

# **UCD***scholarcast*

**Series 1: (Spring 2008)**

---

**The Art of Popular Culture:  
From 'The Meeting of the Waters'  
to *Riverdance***

**Series Editor: P.J. Mathews**

© **UCD***scholarcast*

## **P.J. Mathews**

### **'Doing Something Irish': From Thomas Moore to Riverdance**

The aim of this series is not to offer a comprehensive consideration of Irish popular culture from the early nineteenth century to the present but rather to offer insights into key moments in the story of Irish popular culture since the publication of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* in the early nineteenth century. The term 'popular culture' is deployed in various ways in the critical literature on the subject and needs some clarification here. Firstly, it can be taken to denote a general sense of 'authentic' folk culture produced by 'the people'. This can encompass everything that constitutes collective cultural expression from songs, games and religious rituals to patterns of social and political organisation—culture as it is popularly produced. Such expressions of vernacular culture are usually considered to be germane to 'the people' and in many cases inimical to the influence of the modern institutions of church and state.<sup>1</sup>

Antiquarian interest in Irish popular culture of this nature is well represented by the writings of William Wilde who published his influential *Irish Popular Superstitions* in 1852. In his anti-utilitarian critique of the disappearance of popular cultural practices in nineteenth century Ireland he was subtly aware of the relationship that can exist between the expression of popular culture and attempts by the authorities to regulate it. 'Well honoured be the name of Theobald Mathew', he wrote, 'but after all, a power of fun went away with the whiskey'.<sup>2</sup> Behind this apparently flippant comment, one can detect a concern that something that Wilde considered to be a vital and salient feature of Irish popular life was being threatened by the rigorous demands of cultural reformation insisted upon by the Catholic-led devotional revolution that swept across Ireland from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Its main impact was to replace popular, local and independent forms of worship with new centralised and standardised practices in a concerted attempt to consolidate the power of the church authorities.<sup>3</sup>

However as Gearóid Ó Cruaí has persuasively argued in his essay on the 'Merry Wake', traditional folk practices often operated as 'a central social mechanism for the articulation of resistance' by the peasantry to 'new forms of civil and clerical control' well into the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> In this sense traditional popular culture often proved to be very successful in repelling the advances of the newer modernising orthodoxies.

In another usage of the term, 'popular culture' can refer to the mass-produced offerings of 'the culture industry'—to use the phrase coined by Horkheimer and Adorno.<sup>5</sup> In this definition, popular culture is primarily a commercially produced one and the emphasis is on culture as it is popularly consumed. As Clair Wills points out in her lecture 'Neutrality and Popular Culture' in this series, mass popular culture in Ireland follows a distinct trajectory in comparison with experience in Britain and the US in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, in the figure of Thomas Moore, Ireland produced a writer whose mass-produced work achieved the pinnacle of popular success in the early part of the nineteenth century and endured in the

popular consciousness well into the twentieth century, making him a figure of some importance in any historical understanding of the dynamics of the culture industry from an Irish perspective.

Moore's *Irish Melodies* were not only circulated in print form but were widely performed in drawing room and concert hall, making a lasting impression on the popular culture of his own moment in Ireland, Britain and beyond. Indeed it may not be too fanciful to suggest that in many interesting ways Thomas Moore's life anticipated that of a latter day celebrity pop star: born into the ranks of the Catholic middle-classes in 1779, Moore aspired to inhabit the sphere of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy but also harboured a deep resentment of the injustices which that class perpetrated on his fellow Irishmen and women. It is this ambivalence which informs many of his better-known works and which infuses the *Irish Melodies*. He associated himself with what were considered to be dangerous and seditious revolutionaries like Robert Emmet but he also cultivated the favour and patronage of wealthy members of the British establishment, among them Lord Moira. He was at once a key figure in Irish cultural nationalism in the nineteenth century and a stalwart of the London drawing room. In his most popular work he managed to capture something of the haunted mystique of old Ireland while appealing to the genteel conventions of British taste. He was a master at trading on his liminality, offering a sentimental portrait of Gaelic defeat to his British admirers while appearing to his Irish supporters as an active member of the nationalist revolutionary underground. The complicated posturing that he was engaged in is not entirely unlike that of latter day celebrities who can trade on their anti-establishment credentials and cosy-up to the world's most powerful politicians when it suits them. Indeed his triumphant homecoming to Ireland in 1835 was met with the kind of popular adulation that any latter day celebrity would envy.<sup>6</sup>

