* (9). The opening page of the dreamscape is introduced by quotations about the divine import of dreams from English playwright James Shirley (1596-1666), Scottish playwright Joanna Baillie Ethwold (1762-1851), and British poet Philip James Bailey (1816-1902). If this were only part of the dreamscape conceit, it could perhaps be dismissed as a novelty. But at the outset of the journalistic description of the Fenian cause and history, the author opens with quotations about just revenge from Shakespeare, Dryden, and Scottish poet/playwright James Thomson.

What's more, he also employs a long quotation vowing vengeance or death that he attributes to John O. Sargent, an American lawyer:

Away! Away! I will not hear
Of aught save death or vengeance now;
By the eternal skies I swear,
My knee shall never learn to bow!
I will not hear a word of peace,
Nor grasp in friendly grasp a hand,
Linked to the pale-browed stranger race,

That work the ruin of our land. (2)

This quotation, though, is more likely from a poem composed by C. Sherry to commemorate Wampanoag chief Metacomet's (known to colonists as King Philip) death at Mount Hope in what's known as King Philip's War or the First Indian War in 1676. An interesting choice to include in a tract that is largely meant to attract American support to the Fenian cause, the attribution to the Whig writer and lawyer Sargent would likely lead the general reader to assume that such a quotation was directed from an Irishman towards England, rather than an indigenous indictment of American settlers. It's at this point that the voluntary principle of respectability politics borne out through literary allusion begins to conflict with another principle asserted throughout the text: rightful Irish participation in U.S. Manifest Destiny.

Irish Manifest Destiny

Beyond the direct allusions to U.S.-Irish unity in *The Fenians' Progress*, a more indirect constitutive strategy and third voluntary principle is their invocation of Irish participation in the trappings of the U.S.'s Manifest Destiny. Like the establishment of transhistorical unity mentioned above, this rhetorical strategy begins in the dreamscape and is fleshed out more thoroughly in the ensuing sections. It is given direct treatment in the latter reportage sections, and demonstrates the pivotal place that a topos of Irish Manifest Destiny plays in the expanded geopolitical circumference of the Senate wing's updated Constitutional wish. This is especially apparent in the section entitled "The Real Object," wherein the author engages in an extended refutatio of the idea that the Irish invading Canada is somehow contrary to U.S. interests. The author goes to great pains demonstrating that it actually serves the U.S.: "In order to prevent misconception, it is proper to state, that there is nothing contained in the foregoing views inconsistent with

American theories of government, and American antecedents of action” (35). He goes on, drawing an analogy between the Irish invasion of Canada and the Texas annexation movement, noting that the United States recognized the Independence of Texas in 1837, and that Texas “became another bright star in the glorious American constellation in 1845” (36). The author(s) argues that, had Texas desired, they “had a perfect right to build or purchase a navy, to raise an army” and invade and liberate Cuba from the Spanish if they had so desired—especially to “give the people of that island a free and independent government” with the “fixed purpose of bringing Cuba under the *benign and protecting* folds of the American flag” (36; emphasis added).

This direct argument justifying Irish invasion as an independent sovereign seems, as you’ll recall, consonant with the earlier constitutional wishes of Irish sovereignty detailed in chapter 3: recognized nationhood and international recognition of their legitimate belligerent status. Yet, unlike the earlier Fenian constitutional wishes, the endgame here is statehood in North America for “New Ireland.” This is a radical new constitutive invitation, both to the Irish in the United States and to the United States writ large, an invitation that seeks to harness changes in the geopolitical climate on both sides of the Atlantic to galvanize old Fenian friends and gain new adherents to their revised definition of Fenianism. On the one hand, they’re asking exiled Irish to simultaneously renew their bonds of affiliation with Ireland while acting to cement their eventual fate as full and permanent participants in the United States. On the other, they’re asking the United States to allow them the opportunity to create an Irish enclave that would simultaneously fulfill U.S. hegemonic constitutive discourses of Canadian annexation. It is a kairotic constitutive invitation, as it seeks to diffuse the potential despair felt by

exiles in the wake of the British government's raid on the *Irish People* offices and the growing sense that revolution in Ireland was an impossible dream at this moment. Rather than ditching the dreams of hastening Irish freedom—and even returning home!—only to be forced to assimilate to a culture that isn't your own despite your admiration of that state's professed ideals, *The Fenians' Progress* vision offers a third way: to stay Irish without going home. To support Irish freedom while cementing your *own* place in the United States. Make Canada "Irish Texas." Free your homeland and join the Union at the very same time.

But this voluntary principle of the third way, one that flatters the U.S. constitutive vision of Manifest Destiny, introduces some vexing necessitarian principles of conflict. And they emerge most clearly in the dreamscape narrative. In the dreamscape, immediately after the Fenians take Quebec City and Montgomery orders them to form New Ireland in the image of the U.S. republic, we're then told that Lord Edward Fitzgerald stepped forward and "called upon the scattered children of his race and country to hasten with their strong arms, and with their wealth, to this vast domain which the Eternal God had given them; and from here, with their united strength, to strike for their native land" (13). We're then told that this nod towards divine invitation is heeded in droves:

for, in a moment, I beheld the highways, and the byways, and the fields, flooded with my faithful countrymen, who, pressing forward to our 'New Jerusalem,' were all eagerness to aid in the noble work. And, as if Heaven had determined to reward such patriotic toil in a twofold manner, I saw

shipyards, foundries, commerce, trade, and golden harvest spring up throughout the whole land. (13)

This is Fenian participation in what Malea Powell calls “the American tale,” a “central component” of which is “the settlers’ vision of the frontier, a frontier that is ‘wilderness,’ empty of all ‘civilized’ life” (“Blood” 3). Indeed, the author of *Fenians’ Progress* is relying on a rhetoric of divine right and one of empty wilderness. As *Fenians’ Progress* tells it, the provinces of Canada are empty lands waiting for the Irish to descend upon it, multiply, and make the land fruitful as God intended. Canadian settlers are mentioned—see the quotation at the top of this chapter—but nary a word is said about the Indigenous nation-peoples whose land this settler fantasy plays out upon.

Interestingly, the author of *The Fenians’ Progress* uses the character of Fitzgerald to call for Irish settlement. Fitzgerald is a complicated figure because his United Irishmen no doubt learned from the U.S. example of revolution against the English. But he actually fought for the British in the U.S. Revolutionary War, was wounded in battle, and returned home to Ireland before leading the United Irishmen Uprising. More importantly, he’d also traveled North America extensively on his own, and found himself drawn to the American Indian nation-peoples he met along what is now known as the border between the United States and Canada. Rather than cozying to the socialite spheres of the creole elite in the colonies, he instead found traveled extensively among the Native peoples in these same Canadian provinces, staying with nation-peoples like the Haudenosaunee along the way. In fact, he is rumored to have been made an honorary chief by Pontiac around Detroit during one of his visits (Gibbons 87).

Of course Fitzgerald's experience of Indigenous life was likely influenced by his fascination with Rousseau's work, and he no doubt operated with a version of the "Noble Savage" ideology that has done so much pernicious damage in indigenous-settler relations on the North American continent. Yet, rather than piously lamenting the inevitable death of indigenous lifeways in Ireland, he instead took to finding ways to both celebrate and protect those cultural and linguistic traditions back in Eire. For instance, the United Irishmen movement sought to preserve and strengthen Gaelic lifeways, holding a traditional Gaelic Harper's festival to celebrate Bastille Day in 1792 and arguing for the importance of Gaelic language newspapers as "indispensible equipment for living" (Gibbons 89-90). Under Fitzgerald's leadership, the United Irishmen were much more cognizant of the links of solidarity between American Indian and Irish stories of colonization. By drawing these connections, Fitzgerald helped to lead the cross-cultural dialogues that sought to lend dignity to the Gaelic traditions and language of the majority Catholic peasants in the Irish countryside. This commitment to indigenous culture was partly what made the United Irishmen such a formidable movement at the end of the 18th century (Gibbons 91).

Clearly, the author of *The Fenians' Progress* is presenting a strategic remembrance, to quote M. Lane Bruner's parlance, of Fitzgerald for his United States audience. This portrait not only scrubs his lived admiration for American Indian nation-peoples from the circumference of *The Fenians' Progress*, but also actively replaces it with a settlers' land lust. As such, it introduces a necessitarian principle of conflict between the principles of simple transhistorical U.S.-Irish unity and the Irish participation in Manifest Destiny. Other stories of solidarity between the experience of solidarity

between the indigenous Irish—filtered as they were through the settler “Mixed-Blood” Fitzgerald and his United Irishmen—and the Indigenous North Americans must be scrubbed from the frame in order for this constitutive rhetorical shift to hang together. Fitzgerald would not have been likely to, as Powell puts it, “un-[see]” the “Indian peoples, nations, and civilizations he admired” who would be adversely affected by Irish attempts to further settle Haudenosaunee territory (3). He would not likely have appreciated the very real colonial impact of the Fenian skirmishes on the militarization of the U.S.-Canada border, militarization that continues to this day to violate the rights of passage for Haudenosaunee people in their own territory who happen to pass across the contemporary boundary lines between the United States and Canada.¹³

As we know, the vision outlined in *The Fenians' Progress* did not capture nor captivate all Irish-Americans. Indeed, 50,000 Fenians was a very small number of the overall Irish who lived in North America, where it's estimated that over 1.5 million emigrated to the United States between 1851 and 1870 alone (Miller 569). In fact, it did not even convert all Fenians, as a good number remained committed to the O'Mahony faction's competing constitutive vision of support for the organization in Ireland. Yet, coupled with the barnstorming speeches of William Roberts and other leaders, these rhetorics in *The Fenians' Progress* did gain ascendancy in the U.S. public sphere in this time period as the “true” representative of Fenianism, which galvanized the Senate faction's side of the movement enough to incite the aforementioned Battles of Ridgeway and Pigeon Hill in June 1866. Indeed, its pull even caused the opposing Fenian faction—which represented itself as starkly opposed to the Canadian invasion plans—to launch a

¹³ For more information about ongoing Haudenosaunee resistance to the enforce militarized border between Canada and the United States, see the Indian Defense League of America. Founded in 1926 by Tuscarora Chief Clinton Rickard, it has fought these border infractions upon American Indian sovereignty ever since.

preemptive strike on Canada from Campobello Island in March 1866 in order to steal momentum from the Senate wing while supposedly galvanizing the Irish to fight in Ireland. Despite the fiascoes of 1866, the rhetorics accompanying the Canadian invasion ideology continued to hold sway for a few more years, providing the momentum for another raid from Vermont into Missisquoi County, Quebec on May 25, 1870.¹⁴ The latter raid began with General John O'Neill's arrest at the border, and though as many as 600 Fenians were present and a good number were able to slip across the border to engage with the Canadian volunteer militia, it was truly over before it had begun. O'Neill, who had assumed the leadership of the Senate wing by then, signed the official order from jail in September 1870 that reunified the Fenian Brotherhood under one Constitution and under John Savage as its Chief Executive.

