Staging Irishness in the Transnational Marketing of Local Colour Fiction

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"Miss Jane Barlow," a short item published in the *Islington Gazette* of 24 October 1902 on the occasion of the author's recent birthday, commends Barlow for having "given in her books dealing with the West of Ireland admirable pictures of life in that region of laughter and tears, which might form as instructive reading for legislators at the moment as debates on that part of the Sister Isle in the House of Commons" (3). The anonymous critic frames the importance of Barlow's work in both a regional and national context: her fiction truthfully renders modes of existence from a specific Irish region, but apparently also provides the British with insights into the Irish people. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, when studying Irish local colour fiction from the turn of the twentieth century, one cannot merely consider these forms of cultural production as expressions of local tradition or responses to processes of nation building. Rather, the publication, translation and reception histories of works by Barlow, Seumás MacManus, Katharine Tynan, Emily Lawless and Frank James Mathew show that these texts functioned in processes of transnational circulation, mediation and reception. This chapter aims to take our understanding of Irish local colour fiction into new, transnational directions, especially in light of the rich publication history of Irish local colour fiction of the 1890s and early 1900s across the Atlantic.

Literature that recorded the vernacular, customs, folklore and modes of existence of communities in a specific region became immensely popular in Ireland during the Celtic Revival, and was rooted in a strong fascination with local colour. At the same time, regions in Victorian Ireland defied easy definition. The Ordnance Survey Ireland (1839-1842), in its ambition to map out "a colonised landscape" (Parsons 12), played a significant role in conceptualising areas as administratively identifiable regions with standardised names. However, as various scholars have pointed out, regions are inherently unstable categories when we think of them not as administrative units but as cultural constructions. Xosé Nuñes Seixas and Eric Storm state that the region is "a putative group, constructed upon the performative utterance of those who claim its existence or believe in it" (4). Anssi Paasi stresses the necessity to acknowledge that regions are not given units, and therefore should not just be studied in relation to "broader political, economic and administrative" but also cultural "practices" (11).

In the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland, we should indeed be aware of tensions between administrative and cultural representations of regions. There is great variation among the names and geographical scales by which specific geographical areas were referenced in the media and arts during his period. For example, F.W. Crossley's Dublin-based magazine *The Irish Tourist* (1894-1907),

using the modern medium of photography to record images of traditional rural life, would frame snapshots taken in the same geographical area in various ways. Its July edition of 1895 included a series of photographs of women spinning wool, such as "A Galway Woollen Wheel," as illustrations of arts and crafts in a broader area, as the title of the article "Hand-Weaving in the West of Ireland" indicates (93). While this edition of *The Irish Tourist* presents a more or less homogenous culture belonging to a region called the "West of Ireland," its May 1896 issue depicts the Claddagh in Galway as a specific locality with its own traditions and modes of existence. This becomes evident from a photograph by F.W. Hindley tagged "In the Claddagh, Galway" (115), which features two women and a boy in fishing garb, posing on a quay.

Local colour fiction discloses similar patterns of variation regarding the ways in which Irish regions were imagined and identified towards the end of the nineteenth century. Frank James Mathew's stories from *At the Rising of the Moon* (1893) are situated in "Liscannor," close to Ballynahinch, Ennistimon and "Moher" in "County Clare" (24-5); the subtitle of the collection, *Irish Stories and Studies*, problematises this specific regional focus. At first glance, Jane Barlow's tales in *Irish Idylls* (1892) appear to be set in a specific local community, called Lisconnel, as well. However, this is a fictive village, and the address to the readers that is incorporated in the American edition, published by Dodd, Mead & Co in New York in 1893, localises the interrelated narratives in a broader geographical area, "the wild boglands of Connaught" (i). The setting of Katharine Tynan's *An Isle in the Water* (1895) is even more geographically elusive, as it is an unspecified island on Ireland's western coast. Additionally, the title of Charlotte O'Conor Eccles's short story collection *Aliens of the West* (1904) bears witness to the fact that the Irish "West" is a fluid conceptual construct with shifting, historically contingent borders, rather than a geographically fixed locality, as Toomevara – the village in which most tales are set – is in Co. Tipperary, an area usually not associated with the West. The chosen title may have been inspired by an attempt to appeal to the collection's imagined readership: as the frontispiece to the book edition states, three of the stories had previously appeared in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* and *Pall Mall Magazine*. Subsequently, they were published in London, New York and Melbourne by Cassell & Company, as part of "Cassell's Colonial Library." For British readers, Ireland would be associated with the west of the Empire; for readers in the United States and Australia, with the far west of Europe.

