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"Ourselves Alone": History, Nationalism, and *The Nation*, 1842-5

By Elizabeth Parker

In the nineteenth century, new nationalisms began to form in the western world. Across continental Europe, small principalities united to create modern nations like Italy and Germany. People began to identify themselves by their nation rather than by their local town or province. In the British Isles, particularly Ireland, this formation of a national identity required a restructuring of history to create the idea of an ancient, unified Irish nation that deserved its freedom from Britain.^[1] Ireland had long been a part of the United Kingdom but had developed culturally different than England, Wales and, to a lesser extent, Scotland.^[2] In order to construct a modern Irish nationalism, the island's past had to be reshaped to create the roots of independence.

Much of modern history has overlooked a key figure in the creation of this new and uniquely Irish national identity.^[3] Exhorting better-known statesmen and icons like Daniel O'Connell and Smith O'Brien, Thomas Davis extolled ideas of a self-legislating Ireland unified by its heritage and nationhood, rather than divided by religion and politics, but his contributions have often been overshadowed by these men. Though Davis's lofty goals failed to come to fruition in his lifetime, his work rallied a massive amount of support for Irish home-rule and created an enduring trend of nationalism that would carry from the Monster Meetings with O'Connell through the Gaelic Revival and into the twentieth century.^[4] *The Nation*, the weekly Irish newspaper that Davis and his fellow Young Irelanders began publishing in 1842, helped create the first modern nationalist movement in Ireland.^[5] Thomas Davis, through his editorial leadership of *The Nation* from 1842 to 1845, played a critical role in the development of a vision of Irish history supportive of a new, inclusive nationalism.

In his theory of the "imagined community," Benedict Anderson argued that, in the age of burgeoning nationalisms, print materials like newspapers created the sense of cultural homogeneity necessary for modern nationalisms to arise. Though people generally read newspapers alone, each reader was "well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion."^[6] As Irishmen across the country read *The Nation*, "fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations."^[7] Anderson's theory of the imagined community supports the idea that a newspaper such as *The Nation* could greatly influence the creation of a modern Irish nationalism. This position of power and *The Nation's* large circulation made the paper an important source for the political zeitgeist of the mid-nineteenth century.^[8] Along with this foundation for influence, conditions on the ground in Ireland strengthened the position of the paper. Though Anderson viewed newspaper reading as a solitary act, circumstances in nineteenth century Ireland made newspaper reading a necessarily communal activity.

The profoundly sectarian nature of Ireland in the nineteenth century seemed inescapably linked to print materials, which made town councils shy away from funding public libraries. Privately sponsored reading rooms became the source for reading materials for the common man and an essential element of political movements from the Loyal National Repeal Association of the 1840s to the Gaelic League of the 1890s.^[9] The idea of the reading room as the epicenter of a movement began first with Father Mathew's Temperance Society, but Davis, along with Daniel O'Connell and Charles Gavan Duffy, quickly converted his lending libraries to the needs of the Repeal Association, much to Fr. Mathew's chagrin.^[10] When Davis, Gavan Duffy and their fellow Repealer John Blake Dillon began publishing the pro-Repeal *Nation* in 1842, they placed copies in Fr. Mathew's established Temperance reading rooms, which made *The Nation* a national institution. Gavan Duffy estimated that, through these reading rooms, *The Nation* reached over a quarter million Irishmen.^[11] The reading rooms turned newspaper nationalism from

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Anderson's imagined community into concrete reinforcement of Davis's new concept of Irish nationalism. Incipient nationalists like Davis and his fellow writers now had a "shorter and surer road to the popular mind" and, as writers, were more powerful than "a thousand men all clad in steel."^[12] They used their newspaper to create a new Irish nationalism, one intended to be undivided along the historically sectarian lines of Protestant versus Catholic.

The editors of *The Nation* were uniquely suited to create this broader definition of what it meant to be Irish. Davis and Gavan Duffy came from quite different cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds, which much affected their ideas of nationalism and their roles within the paper as well as in the Repeal community as a whole. Gavan Duffy, the owner of *The Nation*, came from County Monaghan in Ulster. He had been raised strictly Catholic and taught from an early age that "Catholic Emancipation meant the deliverance of our race from the subjection to Orange ascendancy in which we habitually lived."^[13] As a result of this upbringing, his idea of nationalism centered fully on Catholics and redressing the wrongs done by Protestants. It took Davis's southern Protestant view of Irish unity to open *The Nation* to a wider audience.

Raised by Protestant parents, Thomas Davis traced his lineage from Wales and England on his father's side and "descended on [his] mother's side from a Cromwellian settler whose descendants, though they occasionally intermarried with Irish families, continued Protestants, and in the English interest, and suffered for it in 1688."^[14] Given his background, Davis could have easily become a regular member of the Protestant Ascendancy. However, once he arrived at Trinity College Dublin, he encountered the Irish schools of thought that would form the roots of his later theories of Irish history, identity, and nationalism. Davis's time at Trinity introduced him to the ideals of past Protestant patriots, such as Theobald Wolfe Tone and Thomas Emmet, who spoke of uniting all of Ireland, both Protestants and Catholics, to work towards freedom from England.^[15] Davis's first public speech at Trinity defined what would become a mainstay of his philosophy and that of *The Nation* under his editorial leadership. In the speech, Davis claimed, "The national mind should be filled to overflowing with native memories. The history of a nation is the birthright of her sons; who strips them of that, takes that which enricheth not himself but makes them poor indeed."^[16] His life work would be to give the sons of Ireland their "birthright."

After Trinity, Thomas Davis passed the bar and worked briefly as a barrister before openly supporting O'Connell's new Loyal National Repeal Association.^[17] In 1841, Davis, Dillon and Gavan Duffy joined the Repeal Association and formed the Young Ireland wing of the movement along with William Smith O'Brien, Thomas Francis Meagher, and many others.^[18] This political involvement led the three to begin *The Nation*, which Davis infused with his ideas of Irish nationalism from its very inception. While Dillon and Gavan Duffy agreed on publication schedules and styles, Davis wrote a prospectus for the paper:

Nationality is their [the editors'] first great objecta Nationality which will not only raise our people from their poverty, by securing to them the blessings of a Domestic Legislature, but inflame and purify them with a lofty and heroic love of country a nationality which may embrace Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter a Nationality which would be recognised by the world and sanctified by wisdom, virtue and prudence.^[19]

Davis's prose work formed the basis for much of the ideology of *The Nation*, and he had plans to expand his writings with several historical works. Though he only managed to complete one of these projects before his death, *The Patriot Parliament of 1689*, it showed Davis's commitment to the idea of united Irish nationalism. Davis argued that the Irish parliament under James II in 1689 had not corruptly favored the Catholics of Ireland over the Protestant Ascendancy, which went against the theory commonly held by his peers at the time.^[20] Davis contested that James's rule in Ireland had attempted to restore power to the Catholics proportional to their population, while the Protestants in England conspired and falsified documents to stir up revolt against James. Considering his Protestant background, taking a position against that of the Ascendancy pointed to Davis's devotion to an Ireland undivided by race or creed, which permeated his scholarly and political writing. However, Davis's work for *The Nation* ended abruptly when cholera killed him unexpectedly in 1845 before he could achieve

his goals for Irish freedom.^[21] Still, in his three years of editorial leadership, Davis greatly affected *The Nation* and the future of Irish nationalism.

The Nation itself looked and functioned like a regular newspaper; it published news, business, sports, and cultural affairs alongside advertisements from local businesses. In the pages of the "largest newspaper ever published in Ireland," writers and informants reported news from a variety of sources around Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the empire abroad.^[22] *The Nation* brought its readers weekly updates on important domestic issues like agricultural markets and criminal proceedings as well as a "Foreign Intelligence" section in which the editors published information arriving from the far reaches of the British Empire, those with whom they felt a kindred link of provinciality.^[23] Aside from the reporting, a large portion of the pages of *The Nation*, as with any newspaper, went to advertisements for a variety of goods and services from teas and candlewicks to vocational training and educational courses.^[24] In many of the advertisements featured on the front page, the political background of the editors was transparent.