Respectable Nationalism's Embodied Coda

The Fenian experiences in Canada no doubt severely dampened their spirits, and the revised Constitution, more fitting for a civic club than an exile government, was one outcome of their chastened sense of possibilities. Yet, the performance of the voluntary principles outlined in *The Fenians' Progress* persisted in Irish nationalist public rhetorics even after Canada seemed a less and less likely route of Irish liberation. One place we see these rhetorics recurring is in the maintenance of public marching and militia parades. Leading up to St. Patrick's Day in 1870, for instance, the Legion of St. Patrick's New York Brigade planned to march the streets of New York City in order to simultaneously honor their patron and display the strength and power of organized Irish nationalists. This

¹⁴ There was a final raid of Manitoba in 1871, led as well by General John O'Neill, but he had sworn not to conduct it as an official raid of a Fenian organization. Certainly staffed by Fenian volunteers, the fiasco was not officially conducted by the newly reunited Fenian Brotherhood, who had Constitutionally disavowed any violence against Canada in their 1870 Constitution revision.

was a huge affair, as they planned to march down the same streets occupied just last year by the Orangeman parade that had ended in a riot. The mayor of New York City, Oakey Hall, would be presiding at the March, and the commanding officers were keen to put on a good show as well-prepared, disciplined, and respectable Irish militiamen. As the close of the instructions note,

The Commanding General cannot close these instructions without expressing his sincere thanks to the officers and men of the New York Brigade, for their efficiency and the determination with which they enter into the spirit of showing the enemies of the Irish race in this and the others side of the Atlantic, that patriotism and love of country are instilled in their hearts and that they are determined to organize, drill, and fight when the time comes for the freedom of their native land. Persevere in this good work, comrades, and show by your general good conduct on Thursday that you deserve the approbation and respect of all liberty loving people. (3/13/1870 2)

Urging good conduct so as to command respect, the letter is filled with detailed instructions for performing in ways worthy of honor in this most public of stages. Chiefly, displays of Irish-American unity are planned to be performed through the figure and centrality of the mayor as “the receiving officer” of the Legion. The most powerful American political figure in the city, then, is not only included in the planning, but made a key centerpiece to demonstrate the Legion’s superior organization and allegiance to the United States. No detail is left to chance. All officers are to “salute him when they arrive within six paces of him, and recover their swords when six paces past him,” looking at

the mayor as they salute (1). The band is ordered to stop at the Mayor and take up a post facing him, playing until the rest of the column has passed (1). The colors, too, will salute the mayor on a six pace symmetry, redrawing their flags an equal distance past him. What's more, attendance is mandatory for all members of the New York Brigade, and an absence required an excuse that was reported to the Commander (1). Perhaps most tellingly, "Not under any circumstance will either officers or men be allowed to leave the march without special permission from their respective Battalion commanders" (1). Each instance of these is calculated to display the depth of Irish organization and rigor, and this order to never break ranks is an especially severe outcome of the seriousness and ceremony by which this Parade would be conducted. These are not merely drunken Paddies out for a stroll using the excuse of the old sod as another occasion for public licentiousness. Rather, these men are a fine-tuned and muscular nationalist machine, clicking precisely on all cylinders. This is the work of respectable, moral, disciplined revolutionary nationalists. These Irish marchers, in other words, are meant to represent the best of the U.S. American aspirational vision and values.

Yet, no matter the Legion's avowed intentions to "organize, drill, and fight when the time comes," the fiascoes in Canada had made it abundantly clear that the traditional military engagement fantasized by *The Fenians' Progress* was impracticable, a fool's errand. If the Battle of Ridgeway hadn't proved that there would be no such thing as a "walk into Canada" for Irish Independence, the U.S. official response to outlaw Irish skirmishings on June 6, 1866 had effectively ended the Fenian threat for all intents and purposes, no matter the posturing and leadership of General O'Neill right into 1871. By the time he invaded from Vermont in May 1870—two months after the pomp of public

drilling put on by the Legion of St. Patrick's New York Brigade, even most of the Fenian movement itself dismissed his military plans for Canada as mere antics that distracted from the real—and original purpose—of supporting revolt in Ireland.

Despite this re-orientation back to Ireland as the epicenter of the Fenians' violent geopolitical circumference, no amount of respectable and crisp drilling by the Legion of St. Patrick in New York City would change the fact that a traditional military engagement in Ireland was an absolute impossibility at this point in time. Indeed, Fenians in Ireland had been making more news for their rescue attempts in prisons than their exploits on a traditional battlefield. After the failed rising in Ireland in early 1867, Fenian attention had turned towards springing their comrades from British work prisons. The most infamous of these attempts likely proved to be the most impactful on Fenian tactics going forward: the Clerkenwell Explosions. In reality, they were actually a botched job at blowing a prison wall to free captive Fenians. The inexperienced dynamiters used too much explosive, leveling not only the wall but nearly an entire city block, killing a few innocent civilians.

What had been a regrettable mistake by makeshift guerillas set off a maelstrom in the British Press. Indeed, Adams's treatment of the similarity of British and Fenian rhetorical strategies begins with this Clerkenwell flashpoint as the exigency of his essay. Rather than the Fenian press backing down from their position in the face of British attempts to categorize the Clerkenwell Explosions as a gross crime against humanity, as evidence of Fenian wickedness and irredeemable bloodthirst against innocents, the Fenian press responded by comparing the tendency for the weight of the carnage at

Clerkenwell to the centuries of Irish mistreatment and death at the hands of British governmental policy and military enforcement.

Thus begins the next shift in the circumference of Fenian rhetorical practices. Even as *The Fenians' Progress* had sought to widen the geopolitical circumference of acceptable violence against the British, this next round would seek to widen the ideological circumference of acceptable violence from traditional military engagement between armies and navies to the tactics of guerilla warfare that targets public structures with dynamite. In the next chapter, we'll follow Patrick Ford from his place at the head of a column in the St. Patrick's Brigade to his place at the top of a masthead as owner and editor of the *Irish World and Industrial Liberator*. In the 1870's, *Irish World* would emerge as the foremost voice in the attempt to redefine acceptable violent responses to imperial violence. As Niall Whelehan has noted, a key strategy for this rhetorical project was Ford's paper's work to draw transnational solidarities between peoples across the globe working to resist British imperial imposition. The next chapter will trace the details of this new circumference of militant Irish nationalist rhetorical practice.

5. SKIRMISHERS AND SETTLERS: FENIANISM'S TURN IN THE 1870s

At the dawn of the 1870s, the physical force tradition of Irish nationalism in the United States was about to undergo a seismic shift. The Senate wing of the Fenian Brotherhood would officially invade Canada for the last time on May 25, 1870; General John O'Neill, president of the Senate wing of the Brotherhood, would agree to the terms for the reunification of the two Fenian Brotherhood factions from prison in Windsor, VT on September 7, 1870.¹⁵ Yet, the Fenian Brotherhood's days were numbered as the preeminent Irish nationalist organization working in North America. First, the worldwide economic depression of the 1870s slowed organizing and fundraising efforts. Second, the IRB in Ireland had grown tired of the factionalism, and had tapped another organization as its primary collaborator: the Clan-na-Gael.¹⁶ Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the failed invasions of Canada and the failed rising in Ireland had effectively proven the current impossibility of the Fenian Brotherhood's vision—a traditional insurrection culminating in an Irish victory over the British military through a direct encounter on the battlefield.

Though the Fenian Brotherhood's star had begun to fade in the 1870s, the organization's namesake term, Fenian, had taken root in Irish nationalists' hearts. Hence, while the Fenian Brotherhood would soon struggle to remain relevant in the Irish nationalist scene, Fenianism itself was entering a new phase of development, expansion,

¹⁵ Though he promised not to invade Canada again as a member of the Fenian Brotherhood, he tried once more in 1871 in Manitoba. So as to not break his oath to his brothers, he ceremoniously resigned from the Fenian Brotherhood before the invasion. The ill-fated excursion ended, literally, before it began: the "invaders" were arrested two miles south of the U.S.-Canada border.

¹⁶ The Clan-na-Gael were responsible for planning and funding the famous rescue of 6 Fenians from a Western Australian work prison via the Whaling ship *Catalpa* on April 17, 1876.

and redefinition in North America. For these reasons, while more could certainly be said about the Fenian Brotherhood's internal operations from their 1870 reunification to their ultimate dissolution in 1886, this chapter will instead follow the more pressing story of Fenianism in the 1870s: its redefinition as framed through the pages of the *Irish World*.

As the Irish American newspaper with the largest circulation, the *Irish World* became both the mouthpiece for and the trend-setting agent of the many competing strains of Irish nationalism in the 1870s and beyond. Patrick Ford, the owner and editor, had earned his credentials as arbiter of this truly global Irish counterpublic. He had cut his teeth as a printer and abolitionist as an apprentice at William Garrison's *Liberator*. At the end of the U.S. Civil War, he had relocated to Charleston, SC to work on the *South Carolina Leader*, a Republican newspaper for freedmen during Reconstruction.¹⁷ And, as you'll recall, the previous chapter closed with Ford at the head of a column, marching in military regalia at the 1870 St. Patrick's Day parade in the Legion of St. Patrick.

Yet, in a few short years, Ford had lost all faith in an official insurrection brought forth solely by a well-drilled Irish militia encountering the British forces openly on a traditional battlefield. As Niall Whelehan has demonstrated, Ford's paper goes to great lengths to redefine the bounds of acceptable political violence for an oppressed or occupied people. Building from Whelehan's foundational work on the paper's anti-imperialist rhetoric to justify "skirmishing," this chapter follows two competing rhetorics in the *Irish World* in the mid-1870s: that of Skirmishing and that of Settling. As we'll see, despite the *Irish World's* avowedly anti-imperialist politics, the implications of these

¹⁷ This paper would later become the *Missionary Record* published under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

rhetorics lead them, at times, to work at cross purposes against each other, especially in the paper's coverage of the Sioux Wars in 1876.

I'll begin by looking at the paper's rhetoric of Skirmishing. Building off Whelehan's foundation here, I'll note its radically expansive redefinition of Fenianism and the ways that it frames respectable violence from below, anchored in the perspective of the oppressed rather than the oppressor. I will then move to the paper's rhetoric of Settling, in which avowedly anti-imperialist transnational reporting on conflicts across the globe sits neatly next to columns of letters calling for Irish settlements on western lands in North America or editorials about needed reforms in the U.S. Federal Indian Bureau. I'll close by describing the ways that Settling rhetoric leads to a stark contrast between the paper's treatment of the Sioux Wars and its framing of other freedom struggles going on throughout the world, a contrast that reflected shifting material conditions for Irish American nationalists as they continued to develop what Whelehan has called their Irish "state in embryo" (*The Dynamiters* 300).

Skirmishing Rhetoric: Expanding the Circumferences of Moral Violence and Fenianism

In Niall Whelehan's work on Irish redefinitions of political violence from the failed rising in 1867 through the dynamiting campaigns leading up to the turn of the 20th century, he emphasizes the ways that violence was in many ways a dialogue between sovereign states and their counterpublic challengers, both sides of which participated "in collective experimentation with the use of force" in the late 19th century (*The Dynamiters* 20). In his article "Skirmishing, the *Irish World*, and Empire, 1876-1886," itself drawn from his larger project entitled *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900*, Whelehan traces the development of advocacy for

guerilla-style violence as a response to the failed insurrections in both 1848 and 1867.