One of Moore's most popular melodies, 'The Meeting of the Waters' gives its name to this lecture series and embodies the easy lyric sentiment which made him such a popular phenomenon in the nineteenth century. What is notable about this song is the fact that the speaker is decidedly under-whelmed by the scene of natural beauty that he recalls where 'the rivers Avon and Avoca' (50) meet close to Rathdrum in Co. Wicklow.

Yet it was not that Nature had shed o'er the scene  
Her purest of crystal and brightest of green;  
'T was not her soft magic of streamlet or hill,  
Oh! No—it was something more exquisite still<sup>7</sup>

So, it is not the bounty of nature that makes this valley in Wicklow the sweetest valley in the world: in fact it is the human presence of Moore's close friends that aggrandises the natural landscape:

'T was that friends, the belov'd of my bosom, were near,  
Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear,  
And who felt how the best charms of nature improve,  
When we see them reflected from looks that we love. (50)

This contrasts very interestingly with Wordsworth's recall of lone encounters with nature in 'The Prelude' written around the same time. The Vale of Avoca is certainly an idealised pastoral retreat, a spiritual home, but a convivial one.

Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease  
And our hearts like, like thy waters, be mingled in peace. (50)

The key to Moore's popularity lay in the fact that his unspecified 'storms' could easily be interpreted in the London drawing rooms where his songs were performed as the pangs of a homesick Irish exile in London. In Dublin, however, they might be taken as a coded reference to the defeat of the United Irishmen or the death of Moore's friend, Robert Emmet, who had hidden in the hills of Wicklow a few short years before this poem was written. As one critic puts it 'his evocations of Irish landscape, of the remembered valley or home of the exile, are evocations of place that the spirit never leaves of an Ireland that persists through all changes and catastrophes as the beloved place'.<sup>8</sup>

If a song like 'The Meeting of the Waters' represses the political complexities of its historical moment a more obviously political verse like 'Oh breathe not his Name' gives them fuller expression. Here Moore can be credited with introducing the idea of the spectral or ghostly presence of the lost leader into modern Irish literature in English—the title, of course, referring to Emmet's famous speech from the dock where he famously enunciates: 'When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then let my epitaph be written'.<sup>9</sup> The withholding of the epitaph brilliantly suspends closure on Emmet's death, and takes him into the realm of the undead, where he can exercise an influence on Irish politics well beyond the moment of his execution. The opening of Moore's song eludes to this:

Oh breath not his name, let it sleep in the shade,  
Where cold and unhonour'd his relics are laid;  
Sad, silent, and dark, be the tears that we shed,  
As the night-dew that falls on the grass o'er his head. (6)

On the face of it the song seems to draw a line under the events of 1803; 'let Emmet rest in peace', it seems to suggest. However, the word 'shade' conjures up an image of the ghost or spirit of Emmet whose memory must be kept alive, if unarticulated. How can this be achieved? Well, by a ritual of weeping:

'Sad, silent, and dark, be the tears that we shed'. (6)

If tears are to be shed they must be shed under the cover of darkness. On the face of it Moore seems to be buying into a stereotypical and disabling Irish mawkishness. The closing couplet, however, bears a potent and ominous political message:

And the tear that we shed, though in secret it rolls,  
Shall long keep his memory green in our souls. (6)

If anything, the song gestures towards the existence of an underground or parallel universe of clandestine revolutionary solidarity that will draw strength from the

memory of Emmet. This is a classic example of the ambiguity of intention that characterises the *Melodies* and makes them available to a number of different, often competing readings.

Moore tapped into the spirit of antiquarian interest in Ireland's past and popularised it for a non-academic audience. Ironically, he created a vogue out of a decidedly aristocratic notion of Gaelic history in verses like 'The Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls' and 'Dear Harp of my Country'. His idealised and remote Gaelic past was lightly peppered with under-stated suggestions that the glories of yore might some day be resuscitated. Even a personal song like 'Oft in the Stilly Night' has a wider cultural resonance in its portrait of the decline and ending of a way of life once embodied in domestic harmony and largess.