The audiences which these published editions targeted would significantly impact the ways in which these literary representations of Irish regions would be staged – amongst others, through paratextual dimensions such as covers, illustrations and prefaces that established readerly expectations of the localities depicted in the texts. Local colour fiction from Ireland was explicitly marketed as literature for reading communities beyond the region, beyond the nation or empire, and across the globe, including Irish diasporic communities. Yet, these strong transnational dimensions of local colour as a repertoire of cultural representations that are shaped by transcul-

tural interactions and in "cross-national" cultural spaces (Welsch 194) are often overlooked.

One reason for this neglected transnational angle could be the strong nationalist paradigm in studies of the region. Literary representations of the region have often been interpreted as forms of resistance against "the enforcement of national social norms" in the nineteenth century (Donovan 68), or, conversely, as a contribution to the crystallisation of national identity. As other scholars contend, local colour literature recorded regional ways of life that are regarded as symptomatic of national character.[1] Another reason could be the strong emphasis placed on Irish peasantry in the West as emblematic of national identity during the Revival period by cultural nationalists and antiquarians, even if it is vital to acknowledge that the Revival was far from "a singular movement with clear agendas and goals" (McDonald 92). W. B. Yeats's perception of the "wise peasant" (161) from the northwest as the embodiment of Ireland's pre-Christian past, Celtic origins, and the nation's pre- and postcolonial identity, is a well-known instance.[2]

This chapter will contribute to debates about regional literature from the long nineteenth century by examining the branding of Irish local colour literature in transnational contexts of translation, republication and reception. New York was an epicentre of cultural production of regional "Irishness" in that local colour fiction initially published in Ireland was reissued in editions for the American market or (re-)printed in New York-based periodicals. For example, Seumás MacManus's collection *In Chimney Corners* was released for the American market by Doubleday & McClure in New York in 1899. Shan F. Bullock's collections of stories set around Lough Erne, *Ring o' Rushes*, was published by Ward, Lock & Co. in both London and New York in 1896. Additionally, there are notable examples of Irish local colour fiction that was translated into foreign languages and launched elsewhere in Europe. An example is Emily Lawless's *Hurrish* (1886), which was translated into Dutch by Anna Bok as *Hurrish: Een Iersche Roman* (1890) and became very popular among readers in the Netherlands.

Analyses of prefaces, visual and material aspects which reframed these texts when they were published abroad will illuminate how Irish writers were not just producing a self- or "auto-image" (Leerssen 197) of Irish regional life but were also mediating "Irishness" towards communities abroad, in complex dynamics between regional, na-

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1 See Fetterley and Pryse, *Writing out of Place*; and Lathbury, *Realism and Regionalism, 1860-1910*.

2 The passage from *The Celtic Twilight* (1893) reads: "To the wise peasant the green hills and the woods round him are full of never-fading mystery" (161). While Yeats's argument here stresses the regional peasantry's connection to Celtic folklore and pre-Christian spirituality, it must be noted that recent scholarship also extensively addresses the synergy between tradition and international modernism in the Literary Revival. For instance, Patrick Bixby and Gregory Castle point out that "modernism had many points of emergence, many of which can be traced back to Irish artists" (4-5).

tional, and transnational identity construction. Besides identifying trends in the marketing of Irish local colour fiction abroad, this chapter will examine the transnational reception of these regional writings. Such an approach will not only shed light on processes of transculturality, but will additionally reveal how Irishness was imagined transnationally, in diasporic contexts but also in relation to other regional identities and literatures.