Advocates for this dramatic change in the tactics of political violence, led by Patrick Ford and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, sought to legitimize such violence as a moral response to imperial violence and social injustice. To do so, Whelehan argues, Ford's paper the *Irish World* and, later, Rossa's *United Irishmen*—sought to simultaneously place other national struggles in alliance with Irish struggles for self-determination and debunk the so-called legitimacy of civilized warfare being waged by England and other imperial powers.

As it became increasingly clear that insurrection was a fool's errand, these papers advocated for a turn to "skirmishing" in order to keep the flame of militant nationalism alive, and the *Irish World* published a letter from Rossa in March 1876 that called for the establishment of a "Skirmishing Fund." Though the term was deliberately slippery in definition, Fenians would have understood the term both from its use in the U.S. Civil War as well as its employment as the preferred Fenian description for the ill-fated invasions of Canada plotted by the Senate faction of the Fenian Brotherhood. Whelehan notes that its first use dates back to Machiavelli, who defined it as "a 'screen' of men, separate from the main army, whose role was to harass the enemy in small groups" (*The Dynamiters* 75).

Though a military practice utilized in both the recent U.S. Civil War and the U.S. Revolutionary War, Whelehan notes that Ford and Rossa's skirmishing differed in a key aspect: their skirmishers would have no main army in the field to support (75).

Skirmishing outside the defined boundaries of regular warfare faced strong opposition from most Irish nationalists, including the exiled leadership of the Irish Republican

Brotherhood and most of the Fenian Brotherhood, as many believed that such a campaign would smear the moral authority of the Irish national project, and threaten the legitimacy of the future republic. Whelehan describes Ford and Rossa's efforts to overcome these considerable barriers to support as reframing the conversation through rhetorical themes of social injustice and anti-imperialism. He demonstrates how Ford's *Irish World* seeks to mitigate critiques of skirmishing by placing this new form of resistance in a long tradition of "response[s] to misrule wherever occupying forces are present in the world" as well as a "means of resistance to an imperialism that hides behind the veil of civilized warfare" ("Skirmishing" 190). To accomplish these rhetorical goals, Ford's paper reported on and encouraged national struggles throughout the world, and Whelehan notes how they also reported on British misbehavior or excesses in colonial control tactics (191). For Ford and Rossa, then, skirmishing was fully based in "a system of sound moral and political imperatives" in the face of an oppressive power who'd referred to its own usage of dynamite as a "resource of civilisation" (193).¹⁸

While Whelehan goes on to detail the events, and rhetoric surrounding them, at the height of the dynamiting campaign from 1881-1885, I'm going to focus a bit more closely on Ford's *Irish World* rhetoric from 1874-1876 that laid the groundwork for the Irish nationalist turn to dynamite Skirmishing. More than simply exposing the farce of referring to England's use of force as "civilized warfare," I argue that Ford also employed what I'll call underdog expediency rhetoric. And beyond simply reporting approvingly on the national struggles of other peoples fighting British imperialism, he specifically applies the term "Fenian" to other peoples fighting England!

¹⁸ Whelehan notes how this led Rossa to call a later fundraising effort for the dynamite campaigns the "Resources for Civilisation Fund" ("Skirmishing" 193-194).

Whelehan has solidly demonstrated the ways that Fenian antimperialist rhetoric in the *Irish World* sought to draw legitimate connections of solidarity among all resisters to British Imperialism. And he gestures at the underdog expediency rhetoric I'm referring to when he notes that Ford sought to claim historical precedent for skirmishing as a moral tactic used throughout history by a weaker opponent seeking to defeat an occupying force (190). Whelehan mentions Ford's description of Washington's army's use of skirmishing in the American war of Independence, which I quote here at length:

The Americans from the start understood the enemy, and knew well the ferocious nature of the troops with whom they were at war. They placed no confidence in their honor, and disregarded their promises; their threats fell harmless upon men who were determined to be free, and to that end were ready to sacrifice all they held dear upon the earth. Knowing that they were weak they adopted every measure within their reach to accomplish the purpose for which they had taken up arms... (*Irish World*, 18 March 1876)

In this passage, we certainly see Ford attempting to discredit British claims to civilized, legitimate, warfare, calling them "ferocious" troops whose "honor" could not be trusted. We also see an American epideictic rhetoric here, wherein Ford is praising the nature of the colonial rebels. In doing so, though, he is subtly reframing the rights and dignity of the oppressed to resist through "every measure within their reach" as an oppressed people "who were determined to be free." Indeed, though Whelehan claims that Ford and Rossa needed to overcome the fact that the Fenian version of skirmishing differed from the American colonists' since it wasn't directly or immediately supporting an army in the

field, Ford seeks to prove that the American colonists' "army in the field" wouldn't have been there without years of skirmishing to prepare the ground. In Ford's editorial supporting Rossa's call for a Skirmishing Fund, he notes, "The American 'skirmishers' began their work in 1773—two years before Bunker Hill was fought, or the people rose up, and three years before the Colonies declared their independence of England. It was the American 'skirmishers' of '73, '74, and '75 that made the Revolution of 'Seventy-Six inevitable" (*Irish World*, 4 March 1876).

And, as Ford tells it, the North American colonists were not the only people who had eschewed those tactics which their oppressors deemed dishonorable for tactics more likely to result in substantial victory. A full month before the paper announced Rossa's call for a Skirmishing Fund, Ford published an editorial entitled "How to Make War," where he treats the conflict between the Herzegovinians and Turkey at length:

The Herzegovinians have taught oppressed peoples how to make war. They don't do it in theatrical style. They don't come on the stage—after the bombastic Irish fashion, with drums beating, and 'standard of green unfurled,' and shouting vociferously for the 'bloody Saxon,' with his red-coated battalions, to come forth in all his power and pride and meet them in pitched battle. Not they. The Herzegovinians have adopted more sensible tactics. (*Irish World*, 5 February 1876)

This is important rhetorical groundwork for Ford and Rossa's Skirmishing Campaign. Here we see Ford taking a shot at the respectable tactics long espoused by more traditional "physical-force nationalists" like the Fenian Brotherhood who were still clamoring for a traditional insurrection, or "regular" warfare against the English. These

tactics, of course, were the same type being prepared for publically by the Legion of St. Patrick in 1870, an exercise in respectable military pomp and circumstance that Ford himself helped to lead a few St. Patrick's Days ago. But, if such bombastic overtures to war weren't any longer appropriate, what should be done in their place?

Ford continues with the lesson from the recent Herzegovinian victories:

They are not strong enough to cope with the power of the enemy on any given field. So they break up into little bands. One of these bands dashes into a town and blows up a magazine. Another band destroys a bridge. Another band intercepts and captures a train loaded with ammunition and rations for the Turkish army. In this way the Herzegovinians harrass [sic] and lay waste the power of the enemy. The Turkish generals swear that this style of warfare is very dishonorable. But the Herzegovinians pay no attention to what the enemy says or thinks. The Herzegovinians make war, not to suit the Turks, but to advance their own interests. When will the Irish Revolutionists learn to do this? (Ibid)

This, of course, is a far cry from the Fenian Brotherhood Senate faction's dreamscape vision of traditional military victory, first in Canada and afterwards in Ireland, described in the last chapter. As you'll remember, that vision was heavily bankrolled on a rhetoric of nationalist respectability that would attract the support of sovereign allies like the United States. A decade and some bombastic yet farcical Canadian skirmishes later, Ford was able to lampoon such a vision while calling the movement to more effective tactics. Tactics like the Herzegovinians, who "evidently don't feel disposed to accommodate Turkey. They mean to fight her in their own way, with their own weapons, and in places

of their own selection” (Ibid). Concomitantly, the Skirmishers knew that they would lose claims to respectability, but frame it as a small price to pay for the dignity of victory.

A month after the Skirmishing Fund was announced, Ford keys on this important respectability dynamic in a defense of Rossa’s character as organizer of the Fund. Noting the letters of some readers inquiring as to the safety of their contributions, or the fitness of Rossa to administer the fund, Ford mentions a number of more respectable Irish Americans who might be tapped for the job, including Stephens’s old “miserable hybrid” friend Richard O’Gorman:

But neither Mr. O’Conor nor Mr. O’Gorman nor Mr. Kelley will accept this office. These good gentlemen will take no active part in *any* movement looking to the redemption of Ireland. When they were younger men they felt otherwise. But now these gentlemen are staid and respectable, and they sometimes smile at the dreams of their youth, and, of course, they cannot now be expected actively to participate in anything of the like. (*Irish World*, 15 April 1876)

With a tongue-in-cheek indictment of the decreasing likelihood of respectable revolutionaries to support Irish freedom the more success they have in the United States, Ford announces the futility of trying to both retain a modicum of lace-curtain respectability and actually win Irish freedom. He asks and answers his own pressing question:

Well, what are we to do? If the respectability will do nothing for Ireland, then some common man must come to the front. Some man from the people, and *of* the people, must arise to do battle for the people. This man

is O'Donovan Rossa, and you who mean business will now do all that lies in your power to support and encourage this man. (Ibid)

What those “who mean business” lose in their authorization from recognized powers like the British and the United States, they surely will gain from the dignity of actually achieving freedom, an underdog expediency that outweighs the objections from their oppressors or those allies who didn't come to their aid.

Just like earlier versions of Fenian rhetoric covered in previous chapters, these invocations are directed both at Irish people living in North America and the larger United States public. But, unlike the Constitutional pageantry of the Fenian Brotherhood or the respectable reportage of *The Fenians' Progress*, the underdog expediency rhetoric in the *Irish World* isn't seeking to convince the U.S. public that the Irish are respectable enough to merit recognition as a national sovereign. Instead, on the eve of the U.S. Centennial, Ford and his editors seek to remind their readers that the national story of the United States includes its own foundations in underdog expediency. Indeed, the *Irish World* took every opportunity to mark the deep similarities between the Irish cause in 1876 and the North American colonists' revolution one hundred years before. In so doing, the *Irish World* utilized the kairotic occasion of the United States centennial to remind Irish nationalists that, despite earlier setbacks and the Fenian fiascoes, Irish freedom will assuredly never come without employing physical force. In the *Irish World*, the United States's own path to independence becomes a pedagogy for Irish physical-force nationalists whose militant ardor had been dampened by the decade's setbacks or, worse, by those constitutional nationalists who maintained the eventual efficacy of the

paper petition. Take, for instance, this striking comic in the January 29, 1876 issue of the paper (Figure 4):



Figure 4: "Jonathan and Pat," 29 January 1876

In this picture, "Jonathan" leans idly on his rifle looking at "Pat," who holds a petition behind his back. The men share similar topcoats, shoes, shirts, and ties. The Yank's hat is bigger, his hair longer, and his features definitively more grizzled, depicting an air of

calm wisdom and hard-won experience compared to the boyish features and worried look of Pat. The caption reads:

Jonathan: "What, Pat! Still a' Petionin' [sic] Parli'ment for Self-Government! I Should Think that After Seven Centuries of Such Work You'd a' Got Tired of It a' fore This. Now if You Want Independence Just Do as I Did in '76;" and Instead of Carrying that 'er Piece of Paper to London Make Gun-Wadding of It. Self-Government is to be Got Not Through Parli'ment but Through the Rifle."

Coupled with the image, these words ring like the wise older brother who has seen it all and lived to tell about it. Not only would the Irish need to utilize force, they would have to utilize whatever violent means are necessary to dislodge the British stranglehold over their nascent nationhood. Just like the North American colonists who had come before them, colonists who had tried the petition themselves to no avail. Colonists who realized that the path to freedom was paved by skirmishes in '73, '74, and '75 that would prepare the ground for the military battles of '76.