Concluding the preface to the 1856 edition of his *Irish Melodies* Moore wrote:

...I now take leave of the Irish Melodies, – the only work of my pen, as I very sincerely believe, whose fame (thanks to the sweet music in which it is embalmed) may boast a chance of prolonging its existence to a day much beyond our own. (xxxv-vi)

Before century's end, however, Moore's status as Ireland's national poet was being assaulted by the young W.B. Yeats who had designs on that title himself. In a major statement on tradition and influence in nineteenth century poetry, Yeats was very clear about the bardic company he wished to keep:

Know, that I would accounted be  
True brother of a company  
That sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong,  
Ballad and story, rann and song...

However in the second stanza of 'To Ireland in the Coming Times' he very pointedly omitted any reference to Thomas Moore, preferring instead to be counted 'With Davis, Mangan, Ferguson'.<sup>10</sup> In his *Autobiographies* Yeats, who had a clear vested interest in discrediting his poetic precursor and rival, was more explicit in his dismissal of what he described as Moore's 'convivial Ireland with the traditional tear and smile'.<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere he criticised Moore's highly commercial verses for being 'artificial and mechanical'<sup>12</sup>—terms not unlike those later used by Horkheimer and Adorno in their famous essay on the culture industry. In a similar way, although from a very different political perspective, Yeats saw Moore's industrially-produced verses as the opiate of the Irish nationalist masses enchanted by a writer whom he insultingly referred to as 'merely an incarnate social ambition'.<sup>13</sup> He regarded Moore's capitulation to the mores of the London drawing room in the same way as Horkheimer and Adorno were later to view the control that the culture industry had over the spontaneity of talented performers. In fact, it may not be too fanciful to suggest that Yeats's clear contempt for mass popular culture began as an allergy to what he considered to be his fellow Irishman's effete, saccharine and ubiquitous verses.

Yeats may have taken his cue from the radical polemicist William Hazlitt who was a scathing critic of writers who allowed themselves become what he called 'intellectual

pimp[s]' and 'hireling[s] of the press'.<sup>14</sup> As early as 1825 Hazlitt damned Moore's verses for draining the radical energy out of his Irish subject matter:

If these national airs do indeed express the soul of impassioned feeling in his countrymen, the case of Ireland is hopeless. If these prettinesses pass for patriotism, if a country can heave from its heart's core only these vapid, varnished sentiments, lip-deep, and let its tears of blood evaporate in an empty conceit, let it be governed as it has been. There are here no tones to waken Liberty, to console Humanity. Mr. Moore converts the wild harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box!<sup>15</sup>

A sense of Moore's languid capitulation also informs Joyce's Stephen Dedalus in his reflections on the statue of 'the national poet of Ireland' which he views as he traverses College Green:

He looked at it without anger: for, though sloth of the body and of the soul crept over it like unseen vermin, over the shuffling feet and up the folds of the cloak and around the servile head, it seemed humbly conscious of its indignity. It was a Firbolg in the borrowed cloak of a Milesian.<sup>16</sup>

These weighty thoughts contrast very well with those of Leopold Bloom who, on passing the same statue in the Lestrygonians episode of *Ulysses* muses about the appropriateness of placing the author of 'The Meeting of the Waters' over a urinal. On balance, though, Joyce was far more positive about the value of Moore's work. As Anne Fogarty argues in her lecture in this series, Joyce's tendency is to depict popular culture as a site of resistance and the very basis by which his characters may contest the debilitating effects of capitalism and of political imperialisms.