Marketing the Irish Region

Local colour fiction often functions as an act of mediation between insiders and outsiders on a narrative level. Josephine Donovan points to the "double vision" (10) that is characteristic of the genre: local colour literature, she explains, often stages a protagonist or narrator who was once an insider and who has now distanced him- or herself from the native region, by moving away. The narrator's observation at the beginning of Barlow's story "Out of the Way," published in *Strangers at Lisconnel* (1895), illustrates this well. The unidentified narrator uses the first-person plural to suggest that "Lisconnel, our very small hamlet in the middle of a wide bogland" is a community to which she belongs. At the same time, the narrator evokes the suggestion that "a stranger's face" (1) may sometimes appear among the village community. She thereby implicitly invites the reader, who is one of these strange visitors to the locality she describes, to partake of this insider's guided tour through bogland rural existence in Connaught. Second, one should be aware that, generally, late nineteenth-century Irish local colour fiction was originally published outside Ireland – by London or Edinburgh publishers or in British magazines – and therefore targeted towards audiences for whom the Irish regions described were distant, unfamiliar grounds. Therefore, the infrastructures surrounding its dissemination generally implied an act of transcultural transference.

How did these transnational literary networks in which Irish local colour fiction circulated affect its marketing? We may perceive three distinct trends in the ways in which paratextual elements staged regional Irishness for its transnational readerships. The first is a suggestion of rootedness: prefaces, illustrations and cover designs offer the promise of access to an authentic piece of regional Irishness by references to land and landscape. The national emblem of the shamrock features prominently in these presentations of Irish regionalism. The covers of both the Belfast and Toronto editions of Archibald McIlroy's *The Auld Meetin'-Hoose Green* – published by McCaw, Stevenson & Orr in 1898 and by F.H. Revell in 1899 – are ornamented with a picture of blooming shamrocks. The cover of the American edition of Jane Barlow's *A Creel of Irish Stories* (1898), published by Dodd, Mead & Co., likewise features shamrocks that are grouped together in the shape of a heart.

This elaborate use of these symbols identifies the texts as Irish on a national rather than a regionally specific level. By contrast, in the preface to Mathew's *At the Rising of the Moon,* entitled "Shamrocks," the writer-narrator evokes "a bit of shamrock" – a

"dried weed" that he kept among "some dusty papers here in my chambers in the Temple." Finding it again after several years, the writer-narrator remembers "gathering it – years ago now – on a moor by Liscannor" and is further reminded of the "old times on the West Coast of Ireland" (1) and his many friends there. During the writer-narrator's residence outside Ireland, in London, the shamrock is not only a token of his native country; it also functions as what Ann Rigney would call a "portable monument" (363) that encapsulates recollections of regional existence and that prompts him to write down his local colour narratives. The dried shamrock stands for the rootedness of the stories in this region around Liscannor, Co. Clare, and the authenticity of local life they represent. Interestingly, in its review of *At the Rising of the Moon*, printed in the issue of 29 April 1893, the *Newcastle Courant* conveyed the opinion that "the volume would have been more fittingly entitled 'Shamrocks'," because of its focus on "Irish life and character" (5). This suggests that the foreword was rather effective in advancing the idea that the narratives are connected to the Irish land and the people who inhabit it, on both a national and a regional scale.