The Nation tended to be a moderate newspaper based on the unifying ideals of Davis, which meant that the paper gave tremendous support to O'Connell and the Repeal Association during Davis's three years. For the first month of publication, a majority of the front page was devoted to either news headlines about O'Connell or advertisements from various local Repeal Associations calling for a meeting to collect money or praising the Emancipator's leadership.^[25] The subscribers used the paper to flatter the Repeal leader and to collect the penny rent for tribute, which worked as both a party fundraiser and a social security system for the poor, starving, and evicted farmers during the famines.^[26] The pages of *The Nation* were filled with lengthy minutes, often thousands of words per article, from association meetings for those who could not attend.^[27] The paper particularly advertised and wrote articles on the Repeal Association's "Monster Meetings," which used their historic locations to appeal to Irish sensibilities.^[28] *The Nation's* support for Repeal focused less on the actual outcomes of ending the Act of Union and more on the general idea of nationhood in order to appeal to both Catholics and Protestants, who feared ending the Union would leave them a powerless minority.^[29] *The Nation* primarily sought to gain support for this less threatening idea of the Repeal movement while providing its important coverage of news and politics. The editors bolstered these endeavors not only with their traditional journalism, but also with a unique literary view of Irish history and current events.

Along with his prose writing, which featured heavily in the paper, Davis began to build on these ideas of history and unity through particular elements in the poetry he published in *The Nation*, both his own and that of his fellow Young Irelanders. Poetry allowed wider freedom on the use of historical metaphor, hyperbole, and emotional expression than his political prose, which made it an excellent venue for the author to articulate his ideas of nationalism, identity, and history. Davis's first major poem for *The Nation* became one of his most famous: "Lament of Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill." It mourned the death of Owen Roe O'Neill, who had fought for the Irish in the Confederate Wars and was thought to have been poisoned by the English before a treaty was signed.^[30] Davis used the Gaelic spelling of O'Neill's name in the poem to emphasize the historical nature of the subject, and he used violent curses against the English who poisoned the hero: "may God wither up their hearts! May their blood cease to flow! / May they walk in living death."^[31] The use of historical Celtic and Irish heroes to create a strong, nationalist style of poetry would characterize much of Davis's literary work in *The Nation*. His writing demonstrated a strong belief in the necessity of a reconceptualized national history to strengthen Ireland's desire for independence. After the success of the "Lament of Eoghan Ruadh," Davis became the principle editor and writer for *The Nation's* poetry section under the pseudonym "The Celt," a reference to his Welsh-Irish roots.^[32]

While the prose of *The Nation* encapsulated the author's contemporary political views, "The Poet's Corner" became the chief outlet of Davis's reconception of Irish national history.^[33] Poems by The Celt promoted his idea of an inclusive national identity through lyrics and stanzas. "Ourselves Alone," perhaps the most famous of Davis's poems, exemplified the way that he sought to carry out this goal:

Too long our Irish hearts were schooled,
In patient hope to bide;

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By dreams of English justice fooled,
And English tongues that lied.
That mockery of derision's past,
The empty dream has flown;
Our hope and strength, we find at last,
Is in OURSELVES ALONE.^[34]

Davis's stirring call for independence galvanized supporters of the Loyal National Repeal Association by appropriating the separatist sentiments of earlier Irish patriots, like Wolfe Tone. This use of historic intellectual and physical rebellions against English rule in order to garner support for the new Repeal movement encapsulated the life work of Davis. Consequently, "ourselves alone" became an important phrase in the Poet's Corner of *The Nation*, appearing several times in the years Davis worked as an editor there. In a poem called "Stand Together," the writer transformed the phrase from a stern resolution into a cry for Irish unity and independence:

Yet on "ourselves" do we rely
"Ourselves alone" our rallying cry!
And "stand together, strike together!"^[35]

The historical underpinning of "Ourselves Alone," combined with its use as a call for Ireland to unite, perfectly represented Davis's goals for the Poet's Corner and the future of his country. Beyond merely repeating the phrase, *The Nation* also translated it into Gaelic: "Shin fane"* is our watchword so devil may care."^[36] This translation highlighted Davis's desire to see resurgence in the use of Ireland's native language, which he pushed through the inclusion of short Gaelic phrases in the poetry he published. Davis's influence on the poetry of *The Nation* clearly built a foundation that had lasting effects on modern Irish identity from the Gaelic Revival, which sought to reintroduce Gaelic literature and vernacular into daily life, to the twentieth century political party Sinn Féin. In order to assemble the base for this new nationalism further, Davis found it necessary to reconstruct and reinterpret important historical relationships and events along with his established use of separatist language to show the necessity of an independent Ireland.

Creating a new nationalism required not only a drive for independence but also the formation of an "us versus them" mentality. In the case of Ireland, the English acted as a contrast; thus, by defining them, the Irish defined themselves. *The Nation* characterized the English, usually by the name "John Bull" or "Saxon," as callous, greedy, bloodthirsty men who had wrecked Ireland, which meant that the Irish were therefore their weak subjects. For the writers, England's control and manipulation was the root of all Ireland's problems. This idea of oppressed versus oppressor came through most clearly in the poetry published in *The Nation*. These epithets were not fleeting references to England's injustice; they permeated the pages of *The Nation*. John Bull and the Saxon, each used as a metaphor for different aspects of the English, became recurring characters in the paper's nationalist narrative.

In *The Nation*, John Bull took on the role of an authority figure against which the Irish should unite and rebel. Since the seventeenth century in England, John Bull represented the country's fiscal nature, and political cartoonists used it most often in the context of taxes.^[37] However, the context of John Bull began to shift significantly towards Ireland from 1841 to 1859.^[38] During that time, the writers of *The Nation* used the nickname John Bull to personify the English as deceitful, uncaring, and exploitative in terms of Ireland.^[39] In the lyrics of "Song of the United Irishman," the writer urged his countrymen to rise up against their oppressors:

They may swear, as they often did, our wretchedness to cure;
But we'll never trust John Bull again, nor let his lies allure.
No, we won't no, we won't, Bull, for now nor ever more!
For we've hopes on the ocean, and we've trust on the shore.^[40]

The juxtaposition of the treacherous John Bull with the young Irish boys fighting for the "green" portrayed the English as liars, cheating and attacking the Irish, who appeared honest and valiant by contrast. *The Nation*

supported this redefinition of John Bull as the personification of the poor relations between England and Ireland through historical allusion to one of Ireland's past rebellions, which lent scholarly legitimacy to *The Nation's* push for greater Irish independence. Creating this historic duality of English lies versus Irish innocence was an essential element in the modern nationalism built by Davis, and the use of John Bull soon intensified. By 1843, John Bull had become the very embodiment of everything that was wrong in Ireland:

John Bull was a *bodach*, as rich as a Jew
 As griping, as grinding, as conscionless, too;
 A wheedler, a shuffler, a rogue by wholesale,
 And a swindler moreover, says Granu Wail!
 John Bull was a banker, pursy and fat,
 With gold in both pockets, and plenty of that;
 And he tempted his neighbours to sell their entail
 Tis by scheming he prospers, says Granu Wail!^[41]

The Nation's recontextualized version of John Bull spread beyond newsprint nationalism. Decades after *The Nation's* initial run, John Bull continued to be a symbol of the contentious relationship between England and Ireland, appearing in George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island*.^[42] While the depiction of John Bull as cheating Ireland out of its freedom might have seemed harsh, it paled in comparison with the use of Saxon, which was far more prevalent in *The Nation*.

The paper used the perceived differences between the English and Irish to justify its vilification of the English through the epithet of Saxon. According to the paper, not only did all the inhabitants of Ireland share a common language and history, but also they were racially different from the English, a key element in its construction of Irish nationalism.^[43] *The Nation* portrayed the Saxon race as bloodthirsty villains. "Saxon wiles [and] powers" remorselessly enslaved, wronged, and murdered the Irish:

The sword of the Saxon with slaughter is red
 But the blood on his blade in no battle was shed;
 Tis the flame of the village illumines the air,
 Where the shriek of the maiden, in madden'd despair,
 Pleads to the hearts of the monsters in vain,
 Who are dyed with the blood of her kindred slain!
 Spare! spare them, cursed Wilmot!*^[44]

The monstrous epithet Saxon applied to not only nameless English soldiers but also to the Queen and her administrator in Ireland, Charles Wilmot.^[45] This broke the tradition of earlier proto-nationalist movements in Ireland and the Loyal National Repeal Association that had always pushed for independence in the legislature without breaking from the monarchy.^[46] This separation made Davis's ideology a more radical, modern notion of nationalism than had previously developed in Ireland. The vitriol attached to the name Saxon, when used in conjunction with Queen Elizabeth, made Davis's dream of an independent Ireland clear.

