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In 1994 Kevin Gardiner, an analyst working for Morgan Stanley, coined the phrase "Celtic Tiger" as an analogy between Ireland's economic boom and that of the "tiger economies" of Southeast Asia. Gardiner's Celtic Tiger, elevated to the category of zeitgeist by economist and TV personality David McWilliams in his best-selling *The Pope's Children* (2005), soon became shorthand for a period of sweeping change, not only in the Irish economy but socially and culturally too.

Celtic-Tiger Ireland came to an abrupt end in 2007, replaced by recession, an EU bailout and a feeling of collective downfall. Then in August 2015 the *Independent* hailed the apparent end of the slump; after eight years of EU-mandated austerity, Dublin cafés were again being thronged by "hip urbanites" at brunch, while "the bearded and the beautiful" held "techy start-up meetings" over grain-free, gluten-free cakes. Although economic growth was still frail behind this glossy façade, the title of the *Independent* piece wondered: "Is this the rise of the Celtic Phoenix?" (Norton 2015). *The Economist* answered largely in the affirmative (November 19, 2015).

More recently, commentators have worried that Ireland may be repeating the same economic cycle that led to collapse (O'Keeffe, 2017). Revealingly, as O'Keeffe noted, the very phrase "Celtic Phoenix" was coined in fiction by Charles O'Carroll Kelly, the shady developer best known as the father of Paul Howard's character Ross O'Carroll Kelly.

An Irish pop-culture icon, the subject of a weekly newspaper column since 1998, seventeen novels, two non-fiction works, four plays and one audio album, Ross O'Carroll Kelly has served as Paul Howard's vehicle to chart the progress of the Celtic Tiger through boom, bust and apparent rebirth, through the eyes of the privileged class behind it. In a 2011 interview Howard explained that his inspiration had come from George MacDonald Fraser and Bret Easton Ellis (Massey 2011). The present

volume, however, suggests a different reading of Howard's work, as a subversion of a distinctly Irish form of autobiography where fact and fiction coexist, and the hero's journey is inextricably linked to cultural and historical context.

The volume consists of eighteen chapters, distributed in eight parts. Topics range from seventeenth-century Quakers' letters to post-Celtic-Tiger Irish cinema, and cover an array of creative genres including narrative, poetry, drama, radio and cinema. Within this diversity the collection is bound together by its broad approach to the topic of crisis—national, familial, personal, existential—and the recurrence of themes such as autobiography, memory, identity, and the ways in which Irish creators have tackled received notions of Irishness.

The volume's opening chapter, "Full Moon," is a brief first-person narrative piece by author Peter Cunningham, himself a noted satirist of the Celtic Tiger, who is later interviewed by Juan Francisco Elices Agudo for the final chapter. Cunningham's narrator offers a fitting example of the meandering Irish autobiographer, whose musings on a nightly walk wander from flora and fauna to martyred saints, from the Shannon to Jerusalem, under the all-embracing light of the Moon. But the author himself is also a privileged witness to the financial underbelly of the Celtic Tiger, and the volume aptly closes with Cunningham's reflections on the national crisis and his own social role as a chronicler of disaster.

Part two establishes the volume's general theoretical framework. First, Christina Hunt Mahony defends the pioneering role of Irish writers such as George Moore and Oliver St John Gogarty in realising and exploiting the "artifice" inherent to autobiography. She defines the Irish tradition of autobiography as a mixture of the English "egocentric tradition of personal narrative," and an Irish vernacular form of autoethnography which "placed the writer inexorably within a community and an era." (9). Mahony then takes the reader through an impressively broad range of authors from W. B. Yeats to Hugo Hamilton, focusing on the tropes of Ireland as an "imaginative home place," and the writers' vindication of their Irish credentials.

Next, Rosa González Casademont analyses two contrasting examples of recent Irish cinema in order to gauge the response of Irish audiences to representations of Ireland on the screen. The first is John Boorman's under-appreciated *The Tiger's Tail* (2006), which charts the dark side of Celtic-Tiger Ireland through the misadventures of a property developer; the second is John Michael McDonagh's record-breaking *The Guard* (2011), an irreverent portrayal of an Irish rural community disrupted by a gang of murderous drug traffickers. González Casademont notes that Irish audiences seem to have shunned *The Tiger's Tail*'s "relentless inventory of social and moral ills," (28) in favour of *The Guard*'s politically incorrect but fundamentally noble protagonist, in a story with no hint of moral judgment. She concludes that crisis seems to call for "flippant and anarchic sketches rather than solemn lectures or scathing counternarratives" (30).

Part three opens with Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos's study of the work of documentary filmmaker John T. Davis. Davis's films reveal themselves as a visual counterpart to the

written autobiographies analysed by Mahony. This is most obviously the case with *The Uncle Jack* (1996), which explores the life of Davis's titular uncle as the driving force behind his own growth as a documentary filmmaker. But in each of Davis's films, his protagonists are identified as "alter-ego foils" to the director himself (52), in a perpetual quest for self-realisation.