In light of the Fenian failures of the 1860s, Ford is calling Fenians everywhere to hold fast to their vision of physical force nationalism. But he's also calling them to worry less about their dignity as respectable revolutionaries, and more about utilizing all available means to secure true freedom. At the very same time, he's seeking to remind both the United States and the Irish in North America that the respectable, sovereign nations of the future very likely started like those upstart skirmishing North American colonists in 1773. A lot can change in a century, and Ford wants to remind the United States where they came from even as he teaches the Irish where they must really begin.

Perhaps the most striking redefinition of the relationship between the United States and the Irish comes in a small headline from the July 1, 1876 issue of the *Irish World*, at the height of the Centennial celebration: “How England Treated Her American Fenians a Century Ago.” The item quotes a letter from Lord Cornwallis, commander of the English military in North America, to a subordinate that provides punishment instructions for defeated American rebels. These include total confiscation of property and redistribution to loyalists, imprisonment, and the immediate hanging of “every militia man who has borne arms with us and afterwards joined the enemy” (*Irish World*, 1 July 1876). The letter is accompanied by editorial comments proclaiming, “[Cornwallis’s letter] stands in strange contrast with England’s hollow professions of friendship and good will toward Americans in this Centennial year of their triumph” (*Ibid.*). Whereas in the 1860s, the Fenian Brotherhood sought to draw on history in order to perform an essentially peer-to-peer relationship with the United States government, the *Irish World* is drawing on history here to support identifications in the opposite direction. Instead of seeking to show the United States in the 1860s that the Fenian movement was just as orderly, just as systematic in their governance, just as rule-bound to be recognized as fellow sovereigns, the *Irish World* seeks here on the U.S. Centennial to demonstrate through historical representative anecdotes that the United States was just as unruly, just as irregular in their tactics, just as expedient to be recognized as fellow “Fenians.” The possibility of U.S. pre-recognition of Irish sovereignty or even legitimate belligerent status now a distant memory of wishful thinking from the 1860s, these U.S. citizens are instead trying to draw a vastly expanded circumference for Fenianism that includes the

United States—before, of course, they could rightfully refer to themselves as the United States, back when they, too, labored as an underdog against British injustice.

With this article, the *Irish World's* skirmishing rhetoric vastly expands the circumference of inclusion under the Fenian namesake, paralleling the expanding ideological circumference of acceptable violence with a concomitant expansion of subject positions identifiable as Fenians. It is no longer a restricted term harkening back to a warrior band who defended Ireland from invasion in the island's Celtic prehistory of 300 CE—a term that was recently fought over within the North American Irish-Nationalist movement, and one that was denied to the Irish side of the organization in *Fenians' Progress*. Now, in the pages of the *Irish World*, Fenian is divorced from its solely Irish mythological origins and attached to the United States as fellow earnest freedom fighters against England.

But it's not just the United States, even though their epideictic Centennial served as a terrific kairotic moment to reinforce the point that Fenianism can refer to anyone in their battle against British imperialism. In the *Irish World* rhetorical practice in early 1876, any colony who'd fought against England imposition or occupation to achieve their independence was now worthy of the term. Take, for instance, the news article from the very next week, 8 July 1876, entitled "Hindoo Fenians—The 'Arms Act' in India." In the item, the author notes rising discontent in the Northern districts of India. It seems that "certain refractory mountaineers...do not recognize British rule at all" and that the British forces dispatched to punish them have "just returned with the announcement that certain passes are impassable, and certain 'tribes' obstreperous, and that, in short, the chastisement of these unruly 'natives' must be postponed till next fall." Calling the

English expedition a “sad failure,” the article goes on to report of an Indian boatswain who’d been caught smuggling arms. Playing on the English rhetoric of civilized Christian vs. savage heathen, the author makes a tongue-in-cheek reference to the evangelizing efforts of the English:

if he, unregenerate pagan that he is, had only read the Bible with which he was presented by the coffin-visaged evangelists of Exeter Hall, he would find therein, in 1st Samuel, C., 13,...”Now there was no smith throughout all the land of Israel, or the Philistines said, lest the Hebrews make them swords and spears.” So he would have discovered the criminality of possessing weapons of self-defense, when viewed from a Philistine standpoint. Evidently he is not yet “civilized.” (*Irish World*, 8 July 1876)

Comparing the rhetoric of civilization so lately touted by the English to justify their imperialist policies to that of the Philistines, the author underscores the hypocrisy by which English civilizing equates to subjugation and occupation. The author goes on,

The detection of this Hindoo Fenian in smuggling a few arms...would be of no great importance, but that it occurs just now, when the Indians, despite the invader and his coercion acts, are fastly arming...Should India and Ireland seize simultaneously the next ‘opportunity,’ they will give England a task that she will find too much. It is a subject well worthy of reflection on the part of our Irish revolutionists. (Ibid)

Indeed, the Fianna had come a long way from their roots in Eire to their transnational scattering. A letter to the editor from 7 August 1875, on the eve of Queen Victoria’s visit to the United States, puts this new circumference for the term Fenian most succinctly:

“America is Ireland’s left wing. India is her right wing...Her sons are our brothers. Their tyrant is ours” (James McCormick, *Irish World*, 7 August 1875).

Skirmishing rhetoric in the *Irish World* deftly flipped existing scripts about who is savage and who is civilized, about what violence is regular or moral and what violence is irregular or immoral, and about who should be seen as a Fenian. Though only fellow colonized combatants against England seem to be named Fenians in the practice of the *Irish World*—drawing a global bond of Fenianism between the United States, India, and Ireland—it is clear that the newspaper sought to draw lines of alliance among any underdog people fighting to retain control over their own land and collective destiny. In addition to the deep affinities for the Herzegovinian struggle against Turkey mentioned above, the pages of the *Irish World*, as Whelehan has noted, devote considerable attention to Poland’s plight under the Czar of Russia, to the Ashantee [sic] Wars in what’s now known as Ghana, and to Cuban resistance against their Spanish colonial government. Everyone, it seems, is brought under the enveloping folds of solidarity against imperialism, whether as fellow Fenians fighting the British or as underdog skirmishers granted the dignity of employing violence to assure their own victory rather than satisfy their oppressor’s expectations.

From Skirmishing to Settling: *The Irish World’s* framing of the Sioux Wars

As we’ve seen, the *Irish World’s* rhetoric of skirmishing simultaneously expands the circumference of Fenianism to include the militants of any colony, contemporary or historically, who fight England. It also reframes the moral bounds of acceptable violence to suit the needs of overmatched, oppressed peoples instead of the expectations of powerful countries who have the means to employ traditional military engagements. These redefinitions both help to justify Irish political violence and remind stronger allies

like the United States how much their own path to nation-building resembled the “questionable” tactics of current freedom struggles around the world. With these expanded identifications and redefined circumferences of acceptable violence in place, one might expect a similar framing of the Sioux Wars, which were happening at the same time as this rhetorical work in the *Irish World*. Sadly, though, not *everyone* gets to partake in the spoils of underdog expediency rhetoric aligned against imperial injustice in the *Irish World*, and the Sioux exclusion from that circumference likely has to do with another major rhetorical theme characterizing the paper at this time: settler rhetoric. In what follows, I’ll contrast the paper’s anti-imperial skirmishing rhetoric I’ve detailed above with its coverage of the Sioux Wars, its framing of Indian Bureau corruption, and its section entitled “Lands and Homes” publishing calls for Irish settlement on Western lands. Given the recurring themes characterizing these sections of the paper that affected indigenous peoples’ lifeways, the paper’s settler rhetoric provides a stark contrast to its avowed commitment to underdog justice put forth in the coverage of skirmishing across the globe.

While the *Irish World* was working to draw connections between the U.S. Centennial and the cause for Irish Independence in 1876—and among the tactics utilized across the globe throughout history to resist imperial occupation—the United States military was engaging in bitter battles with Sioux Indians over the territory in Western North America. Despite the rhetoric in their masthead stating that “No man has any more natural rights than any other,” the coverage in the *Irish World* of the Sioux Wars demonstrates the limits of anti-imperialist solidarity in these radical Irish-Americans’ framing. Despite the close attention being paid to international conflicts with England, to

the excesses of Russia in Poland or Turkey in Herzegovina, the *Irish World* seems to pay little attention to the growing conflict bubbling over with the U.S. government and their white settlers on one side and Sioux Indians on the other. Whereas English military conflict with the Ashantee [sic] on the coast of Africa merits front-page discussion, the U.S. battles with the Sioux are barely mentioned. When the conflict is treated, it's typically buried amidst small news items in the general section of the paper. Take, for instance, the battle of June 17th between General Crook and the Sioux, known to posterity as the Battle of Rosebud. Treated in the 1 July 1876 paper, two paragraphs on the conflict are sandwiched between news of the Colorado beetle's arrival in the New England states and the San Francisco municipal celebrations of the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Here's the extent of the reporting:

It is reported that nearly 70 of Gen. Crook's regulars deserted, a day or two after leaving Cheyenne, and 200 miles from the Indians, because they thought that, if they were wounded in battle, they would be left to the Indians.

On June 17, a sharp battle was fought between the United States troops under General Crook and the Sioux Indians, in which nine soldiers were killed and twenty-one wounded. The troops won the fight and camped on the field. (*Irish World*, 1 July 1876)

A spare piece of reportage, there's no space given to the nature of the conflict. There's no reporting on the losses sustained by the Sioux in the conflict. The only sense readers are given of the Sioux is through enthymematic insinuation: since "regular" U.S. soldiers are

typically stouthearted, the Sioux Indians are presumably a ruthless enemy if the mere thought of being left to them has U.S. soldiers deserting their post.

Framing the Sioux combatants as savage, ruthless enemies continues into the paper's coverage of Custer's infamous defeat at the Battle of Little Bighorn. The headline itself speaks volumes: "Terrible Slaughter of United States Troops by the Sioux Indians." Framing the loss as a "slaughter" conjures images of Sioux treachery or underhandedness, especially when the sub-headline notes that the U.S. soldiers had been "Fighting Like Tigers, But Every Man Killed" (*Irish World*, 15 July 1876). Yet, the following columns relate the story of Custer's foolhardy charge "into the thickest portion of the Indian camp," wherein the five companies were "received with a deadly fire, and [were] soon cooped up in a position from which there was no outlet" (Ibid.). Enthymematic tropes of Indian savagery are reinforced here, as the report once again notes that "All [U.S. soldiers] fought desperately, preferring death to capture" (Ibid.).

This piece also relates more of the history regarding the conflict, noting that, "For many years a number of hostile Sioux Indians have been roaming through the northern portion of Dakota and Montana." The article notes that half their numbers have gone "into the reservations and agencies marked out by the Government" (Ibid.). But

The chief Sitting Bull has never made peace with or entered into treaty relations with the whites. He has led frequent raids on the Crow tribe, who are living quietly on their reservation, has made the frontier uninhabitable for whites, unless in very large settlements, and has been a constant source of terror to that region of the Northwest" (Ibid.).