Though *The Nation* aimed to unite those living on the island of Ireland to achieve this independence, this kind of heightened rhetoric likely alienated those Protestants and Presbyterians descended from English and Scottish settlers unfamiliar with Davis's idea that Irish identity was a choice. Despite the unifying intentions of Thomas Davis, some of the *The Nation's* language contributed to the widening split between Ulster and the south. The following poem by Lafontaine made the division between Irish and English clear:

We were numbered and marked as the banned of the earth
 As the mere Irish' were, in the worst days of old,
 By the Saxon marauder, whose offspring yet hold
 All the hate of your race

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That enriched their *adventuring* fathers of yore,
 While we, too, lay as outcasts benumbed, heretofore,
 In the shade of the Saxon, and knew, where he came,
 We were *aliens in blood, in religion, in name*,
 Whither looked we for hope?[47]

Based on Davis's fluid concept of Irish identity, the poem probably meant to vilify the English and those who chose to identify with their Anglo ancestors who had wronged the Irish rather than all the descendents of England in Ireland. However, this denigration of the English character likely pushed away the demographic hardest to convince of the benefits of Repeal, the Protestants. In order to reach out to them, Davis and the writers of *The Nation's* Poet's Corner would have to create an Irish history that included, rather than excluded, Irish Protestants. However, building to historical events that shed a positive light on the ruling religion took time.

Davis began developing his unifying idea of Irish history through the island's native Celtic past. Chronologically, the legends of Fionn mac Cumhaill (pronounced Finn McCool) were found in Gaelic culture across not only Ireland but also Scotland. Fionn was an Arthurian-type hero believed to date back to the late third century A.D.[48] Stories of Fionn and his Fenian warriors, known as the Fenian Cycle, have been the most famous of the ancient Gaelic legends and an important part of traditional Irish storytelling and literature for over a millennium and a half.[49] In the literature of *The Nation*, Davis used Fionn's battle against Danish invaders at Dundalk to promote his idea of Irish strength and independence:

With terror struck, the astonished Danes at every point gave way,
 And but few were left to tell the tale of that destructive fray.
 There was joy that week o'er all the land, from Bann to Shannon's shore;
 For they said those Danish chiefs will come to spoil our homes no more.
 But yet, ere the song of mirth went round, or toast in hut or hall,
 A tear was shed, and a pray'r was said, for Fionn and Fingall.[50]

The poem played on the emotions already associated with the legend of Fionn to create an ancient Celtic hero supportive of Irish independence. Davis chose to begin his history with an Ireland that had been ruling and defending itself since before King Arthur supposedly ruled and defended England.[51] Davis created a history that implied that Ireland's strength and independence predated England's, which gave historical credence to his desire for Irish independence. Along with justifying his view of ancient Irish independence, Davis's repopularization of the Fenian Cycle helped bring it to the attention of a new group of American-Irish nationalists: the Fenian Brotherhood.[52] Founded by Young Irelanders James Stephens and John O'Mahoney, who had fled to America after the failed rebellion of 1848, the Fenian Brotherhood raised money and arms for its counterpart in Ireland, the Irish Republican Brotherhood.[53] O'Mahoney's participation in the Young Irelanders meant he would have read *The Nation* and may have been inspired by Davis to name the organization after Fionn. This relationship between Davis's work in *The Nation* and another one of the first modern nationalist organizations showed how influential Davis's ideas of using Irish history to support independence were.

Davis continued his new history of Ireland with another Gaelic hero, a Munster high king called Brian Boru. In 1014, Boru fought off the Danish at the Battle of Clontarf, which became legendary when Boru's descendents created an epic literary version of the event to strengthen their claims to the high kingship.[54] The legend of Clontarf, as it developed through the Middle Ages, told of the heroic Irish Boru fighting the Viking king of Dublin in an attempt to unite Ireland. Though Boru won the battle, the leader of a mercenary troop killed him, supposedly as he knelt in prayer, adding to the Irish outrage against the Viking outsiders.[55] As the English began to control Ireland, the legend of Boru gained importance as a symbol of the Irish rising up against foreign oppressors. In the mid-nineteenth century, when Davis and the Young Irelanders worked to repeal the 1801 Act of Union, the events of Clontarf seemed an apt metaphor for their struggle for an Ireland controlled by the Irish. The importance of Clontarf as a symbol for the Repeal movement became most apparent when O'Connell attempted to hold a Monster Meeting there in October 1843, which led to a clash with Prime Minister Robert Peel.[56] While this event

has been written about often, *The Nation's* role in bringing Clontarf back into the national spotlight in the preceding months has not.^[57]

In the pages of *The Nation*, Clontarf's symbolism for Ireland's historic fight to rid itself of foreign control built up the importance of the battle as O'Connell planned his Monster Meeting. In the June 1843 poem dedicated to the battle, the writer described the glory of the native Irish fighting off the "heathen" Viking around Dublin:

Tis o'erand Denmark's men in mail
Have closed their mortal term
Nor hosts, nor valour, ought avail
Gainst patriots linked and firm.^[58]

In this description of Clontarf, Davis's ideas of an historic Irish nation came to the forefront. Though, in truth, eleventh century Ireland was controlled by constantly feuding clans, the poem transformed Brian Boru's army, which was actually comprised of a loose grouping of men from Munster and Connacht, into "patriots linked and firm."^[59] This created an idea of Irish unity that now dated back to the eleventh century and tied Davis's new Irish history to the island's ancient Gaelic glory. Through these poems of Celtic heroes, Davis established the pattern by which he would create a new narrative to substantiate his idea of an enduring Irish nationality.

Part of that pattern included tying ancient battles to ones from later centuries in order to create a sense of cohesion between them. In the weeks leading up to the publication of "The Battle of Clontarf," poems in *The Nation* began slowly incorporating references to Clontarf in poetry about other famous Irish battles, regardless of there being any historical links between them. For example, one poem connected Clontarf to the Battle of Kinsale, in which the Irish and Spanish fought against the English during the Nine Years War in the early seventeenth century:

Their bravest came in power and pride
Clontarf's red field was deeply dyed
And woman wept by Baltic's tide!
O, Discord! Erin's olden bane!
Twas thou alone could'st forge her chain;^[60]

Were it not for the end of the title, "The Battle of Kinsale," it would seem that the poem described only Clontarf, or that, at the very least, the two were contemporaneous and integrally linked. However, the Battle of Kinsale happened almost six hundred years after Clontarf. Rather than Gaelic clans fighting off Viking invaders, the native Catholics fought to rid the island of Anglican and Presbyterian planters from England and Scotland.^[61] This poem expressed Davis's plan for a history of the ceaseless Irish struggle against foreign control, even if the historical record did not match. This sort of connection was not accidental but rather repeated for months in *The Nation* before O'Connell decided to hold a Monster Meeting in Clontarf. In "The Leinster War-song," a writer with the pseudonym Shamrock wrote:

By the crimson Clontarf, and the Liffey's dark waters
By shore, vale, and stream, with our heart's blood that runs!
By Barrow and Boyne, conflagration and slaughter
Shall toss their red plumes in the blaze of our guns!^[62]

Here, Clontarf became entwined with three of the major rivers of Ireland where famous battles took place, namely the Boyne. The latter river had particular resonance due to its connection to the famous battle fought between William of Orange and James II in 1690, centuries after Clontarf.^[63] By association, the author imparted the tense emotions associated with the Battle of the Boyne to Clontarf, which gave greater importance to O'Connell's choice to meet there. Clontarf continued to be connected to more modern events in Irish history to increase the emotional importance of the location in the months leading up to the planned Monster Meeting.

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Davis and *The Nation* interwove connections between Clontarf and the history of Ireland beyond battles of the seventeenth century to the Loyal National Repeal Association's struggle against English rule. To enhance the importance of Clontarf, Davis carried the symbolism of the battle all the way through to his present day in "Irish War Song: AD 1843" written in April of that year:

Our sunburst on the Roman foe
Flash'd vengeance o'er in foreign field
On Clontarf's plain lay scathed low
What power the Sea-kings fierce could wield!
Benburb might say whose cloven shield
Neath bloody hoofs was trampled o'er'
And, by these memories high, we yield
Our limbs to Saxon chains no more!^[64]

The poem's references to Ireland's former glory against foreign oppressors at Clontarf and Benburb revealed Davis's determination to attain Repeal by any means necessary.^[65] *The Nation* transformed Clontarf from an ancient battle to a modern battle cry for independence from Britain, which he did by seamlessly interweaving it with the rest of Irish history. However, this battle cry backfired for his movement when the English government became so concerned about the influence of the Repeal Association that they banned the meeting at Clontarf; to avoid violence, O'Connell followed Prime Minister Peel's order to call off the rally.^[66] The impact Davis's work had on O'Connell and Anglo-Irish relations revealed the tremendous importance of his re-envisioned Irish history. Still, the heightened emotions that *The Nation* built around Clontarf followed by this disappointment strained the relationship between O'Connell and the Young Irishmen, who showed their desire for more decisive action in gaining Ireland's freedom through their writing.