The waning of Moore's reputation in the latter half of the nineteenth century was, not surprisingly, more pronounced among the literati than among ordinary people. The density of reference to the *Melodies* in Joyce's work is an interesting case in point: for although Joyce could never claim to be a popular writer—particularly in the early part of the twentieth century—his work is heavily invested in the quotidian realities of his own moment which are reflected through a deep engagement with Moore's work. Into the twentieth century, the songs were given an extended after-life by the recordings and wireless broadcasts of popular artists such as John McCormack, Margaret Burke Sheridan and the British tenor Webster Booth. As late as 1991 Seamus Deane could confidently write that 'Moore is still in terms of popular appeal, Ireland's national poet'.<sup>17</sup>

The *Melodies* have also made their mark on contemporary popular culture: the tune of 'Come on Eileen' by Dexy's Midnight Runners (which became the biggest selling UK single of 1982) is introduced by the opening bars of 'Believe Me, if all Those Endearing Young Charms'. And versions of the *Melodies* have been given by a range of popular cultural icons from Bugs Bunny—who also famously played 'Believe Me, if all Those Endearing Young Charms' on the piano in a 1950s cartoon—to Nina Simone who recorded a powerful version of 'The Last Rose of Summer' in 1964. 'The Minstrel Boy', too, has informed the soundtracks of numerous films—particularly those with obvious Irish-American themes.<sup>18</sup> That song, of course, has a deep connection with Fire and Police Departments across the United States and was

prominently used during the post-9/11 mourning period. These songs were once hugely popular because of their poetic manipulation of a late-eighteenth-century sense of a vanishing, yet enduring, Irishness: ironically, in the present cultural moment, they have themselves become vestigial signifiers of Hibernian ethnicity. Any casual search for Thomas Moore in that great repository of contemporary popular culture—Youtube—will confirm as much.

If the story of transnational Irish popular culture begins with Thomas Moore in the early nineteenth century, it wasn't until the end of the 1800s that writers and intellectuals began to theorize the impact of mass cultural production on the Irish psyche during the industrial century. In 1892 Douglas Hyde, sounding the keynote of the Irish Revival, wrote that: 'the present art products of one of the quickest, most sensitive, and most artistic races on earth are now only distinguished for their hideousness'.<sup>19</sup> In the course of his influential essay, 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland', he built up a narrative of Irish cultural degeneration brought on by the un-thinking absorption of what he perceived to be vulgar British pop culture.

We must set our face sternly against penny dreadfuls, shilling shockers, and still more, the garbage of vulgar English weeklies like *Bow Bells* and the *Police Intelligence*.<sup>20</sup>

Hyde, however, was not against popular culture *per se*, but made discriminations along national lines. He was careful to suggest that 'every house should have a copy of Moore and Davis'. In this sense he diverged from Yeats who, as we have seen, found most forms of mass-produced culture repugnant (whether home-grown or not). Yet as Eddie Holt shows in his contribution to this series, there was one form of mass-produced popular culture that Yeats found irresistible—the newspapers. His not-inconsiderable body of writing for the press ranges from literary journalism to letters to the editor. As Holt demonstrates though, Yeats displayed considerable journalistic acumen over the span of his career: to make ends meet during lean times, to publicise his literary endeavours, to plead Ireland's cause, and to further his own political agendas.

The fact remains, though, that Yeats is squarely associated with an uncompromisingly hostile view of popular culture. In her book *Our Irish Theatre*, Lady Gregory recalls a lecture which he gave in February 1900 attacking the scourge of British popular culture in Ireland. 'The materialism of England and its vulgarity are surging up about us', Yeats thundered. 'It is not Shakespeare England sends us, but musical farces, not Keats and Shelley, but *Titbits* [sic]'.<sup>21</sup> This is an early expression of the 'filthy modern tide' idea that he would develop in his later poem 'The Statues'.<sup>22</sup> For the record, *Tit-Bits* was one of the most successful of a wave of popular magazines that appeared in Britain in the closing quarter of the nineteenth century. It catered to a new readership created by compulsory education and was characterised by a combined emphasis on improvement and amusement. '*Tit-Bits* established a model of rewriting material from many sources, using cheap newsprint and selling in volume' and 'spawned many imitators'.<sup>23</sup> With a masthead that read: 'from all the most interesting books, periodicals and contributors in the world', it clearly functioned as the *Reader's Digest* of its day. It is not a surprise that it would appeal to that fictional embodiment of Victorian middle-brow trivia, Leopold Bloom, who famously creates a filthy modern

tide of his own as he reads *Tit-Bits* while emptying his bowls at the end of the Calypso episode of *Ulysses*.