Having contrasted these hostile Sioux with the more peaceable Indians who've accepted their forced assignment to reservations, and having described these hostile Indians' behavior as cause for terror to white settlements, the writer relates the U.S. government response:

Last fall it was decided to send a military expedition against [Sitting Bull]...to warn the hostile tribe that it must break up camp and report at the agencies within three months, or troops would be sent to punish it. Sitting Bull received the message with contempt, and three columns of United State stroops [sic] were thereupon equipped and sent out on active service.

(Ibid)

Written with no trace of irony regarding the fact that the United States is claiming the right to "punish" a "tribe" who refuses to cede their lands without a fight, this is a far cry from the paper's framing a week prior of the Herzegovinians as "insurgents" who "absolutely reject the armistice" or Indian "mountaineers" who don't recognize British authority. Ford's paper here is deploying a subtle version of the "savage" rhetoric that has long been used by England against Ireland and other peoples. Clearly, the *Irish World* understands the paradox, as the final paragraph of the story laments the outcome of Custer's "rash though daring game" by utilizing the term "savage" in scare quotes. I quote at length to draw out some salient themes:

The worst of it is that this signal triumph on the part of Sitting Bull will probably bring to his aid thousands of warriors who have hitherto been neutral and [3-4 words unreadable] war is sure to follow. The frontier settlers will flee for their lives. Colonization will be interrupted. The

hostile tribes will in the end be extirpated or subdued, but not without a terrible waste of blood and treasure. Of course there will be little or no sympathy for “the savages,” although they are really more sinned against than sinning. All the trouble they cause finds its origin primarily in the swindling and brutality of rascally agents and traders. These abuse the Indian and plunder him until he is naturally driven to retaliate; and once taking the warpath, he regards every whiteman as an enemy. There has been an abundance of proof during the past few years to show that a radical change is required in the machinery through which we deal with the Indian. (Ibid.)

This last part, the nod to being sinned against rather than sinning, is a powerful moment. On the one hand, it denotes that Ford’s paper is well aware of the tragic story being woven between the United States and American Indians. It also preserves a semblance of nobility for the Sioux fighters, yet it’s framed with a tragic sense of impending doom for the Sioux way of life. And in the same breath, it also laments the slowing of “colonization” and settlement, the very cause of the unrest between the two peoples for time immemorial. In place of white settlement as the primary pressure causing vitriol between the peoples, all the blame is laid upon a few bad apples and the overall corruption of the government bureaucracy that has grown to manage or “deal” with the Indians.

Perhaps most telling, when speaking about these Sioux fighters there is no trace of the underdog expediency rhetoric granted to other peoples fighting from below. Other peoples like the Herzegovinians are framed as insurgents who have the right to not

recognize the authority of the Turkish government. The Irish, of course, are considered to be at perpetual war with the British government, a government that is framed as beyond the tools of reason or moral petition. But these Sioux are expected to recognize governmental authority and go peaceably to reservations? Indians here are simply wards who, at best will be managed in perpetuity. At worst, they'll be extirpated.

Even the nod at the end of that passage recognizing that something needs to change in the governmental structure for dealing with the Indian relationship seems less altruistic when read alongside other passages of the *Irish World* leading up to these deadly conflicts. Clearly, it's not just the Indian who stands to benefit from the uprooting of government corruption in the Indian Bureau. Take, for instance, this passage from a year earlier, headlined "The Indian Bureau:" "That corruption prevails in the Indian service as now administered, is notorious; and if the Bureau cannot suppress it, then the Bureau itself should be suppressed or re-organized" (*Irish World*, 7 August 1875). Despite the subject matter, the complaints of the Indians themselves are absent from the piece. In fact, there is no mention of Indians at all. Here's the charge laid against the bureau: "The chief sins charged to the Bureau are sins of omission, rather than commission; but even the former cannot be disregarded where such important interests are at stake" (Ibid.).

That final line, "where such important interests are at stake" is ambiguous. Yet, given the lack of coverage devoted to Indian country in the rest of the paper, it seems difficult to imagine that those interests referred to are Indian interests. The ambiguity carries over a few weeks later, in a piece entitled "The Indian Bureau Again," wherein more extended treatment is given to the grievances of Osage and Chippewa Indians. The

article calls for an investigation both for discrimination against Indians who've converted to Catholicism, and "because [the Indian Bureau] has tolerated gross mismanagement and fraud" all the way to the top of the organization (*Irish World*, 28 August 1875). The piece doesn't claim specific fixes to be worked for these Indian peoples. Rather, it closes with a more general call: "Where there is so much smoke, investigation might probably detect some fire. The Indian Bureau needs a thorough overhauling" (Ibid.). Still, there's no precise call for what, exactly, needs to be done about the Bureau. While there's no doubt that many American Indian peoples would have agreed with the *Irish World* on this point, the ends envisioned by these parties are likely vastly different.

A hint at what the authors are getting at in their critiques of the Indian Bureau can be found in other passages throughout the paper during this time period. In that same issue from August 7, a full column is devoted to letters regarding the conflict over the Black Hills. One headline states, "Let the Black Hillers Alone." Arguing that there is no statute that prohibits U.S. citizens from entering the Black Hills to seek their fortune, the writer intimates who the real roadblock is:

the Black Hills country may be the means of strengthening our paper treasury, and putting large quantities of bullion in general circulation is, I think, the ardent desire of every man in the country, excepting, of course, the Indian ring and their hangers on and parasites. After the government quietly let 1,500 or 2,000 miners into that country at an enormous aggregated expense, I believe, for one, that it would not only be an atrocious, but a most cruel and unjust act on the part of the government to [prohibit others from going]. (M.O. Healy, *Irish World*, 7 August 1875)

Here we see the major disagreement that many have with the Indian Bureau. It's not primarily the corruption that is bleeding the Indians dry through broken treaty promises and the siphoning of their promised resources into Bureau agent pockets. Rather, it's the gross injustice of limiting who is allowed first crack at the Black Hills country gold deposits. It's the fact that some cherry-picked friends of the Indian Bureau have been granted access to gold country—a "quietly" allowed 1,500 or 2,000 miners—while the government debates limiting access to other settlers and prospectors. Indeed, this very writer goes on to exclaim, "If the government has to feed, clothe, and support the Indians at the expense of the tax-payers of the country, which they have, and are now doing, what in heaven's name do the Indians want of the Black Hills at all? They do not need it or make any use of it, not even for a hunting ground or for any other purpose" (Ibid.).

In light of passages like this, the complaints from the Osage and Chippewa mentioned above seem to function as additional representative anecdotes whereby the paper can push for a change in the Indian Bureau. This change would benefit white settlers, especially those like the Irish who may not have had as many establishment ties to agency insiders. It's doubtful, though, that these changes would necessarily ameliorate the basic dynamics of land confiscation facing Western Indian peoples. More importantly, this author employs a fundamental tenet of settler rhetoric that "unsees" the active presence of indigenous peoples on a landscape. To say that "Indians" do not "make any use" of the Black Hills is to ignore the insistence of both Lakota and Cheyenne peoples that the Hills are sacred to them, the center of their cosmology. To say they do not "need" the Black Hills is to ignore the 1868 Treaty of Laramie that promised the Black Hills to the Lakota in perpetuity, the very violation of which helped to set off the

latest round of Sioux Wars in the first place. Beyond unseeing the claims of these people to their lands—claims that were recognized in a treaty with the U.S. Federal Government a mere seven years before this comment—this comment also unsees Lakota way of life, rendering their approach to living on the land unrecognizable to this writer. Clearly, this writer’s logic seems to be saying, if the Sioux aren’t interested in mining the gold and silver discovered (by Custer, no less) there, then they must not be using nor in need of the land.

This inability to recognize the veracity and fullness of another people’s way of life on a landscape has been a central trope used to justify the confiscation of indigenous lands in North America since contact between Europeans. And here, in the midst of a paper dedicated to underdog anti-imperialism, it is being used continually to refer to the salient issues in the Black Hills controversy. In another letter from the August 7, 1875 issue, a professor who was sent to assess the quality of the gold stores in the country writes that the gold out there is far less substantial than has been advertised. The sub-headline of the piece states, “The Great Wealth of the Black Hills Lies in its Grass Lands, Farms, and Timber, Which is Not very Encouraging to Gold-seekers.” But this is not said as a deterrent to settlement. Rather, the piece seems to be written both to discourage casual gold-seekers from trying their hand at a difficult trade rife with danger and uncertainty, while also encouraging people to think of the region as another place useful for more permanent patterns of settlement. Given the tenor of the piece, then, the headline could have easily continued to state, “but quite encouraging to new settlers!” (Ibid.)

And this is the prime predicament of an Irish-American newspaper that is painting itself as avowedly anti-imperialist and committed to Irish freedom while remaining avowedly invested in helping Irish immigrants to quite literally take their rightful “place” in the United States democratic republic. As the paper’s masthead states, the *Irish World* is Irish in Race, and American in Nationality:

To the flag of the United States alone do we owe allegiance; to the flag of no other power on earth do we look for protection. This country is our home and is forever to be the home of our children. Let us always feel this. There is a small class of bigots who, with Anglo-Saxon arrogance, strut themselves before people as the true and only genuine American type and affect to look upon us—and indeed upon all others differing from them—as an alien element, who owe all the privileges we now enjoy to their great-souled generosity alone...We enjoy no *privileges*—we possess only *rights*. Whether we look to the past or to the present—whether we regard abstract justice or actual service rendered—our title to this land is as old and strong as that of any other element. (*Irish World*, 7 August 1875).

Here we see the ambiguities of U.S.-Irish identification from the Fenian rhetoric of the 1860s unequivocally wiped away. In place of an exile topos that leaves the door open for return to the home country in O’Mahony’s rhetoric, the *Irish World* masthead instead declares the United States as its permanent national home—and the Irish people’s rightful participation in the U.S. story. Unstated as it is, such rightful title entails participating in some of the very same settlement patterns that it repeatedly invokes to demonize the

British's treatment of Ireland over seven centuries of settlement, subjugation, and forced governmental assimilation. This is not to mention that their title to this land can only be "as old and strong" as all other elements if the indigenous presence on this land is actively erased or forgotten.

Caught in this tension of Irish personal needs and radical political ideals, the paper frames the Sioux conflict in 1876 as a frightful yet inevitable outcome of the corruption within the Indian Bureau, rather than a frightful conflict hastened by continued settler pressure on their dwindling Western lands. Moreover, the *Irish World* paints Sioux combatants as wards of the state who, though "sinned against more than sinning," are nonetheless misbehaving and must be "punished." Nowhere is their struggle framed as a national one replete with the resources of underdog-expediency that the paper has so carefully cultivated for the Irish. Nowhere is the Sioux response framed as an irregular mode of warfare aimed not at pleasing the Americans but at gaining self-actualization, by any means necessary, for their own people.