In order to continue garnering support for the Repeal Association after this setback, the bloody timeline of Davis's history of Ireland moved beyond the Fenians and Clontarf. Though Davis's Gaelic heroes like MacCumhaill and Boru were able to defend Ireland from outsiders attempting to take over Ireland, one group of foreigners eventually managed to take hold of the island indefinitely: the English. In 1155, the first and only English pope, Pope Adrian IV, "granted and gave Ireland to Henry II to hold by hereditary right."^[67] Henry II then sent an expedition to Ireland led by Richard de Clare, earl of Pembroke, commonly known as Strongbow.^[68] Shortly after arriving, Strongbow took hold of Leinster, the province surrounding Dublin, which had become the major seat of power. After Strongbow had a solid grasp on Leinster, Henry went to Ireland to consolidate his control of the island by receiving submission from the Irish kings, and, in doing so, he became the first English monarch to set foot on the island.^[69] In the pages of *The Nation*, Strongbow represented England's first encroachment on Irish independence, and the paper celebrated his eventual defeat at Thurles in 1174:

The Saxons came to spoil the land,
And met that land's avengers
Dark doom and death smote each brigand
Oh Murrough of the Strangers!^[70]

The poem distorted a key element of the history of de Clare by calling him a Saxon. Strongbow and his men were Welsh, which meant they likely descended from Celts and not Saxons. This attempt to identify Strongbow with the established negative connotation of Saxon showed how Davis thought identity had more to do with one's choice of environment rather than with birth.^[71] Because Strongbow chose to represent the English crown in Ireland, he therefore became a part of the Saxon problem in Davis's eyes. Because of this purposeful distortion, the choice to celebrate Strongbow's defeat rather than mourning his successes in collecting power in Leinster turned de Clare into a symbol of Ireland's triumph over the early "Saxons." However, Ireland's ability to avoid complete English dominance only lasted until a new, stronger invasion force landed at Kinsale, which meant a change in tone for the poetry of *The Nation*.

Poems about Ireland after England gained control there contained a new and crucial element in Davis's version of Irish history, abuse, and slaughter. Many examples used by *The Nation* to illustrate this point came from the time of the Interregnum and Oliver Cromwell's campaign against Ireland's Catholic majority. Attempts at controlling Ireland through plantation, the populating of Irish lands with English and Scottish immigrants loyal to the English Crown, had been patchwork and mostly unsuccessful until Cromwell's New Model Army landed at Kinsale.^[72] Cromwell's subjugation of the Irish population, far more brutal than the violence in England or Scotland, killed forty-one percent of the Irish population through fighting and disease.^[73] Cromwell's view of Irish Catholics as subhuman and the massacres at Wexford and Drogheda by his troops figured prominently in the Irish consciousness even before Davis.^[74] To *The Nation*, Cromwell's campaigns were the worst examples of the evils of their "Saxon" neighbor:

He found them therethe young, the old
The maiden and the wife;
Their guardian brave in death were cold,
Who dared for *them* the strife.
They prayed for mercyGod on high!
Before *thy* cross they prayed,
And ruthless Cromwell bade them die
To glut the Saxon blade!^[75]

This poem described a scene from the massacre at Wexford in which Cromwell's soldiers killed a church full of women and priests. The poem's gruesome detail and choice of victims were meant to elicit feelings of unjustness and outrage against not just Cromwell, but English rule more generally. This version of Cromwell's time on the island served to enhance the Repeal Association's claims that Ireland needed an independent legislature.

The length of Cromwell's campaign in Ireland provided many examples of the worst evils of English rule. Before the massacre at Wexford, Cromwell sent troops to compel the surrender of the Castle of Lady Island. According to an historical footnote in *The Nation*, "The castle surrendered without conditions, and all the prisoners were forced to join the ranks of Cromwell and march to the siege of Wexford."^[76] However, the monks of the castle refused to march against their fellow Irish, so Cromwell's men killed them. This event became known in *The Nation* as "the Massacre of the Monks." The poem describing this scene in Cromwell's campaign played heavily on the offensiveness of killing religious leaders:

St. Mary's burns brightand its monks are no more!
Go, demon incarnate! thy hell-vultures call.
By the cross of the Saviour, a banquet of gore
At Wexford awaits theethe reddest of all!^[77]

In Ireland, where religion played such a prominent role in identity formation, using such strongly religious words to attack Cromwell's English rule sent a strong message of discontent. The author's use of footnotes in the poem to explain the historical context gave an air of scholarly authenticity to the strong claims made about this particularly bloody portion of Anglo-Irish relations. It showed clearly the intent of Davis and *The Nation* to use history to substantiate their new idea of nationalism.

Establishing a history of this sort of horrific abuse of the Irish people justified *The Nation's* stance that Ireland should be freed from English legislative control and all that came with it. Since Cromwell's campaign in Ireland was already well known for its violent and particularly gruesome nature, it made sense that Davis would enlist the long-standing emotions associated with it in his campaign for a new Irish nationalism. However, in vilifying Cromwell and his troops, he also risked vilifying their descendents in Ireland:

Mongrels of the Cromwell brood,
Swift of foot and keen of scent,

Elizabeth Parker

When the trail is one of blood,
How the chase affords content.[78]

The poem, aptly entitled "Expostulation and Agitation," stirred up enmity between the religious and political factions of Ireland in order to call upon Repeal Association members to rise up and "claim justice." [79] The poem implied that Protestant descendents of Cromwell's troops in Ireland were still out for Irish blood. Along with this claim, the poem also alleged that Protestants would only turn to the Irish Church for political help "when its [the Cromwellian descendents'] strength is spent elsewhere," implying they used the church only for political gain. This poem seemed to alienate the religious/political group that the Repealers needed most. [80] In light of Davis's previously discussed views on the nature of self-selected national identity and his own heritage, Davis likely meant to impugn only those who chose to identify themselves as descendants of Cromwell's soldiers. However, the poem's lack of explanation as to the meaning of "Cromwell's brood" left the average reader to assume that he meant all settlers from the time of the Interregnum. Yet, regardless of the repercussions on Protestant support of Repeal, the author used these references to Cromwell's violent acts to support the idea that Ireland would have to take justice into its own hands to prevent a recurrence of England's historic abuse and slaughter.

After Cromwell's subjugation of Ireland, the return and ouster of the Stuart monarchy in England had long-lasting repercussions in Ireland. In 1685, James II ascended the throne of England after the death of his brother, Charles II. His Catholicism and religiously tolerant rule worried the Protestant political elite in England. In Ireland, his Lord Lieutenant, the earl of Tyrconnell, extended rights to the Catholic majority and angered the Protestant Ascendancy. The birth of James's son, which threatened to create a line of Catholic monarchs, pushed the Protestant elite to invite William of Orange, husband of James's daughter Mary, to seize the throne. [81] After fleeing to France, James II went to fight for his throne in Ireland, where he had a base of loyal Catholic supporters. William's pursuit in Ireland initiated the Williamite War, or the War of Two Kings. The Battle of Aughrim in 1691, known as "Aughrim of the slaughter," became the final major battle in the war when William's forces defeated the Jacobites in an overwhelming victory even though the odds favored the Irish. [82] *The Nation* described the Irish loss:

Eternal powers! what fate is ours!
Twas when our brave were dashing
To vengeance deep with whirlwind-sweep
Like shapes of lightning flashing;
St. Ruth's was struck that fatal ball
That from his saddle bore him,
Left scatter'd wide our armed pride
Tis therefore I deplore him! [83]

The poet blamed the loss at Aughrim on St. Ruth, the French general sent by Louis XIV to aid his cousin, James. [84] This lifted the blame from the Irish commanders present at the battle and placed it squarely on the shoulders of the French. For *The Nation*, this provided an opportunity to portray the Irish as helplessly trapped between England and France. This idea of Ireland being a pawn between the two warring countries was meant to elucidate the need for Irish sovereignty. While *The Nation* faulted the French, they praised the Irish Lieutenant-General Patrick Sarsfield for his retreat to France after the war ended:

Sarsfield has sailed from Limericktown
He held it long for country and crown;
And, ere he yielded, the Saxon swore
To spoil our homes and our shrines no more. [85]

After negotiating the Treaty of Limerick, which came at the end of a long siege of that city, Sarsfield led the exodus of Jacobite nobles and military leaders to France, later known as the "Flight of the Geese." According to the terms of the treaty, men were given the choice of returning to civilian life, enlisting in William's army, or leaving the

country to fight in another Jacobite army (namely that of France), and many of the officers chose the latter option with Sarsfield.^[86] His decision to remain a Jacobite rather than live under the rule of William and Mary, when combined with his military leadership during the war, made Sarsfield a hero in *The Nation's* new historical narrative. This heroism allowed Davis to use the War of Two Kings to make Ireland seem weak in the grand scheme of the feud between Britain and France while using a strong individual to embody Ireland's true strength and independence.