This idea that the presented work of local colour fiction offers readers a direct experience of the described geographical areas recurs in various printed editions. Jane Barlow's collection of regional tales, *At the Back of Beyond*, was published by Dodd, Mead & Co in 1902, after it had previously appeared in both a New York and London edition as *From the Land of the Shamrock* in 1900 and 1901 respectively. This 1902 New York edition of stories contains a prologue entitled "A Topographical Note," in which Barlow sketches the difficulties of finding one's way through the Connemara boglands when a complete stranger to the area:

> In Bogland if you inquire the address of such or such a person, you will hear not very infrequently that he or she lives 'off away at the Back of Beyond'; and this answer is never a satisfactory one. For it not only sounds discouragingly vague, but it moreover implies that you have a long road before you, and probably a rough road too. (1)

The writer-narrator uses the prologue to map out the area for the reader foreign to these boglands, sharing an insider's knowledge about the region. Furthermore, this "Topographical Note" serves as the starting point of a narrative journey through which the narrator will guide the readers, almost as if the latter are taken by the hand to explore the landscape and its people. The American audiences are positioned as tourists who can visit Connemara – for some perhaps even the ancestral region of their families – from their armchairs. This impression of travelling to the narrative's setting is strengthened by the book's cover, which depicts the dark green silhouettes of a rural cottage and trees.

An earlier publication by Barlow for the American market, the 1898 holiday edition of *Irish Idylls* by Dodd, Mead & Co., also used illustrations – in the form of photographs made by the Massachusetts-born folklorist Clifton Johnson – to enhance the narrative illusion of a journey to Connemara. In the introductory note that precedes the stories, Johnson claims that he has visited the "wild boglands of Connaught" depicted in the collection, testifying to the veracity of the regional world that Barlow recon-

structs. As Johnson maintains, the author "preserves the atmosphere of the region, and the sentiment of the life that she describes to a rare degree" (v), as travellers like himself will note. At the same time, Johnson suggests that he has shot images that offer authentic perspectives of the region: "I have tried to make the pictures faithful transcripts of nature and life as they really are amid the sombre bogs that are the predominant features of that part of the Irish west coast" (vi). The idea that Johnson conveys is that the narratives and photographs together offer a slice of authentic Connemara life to which American readers are given access: they will be able to experience and see Connemara life for themselves even if they are geographically remote and have never visited the area. Modern technology in the form of photography brings traditional ways of existence to life, preserves them for future generations, and connects local communities on a transnational level.

It is striking that rich illustrations – such as Johnson's photographs – are more often included in editions for North-American readerships than in those for the British market. The cover of the London edition of Barlow's *Creel of Irish Stories* (Methuen, 1897) bears no shamrocks or other decorative images. Similarly, the cover binding of the London edition of *Across an Ulster Bog* (William Heinemann, 1896), a regional novel by M. Hamilton (Mary Churchill Luck) is marked by plain cloth and lettering. However, the American edition (Edward Arnold, 1896) features an elaborate illustration of a hooded, forlorn young woman, holding her own in tempestuous weather. In the background, a rural landscape looms. How can we account for the more prevalent presence of images in American editions, apart from the fact that for these transatlantic readerships, the west of Ireland was a remote world that had to be brought to life visually rather than just textually?

Contexts of Migration

A clue may be found in the context of diasporic Irish communities in North America, most of which came into existence during and immediately after the Great Irish Famine, when more than 2 million people fled from hunger.[3] These diasporic communities would integrate the Famine migration from which they descended into narratives of involuntary exile. Thomas D'Arcy McGee's "The Exile's Meditation," published posthumously in 1869, presents a persona who laments the fact that his fellow countrymen are "wiled and cast away, / And driven like soulless cattle from their native land a prey," because those in power compel the tenant farmers to leave their communities (105). This template of exile persisted well into the 1890s, which saw both the influx of new waves of Catholic immigrants from primarily western Ireland (Moran 15) and the upsurge of a new nativist movement. The American Protective Association, founded in Clinton, Iowa in 1887, was "principally an anti-Catholic organisation" and "in 1893 […] counted as many as two million supporters across the country"

3 See, for example, Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*.

(Meagher 196). Andreas Huyssen states that diaspora communities, especially those whose legacies are rooted in the idea of forced migration, are inclined to “create a unified or even mythic memory of the lost homeland” that is steeped in nostalgia. These communities are driven by a desire to recuperate and reconnect the homeland through what Svetlana Boym defines as “restorative nostalgia” (42). The images and prefaces that accompany the reprinted local colour narratives may be interpreted as an attempt to retrieve true ‘Irishness’ by second and third generations living away from the homeland.