Whelehan has noted that Ford reserves some harsh words for the treatment of the Sioux in a column at the close of the conflict. Quoting from a piece in the 20 January 1877 *Irish World*, 12 days after the final battle of the conflict, Ford states "Ought the Indian to be anxious to welcome a 'civilisation' which he finds breaking solemn compacts, cheating him out of his patrimony, and hunting him down like a wild beast?" (*Irish World*, 20 January 1877; quoted in *The Dynamiters*, 115-116). Yet, this call sits uncomfortably next to a standing column in the paper called "Lands and Homes" that published countless letters without comment about the necessities of settling Irish

immigrants on Western lands. A standing section of the paper, it was often published with this tagline:

The object of this department is to supply information to such of our people as believe they can better their condition by settling on land. Practical suggestions are therefore solicited from conscientious and disinterested men. *The Irish World* is biased in favor of no particular state or section, and communications will cheerfully be welcomed from all points. (*Irish World*, 5 February 1876)

Some of these letters in 1875-76 reference the contested lands that are part of the brewing Sioux conflict. Take, for instance, this letter from John J. McCafferty in the 9/18/75 *Irish World* that extols the virtues of settling at the gateway to the Black Hills:

I'd say that this is the most direct and easy route to the far-famed Black Hills, and if they are thrown open to the miners, we'll have a very large emigration through here next spring. In fact, to those seeking homes in the West, and having a few hundred dollars to start, I would say to come here. (*Irish World*, 18 September 1875)

Yet, as the Sioux conflict wore on, and as few folks were striking it rich in the gold prospecting, these letters become increasingly sour on the idea of people heading to the Black Hills. By March 25, 1876, a column notes a report from General Merritt that calls it folly to come to the Black Hills, especially for "broken down city people...recruited by these lying adventurers, greedy to skin them of what little means friends have contributed to sustain their delusive hopes" (*Irish World*, 25 March 1876). These folks, the General says, are "leaving the cities from the fear of starvation" and now

“find themselves in a strange, bleak and inhospitable country, face to face with the certainty of starvation” (Ibid.). The General also notes that people going north will find “swarms of hostile Indians to meet them” even though “General Crook is after them now with a large force, and I think will give them a thrashing” (Ibid.).

By January 1877, letter writers draw an even bleaker picture. A writer from Granite Canon in Wyoming Territory writes that winter has come early and “The country is full of dead broke refugees from the Black Hills who have neither a cent in their pocket nor half clothes enough to keep them from freezing” (“Sympathizer,” *Irish World*, 13 January 1877). What’s more, those who already have jobs with the railroad are now facing a 5-10% paycut due to the oversupply of labor. He closes the letter by stating unequivocally, “My advice to all those who are living in God’s country and among civilized people is to stay there if life can be sustained in any manner” (Ibid.).

Though the excitement of Black Hills settlement seemed to quickly wane, the “Lands and Homes” section throughout the conflict hummed with letters from all over the United States and Western territories describing the opportunities available to enterprising and hard-working settlers. What’s more, there seems to be a concerted effort in these sections of the paper to galvanize a more official settlement movement for the Irish-American community. In a column entitled “Practical Suggestions,” in the “Lands and Homes” section of the February 5, 1876 issue, the writer calls for well-to-do Irish Americans to organize in larger cities and create Irish Emigrant Aid societies that would create a pipeline for outfitting new Irish emigrants with the information, pathways, and resources to successfully settle on government lands out West. The piece contrasts the lack of Irish organization for helping emigrants to gain ownership of land to that of other

nationalities like the Germans or Scandinavians. And it closes with an indirect dig at the waste of money and energy on nationalist schemes:

We have not the standing or influence we might have, if a larger proportion of our people was independent, wealthy, and happy. We are too prone to waste our energies and means on vague and impractical schemes. Let us hereafter be more selfish, and at the same time, more self-sacrificing: selfish in trying to secure good homes for ourselves, and self-sacrificing in doing something to aid and encourage our people to become possessors of the soil. (“Agriculturalist,” *Irish World*, 5 February 1876)

No doubt, the impetus to help more Irish folks become “possessors of the soil” was borne out of the best intentions for the well-being of the Irish diaspora. There are letters calling for the wealthy Irish in Eastern parishes to organize societies for the express purpose of helping poor Irish families afford the start up costs of setting up Irish colonies in the Northwest (*Irish World*, 8 January 1876). Yet, in the process of helping the Irish to enjoy more of the opportunities of government land in the 1870s, they must also ignore this pressure on the Indian peoples who are being fought and relocated in order to secure U.S. rights to this acreage.

At the close of the Sioux War, in late September 1876, a column appeared in the miscellaneous letters section entitled “The Indian Problem,” with a subheading that states “How the Remnant of the Race May be Saved from Extirpation.” The column begins with a writer from Washington, DC, who claims to be “deeply interested in the welfare and civilization of the Red Man.” This writer frames the problem, again, as one of corruption in the Indian Bureau. And, presumably in order to raise the stakes of the issue,

begins in dramatic fashion about the plight of native peoples on the North American continent. Speaking about the Indian Bureau's "peace policy," the writer claims that it is:

causing the Indian to pass away like the mist from before the morning sun...they are verging upon the wave of civilization and progress that is sweeping in from the Pacific coast, and the day is not far distant, if the present galling system of persecution, fraud, and deceit continues to be administered them, when they will disappear forever from the face of the earth. (*Irish World*, 30 September 1876)

The writer continues with a litany of "tribes" from the East—including the Six Nations, who continue to maintain their sovereignty to this day—who have "passed away like the snows of winter more than a hundred years ago, and, were it not for history which has preserved the names of the tribes and some of their most celebrated chieftains, we would scarcely know that they even existed" (Ibid.).

Disregarding for a moment the factual errors of these eastern peoples' extinction that the writer is using as a cautionary tale to persuade readers that a change is needed in governmental policy, it's striking to note these intertwining themes. First, it is not settlers and land theft that are overtaking these peoples, but a wave of "progress and civilization." This demonstrates that a change in administration from the Indian Bureau to the Army is aimed to protect Indians from privation as they are more gently eased into modern life. Coupled with the theme of extinction and disappearance, this rhetoric of care is consistent with the progressive policies of the time period that would, a mere three years later in 1879, bankroll founding headmaster of Carlisle Indian School Richard H. Pratt's educational intention to "kill the Indian" in order to "save the man."

The writer proposes a solution—and marshals the professional opinions of numerous Army generals to bolster it—that would transfer all dealings with the Indians from the Indian Bureau to the Military. It claims to have surveyed 50 army officers, all of whom concur that this is the absolute best policy decision. The writer goes on to quote from such military notables as General Sherman, General Sheridan, and General McDowell. Sherman states, in a subtle continuance of the caring rhetoric of salvation through assimilation and army protection above:

If it be the policy of the Government, as I believe it is, to save the remnant of these tribes, *it can only be accomplished by and through military authority*...the army naturally wants peace, and very often has prevented wars by its mere presence; and if entrusted with the exclusive management and control of the annuities and supplies, as well as force, I think Indian wars will cease, and the habits of the Indians will be gradually molded into a most necessary and useful branch of industry—the rearing of sheep, cattle, horses, etc. In some localities they may possibly be made farmers. (Ibid.; emphasis original)

Sheridan fleshes out the army's vision more fully, stating:

There would be a power over [Indians], which would make them respect persons and property, and they would respect that power. The attempt is now being made to govern these Indians without exercising any power over them at all by simple suasion, while at the same time, we acknowledge the necessity of having the severest laws for the government of intelligent white people. (Ibid.)

Taken together, these quotations demonstrate that the army views the Indian Bureau as simultaneously too weak to make the Indians respect them, too inept to prevent settlers from violating governmental promises, and too corrupt to keep the government's promises. At the same time, these quotations also reveal quite distinctly the mode to which these Indian peoples have been reduced, in the eyes of the government and military, to simple wards of the state that must be kept, controlled, and eventually tamed into more useful behaviors.

On balance, the *Irish World* likely took a progressive stance toward the United States's "Indian Problem" given the time period. But the vast majority of their pages dealing with conflicts between American Indians and the United States, including its reporting on the Sioux Wars, its framing of Indian Bureau corruption, and its call for more resources to assist Irish settlers—reveal a very different stance on American Indian resistance than they grant to other oppressed peoples fighting an occupying force. Gone is the alliance rhetoric of terming the Sioux's fight an underdog's skirmish. Nowhere amongst the calls to settle government lands out west is there a recognition that this is a replication of some of the very same dynamics that had fueled the Irish-English conflict for centuries.

Skirmishing and Settling: Interconnected and Conflicted Irish Routes to Dignity

At the height of the Sioux Wars, the *Irish World* published a letter from James O'Reilly in New York that preserves a trace of the rhetorical alliance that Edward Fitzgerald posited almost a century before between the Irish and the American Indian struggles. Titled "Indians and Irishmen," O'Reilly states:

The Indians in America are immeasurably better treated than are the Irish people by the English Government; yet the “savage” red man is quick to resent an injury or indignity. Recently General Crook attempted to engage the services of Red Cloud against the Sioux bands. The chief replied that his men were not children or squaws to be persuaded into fighting against their brethren. Is not that the proper answer to give the English recruiting officer who attempts to seduce the Irish peasant into keeping down *his* brethren? If Irishmen cannot learn this lesson from the “savage” then I had rather be an Indian than an Irishman. (James O’Reilly, *Irish World*, 17 June 1876)

The assertion that the Irish have been treated worse than Indians is less interesting here than the equivalence seen in their circumstances by this letter writer. That is, despite the editorialist’s bias toward Irish suffering and American magnanimity, he still sees a similarity between the relationship American Indians have to the United States and the one the Irish have with England. What’s more, he applauds Indian solidarity amongst themselves as compared to the Irish’s penchant to enlist and serve against their own people’s interests—and sometimes even their own people’s bodies—in the British army. This author goes so far as division with Irish traitors and direct identification with North American Indian “loyalists.” This identification preserves a trace of the United Irishman leader Edward Fitzgerald’s observations in North America in the late 18th century, observations that would directly influence the tenor of the Irish Independence movement of 1798. Here, just under 80 years later, much has changed in the material conditions influencing this most recent iteration of Irish nationalism, and these competing rhetorics of skirmishing and settling in the *Irish World* crystallize quite clearly the paradoxes

facing politicized Irish-Americans as they work toward Irish freedom in Ireland, and Irish dignity in North America and beyond.

On the one hand, skirmishing rhetoric marks a new chapter in physical force nationalism's attempts to make common cause with the United States republic during the Fenian era. In place of the Fenian Brotherhood's posturing as a nation-in-exile throughout the 1860s, the *Irish World* turns the respectability narrative on its head in the 1870s. The Irish nationalist movement in North America is no longer being framed as every bit the respectable, rule-bound nation that the United States has become. Rather, it's being framed more realistically as the desperate underdog who's been perpetually oppressed by a violent regime that is beyond reason or the tools of moral suasion. Concomitantly, rather than seeking to make Irish nationalists look more like the present day United States through Constitutional conventions and bonds of the future Irish republic, the *Irish World* instead posits a strategic remembrance of the United States as it once was: a rebellious, desperate band of skirmishers whose claims to nationhood were written off as laughable by the British and other powers of the day. The United States is still looked upon as an instructive model for Irish nationalists, but it is no longer for their Constitutional acumen. Rather, it is for their irregular violent methods that made possible the successful revolution that birthed their famed Constitution.