For *The Nation* and Ireland as a whole, the War of Two Kings affected their present identity even more than the strength of Boru or the cruelty of Cromwell. William and Mary's succession to the throne ushered in an era of legislation that stripped Irish Catholics of their lands and rights, known as the Penal Codes.^[87] Though the codes lasted until the mid-eighteenth century, Catholics had only gained the right to sit in parliament by the mid-nineteenth century and were still unequal in many ways to their Protestant countrymen, which meant the tension created by these laws continued:^[88]

Oh! curse those days, those penal days,
When damned persecution reigned
When, year by year, for serf and peer,
Fresh cruelties were made by law.^[89]

The poem discussed the harsh effects of the Penal Codes on Ireland and the Irish and wished for a removal of "their lingering trace."^[90] The bitter emotions of this Poet's Corner entry showed how much events of Ireland's history could affect the modern Irish conscience even after 150 years, particularly the War of Two Kings and resulting Penal Era. These powerful emotions strengthened Davis's new Irish historical narrative, which blended past and present into a single Irish identity.

At this point in Davis's narrative of Irish history, most stories represented Gaelic heroes or the Catholic majority fighting against the rule of England. It lacked appeal for the Protestant side of Ireland, which would have left Davis's ideas of unity woefully incomplete. To remedy this lack of important Protestant patriots, Davis enlisted the memories of the more recent political action in Ireland led by members of the Irish Church. In 1782, a Protestant politician named Henry Grattan led the parliament in Dublin to pass the Irish Declaration of Independence, which removed Westminster's veto power over legislation passed by the Irish parliament and its right to legislate directly for Ireland.^[91] Given *The Nation's* support of the Repeal movement, which sought the re-establishment of an independent parliament in Dublin, Grattan's work in removing England's legislative power over Ireland became a symbol of the island's former greatness that Davis wished to restore:

When Grattan rose, none dar'd oppose
The claim he made for freedom;
They knew our swords, to back his words,
Were ready if he'd need them.
Then let us raise, to Grattan's praise,
A proud and joyous anthem;
And wealth, and grace, and length of days,
May God, in mercy, grant him!^[92]

Grattan became a hero in Davis's narrative for his work in forcing the Parliament at Westminster to yield legislative control to Dublin. Unlike earlier figures emphasized by Davis, Grattan had the additional element of being an Ulster Protestant. Whereas the stories of Cromwell or Sarsfield revealed the southern or Catholic historical perspective, Grattan represented the majority of Ulstermen. Davis used the fact that a Protestant had made the most gains for an independent Ireland to reach out to the North, a typically Unionist area. Figures like Grattan allowed Davis to combine his ideas of unity with his desire for a nationalist Irish history in a way that many historic events could not.

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Davis used his timeline of Irish history to look beyond the atrocities of the more distant past, which his re-telling of earlier events had shown, and to unite Ireland for Repeal. The work of Grattan in 1782 then became *The Nation's* rallying cry to the nine counties of Ulster:

Will Ulster stand back while one true heart remembers
The spirit that dwelt in her children of yore?
Who fanned the last spark of our liberty's embers,
Till tyranny dazzled shrunk back from our shore.
No, no; by the graves of your valorous dead!
Who stood forth majestic in proud Eighty-two,
If the spirit of men from your hearths be not fled,
Join, Ulster! for Freedom and Erin Aboo!^[93]

Here, *The Nation* used the memory of the Volunteers, who had provided the threat of physical force to help pass the Irish Declaration of Independence. Davis called on Ulster to take up its historic position in fighting for Ireland's freedom by joining the Repeal movement, the modern equivalent of Grattan's legislative actions. Rather than only focusing on the most nationalistically oriented audience, Catholics, *The Nation* attempted to reach out to Ulster Protestants, a key component of Davis's notion of Irish identity.

The work of Grattan and the Volunteers in "glorious eighty-two" became an integral element of Davis's efforts to create a truly united Irish nation. He had a vision of "how bright, though brief, the halo then / That o'er our common country lighted!"^[94] This idealized version of 1782 served as a reminder of past unity to not only Ulster but also the three southern provinces:

For tell us, ye band of the trusted and true
Ye citizen-soldiers of stout Eighty-Two,
Who lent you the power to resist and o'ercome
The Foe from without and the Tyrant at home?
Twas the Men of the North. ^[95]

Davis reminded Connacht, Munster and Leinster that Ulster's Volunteer forces had been the ones supporting Grattan in Dublin during the push for greater legislative independence. As a southern Protestant, uniting the two sides of Ireland was integral to Davis's idea of Irish identity and nationalism.^[96] Using the work of Grattan and the Volunteers in 1782 allowed him to appeal to both Catholics and Protestants through a single historical event, thus strengthening his use of Irish history to create an all-encompassing nationalism and attempting to make amends for poems about older events that demonized Protestants.

Along with Grattan, Davis also used another recent Protestant political figure from Ulster to bolster his idea of an inclusive Irish nationalism. Theobald Wolfe Tone helped found an organization called the United Irishmen in 1791. It held as its core belief that all the men of Ireland, regardless of creed, should unite to reform the Irish parliament and gain more independence from England.^[97] Though Tone left most of the work of the United Irishmen to Thomas Emmet, his ideas greatly influenced Davis, who used *The Nation* to turn Tone into a kind of secular savior of the Irish people:

Then up for the green, boys, and up for the green!
Shout it back to the Savvenagh, We'll *never* sell the green!
For our Tone is coming back, and with men enough, I ween,
To rescue, and avenge us and our own immortal green.^[98]

This poem, a reference to the United Irishmen's rebellion during the late 1790s, made Tone seem triumphant, which overlooked the facts that Tone arrived too late with French support and the rebellion failed.^[99] *The Nation* supported Tone regardless of his lack of actual success because he created the first semblance of modern Irish

nationhood, one strongly influenced by French-style republicanism.^[100] Tone's involvement in the rebellion modeled the sort of nationalistic action that Davis and *The Nation* hoped to inspire in Ulster in the 1840s.

Accordingly, the paper focused much attention on the United Irishmen's attempt at a rebellion in 1798, which Tone worked to orchestrate from his self-imposed exile in France. Davis used the men of "Ninety-Eight" as further evidence of the historic role Ulster played in the history of Irish national movements. Though, much like earlier Catholic attempts at rebellion, the work of the United Irishmen failed to come to fruition, Davis insisted that they still constituted something for which Ulster, and Ireland as a whole, should be proud:

And when the yoke, at length, is broke, that binds our island green,
And high acclaim shall swell her famebroad ocean's emerald Queen!
A column fair, of sculpture rare, shall proudly celebrate
The faithful dead, whose blood was shed in fatal Ninety-eight!^[101]

The exuberant language of the poem suggested that the United Irishmen deserved a spot in Irish history alongside the other warriors Davis exulted, such as MacCumhaill, Boru, and Sarsfield, regardless of their faith. This celebration of the first major Irish separatist movement held an olive branch out to the countrymen least willing to take it, and Davis's efforts to reach out to Protestants did not go unnoticed. By 1843, Protestant legal and political figures joined the Repeal Association in droves, and Davis believed that "most of the educated Protestants now profess an ardent nationality and say that, if some pledge against a Catholic ascendancy could be given them, they too would be Repealers."^[102] Though Davis's work could not overcome Protestant fears of Catholic retribution for past injustices, the fact that these men willingly admitted supporting the Repeal Association showed the strength that his revision of Irish history gave to the movement.