Shahriyar Mansouri continues by tracing the "meta-national Irish identity" espoused by Irish modernist writers, one which defines itself "by challenging the identitarian, conventional perception of Irishness, be it colonial, anti-colonial or nationalist" (55). In a sophisticated albeit chronologically vague theoretical discussion, the author dissects these writers' opposition both to the British colonial regime and the backward, oppressive nationalist establishment that replaced it after 1922.

Marisol Morales Ladrón brings the reader back to specifics through the analysis of Deirdre Madden's novels, classified into two main categories: those focusing on creativity and the role of the artist, and those dealing with the Northern Irish Troubles from the female perspective. Once again autobiography and identity emerge as salient themes, as Catherine in *The Birds of the Innocent Wood* (1988) "re-writes and re-creates her life in her diary" with her own mother as a twisted model (80-81).

Part four delves more deeply into the theme of personal trauma in the oppressive atmosphere of post-independence Ireland. Asier Altuna analyses Dorothy Nelson's fictional families, riddled with incest, domestic abuse, alcoholism and poverty (95), as clinically accurate depictions of dysfunctional family dynamics, challenging "the hegemonic notion of the Irish Catholic nuclear family as a repository construct of national, religious and political identity" (92). Silvia Díez Fabre provides a more optimistic reading of Jennifer Johnston's *Two Moons* (1998), which explores the topics of traumatic memory and lack of communication across three generations of women in a family. Whereas Nelson depicts family secrets as suffocating consequences of trauma and social isolation, Johnston focuses on their power for bonding, and celebrates the healing power of words.

Part five is the least cohesive in the volume, but it also introduces a refreshing change of periods and methodological approaches. Antonio José Couso looks at the deathbed letter of a late-seventeenth-century Dublin Quaker, while Purificación García Sáez dissects the legal background to Heathcliff's takeover of the Linton and Earnshaw estates in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847). The Irish connection is more tenuous here, merely consisting in the hypothesis that Heathcliff had been modelled on the throngs of Famine immigrants who had taken refuge in Liverpool. Still, the article shows the potential of historicism to enrich our understanding of literary works. The last chapter in the section, María Gaviña's study of Brian Friel's *Volunteers* (1975), brings the volume back to the dominant themes of national identity and the oppression of the individual by both the British and Irish nationalist establishments.

Humour becomes the central theme of part six. Verónica Membrive first analyses Walter Starkie's sarcastic, partially plagiarised account of the Easter Rising from his

Scholars and Gypsies (1963), which represents another of Christina Hunt Mahony's unreliable self-narratives. Munira H. Mutran then walks the reader through Mark Doherty's play *Trad* (2006), whose ancient main character Da, old enough to have been alive during the Famine, allows Doherty to bring memory back to one of the mythical trauma moments of Irish history, then undermine it with humour. After crediting his family's survival on his mother's berry-picking skills, Da grumbles: "Do you know what's it like? Living in a house full of people who smell of jam?" (174).

The last four articles in the volume revert to seriousness. Paul Stewart looks into Samuel Beckett's un-aired radio broadcast "The Capital of the Ruins" (1995), his essay "Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit" (1949) and his novel *How It Is* (1964), to deconstruct Beckett's grim view of human relations as predicated on coercion and torture. Burcu Gülüm Tekin traces echoes of Joyce's *Dubliners* in Roddy Doyle's middle-age-crisis story "Recuperation" (2003). Aida Rosende Pérez then looks into Emer Martin's *Baby Zero* (2007), closing the volume's extended exploration of memory and identity. Rosende Pérez opens with Jay Winter's two great "memory booms": the 1890s-1920s, when the emphasis was on the construction of homogenous national identities, and the 1970s-1980s, when memory became "a way of casting about in the ruins of earlier identities and finding elements of [...] a 'usable past'" (207).

This new preoccupation with memory is explained as the result of a threatened sense of identity, an idea that finds a corollary in Pilar Villar Argáiz's analysis of recent Irish poetry by Eavan Boland, Paula Meehan and Michael O'Loughlin, among others. The radical alteration of Ireland's urban and human landscape brought about by the Celtic Tiger leads these writers alternately to mourn the loss of the Ireland they knew, and try to come to terms with the "black cormorants" who, in Michael O'Loughlin's metaphor, have come to fly above the swans, creating a space of diversity, but not integration.

The necessary lapse between artistic production, scholarly engagement and final publication makes it difficult for academia to keep pace with current events; this raises the question of how—or more likely whether—recent developments, from the recession itself to the "Celtic Phoenix," and especially the 1916 Centenary commemorations, may have affected Irish historical memory and sense of identity. It is hoped that the editors and contributors will take up the challenge in future volumes; the present work is a solid starting point.

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