Skirmishing rhetoric seeks to broaden the circumference of acceptable violent responses to imperialism. As Whelehan has demonstrated, it first calls into question the supposition that British-imposed order is a moral order that is inherently civilizing rather than inherently violent. It continues by drawing connections among many freedom movements the world over, demonstrating through a rhetoric of underdog expediency that

the successful revolution engages violence on its own terms, and in ways that will help lead to victory rather than simply moral respect. What's more, it notes the ways that the oppressor will denigrate such violence for its immorality. And finally, skirmishing rhetoric relies on a much different iteration of the long-posed similarity between the Irish and the U.S. colonial stories, drawing kairotically at the U.S. Centennial on a strategic remembrance of the U.S. Revolution that foregrounds its original uncertainty and its need to rely on methods that the British deemed "irregular" and immoral. In so doing, these would-be skirmishers in the *Irish World* seek buy in from the Irish living in the United States and the support of the larger public of United States citizens for a turn in Irish nationalist methods of political violence, harvesting a different part of the U.S. story in order to bolster that turn as similarly responsible, appropriate, and moral to the U.S. response to British injustice. This invitation both seeks to renew bonds of affiliation to the United States, while also challenging common sense moral authority about the respectable means by which the United States gained its own freedom.

In the process, then, the circumference of Fenianism grows considerably. Where opposition to English occupation and imperialism exists throughout history, there now stands a Fenian! And where a people exists who are resisting the impositions of an occupying force, the *Irish World* is often there too, justifying that people's turn to violence through a rhetoric of underdog expediency and calling on the Irish to engage similar tactics in their own fight for nationhood.

Yet, such affordances to the underdog are largely absent in the *Irish World's* coverage of the Sioux Wars. Coupled with the paper's coverage of Western settlement and corruption in the Indian Bureau, the *Irish World's* skirmishing rhetoric clearly

doesn't extend to the Sioux or other American Indians. Despite the bloody conflict, and the Sioux's obvious resistance to a treaty-breaking and occupying imperial force, the *Irish World* greets the American Indian plight in Western North America with settler rhetoric in place of skirmishing. Instead of the underdog expediency granted to resistant violence elsewhere, Sioux violence is treated as punishment-worthy transgressions of a people who are wards of the state rather than legitimate belligerents fighting injustice. In place of a pragmatic take on Herzegovinian guerilla-style violence, the *Irish World* runs headlines about Custer's defeat being a "terrible slaughter" and publishes stories insinuating Sioux savagery by focusing on U.S. troops' fear of being captured and preference for desertion or death. In place of a vision wherein Sioux fighters are granted any means necessary to achieve their freedom, writers in the *Irish World* seem to see military management and assimilation to U.S. ways of life as the only solution. And in place of settlement itself as the problem facing American Indians in the West, the *Irish World* lays blame at an Indian Bureau that deprives both Indians from their treaty scraps and the majority of U.S. citizens from rightful access to their appropriated lands.

At base, both of these rhetorics in the *Irish World* fulfilled the paper's call to fight for Irish nationality and the dignity of the Irish race in the context of being American citizens. Both are meant to assure Irish dignity and expand Irish opportunity for more freedom, whether that means skirmishing toward nationhood or becoming "possessors of the soil" in North America. But, taken together, the implications of both rhetorics work at cross-purposes. Skirmishing purports dignity to underdogs everywhere, while settling bankrolls Irish success in North America on the colonization and erasure of American Indian nation-peoples. Just as the Senate faction of the Fenian Brotherhood employed a

strategic remembrance of Edward Fitzgerald that actively erased his solidarity with Indigenous peoples in North America, the settling rhetoric of the *Irish World* must actively erase the ongoing resistance of the Sioux from membership in the ranks of true skirmishers.

At the close of 1876, then, the vanguard of Irish nationalism in the *Irish World* had considerably evolved the Irish relationship to political violence, to the United States, and to Empire. Unquestionably transnational in their ability to connect the imperial dots, they advocated well for a shift in political violence by drawing attention to the success of other freedom struggles that relied on skirmishing rather than traditional battlefield insurrection. This shift in tactics would eventually lead to the dynamiting campaigns in the 1880s, a far cry from the Canada skirmishes of 1866, 1870, and 1871, and further still from the Fenian rising in Ireland of 1867. Even as they distanced themselves from a premature performance of U.S. Constitutional nationalism, they justified their turn to more controversial methods in large part by mobilizing strategic remembrances of skirmishing in the U.S. colonial story. Yet, at the very same time that they sought to reduce the United States to fellow skirmishers, the writers and letters in the *Irish World* sought to cement the Irish claim in North America as fellow settlers. Even these most politically progressive Irish nationalists, then, could not extend their vision of justice to include American Indians. To the contrary, a main avenue towards Irish dignity here in the 1870s directly depended on North American indigenous disappearance.

CONCLUSION

On January 8, 1876, the *Irish World* printed a letter from Fenian General John O’Neill. In it, he calls upon wealthy Irish Americans to invest in the future of the Irish people by helping the poorer Irish to make it out west. As O’Neill put it, “I believe I have read and carefully studied every letter that has been published in the *Irish World* for the last two years under the head of ‘Lands and Homes,’ but I have yet to notice a satisfactory answer to the question: ‘How can the poorer classes of our people be assisted in getting to the West and getting a start on a farm?’” (*Irish World*, 8 January 1876). O’Neill had a solution in mind, and his letter pitches an investment scheme that would establish Irish Emigrant Aid Societies in eastern parishes so as to finance poorer folks’ costs to relocate and establish Irish Catholic colonies on government land in return for repayment with interest. In O’Neill’s framework, this plan was virtually assured success. After all, “My observations in travelling through the West for the last four years fully confirms me in the opinion that no class of people prosper better on the land than do the Irish.” (Ibid.)

Written just under a decade after the first Fenian invasions of Canada, O’Neill’s rhetoric here preserves some of the most important constitutive strategies that this dissertation has traced from Fenianism’s founding in 1858. O’Neill invokes a unified Irish “people” who naturally come together across class divisions and inherently possess the shared group traits of good land stewardship, a racialized peoplehood that invites the Irish to renew their bonds of affiliation with each other. Despite the many changes in radical Irish-American constitutive visions over this time, the invocation of a collective Irish subject remained foundational to each new iteration of Fenian constitutive invitations, and O’Neill trades deeply in it here.

O'Neill also invokes an admonitory constitutional wish of crisis, warning the Irish that they are destined to fall behind other immigrant groups in gaining a foothold in the United States if they don't take action. As he puts it, "Unless they bestir themselves in time the Irish people of this country will continue to be the 'hewers of wood and carriers of water' for the landed-proprietors" (Ibid.). Similar to the constitutive invocations of crisis detailed in Chapter 3, O'Neill invites readers to rethink their experience of public time, quickening the pulse with invocations of a closing window of opportunity.

Perhaps most importantly, O'Neill's performance here couples with his previous resume to provide a fitting representative anecdote for the larger arc of U.S.-Irish identifications in the Fenian agitations from 1858-1876. After all, O'Neill came to the United States as a 14-year-old Famine exile in 1848, quite similar to those exiles from the earliest membership of the Fenian Brotherhood who sought to remain, above all, consubstantial with their comrades in Ireland. He joined the U.S. army during the Utah Mormon rebellion, but deserted for California afterwards, and later reenlisted for the Union effort. O'Neill's path of military service displays a conditional and shifting identification with the United States, a flickering bulb of allegiance to the Red, White, and Blue similar to the shifting constitutional invocations of the Fenian Brotherhood. After joining the Fenian Brotherhood, O'Neill was attracted to the Senate faction's "Men of Action" at the close of the U.S. Civil War. He quickly became the leading proponent of Canadian invasion, assuming the Senate Wing's presidency after Roberts stepped down, and personally leading the final official Irish invasions into Canada in 1870 (as the Fenian Brotherhood) and 1871 (unaffiliated with the official Fenian Brotherhood). Perhaps more than anyone, O'Neill embodies the shift in dominant Fenian constitutive

vision from a separate nascent Irish sovereign to an Irish-American freedom fighter aiming to establish New Ireland. As we saw in Chapter 4, this vision would have Fenians seek to simultaneously free their homeland while establishing a state of their own for the exiled Irish in North America, a state that would eventually place itself within the “benign and protecting folds” of the American flag. Finally, after these failures, he became a surveyor and real-estate prospector in the North American West, allowing the vision of an eventual Irish Republic to fall away while he set to work accomplishing the latter vision of helping more Irish folks find a place of their own in North America. Founding O’Neill City in Nebraska in 1874, the General thus completes the circle from exile to sovereign to skirmisher to self-motivated settler.

This dissertation has asked how the revolutionary Irish nationalist movement of Fenianism sought to constitute itself across borders and across time from 1858-1876, both in spite of and in response to shifting geopolitical and material constraints. It has asked what strategies were invoked to support this constitutive vision, and what implications those choices had for the direction of the movement. It has asked how Fenians in North America negotiated their place even as they sought to remain loyal to Ireland, and what the implications of those negotiations had for other marginalized groups in North America. I have argued that the Fenians invoked key hortatory constitutional wishes of the “people,” of Ireland as “home,” and of legitimate Irish national “sovereignty.” Invoking those wishes in conjunction with admonitory constitutional wishes of “crisis,” they sought to foster revolutionary Irish unity while substantiating their movement as legal, their violent vision as moral, and their identities as respectable. I have also argued that they attempted to modulate the geopolitical,

ideological, and identity circumferences of their movement in order to take advantage of kairotic opportunities for Irish freedom developing in the wider global geopolitical context. The Fenians increasingly performed a vision of national sovereignty in hopes of securing recognition as sovereigns from the United States. Due to the vast numbers of Irish in the United States, and the political instability brought on by the U.S. Civil War and early Reconstruction, the United States feigned recognition of Irish sovereignty up until the very moment that the Irish actually cross the water into Canada and put their bodies into the argument.

As such, the Fenians provide a useful counterpoint to Nancy Welch's work on the disorderly, or unruly, rhetoric of working class agitation such as the Lawrence Mill strike. In her work on unruly rhetorics, she points out the contested terrain of what constitutes a violent response. As she details, much of the press and even some of the most stalwartly progressive voices tended to decry workers' methods of disrupting the workday or public space as "violent" in their unruliness. Welch argues that studying these class-ways of arguing with our bodies usefully expands the available means of persuasion for students of public rhetorics today. The Fenians, on the other hand, sought to use thoroughly respectable middle-class ways of organizing such as national public conventions and representative elections to justify a thoroughly violent and unruly end—bloodshed in Ireland and British Canada.

The Fenian location as a protean nation, invoking sovereignty and modulating the circumference of their movement to help their chances for recognition from more powerful sovereigns, then, helps us to investigate the inherent unruliness of nationalist and sovereign state rhetorics. That is, at the same time that we recover unruly rhetorics

“from below” that seek to open rhetorical space such as the Bread and Roses or Republic Windows strikes, we might also seek to reframe the rhetorics “from above” for their own inherent violence. The Fenians stand square in this crossroads where such hierarchies flip, and the emancipatory becomes the oppressive. For, surely, Fenian invocations of U.S. citizenship and loyalty to the U.S. republic are cherished topoi for any group working for full participation in the civic life of the United States. But just as these strategies open space for Irish-American participation in their adopted State—even if such participation began as only a tertiary goal of their movement—they worked against other possible identifications in the Irish story, effectively burying other possible strategic remembrances of solidarity with American Indians and Africans in Irish history. In place of recognition of Irish national sovereignty, the Fenian agitators would earn a consolation prize of recognition as legitimate citizens and worthy settlers.