As Protestants began to believe in Davis's new idea of Irish nationalism, he fiercely defended their patriotism. The United Irishmen became heroes in the pages of *The Nation* alongside earlier Catholic heroes. *The Nation* did not portray the failure of the 1798 rebellion as a loss but rather as something for which all Ireland should have been proud:

Who fears to speak of Ninety-Eight?
Who blushes at the name?
When cowards mock the patriots' fate,
Who hangs his head for shame?^[103]

The poem attacked anyone doubtful of the men who fought the rebellion of 1798 and told the "true men" of Ireland to follow their example.^[104] This call to arms showed the severity of Young Ireland's commitment to repealing the Act of Union for which they were willing to risk their lives.^[105] Davis's use of such violent imagery in his revised Irish history that intended to create the first modern nationalist movement in Ireland had lasting, bloody consequences for the island, but it did eventually lead to Ireland's independence.^[106]

Due to this diehard devotion to Repeal, the Young Irelander-run *Nation* showed a negative representation of the Act of Union. Aside from the issues of sovereignty, the Irish had reason to dislike the Union. According to Irish historian Sean Connolly, the act had been passed at the turn of the century through "a restricted and unstructured process whereby the essential features of the measure were decided by a narrow and arbitrarily selected group of individuals."^[107] The Act of Union threw the legislative, executive, and military control of Ireland into turmoil. *The Nation* placed the blame for this on unnamed traitors in the Parliament at Dublin. A poem entitled "The House that Paddy Built" detailed *The Nation's* claim that members of the Irish Parliament had sold their legislative power to England for land, titles, and money:

This is the House that Paddy built!
This is the Parliament that sat in the House that Paddy built
These are the slaves, who basely bent,

Elizabeth Parker

And sold to England the Parliament,
That sat in the House that Paddy built!^[108]

The repetitive nature of the poem emphasized the idea that Ireland had built itself into a functioning, civil society, and that slaves to fortune sold them out to the English. The poet based this repetition on the accumulating story style of a centuries-old British nursery rhyme, "The House that Jack Built."^[109] The use of a rhyme scheme meant for children added derision to the description of the Act of Union, as if its very foundation were childish. Trivializing the Union in this way made Repeal seem like the most sensible option to correct Ireland's troubles. However, this revision of history omitted the cause for England's actions.

In supporting the Young Irelanders' notion of the need for Repeal, Davis's new history of Ireland downplayed the fact that the strength of Grattan's Parliament in 1782 had provoked England into taking parliamentary control. That legislative coup, combined with the United Irishmen's rebellion in 1798, frightened the Parliament in Westminster into taking legislative control of Ireland.^[110] *The Nation* did reference these factors in "The House that Paddy Built:"

This is THE UNIONthat Union of Woe!
Which Ireland was forced to undergo
When her hopes were lost, and her spirit was low!
From the dire confusion, and slaughter fell
That ensued from the terrible struggle to quell
Her people, whom tortures forced to rebel^[111]

However, in their version of events, the injustices of English control forced the Irish to rebel against them, and the poem buried the reference to the rebellion deep under the capitalized emphasis on the horrible nature of the Union. *The Nation's* revision of Irish history to gloss over details that might have given credence to Unionist arguments completely took advantage of the events of the late eighteenth century. On the one hand, they glorified Grattan, the Volunteers, Tone, and the United Irishmen as heroes for rising up against English oppression in order to encourage Protestant support for Repeal. On the other hand, when retribution came from Westminster, *The Nation* portrayed Ireland as the helpless victim sold out by traitors, which also encouraged support for Repeal. The portrayal of the Act of Union of 1801 in *The Nation* clearly showed how Davis appropriated Irish history to build a modern nationalism that bolstered support of his political goal. However, without the work of a new Irish hero, the dream of Repeal would not have been remotely possible.

In 1828-29, O'Connell rallied a massive amount of support for Emancipation and was elected as a member of parliament (MP) for County Clare, though his Catholicism barred him from the House of Commons. Soon after, he won the right to sit in the Westminster Parliament when the Catholic Relief Act of 1829 passed.^[112] This was revolutionary for two reasons. First, the Irish masses voted for someone other than their landlord, and, second, it opened the door for the Catholic middle and upper classes to serve in a variety of civil service posts for the first time in over a century. However, after his failure to overcome party politics within the House of Commons, O'Connell fell out of favor with the Irish public until he began campaigning for a new movement in the 1840s. The poetry of *The Nation* made a large show of supporting him as the Repeal Association leader during Davis's tenure. The paper portrayed O'Connell as Ireland's best chance at freedom from England's tyranny. In their "National Ode to O'Connell," the writers called him "Heaven sent" and the "Hope of our Isle:"

Long-oppressed millions feel
Thy Heaven-taught cry Repeal,
Thy own Erin's wounds shall heal,
Hope of our Isle!^[113]

The poem connected O'Connell's success in gaining Catholic Emancipation over a decade earlier to the present campaign for repealing the Union. In many ways, O'Connell became the perfect example of Davis's narrative

describing the interwoven nature of Ireland's past and present. Davis and the Young Irelanders felt directly connected to O'Connell, who, in turn, felt integrally linked to those who fought for Irish freedoms in the 1790s. O'Connell had been young when Henry Grattan and Wolfe Tone fought legislatively and militarily against English rule in Ireland, and his horror at the bloodshed of the 1798 rebellion led him to try peaceful, constitutional methods for obtaining rights for Catholics.^[114] O'Connell's lawful attempts at gaining freedom for the Irish then inspired Davis's idea of an Irish nationalism inclusive of Catholic and Protestant patriots. By remaining mindful of their political past and inspiration, Davis thought they could again be victorious against England and create a modern Irish nation.

In preparing for the success of the Repeal movement under the leadership of the Great Emancipator, *The Nation* began creating triumphant odes to the glory of Repeal. Though Davis, O'Connell, and the Loyal National Repeal Association never achieved victory in actuality, a history based on *The Nation* would show otherwise. In the first year of *The Nation*, the creation of a wealth of celebratory Repeal literature began with the further deification of O'Connell:

I heard the watchword burst from all the gath'ring cry *Repeal*;
And as his eyes were raised to heav'n from whence his mission came
He stood amid the thousands there a monarch, save in name!^[115]

After portraying O'Connell as a Christ-like figure praying for the forgiveness of his oppressors' sins, the poem called the politician "princely" and "a monarch." The poet contended that O'Connell was on a mission from God to repeal the Act of Union. In the heated sectarian environment of Ireland, that was a bold claim to make. Yet, Young Ireland's confidence in O'Connell was strong enough in 1842 that they truly believed he would succeed. Had O'Connell, Davis, and the Loyal National Repeal Association accomplished their goal, *The Nation* had already amassed literature celebrating the success of the movement to add to their nationalist timeline of Irish history. This literature involved a large dose of idealism not only about the fate of Repeal but also about the means necessary to gain Irish legislative independence:

Then shout let the echo ring wide o'er the land,
Till it flutter the flags on the far English strand;
We are strong! we are brave but we grasp not the steel
With the branch of the olive we sue for Repeal!^[116]

The poet portrayed the Repealers using nonviolent methods to create political change, which accurately described its contemporary Repeal Association; O'Connell continued the peaceful, constitutional methods that had won in the Emancipation battle over a decade earlier. However, Davis and his fellow Young Irelanders, who had not lived through the violence of 1798 that had so influenced O'Connell, advocated methods that increasingly involved taking up arms against the crown if necessary to gain Repeal.

This violent development in Young Ireland's ideology showed more as the years passed without any major achievements for home rule. The poetry of *The Nation* revealed the increasing differences in methodology between Young and Old Ireland as early as 1843:

No! we'll wash out the stain be a nation or die!
Remember the glories of Eighty-Two!
Shall Volunteers' brows with the slaves' brand burn!
Yes! stern and loud be our morning hymn
Our mind-day wish, and our ev'ning song;
For Repeal we will peril life, name and limb
Be the fight soon or late be it short or long!^[117]

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The poem abandoned sentiments of peaceful protest to enlist for Repeal the heated emotions stirred up by Davis's enumeration of all the wrongs committed by the English against Ireland. Recounting a chronology of lies, abuse, slaughter, and oppression eventually led the Young Irelanders' anger to surge. Under the leadership of Davis, who held O'Connell in high regard, *The Nation* generally left these issues to the pages of the Poet's Corner, which oscillated on their depiction of the relationship with O'Connell depending on the author. However, after Davis's death, the young leader could no longer contain the volatile combination of nationalist rhetoric and a laundry list of complaints against England that he had published. Gavan Duffy and O'Connell quickly and publicly fell out with one another. [118] Death and disease soon split up the original Young Ireland group. When Gavan Duffy formed a new Young Ireland party, its meager rebellion in 1848 led to the arrest and imprisonment of many members, and their political power diminished greatly. The strength of Davis's notion of a modern, inclusive Irish nationalism could not hold his party together without him, but the affects of his work for *The Nation* lived on in later, more successful nationalists.