The Revivalists' answer to what they saw as the coarsening influences of mass culture was to invest heavily in retrieving what they believed to be *the* authentic folk culture of the people. As John Fiske has argued, though, bemoaning the loss of 'the authentic' can be a fruitless exercise in romantic nostalgia.<sup>24</sup> However it is also important to point out that Revivalist appeals to vanishing folk practices did also play a strategic role in subverting the distortions of the colonial mindset. Lady Gregory, Douglas Hyde and J.M. Synge were enthusiastic folklorists who created new literary possibilities from their experiences in the field. Once again, as with Thomas Moore, the re-presentation of vestigial traces of a true and essential Irishness was central to the Revival project—in this case, though, it was an earthy, peasant Irishness which had been actually encountered, in contrast to Moore's delicately-polished fragments of Gaelic aristocracy. Needless to say, the Revival produced a highly mediated and constructed version of national identity rather than the real thing—whatever that might be. This version, however, was recruited as a bulwark against the advance of popular culture from the imperial centre that was being enthusiastically embraced by a rapidly modernising Irish bourgeoisie.

Inevitably this process led to an untenable bifurcation at the heart of the Revival project whereby the category of 'mass popular culture' was associated with foreign imposition while so-called 'authentic Irish folk culture' was sequestered almost exclusively for high-minded literary purposes. This may have produced some fine contributions to European modernist literature but it didn't always speak to the thousands of Irish people who were regular readers of *Tit-Bits*. J.M. Synge, however, was to emerge as one of the earliest critics of the Yeatsian esoterics that quickly became synonymous with the Revival. In the preface to his poems written shortly before his death in 1909 he wrote that:

...when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation, in the way men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops.

In the end, argued Synge, the best writing should be appealing to 'strong men, and thieves, and deacons, not by little cliques only'.<sup>25</sup>

The Irish Revival is often considered to be a movement characterized by a definite hostility to the popular culture of the entertainment industry—especially that imported from Britain—and indeed, there is much truth behind this assessment. Yet it does not tell the complete story: there were other forces within Revivalism that supported the development of popular entertainments along Irish lines. The Gaelic League, after all, was intent on seizing the Irish language from the antiquarians and making it popular again by associating it with popular entertainment. Horace Plunkett's Co-operative Movement was also hugely important in its encouragement of local initiatives—such as sports, traditional music and village libraries—for the betterment and amusement of ordinary people. Yet if one thing distinguishes Revivalist popular culture it is the emphasis on a participatory, parish-based idea of cultural engagement in opposition to the passive, consumerist model of the culture industry.<sup>26</sup> Ironically, during the 1990s

it was the commercialisation of this largely participatory 'traditional' culture—be it dance, music or Gaelic games—which fuelled a whole new phase in the story of Irish popular culture, increasingly being played out on the global stage. Elaine Sisson's Scholarcast in this series explores some of these issues in detail by contrasting ways in which the figure of Cuchulainn was adapted to create an idea of modern male citizenship, with more recent deployments of that heroic image.

The rest of the lectures in this series address key moments in the story of Irish popular culture up to the present time. In her distinguished work on the cultural history of Ireland during the Second World War, Clair Wills describes how a sense of Ireland-under-siege-from-foreign-popular-culture that emerged during the Revival is re-activated and intensified. The complex dynamics of the Emergency also boosted the production of popular culture along Irish lines especially in amateur drama, film and journalism.

Moving into the Celtic Tiger period Paige Reynolds explores the globally popular form of contemporary Irish drama. As she perceptively argues, Irish playwrights now make liberal use of the cinematic and narrative patterns of Hollywood movies—a striking reversal of the trajectory of reference from the drama of the Revival. This would suggest that the American film industry provides a productive tool for exploring Irish identity and history in the era of globalisation. But if Irish playwrights have taken up Hollywood, Hollywood has also taken up Irish dramatists, as the film adaptation of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (starring Meryl Streep) testifies. In his personal reflections on the process of writing the screenplay for that film, Frank McGuinness offers much insight into this act of translation, as well as a fitting tribute to his fellow Donegal playwright, Brian Friel.