In chapter 2, I traced how the Fenian movement sought to constitute a unified people across the ocean, presenting a vision of Ireland as “home” and the Irish “people” as united transhistorically across time and distance. I also traced how that unity was constantly interrupted by distrust born out of distance, and by the separate national constraints that pushed North American Fenians into ever more public displays of Irish nationalist legitimacy while Fenians in Ireland tried their best to operate in secrecy and anonymity. I found that even as each wing of the movement continued to invoke a unified Irish people as a constitutive vision, their unity over tactics disintegrated around them in 1865-1866. While the ideological effects posited by Charlandian constitutive rhetorical theory help to explain the constitutive invitations of the Fenian Brotherhood, it cannot account for the splintering of the group’s revolutionary telos. Despite each group’s claims

to Irish consubstantiality—and the rousing cheers of that Jones’s Wood audience when Stephens invoked “the people” ready to fight and die for “home”—there was no longer a prescribed end to the constitutive narrative. In place of a singular *telos* united for action in Ireland, the radicalized collective Fenian subject had created a choose-your-own-adventure ending, a dialogic constitutive cacophony that wrangled over fighting in Ireland, fighting in British Canada, or simply biding their time.

Conceptually, the Fenians demonstrate how the *telos* in the narrative of a constitutive rhetoric can get stretched to the breaking point in transnational contexts as the collective subject splinters in their “illusions of freedom” through negotiation of separate national constraints. While the Fenians’ failure to remain unified partly confirms Drzewiecka’s insight that diasporas “strategically enact” constitutive identities “in response to changing political and cultural conditions” (18), their staunch early refusal to identify with the United States as home complicates the reasons Drzewiecka finds for such “strategic enactments” (18). While she finds that “Diasporas have to protect themselves from possible accusations of betrayal of their “American” nationality,” and thus must alter the terms of their constituted collective subject in relation to others, the Fenians’ collective subject remained intact as the militant Irish Revolutionary, at least until Johnson’s proclamation in 1866. Rather, their negotiation of the shifting contexts in North America causes them to alter the ending demanded of them, and thus their actions to fulfill the narrative demanded of their collective Irish-ness. The Fenians invite us to rethink the narrative teleology inscribed in Charland’s constitutive theory into more of a dialogic habitus. While Fenian constitutive efforts no doubt fashioned a Fenian habitus of

radical Irish unity, they did not produce a lockstep finish to the narrative of Irish freedom encoded into Fenian discourse and practice.

The Fenians' struggle to sustain transnational constitutive unity invite further rhetorical studies of transnational justice movements, both contemporary and historical, to gain greater insights into the sticky difficulties facing actors who feel themselves consubstantial with a cause far away, yet are hindered in their work by distance and national constraints. As a group making sovereign constitutional wishes beyond numerous nation-states and across continents, tracing the ways that the Fenian wishes must ply an "inevitable give-and-take between fixity and contingency" (Olson 96) returns our attention to the ways that national contexts—Constitutional circumferences and wishes—intervene on identifications aimed at solidarity and social uplift beyond a single border. In these increasingly interconnected times, the Fenians provide a fruitful historical representative anecdote for the ways Constitutional wishes are interrupted by overlapping wider circumferences beyond a movement's control.

I have also argued that Fenian constitutional wishes of sovereignty both relied on recognition from and became mutually constitutive of their wider circumference in the United States Constitutional scene. In conjunction with an admonitory wish of crisis, this scenic framework introduced in Fenian constitutions provided fantastic motivational fixity for North American growth, at least at first. But the scene also came to constrain possibilities for future Fenian direction as it pushed the organization toward democratic ends and, concomitantly, more North American concerns. By tracing the Fenian Brotherhood's evolving Constitutional enactment of wills, we see an organization that comes to resemble the United States more and more as it seeks to secure U.S. recognition

of Irish sovereignty. Their work here demonstrates Scott Lyons's insight about the rhetoricality of sovereignty: it is enacted through discourse and depends on recognition from power. The Fenians proved formidable enough to coerce the United States to let them play awhile at sovereignty, but not powerful enough to secure permission to attempt to prove their sovereignty through arms. In the process, though, their invocations of solidarity with the United States constitutional scene helped to further cement its own sovereign vision in North America, one that has long been fraught with racial and settler colonial exclusions.

Christa Olson has called for a stance of learning through travel and a displacement of the field's representative anecdotes to new sites. She enacts her call by examining the constitutive visions of Ecuador through Burke's constitutional theory. The Fenians join this work in calling the field beyond a simple focus on the U.S. nation-state as the sole site of rhetorical action in the Americas. But more than simply travelling, the Fenian case calls us to do a better job of thoroughly exploring the emplacement of rhetoric right here in our backyard, a call that echoes a growing collection of work that asks the field to decolonize its theoretical frames of reference for rhetorical practice on this continent (Olson, "Raíces"; Baca and Villaneuva, 2010; Powell, 2004; Villaneuva, 2003; Wanzer 2012). Given that Olson's anecdote helps to show the troubled relationship between imposed citizenship and indigeneity, her work and the Fenian anecdote might prompt us to examine those same dynamics more fully in Burke's original anecdote, helping us to further *unsettle* North American rhetorical theory. Following Scott Lyons, then, it might prompt the field to ask how Indigenous nations negotiate the imposingly wished Constitutional Circumference of the United States Constitution as they pursue

their own Constitutional wishes? How might the Constitutional wishes of other marginalized rhetors on this continent, when invoking the U.S. palliative wishes of liberty, freedom, and equality, paradoxically further substantiate their own oppressed “is” by reinforcing the U.S. Constitution’s sovereign power? Given these God-terms’ ongoing palliative ought rather than a substantial is for many people living on this continent and seeking citizenship, what new coordinates might we need to begin thinking by? To broaden the frame in this way concomitantly calls us to treat North America as a contested rhetorical ground of overlapping nationalisms, from 1492 to this day, populated by indigenous, immigrant, and mestiz@/creole rhetors whose praxis is sometimes aimed at a vision of sovereignty beyond the U.S. nation-state.

Though the Fenians’ vision of sovereignty was certainly beyond that of the U.S. nation-state, I have also argued that their invocations of rhetorical sovereignty helped to reinforce the United States’s claim to sovereign power on this continent. This becomes especially true when the dominant constitutive vision of the Fenian Brotherhood turns to the invasion of Canada. To do so, they invoke constitutional wishes in *The Fenians’ Progress* that widen the geopolitical circumference of acceptable military engagement to include British Canada. To justify this, they present a strategic remembrance of Irish-American national unity that places the U.S. and Ireland in timeless consubstantiality through the figures of Edward Fitzgerald and Richard Montgomery and the invocation of Irish Manifest Destiny. This strategic remembrance creates a necessitarian principle of collusion with settler colonialism that obscures earlier Irish nationalist solidarity with the Haudenosaunee through Fitzgerald and the United Irishmen. This shift in geopolitical circumference marks the point at which the Fenian Brotherhood becomes more about

Irish success in the United States than Irish freedom as a collective in Ireland. Indeed, O'Mahony's dream of a final call that would enable success in Ireland, thus "enabl[ing] me and my brother Fenians to leave this country forever" (*New York Times*, 5 March 1866), was converted to the dream of New Ireland and eventual U.S. statehood. In this faction's constitutive vision, Ireland will someday be freed, but the exile will remain in North America, co-creating the Manifest Destiny dream of the United States. Even though it was rendered largely toothless by President Johnson's proclamation against Canadian skirmishes in June 1866, this constitutive vision of the Senate Wing remains in circulation until 1870, when the chastened Fenian Brotherhood reunites under a much less sovereign Constitution, a fully civic organization rather than a self-proclaimed sovereign.

The Fenian dream of the 1860s largely dashed, the constitutive vision of Irish-American Fenianism shifts remarkably in the 1870s, especially as the Fenian Brotherhood loses preeminence. This gives way to a more robust counterpublic sphere anchored by the transnational analysis of the *Irish World*. Playing kairotically off the epideictic opportunities of the United States centennial, the paper invokes a constitutive vision that expands the ideological circumference of acceptable violence from traditional military battles to more irregular tactics like skirmishing. In the process, they invert the alliance relationship of the United States and Ireland, invoking not an Irish Republic awaiting U.S. recognition but a strategic remembrance of the United States as an oppressed, anti-imperial North American British colony skirmishing for freedom through irregular tactics just like Ireland. Yet, this reversed trajectory still leaves intact the Irish

American investment in settling, as the circumference of legitimate anti-imperialist violence is not extended to the Sioux in the pages of the *Irish World*.

Thus, we see a picture emerge of a radicalized immigrant group using their access to citizenship as a tactic to justify violence for Irish freedom, adjusting the ratios of their performance of a U.S.-Irish borderlands subjectivity to suit the exigencies of the moment. Yet, even as some of them resisted the corrupting influences of the land of “self and greed and grab,” stalwartly avoiding becoming a “miserable hybrid” on their path to freeing Ireland, each iteration of the Fenian movement substantiated their constitutive vision for Ireland through an invocation of U.S. law and Constitutionality. The United States, then, forms the unquestioned foundation that would legitimize their cause. Faced at first with allegations of illegality from Britain and charges of a secret society by Catholic clergy, the Fenians responded by denying British law and invoking U.S. law as their legitimate grounds for lawful organizing. Faced then with the problem of sovereign recognition to guarantee their international status as a legitimate national belligerent, the Fenians write a Constitution, eventually declare themselves the National Assembly of the Irish Republic in exile, and quite literally declare their sovereignty rhetorically so as to someday enact it in deed. Many Fenians, faced with dwindling prospects in Ireland, trade their vision of sovereign Ireland for sovereign New Ireland, a stepping stone to an Irish republic with the added bonus of a new Irish enclave state in North America. Finally, in the 1870s, with Fenian rhetorical sovereignty chastened and rebuked by the refusal of the United States to recognize and back Irish sovereignty, Fenians like Patrick Ford reverse their strategy for substantiation. Instead of seeking U.S. recognition of Irish sovereignty, they sought U.S. recognition of its own roots in irregular skirmishing and, thus, solidarity

with Fenianism. Other Fenians, like General O'Neill, trade their swords for ploughs, their Fenian Constitutions for real-estate contracts, and fully join the race with other white-skinned immigrants and U.S. citizens to partake of government-owned land recently wrested from American Indian nation-peoples.

As you'll recall from the preface, I wondered if these politicized Irish might have been able to see and enact solidarities with other differently marginalized folks in the 19th century United States. And if not, why not? If my argument has been persuasive, it's clear by now that their investment in gaining sovereign recognition for Ireland led them to invoke full solidarity with the United States, which included strategic remembrances that buried potential solidarities with American Indians and other marginalized groups on this continent. These tactics, aimed at gaining Irish freedom in Ireland and assuring Irish dignity in North America, reinforced the United States's own palliative constitutional wishes of freedom and justice for all. By mimicking the U.S. Constitution's wishes to gain their own freedom, these radical Irish helped the United States to further build towards a persistent substance, a substance that denied sovereignty to American Indians in North America and repeatedly denied full rights of citizenship to African Americans. From exiled sovereign-skirmishers to settler-citizens, the Fenian Irish took their place in North America. Not allied to the United States, as once envisioned, but instead fully within them. And, in so doing, the Irish freedom fighters add another chapter to what Malea Powell has called "the meaner events" within the histories of rhetorical practice on this continent.

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