Thomas Davis was instrumental in the creation the first completely modern idea of Irish nationalism through his construction of a new version of historical events and figures in the poetry of *The Nation*. His foundation for a new Irish national history was based on the ideas of Clontarf, Cromwell's Campaign, the War of Two Kings, the Penal Era, Grattan's Parliament, Tone's United Irishmen, and Emancipation. Through his re-envisioning of these events, Davis created a new lexicon of Irish symbols for future generations of Irish nationalists. Clontarf, the Cromwellian assault, the War of Two Kings, and the resulting Penal Era became symbols of foreign aggression against a united, Gaelic population and called for a severing of ties with England. Fionn, Grattan, and Tone became national heroes and symbols of former strength and independence that could unite the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland to form "a nation once again." [119] He brought his timeline of Irish history up to his present through the songs of praise for O'Connell and Repeal, which were meant to show the linear progression of Ireland's great heroes from Fionn to O'Connell and bolster support for the movement. The influence of his work for *The Nation* reached well beyond the 1840s campaign for repealing the Act of Union. Modern Irish nationalist groups like the Fenians and Sinn Féin named themselves after Davis's ideas. The President of the Assembly of Ireland, Arthur Griffith, compiled an entire book about Davis's work before heading the assembly during the Anglo-Irish War. [120] Even Sir Winston Churchill quoted Davis's poetry in a letter to President of the Irish Free State, Eamonn de Valera, during World War II. [121] Thomas Davis had a resounding impact on the making of modern Ireland.

[1] Michael Tierney, "Origin and Growth of Modern Irish Nationalism," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 30, no. 119 (1941): 321, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30098131>.

[2] Throughout the centuries, Scotland and Ireland had a considerable amount of interchange due to Scotland's proximity to Northern Ireland.

[3] Helen F. Mulvey provides the best examination of Davis's life and work; however, it is generally limited to broad analysis rather than an in-depth look at his on the poetry in *The Nation*. See Helen F. Mulvey, *Thomas Davis and Ireland, a Biographical Study* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

[4] For more information on Monster Meetings see Gary Owens, "Hedge Schools of Politics: O'Connell's Monster Meetings," *History Ireland* 2, no. 1 (1994), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27724141>. Monster meetings were meetings of the Repeal Association led by Daniel O'Connell named "monster" for the large number of people in attendance.

[5] While some might argue that Wolfe Tone's United Irishmen movement was the first nationalist movement, I contend that the United Irishmen were not truly nationalist in the modern sense. They lacked a coherent idea of Irish national character and goals. Davis's creation of a new history and his work with the Loyal National Repeal Association did, however, include these characteristics of modern nationalism. It is therefore that I argue he had the first modern nationalist movement.

[6] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 36.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Robert Welch, *Irish Poetry from Moore to Yeats* (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980), 12.

- [9] Paul A Townend, "Academies of Nationality" in *Reading Irish Histories: Texts, Contexts and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Lawrence W. McBride (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 21.
- [10] Ibid.
- [11] Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History* (Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son, 1884), 145. For more on the importance of Repeal reading rooms see D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) and Townend, "Academies of Nationality."
- [12] Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, 159.
- [13] Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, vol. 1 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969), 5.
- [14] Thomas Davis qtd. in Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, *The Short Life of Thomas Davis, 1840-1846* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895), 3. <http://books.google.com>.
- [15] Gavan Duffy, *The Short Life of Thomas Davis*, 7.
- [16] Ibid., 24.
- [17] Ibid., 47. Decades after his successful Emancipation movement, O'Connell had just begun the Repeal movement and had almost no support within the Irish ruling class, particularly Protestants like Davis, which made his support shocking.
- [18] Ibid., 51.
- [19] Ibid., 66.
- [20] Thomas Osborne Davis, *The Patriot Parliament of 1689, with its statutes, votes and proceedings*, ed. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893).
- [21] Gavan Duffy, *The Short Life of Thomas Davis*, 240.
- [22] Front Page, *The Nation*, October 29, 1842, *Irish News Archive*.
- [23] Front Page, *The Nation*, October 15, 1842 and "Foreign Intelligence," *The Nation*, April 15, July 8, and August 5, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [24] Front Page, *The Nation*, December 24, 1842, *Irish News Archive*.
- [25] Front Page, *The Nation*, October 15, 22, and 29, 1842, *Irish News Archive*.
- [26] "O'Connell Tribute," *The Nation*, October 15, 1842, *Irish News Archive*. This practice began during O'Connell's campaign for Emancipation in the 1820s as a safety net for those evicted from their land for voting for an Emancipation candidate.
- [27] Ibid.
- [28] Robert Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 210. O'Connell held a Monster Meeting at Tara, the seat of the Gaelic High King before England began governing the island, and attempted to hold one at Clontarf before the British government banned it.
- [29] Ibid., 196.
- [30] "Owen Roe' O'Neill," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 4, (1856): 37-8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20608790>. Owen O'Neill was a member of the O'Neill clan of County Tyrone along with other Irish heroes such as Phelim O'Neill and Hugh O'Neill.
- [31] Thomas Osborne Davis and John Mitchel, *The Poems of Thomas Davis* (New York: D & J Sadlier & Co., 1866), 137.
- [32] Ibid., iii. As for his colleagues, John Blake Dillon never wrote poetry for *The Nation* because he never liked his work enough to keep at it, and eventually left the paper. Charles Gavan Duffy wrote mainly opinions articles, so much of the writing was left to Davis in 1843-4. As such, *The Nation* may be used as a view into the mind of Davis and his ideas on a united Irish nationalism. See Gavan Duffy, *The Short Life of Thomas Davis*, 75; Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland*, 195.
- [33] Ibid., 137.
- [34] "Ourselves Alone," *The Nation*, December 3, 1842, *Irish New Archives*. Capitalization comes from the original.
- [35] Beta, "Stand Together!" *The Nation*, July 29, 1843, *Irish News Archives*.
- [36] J.K., "Devil May Care," *The Nation*, September 23, 1843, *Irish News Archives*. The asterisk led to a footnote from the poem that read: "Shin fane'Ourselves or Ourselves Alone." Shin fane is another spelling of Sinn Fein.
- [37] Miles Taylor, "John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England c. 1712-1929," *Past & Present*, no. 124 (1992): 98, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650800>.
- [38] Ibid.
- [39] Ibid. The use of John Bull in the context of Ireland so increased during this period that it became one of the top ten contexts in which John Bull was used.
- [40] "Song of the United Irishmen," *The Nation*, December 10, 1842, *Irish News Archive*.
- [41] "The Lament of Granu Wail," *The Nation*, February 18, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.