Considering the theme, 'Globalising Irish Music' the composer, Bill Whelan provides the deft analysis of an astute observer of Irish culture as well the insights of a key participant in the phenomenal *Riverdance* story. It has become the critical norm of late to take pot shots at this ageing warhorse and I've taken one or two myself.<sup>27</sup> Yet considering it in relation to the comparable transnational success of Moore's *Melodies* is instructive. Like the *Melodies* in its day, *Riverdance* has come to be regarded, perhaps unfairly, as *the* stable signifier of a complex and rapidly evolving Irish cultural dynamic. Indeed, it is revealing to compare the critical reception of both: Moore was berated for his emphasis on a moribund Irishness while *Riverdance* was criticised for being overly-exuberant. In both cases a highbrow hostility to the popular embrace of a homegrown hit is palpable.

The story of its inception as relayed by Whelan in his contribution to this series is instructive and demonstrates how a participatory and collaborative idea of cultural endeavour became a highly successful commercial product. Of particular significance is Whelan's proximity to, and involvement in, highly fertile moments and movements in contemporary Irish popular music—from traditional to rock. In many ways, the extraordinary appeal of the *Riverdance* score can be explained by his deconstruction of the imposed divide between purist notions of Irish traditional music promoted by the cognoscenti, and more promiscuous forms of commercial music popularly enjoyed. Such a schism, as we have seen, extends back in time to a Yeatsian aversion to Moore's *Melodies*.

Whelan's analysis of the achievement of his precursor, Seán Ó Riada, sheds much light on his own methods:

What Ó Riada did was take old Irish melodies, and re-orchestrate them in a way that made sense to the ears of his contemporaries. They recognised that this was *their* music, but in a way they had not heard it before.<sup>28</sup>

But even Ó Riada was careful to keep his jazz-pianist self and Irish composer self in two separate compartments. Whelan's outstanding achievement, however, is in his synthesis of the avant-garde and the popular which owes much to his experiences during the Planxty years. Combining complex experimentation—in the fusion of rhythms and modes from Irish and Eastern European music—with popular appeal, Whelan's music managed to transcend the highly compartmentalised relations that pertained within the substrata of Irish music throughout the twentieth century. Significantly, the critiques of *Riverdance* that have emerged in its wake often re-trace the contours of Yeats's criticisms of Moore's *Melodies*, interpreting the music as a capitulation to market forces and international taste. Such analyses, however, are blind to Whelan's robust interrogation of the stifling, conservative and schizophrenic tendencies that often informed the guardians of Irish traditional music from the 1950s onwards.

To finish up these reflections on Irish popular culture I'd like to refer briefly to a clever ad for Carlsberg beer that ran on Irish television some time ago.<sup>29</sup> Three young Irish lads on tour find themselves in a nightclub in an unspecified exotic location, perhaps Rio de Janeiro. They are challenged by the barman and some of the 'regulars' to 'do something Irish' before they are allowed to enjoy the delights that the club has to offer. They are presented with two choices: 'sing' or 'dance'. After a short deliberation one of the Irish visitors steps forward to answer the challenge on his own terms, offering neither a song nor a dance but a third alternative—the performance of 'a poem in our native tongue'. As it turns out, the poem he recites is not one of the better-known verses from the canon of Gaelic literature but a spontaneous creation of his own which appears to be a pastiche of random phrases remembered from his primary school Irish lessons. Luckily for the Irish visitors the verse is well received and they are embraced by the club bystanders who appear suitably impressed by the recitation *as Gaeilge*.

So many questions are prompted by this intriguing latter day ephemeron: Is this the contemporary equivalent of the nineteenth century drawing room in which Thomas Moore excelled? Once again a residual memory of Gaelic Ireland is being drawn on here to charm a cosmopolitan audience. By performing a parody of the authentic, is the ad actually authentic to many Irish people's experience with the Irish language—authentic to those who never get beyond the *cúpla focail*? Can it be read as an exposé of a widespread tokenism towards the language in this unmasking of a feigned investment in it? Or does this ad, in its direct invocation and deployment of the Gaelic lexicon—however limited it might be, represent an important moment of symbolic rapprochement between the Irish language and global popular culture? Perhaps what is most significant is the extent to which these issues have been hotly debated on the Youtube discussion board dedicated to this advert which can be freely accessed on that website. It may be that participatory and consumerist ideas of popular culture are coming together in ways that could not have been imagined a decade or so ago.