Significantly, in this light, a second way in which late nineteenth-century local colour narratives were framed for transnational audiences is through contexts and tropes of migration. The earlier referenced prologue “Shamrocks” from *At the Rising of the Moon* is a case in point. The writer-narrator positions himself as both an insider and outsider of the region: he is the native from Co. Clare who migrated to London. Therefore he is displaced from his indigenous homestead, just like many readers of his British and especially his American edition. There are several other examples: MacManus’s collection of regional folklore, *In Chimney Corners* (1899), which came out in London and New York, and is not only dedicated to Irish migrants, “[o]ur Brave Boys and Girls who have fared forth from their homes, travelling away and away, far further than I could tell you and twice further than you could tell me, into the Strange Land Beyond, to push their fortune” (n.p.). The preface, “Our Folk Tales,” also alludes to the mass emigration from Ireland. Just as Ireland’s boys in “the old folk-tales” went off for adventure, “now our poor girls, too, must go” (xii) to seek their fortunes in the New World, the writer-narrator intimates. Some return, but some “never come” back, leaving their mothers in Ireland to bemoan their absence. MacManus ends his prologue by invocating the Virgin Mary to protect these emigrant children of Erin, to “soften to them the heart of the stranger” (xii). Charlotte O’Conor Eccles’s opening narrative “Toomevara” – a prologue to the rest of the stories – also contextualises the region in Co. Tipperary in relation to migration, describing the departure of young villagers to the New World and the mourning relatives who are left behind:

> Every week in summer some eighty youths and girls leave the little railway station to catch the Queenstown express. Their fathers and mothers weep out loud, and often some heartbroken woman raises the *Caoine*, the wild cry for the dead that those who have once heard can never forget. (3)

By subsequently portraying those who went across the Irish Sea or Atlantic as exiles of their native region, “Toomevara” creates narrative bridges between the local and transnational: “those who were born amidst it, and that in Manchester slums or the back blocks of New York fills the old folks with sick longing for home” (2).

The preface to the 1893 New York edition of Barlow’s *Irish Idylls* also envisages transatlantic ties. Barlow addresses American readers, to whose shores the wild boglands of Connaught send so many a forlorn voyager ‘over oceans of say’” (i). She expresses the hopes that these readers “will perhaps care to glance” at the Irish emigrant’s “old home, and learn the reasons why he leaves it, which seem to lie very ob-

viously on the surface, and the reasons, less immediately apparent, why his neighbours bide behind" (i). Barlow thus 'stages' a general American audience whose understanding of their Irish immigrant compatriots can be improved by showing them where these new Americans come from. The preface therefore imagines the published edition of the stories as a transaction which not only bridges the gap between Ireland and the United States, but also between Irish emigrants and US citizens, bringing them together in a transmission of folklore and tradition. Barlow even imagines her own edition as "one emigrant more" (i), awaiting a warm reception across the Atlantic. As such, Barlow situates her texts in the history of Irish immigration to America, but she also positions her collections of stories in a process of cultural transfer between what Stefanie Stockhorst calls "communicative communities" (21) that include the exchange of material as well as immaterial goods, such as thoughts, representations, and discourses. By drawing analogies between the "turf to be found in a bog" and the "human nature" (i) that she is excavating from the region and renders to her American readers, Barlow almost materialises this immaterial transaction. This sense of geographical transplantation is also articulated by the shamrock-covered binding and frontispiece of the book.

Barlow is by no means the only Irish local colour writer who explicitly addresses an American audience. Julia Crottie had previously published her collection of stories about the fictional village of Innisdoyle, modelled on Lismore, Co. Waterford, *Neighbours: Annals of a Dull Town* with T. Fisher Unwin in London in 1900. In 1920 she brought out a sequel entitled *Innisdoyle Neighbours*, which was launched solely for the US market by the Magnificat Press in Manchester, New Hampshire. Despite the fact that this text was published much later compared to Barlow's *Irish Idylls*, we find that Crottie's preface to American readers similarly tries to evoke sympathy for the Irish and their imaginative nature, their "faith in the Unseen" (n.p.). This spirituality is presented as diametrically opposed to the more business-like mindset of the Americans themselves, who are children "of a more materialistic civilisation" (n.p.).