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- [42] George Bernard Shaw, *John Bull's Other Island*, 1904.
- [43] Merriam-Webster, s.v. "nationality," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nationality>.
- [44] M. J. M'C, Untitled "Poet's Corner" entry, *The Nation*, December 3, 1842, *Irish News Archive*. The author included this historical footnote: "One of the acts of Sir Charles Wilmot, one of Elizabeth's *pacificators* of Ireland, was to butcher in cold blood the sick and wounded whom he found in a deserted Irish camp."
- [45] Ibid.
- [46] John O'Connell, *An Argument for Ireland* (Dublin: Loyal National Repeal Association, 1844), 33. This willingness to remain under the monarchy accounted for the word "Loyal" in the association's title.
- [47] "Epistle: To O'Connell in Ireland, From Lafontaine in Canada," *The Nation*, November 26, 1842, *Irish News Archive*. Italics in original.
- [48] John M. Thunder, "The Kingdom of Meath," *Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 8, no. 77 (1889): 511, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25506494>.
- [49] James MacKillop, *Fionn mac Cumhaill: Celtic myth in English literature* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986), xi. For example, James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* is taken to be a corruption of "Fionn again is awake," a reference to the end of the legends of Fionn which prophesized that Fionn and his Fenians would someday awaken from their eternal slumber with their full strength and battle for Ireland's freedom.
- [50] "The Battle of Dundalk," *The Nation*, April 6, 1844, *Irish News Archive*.
- [51] Mary Williams, "King Arthur in History and Legend," *Folklore* 73, no. 2 (1962): 73, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1258608>.
- [52] Though James Macpherson had repopularized the chronicles of Fionn by his son Ossian in 18th century Scotland with his *Poetical Works of Ossian*, which became an important element in European romanticism, the reclamation of Fionn by the Irish began in earnest with Davis and Mahoney. See Clare O'Halloran, "Irish Re-creations of the Gaelic Past: The Challenge of Macpherson's Ossian," *Past and Present*, no. 124 (1989), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650893>.
- [53] Leon O'Broin, *Revolutionary Underground: The Story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, 1858-1924* (Gill and Macmillan, 1976).
- [54] Clare Downham, "The Battle of Clontarf in Irish History and Legend," *History Ireland* 13, no. 5 (2005): 21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27725330>.
- [55] Ibid. The first account of Boru being killed in prayer is found in Marianus Scotus's account written fifty years later in Germany and therefore may or may not be true.
- [56] Kathleen Quigley, "Daniel O'Connell and the Leadership Crisis within the Irish Repeal Party, 1843-1845," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 2, no. 2 (1970): 100, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4048448>.
- [57] See Michael MacDonagh, *The Life of Daniel O'Connell* (London: Cassell and Company, Limited, 1903), 329; Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Repeal Year* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), 173-5; or Iain McCalman, "England and Ireland" in *Revolution and the Meanings of Freedom in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Isser Woloch (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1996), 152.
- [58] "The Battle of Clontarf," *The Nation*, June 24, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [59] Hodder M. Westropp, "On the Tribal System and Land-Tenure in Ireland, Under the Brehon Laws," *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* 2, no. 3 (1870): 342-51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3014461>.
- [60] M. J. M'C. "A Poet Describing a Bivouac of O'Neil's Followers, After the Battle of Kinsale," *The Nation*, December 17, 1842, *Irish News Archive*.
- [61] Reverend Edward Alfred D'Alton, *History of Ireland: from the Earliest Times to Present Day*, vol. 3 (London: The Gresham Publishing Company, 1649), 174.
- [62] Shamrock, "Leinster War-Song," *The Nation*, April 15, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [63] The annual parades in remembrance of the Battle of the Boyne have continued for centuries and create much tension between Protestants and Catholics in the North, particularly during the Troubles. See J. G. Simms, "Remembering 1690," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 63, no. 251 (1974): 231, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30088090>.
- [64] "Irish War-Song: AD 1843," *The Nation*, April 15, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [65] The Battle of Benburb, like Kinsale, was a battle in the Confederate War, or the Irish Civil War, or the Eleven Years War, or the Cromwellian War. For an explanation of the changing phases of the war accompanied by the details of Benburb, see John J. McDonnell, "Another Look at the Battle of Benburb, 5 June 1646," *Seanchas Ard mhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society* 9, no. 2 (1979), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29740933>.
- [66] Quigley, "Daniel O'Connell and the Leadership Crisis," 99.

- [67] Kate Norgate, "The Bull Laudabiliter," *English Historical Review* 8, no. 29 (1893): 18, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/548313>. The authenticity of the Bull Laudabiliter granting Ireland to Henry II has been hotly debated since the seventeenth century, but that debate did not affect the facts on the ground that England controlled Ireland.
- [68] Desmond Keenan, *Ireland 1170-1509, Society and History* (Xlibris, 2010), 407. Henry sent Strongbow as leader of a group of Welsh soldiers to help the king of Munster, Dermot Mac Murrough, to fight off a rival.
- [69] Christopher Harper-Bill and Nicholas Vincent, *Henry II: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2007), 139. The chapter "Henry II and England's Insular Neighbours" includes an interesting historiographical discussion of the legality of Henry's claims in England.
- [70] "The Defeat of Strongbow A.D. 1174," *The Nation*, September 2, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [71] Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, 158.
- [72] Kee, *The Green Flag*, 15-6. The planted nobility often came from Scotland and England, but the English monarchy also attempted to enlist Irish clan chiefs by giving them royal titles.
- [73] Noel M. Griffin, "How Many Died During Cromwell's Campaign?" *History Ireland* 16, no. 6 (2008): 13, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27725895>. Irish casualties are estimated to be around 600,000, as compared with 83,000 in England/Wales (3.7% of the population) and 27,000 in Scotland (6% of the population).
- [74] Ibid.
- [75] "The Wexford Massacre," *The Nation*, July 29, 1843, *Irish News Archive*. Italics in original.
- [76] "The Massacre of the Monks," *The Nation*, October 28, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [77] Ibid.
- [78] "Expostulation and Agitation," *The Nation*, September 30, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [79] Ibid.
- [80] Ibid.
- [81] Robert Fitzroy Foster, *The Oxford History of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989): 125-6.
- [82] Michael McNally, *The Battle of Aughrim 1691* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: The History Press, 2008), 153. For more information on the importance of the battle of Aughrim, see Thomas Fitzgerald, *Ireland and Her People: A Library of Irish Biography*, vol. IV (Chicago: Fitzgerald Book Co., 1910), 353; or see G. A. Hayes-McCoy, "The Battle of Aughrim, 1691," *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 20, no. 1/2 (1942): 1, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25535220>.
- [83] "The Battle of Aughrim," *The Nation*, April 29, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [84] Many historians debate the true cause of the Irish loss at Aughrim, and St. Ruth's lack of information sharing with his generals has been cited as a factor. For more information, see "On the defence of Ireland: including observations on some other subjects connected therewith," *Cowen Tracts* (1795) from Newcastle University: 27, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60202321>.
- [85] "The Death of Sarsfield," *The Nation*, April 22, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [86] McNally, *The Battle of Aughrim*, 188.
- [87] T. Arkins, "Penal Laws and Irish Lands," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Journal* 1, no. 3 (1912): 515. See also: Sean J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland 1630-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 146.
- [88] Ibid.
- [89] "The Penal Days," *The Nation*, June 15, 1844, *Irish News Archive*.
- [90] Ibid.
- [91] Kee, *The Green Flag*, 33.
- [92] "Song of the Volunteers of 1782," *The Nation*, May 13, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [93] "Erin Aboo," *The Nation*, June 3, 1843, *Irish News Archive*. Aboo is a Gaelic exclamation similar to "hurrah," according to William Shepard Walsh, *Handy-Book of Literary Curiosities* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1909), 331.
- [94] "The Irish Catholic to His Protestant Brother," *The Nation*, December 24, 1842, *Irish News Archive*.
- [95] "The Song of Ulster," *The Nation*, March 11, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [96] Gavan Duffy, *The Short Life of Thomas Davis*, 4.
- [97] Kee, *The Green Flag*, 52.
- [98] "Song of the United Irishmen," *The Nation*.
- [99] Kee, *The Green Flag*, 132-45.
- [100] Tone actually hoped to receive help from the French Directory in order to overthrow English rule in Ireland, a theme carried over from the War of Two Kings when Irish hope rested on French intervention.
- [101] "Ninety-Eight!" *The Nation*, August 5, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [102] Davis qtd. in Gavan Duffy, *The Short Life of Thomas Davis*, 92.

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- [103] "The Memory of the Dead," *The Nation*, April 1, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [104] Ibid.
- [105] This sentiment later caused problems for the unity of the Repeal Association.
- [106] Previously discussed nationalist groups such as Sinn Féin and the Fenians military wing in Ireland (the Irish Republican Army) eventually won the Irish Free State, but sacrificed many lives and their connection to six of the nine counties of Ulster that now form Northern Ireland.
- [107] Sean J. Connolly, "Reconsidering the Irish Act of Union," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10, (2000): 400. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3679387>.
- [108] "The House that Paddy Built," *The Nation*, December 10, 1842, *Irish News Archive*.
- [109] Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, 2 Sub ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 231.
- [110] Connolly, "Reconsidering the Irish Act of Union," 401.
- [111] "The House that Paddy Built," *The Nation*. Capitalization comes from original.
- [112] Kee, *The Green Flag*, 183.
- [113] A.B. and T.C.D., "A National Ode to O'Connell," *The Nation*, August 26, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [114] Kee, *The Green Flag*, 180-4.
- [115] Astrea, "O'Connell," *The Nation*, November 5, 1842, *Irish News Archive*. Italics come from the original.
- [116] Henrietta B. O'Neill, "Of the Ulster Repealers," *The Nation*, April 8, 1843, *Irish News Archive*.
- [117] "Repeal," *The Nation*, May 20, 1843, *Irish News Archive*. The poem revolves around calling out each of the four historic provinces of Ireland to join in the fight for Repeal.
- [118] Gavan Duffy, *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, 125-281. Duffy was convinced that O'Connell was trying to suppress *The Nation* by stopping its delivery to Repeal Reading rooms, which, as previously discussed, was essential to the paper's success. On the other hand, O'Connell thought that Duffy had been growing too violent in his rhetoric.
- [119] "A Nation Once Again," *The Nation*, July 13, 1844, *Irish News Archive*.
- [120] Arthur Griffith, ed., *Thomas Davis: the Thinker and Teacher* (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, Ltd., 1914). The Assembly of Ireland was commonly called by its Gaelic name: *Dil ireann*.
- [121] Winston Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1950), 539.