Significantly though, the question of what's at stake in 'doing something Irish' is still being asked.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See James S. Donnelly, Jr. and Kerby A. Miller (eds.) *Irish Popular Culture 1650-1850* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Elizabeth Malcolm, 'Popular Recreation in Nineteenth Century Ireland', in Oliver MacDonagh, W.F. Mandle and Pauric Travers (eds.), *Irish Culture and Nationalism 1750-1950* (London: Macmillan, 1983) 40.

<sup>3</sup> See P.J. Mathews, *Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Co-operative Movement* (Cork: Field Day / Cork UP, 2003) 46-7.

<sup>4</sup> Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch, 'The "Merry Wake"', in Donnelly and Miller (eds.) 173-200

<sup>5</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002) 94-136.

<sup>6</sup> Ronan Kelly, *Bard of Erin: The Life of Thomas Moore* (Dublin: Penguin, 2008) 519-26; Terence de Vere White, *Tom Moore: The Irish Poet* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977) 240-52.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Moore, *Irish Melodies* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1856) 50.

Subsequent references to the *Melodies* will be taken from this edition and cited parenthetically.

<sup>8</sup> Seamus Deane, 'Thomas Moore', *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. 1 (Derry: Field Day, 1991) 1055.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Emmet, 'Speech from the Dock', in Stephen Regan (ed.), *Irish Writing: An Anthology of Irish Literature in English 1789-1939* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) 23.

<sup>10</sup> W.B. Yeats, 'To Ireland in the Coming Times', *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1933) 56.

<sup>11</sup> W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1955) 207.

<sup>12</sup> See R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, vol. 1: The Apprentice Mage 1865-1914* (Oxford: OUP, 1997) 146.

<sup>13</sup> W.B. Yeats to John Quinn (15 Feb 1905), John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (eds.) *Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats, vol. 4: 1905-07* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) 38.

<sup>14</sup> William Hazlitt, *Political Essays, with Sketches of Public Characters* (1819; London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1932) 149.

<sup>15</sup> William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age* (1825; London; J.M. Dent and Sons, 1932) 174.

<sup>16</sup> James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin, 1992) 194.

<sup>17</sup> Deane, 1053.

<sup>18</sup> Examples include: *The Departed* (2006, dir. Martin Scorsese) and *Gettysbury* (1993, dir. Ronald F. Maxwell). It was also prominently used on the soundtrack of *Black Hawk Down* (2001, dir. Ridley Scott)—a film with no obvious Irish themes.

<sup>19</sup> Douglas Hyde, 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland' in Mark Storey (ed.), *Poetry and Ireland since 1800: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1988) 78.

<sup>20</sup> Hyde, 82.

<sup>21</sup> Lady Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre* (NY: Knickerbocker Press, 1914) 26.

<sup>22</sup> W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*, 376.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.magforum.com/time.htm>

<sup>24</sup> John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) 27.

<sup>25</sup> J.M. Synge, *Collected Works, vol. 1, Poems*, ed. Robin Skelton (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1983) xxxvi.

<sup>26</sup> See the *Irish Homestead*, 9 Nov. 1901, 744.

<sup>27</sup> P.J. Mathews, 'In Praise of "Hibernocentrism": Republicanism, Globalisation and Irish Culture', *The Republic: A Journal of Contemporary and Historical Debate*, 4 (2005) 7-14.

<sup>28</sup> Bill Whelan, 'Globalising Irish Music' in P.J. Mathews (ed.) *The Art of Popular Culture: From 'The Meeting of the Waters' to Riverdance*, UCDScholarcast (Series 1: Spring 2008) 5, <http://www.ucd.ie/scholarcast/scholarcast7.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTNBmFveq2U>