This third trend in marketing Irish local colour fiction across the Atlantic, which juxtaposes Irish imagination to American capitalism, is also illustrated by the prologue to the New York and Toronto editions of MacManus's collection of local colour stories set in his native Co. Donegal, *Through the Turf Smoke* (1899). The people in his native "remote and mountain-barred Donegal," the author writes, may be "poor as paupers"; and yet, they are also "hospitable as millionaires" and, moreover, are rich in their wit and imagination, "the poetry, the virtues, the soul, of the most miserable amongst them the wealth of Croesus couldn't purchase" (x). The "American readers" (ix) are encouraged to embrace these different non-materialistic values and join the narrator at the imaginary fireside to listen to the village "shanachy, the teller of tales" (x).

Irish Local Colour Fiction: Transnational Receptions

In what respects and to what extent did the marketing of Irish local colour literature influence its transnational reception? As we saw, the promise – often expressed by cover designs, illustrations and prefaces – that readers will be offered a complete and faithful feel of a specific Irish region on their 'journey' through the narratives is mirrored by the books' reviews at the time. Authenticity proved to be an important point of assessment in reviews of Irish local colour fiction. For instance, the *London Pall Mall Gazette* of 24 March 1905 praises Charlotte O'Conor Eccles's *Aliens of the West* for its attention to minute detail and truthfulness, almost as if the work were a realist painting: "Rarely has life in a quiet, remote Irish country town been pictured more faithfully or more sympathetically. There is not a single touch out of harmony with the truth, not a line of shading omitted which could strengthen the canvas" (9). In its review of *At the Rising of the Moon* on 20 April 1893, *The Glasgow Herald* judges that "Mr Mathew shows us these West of Ireland people – as they are – or rather as they were ere the respectability of civilisation had supplanted their original state" (10).

Similar appraisals regarding authenticity can be found in critical reviews of Irish local colour fiction that were published outside Britain. The reviewer Henry v.d. M. in *De Groene Amsterdammer* of 15 June 1890 recommends the work to Dutch audiences by outlining that the novel offers "even zoo vele beelden uit de werkelijkheid" (3), many pictures of reality. Furthermore, he argues that Lawless paints "het Iersche volksleven," Irish folk life, in such vivid colours, "zulke levendige kleuren" (3). What is more, this review strongly reverberates with the naturalistic idea that land is a quality which determines the people's character: Henry v.d. M claims that Miss Lawless's Irish are one with the soil on which they live: "Eén zijn de Ieren van Miss Lawless met den grond waar op zij leven" (3). The desolate landscape of the Burren in the North of Co. Clare, the reviewer adds, is reflected in the character of the local population, which is eccentric and elusive.

The reviewer of Emily Lawless's *Hurrish* suggests that readers are presented with a truthful experience of life in the Burren. Nonetheless, this is not an authenticity that helps (in this case Dutch) readers to identify with the regional Irish characters, for Henry v.d. M. stresses differences in temperament between them and the Dutch readership of Lawless's work. By contrast, in the reception of American editions of Irish local colour fiction, the idea of authenticity is evoked to emphasise connection. This becomes clear from reviews in the following magazines: the American edition of *The Bookman*, issued by Dodd, Mead & Co. in New York; the *American Review of Reviews*, published in New York and edited by Albert Shaw, and The Chicago-based journal *The Dial*. In a double review of Shan Bullock's *Ring o'Rushes* and *By Trahsna River* published in *The Bookman* in 1897, the reviewer accentuates the fact that the stories in the former "are always from the inside, always distinctively from the Irish peasant's own point of view," so that the "atmosphere is completely realised, and a peculiar intensity arises from the narrowness of the environment" (427).

What the reviewer calls Bullock's "too faithful" representation of "the Celt" apparently also leaves ample room for identification on behalf of readers in different climes, for the peasants are said to "touch a common chord" and to be the "typical embodiment of noble womanhood and less noble manhood" (427). In other words, the Irish peasantry far away in County Fermanagh bear traits of humanity that are recognisable to audiences across the Atlantic. The review of Tynan's American reprint of *An Isle in the Water*, issued in *The Bookman* in 1897, not only intimates that Tynan's stories perfectly capture "the traits and characteristics in the home-life of the fisher folk" on the island she portrays, but also impresses the reader with the community's "chastity and the strict measures meted out to the one who has fallen" as well as characters "innocent at heart" who are "touching" in the devotion to loved ones they display (171). Here, a nostalgia for a pre-modern moral compass, an almost prelapsarian state of being, to be found in the Old World, appears to be one of the attractions of the stories as well, as the reviewer suggests.

Paratextual aspects such as illustrations are, moreover, mentioned as elements which increase the reader's engagement with the region in distant Ireland. This is demonstrated by reviews of the 1897 holiday edition of Jane Barlow's *Irish Idylls*. Johnson's photographs are often praised for providing an intimate, authentic insight into a region American readers are not familiar with, but can now successfully identify with. Often, the combination of Barlow's stories and Johnson's pictures are cited as confirming the veracity of the former. *The Review of Reviews* in 1897 stated that "the effect of Miss Barlow's vivid pen-sketches is heightened by the reproductions of actual scenes and incidents among the humble folk whose life story she tells" (767).

Likewise, in the same year, *The Dial* claimed that Johnson's photographs "serve to prove the accuracy of Miss Jane Barlow's descriptions of the desolate life of the Connemara boglands. The pictures have some of the quaint charm of the stories, and they give definiteness to our ideas of the bogs and the villages" (840). Stressing the fact that both the stories and images capture a faithful experience of Connemara, these reviews appear to echo Johnson's preface to the 1897 edition. Both bridge the conceptual gap between the region in Ireland and American readers – perhaps in particular diasporic communities identifying with a 'lost' homeland. As *The Review of Reviews* had written previously in 1893, Barlow's sketches had "such power" that they "wonderfully picture up before the reader a life so entirely different" from that to "which he has been used" (327) that they seemed familiar. Interestingly, the effect of illustrations in intensifying a sense of familiarity among readers across national borders is also mentioned in the 1893 *Glasgow Herald*'s review of *At the Rising of the Moon*: "In the illustrations Fred Pegram and A. S. Boyd have fairly caught and cleverly shadowed forth the spirit of the author" (10).

As we have seen, prefaces to American editions of Irish local colour fiction frequently place the texts in contexts of immigration, explicitly appealing for the readers' understanding of the Irish and their descendants in the United States. In the case of Jane Barlow, the ways in which her local colour tales were framed for the American market

appear to have impacted their critical reception. For example, *The Review of Reviews* in 1897 observed that the stories in Barlow's *Irish Idylls* "found a warm welcome four years ago in America, whither had come so many wanderers from Connemara's distant boglands. It is the old neighbors of these immigrants that Miss Barlow describes in her book" (767). These phrases clearly echo Barlow's own preface to the American edition of her stories and additionally situate the tales in the context of the Irish-American diaspora. The same applies to the reception of MacManus's *Through the Turf Smoke*, for in 1899, *The Review of Reviews*, in discussing the American edition together with Stephen Gwynn's *Highways and Byways in Donegal and Antrim*, concludes that both depict a "region not often visited by American tourists, but well remembered in many an Irish-American home" (119). Tourism and diaspora thus serve as lenses through which these reviews assess the marketability of these texts in the US.

While there was a rich local colour tradition in American literature at the time – with writers like Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Joel Chandler Harris, Celia Thaxter and Mark Twain reaching heights of popularity – the reviews of these Irish local colour writers do not draw analogies with similar authors whom readers could have been familiar with. Instead, Barlow and Tynan are, for instance, compared to Scottish, Cornish and English regional writers. For example, the American edition of *The Review of Reviews* in 1893 likened Barlow's representations of the Irish peasantry to J. M. Barrie's Scottish Kailyard writings and Arthur Quiller Couch's narratives of Cornwall: "what 'Q' has done for the people of that part of Cornwall in which he lives" (327). In 1895, *The Review of Reviews* placed Barlow in a group of authors such as J. M. Barrie, 'Ian McLaren' and Samuel Rutherford Crockett, who render the dialect and manners of specific communities in "that form of local fiction" (241), thereby identifying a fashion for regional writing. Later that year, *The Review of Reviews* called "Miss Jane Barlow and Mrs. Kate Tynan Hinkson […] representatives of a new group of Irish writers" (462) similar to authors such as Crockett, Quiller Couch, but also Thomas Hardy and R. T. Blackmore, who were known for literature set in a specific region. There was, therefore, a clear recognition of how these Irish local colour authors fitted into similar trends in regional literature elsewhere on the British Isles, though broader transnational perspectives on these writers and the genre are missing. It must be noted, however, that it was very common to draw analogies between these Irish local colour writers and those from Scotland in the British press as well. The review of *At the Rising of the Moon* from the *Glasgow Herald* cited earlier, for instance, draws analogies between Mathew and J. M. Barrie:

> In this series of stories and studies, the biographer of Father Mathew has done for Moher and its people very much what Mr Barrie has done for Thrums in his 'Idylls.' They are not such a habitually serious people these of Moher as are their Scotch antitypes, but if they take life more lightly as a rule, they are not thereby emancipated from its pathos. (10)

When studying Irish local colour fiction from the turn of the twentieth century, as this chapter has shown, one cannot merely consider these forms of cultural production as

expressions of local tradition or responses to processes of nation building. Rather, as we have seen, these texts are key to processes of transnational circulation, mediation and reception. These dynamics of "transculturality" (Welsch 198) have to be taken into account, because they helped shape people's perceptions of regional Ireland globally as well as contributed to the ways in which local colour literature as a transnational genre developed. As we saw, Irish local colour fiction was often interpreted as part of a larger corpus of regional fiction from the Celtic fringes of the British Empire, which included Cornwall, Scotland and Wales. At the same time, Irish local colour texts were imagined as 'bridges' between diasporic and non-diasporic communities in Ireland and North America, because they traced roots of origin and provided routes of imagination.

There is, moreover, much more to be discovered through in-depth studies of the infrastructures through which Irish local colour fiction was transmitted. For example, Dodd, Mead & Co played a crucial role as a literary broker not only for Irish local colour writers such as Barlow and Tynan, whose *The Way of a Maid* they published in 1896. In fact, the New York company released various works of regional fiction in the period 1890-1917, mainly from England and Scotland, such as *Tales of Our Coast* (1896), a collection of tales by local colour writers from Cornwall (Arthur Thomas Quiller Couch) and the Deeside (Samuel Rutherford Crockett), Crockett's *Love Idylls* (1901) and George Eliot's most regional novel *Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe* (1899). Additionally, Dodd, Mead & Co. issued some translated European works of local colour fiction, such as Fernand Calmettes' *Fisher Girl of France* (1892) and Stijn Streuvel's *The Path of Life* (1915), translated from West-Flemish by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. Dodd, Mead & Co. therefore appears to have tapped into a market for local colour literature. What do these intersections reveal about the role of regions in cementing transnational readerships and identities? Local colour fiction is implicated in cultural transactions that cross borders and (re)codify genre in a transnational network of texts, audiences and identities. A paradigm shift towards the dynamics between the regional and transnational and the forms of what Jaan Valsiner calls "multidirectional transfer" (22) that were involved in the making of local colour literature is called for. Such an approach will help us to decode Irish literary production in global contexts in more refined ways.

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