

Ideology and Cultural Production: Nationalism and the Public Monument in Mid Nineteenth-Century Ireland

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In May 1843 *The Nation* declared:

The time is coming when, in the streets of Dublin, we will have monuments to Irish patriots, to Irish soldiers and to Irish statesmen. We now have statues to William the Dutchman, to the four Georges – all either German by birth or German by feeling – to Nelson, a great admiral, but an Englishman; while not a single statue to any of the many celebrated Irishmen whom their country should honour adorns a street or a square of our beautiful metropolis.

The Nation, a national newspaper, had been set up by members of Young Ireland seven months previously to help foster a sense of Irish identity in its readers. It was hoped to appeal to both Catholics and Protestants; to draw them together under the umbrella of a shared culture. The vision of Dublin populated by bronze or stone effigies of celebrated Irishmen was part of this broadly based nationalism; prominent Irishmen of all political allegiances or religious creeds were eligible. Public depictions of exemplary historic and political figures would also be a way of demonstrating the culturally unique character of Ireland, the animating idea of the cultural nationalism of Young Ireland derived from Thomas Davis. Davis had included such figures – ‘Father Mathew Administering the Pledge in a Munster County’, ‘The Clare Election’, ‘O’Connell’s Dublin Corporation Speech’ – in the list of subjects he had advocated for Irish painting in one of his essays.¹ Finally the erection of a public monument was one of the most direct ways of realising Davis’s ambition of putting culture to political use – great figures would become familiar, inspire collective confidence and right action, ‘awaken their piety, their pride, their justice, and their valour ...’²

Davis’s ambitions for a politicised art were mainly directed towards painting and songs. He did, however, apply it to one monument in the ballad

1 Thomas Davis, *Literary and Historical Essays* (Dublin, 1845), p. 169. His ideas on Irish art are discussed in ‘National Art’, pp. 155–6.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

'O'Connell's Statue: Lines to Hogan' which begins 'Chisel the likeness of the Chief' and proceeds to describe the features of O'Connell in terms of Irish history and his imagined involvement, so that he evokes a colossus eloquent of Irish experience. This highly romantic and pointedly nationalist vision can be compared to Thomas Carlyle's cult of great men, explored in a series of lectures given in London in 1840.³ Emphasising the importance of great men in effecting the course of history – 'They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain' – he concluded that although ordinary men could never aspire to their brilliance and achievement, they could learn from their example. His ideas underpinned the mid nineteenth-century blossoming of the project to erect monuments in Britain to poets, writers, philosophers, politicians, public benefactors and military heroes. Thus when in December 1862 the *Dublin Builder* proclaimed: 'To do honour to the memories of great men is so pre-eminently a national duty ... [When] we see public monuments, we may assume that public benefactors are not forgotten [and we] remember their patriotism with gratitude, and their genius with pride', we not only hear an echo of Thomas Davis but also an awareness of what was being achieved in England.

From 1853 to 1880 some twenty-five statues were erected throughout Ireland, fourteen in Dublin. This represents a modest showing compared to other European countries but in a country which had erected only about sixteen public monuments in the 120 years between 1701 to 1823 it demonstrated a considerable increase in effort. These twenty-seven years from 1853 to 1880, falling between the famine and the land war, also fell between the inspiring and politically unifying influences of Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell. It was a period when the term nationalist was ill-defined. Theodore Hoppen has argued that in borough and county elections national issues were obscured by local concerns, 'drains and cash' rather than 'repeal and reform'.⁴ This is corroborated by the experience of men like A. M. Sullivan, John Martin and William Smith O'Brien, Young Irelanders, now with faith in the constitutional route to reform, who failed to attract significant support for various efforts to found nationalist organisations in the late 1850s and 60s. This began to change in the 1870s when the Home Rule movement was established. Another focus for nationalists was the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret, oath-bound organisation founded in Dublin in 1858 under James Stephens and committed to a violent overthrow of the existing system. It was a

3 Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, in Alan Shelston (ed.), *Selected Writings of Thomas Carlyle* (London, 1971).

4 See K. Theodore Hoppen, 'National Politics and Local Realities in Mid Nineteenth-Century Ireland' in Art Cosgrove and Donal McCartney (eds), *Studies in Irish History* (Dublin, 1979), pp. 190-227.

relatively small group and, aiming to supplant other forms of nationalist organisation, it contributed to their failure to attract popular support. Together the Catholic Emancipation Act, which had enfranchised the wealthier Catholics, and the Municipal Reform Act of 1840, which had enabled middle class Catholics to secure positions in local government, had given power to a significant group of Catholics. Politicised by O'Connell, they had nevertheless dropped Repeal after the famine but remained faithful to his ambition to advance Irishmen in the modern world – they sought to consolidate Catholic rights with the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the establishment of state support for denominational education.⁵ Cardinal Cullen, archbishop of Dublin from 1852 to 1878, had organised a hearteningly popular demonstration for a Catholic university in July 1862. Such an issue prioritised Catholics without referring to self-government; an issue avoided by both Cullen and many of his middle-class followers.

For a similar reason this group of Catholics was often to be found behind proposals for nationalist monuments; the O'Connell monument campaign in Dublin was launched two months after the Catholic university demonstration, and when John Gray, Protestant proprietor and editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, the popular organ of moderate, predominantly Catholic opinion, member of Dublin City Council, and the main inspiration behind the Dublin O'Connell monument died in 1875, his statue was erected in Dublin four years later.⁶ In Limerick, Maurice Lenihan, local historian, newspaper proprietor and persuasive voice in Limerick Corporation for disestablishment and Catholic education, proposed and pushed through a monument to O'Connell, unveiled in 1857. In Cork, O'Connell was dropped in favour of the Cork 'Apostle of Temperance', Father Mathew, whose monument was organised by both Protestants such as the businessman F.B. Beamish, and Catholics such as the mayor and proprietor of the *Cork Examiner*, John Maguire. In Dublin the more constitutionally ambitious A. M. Sullivan and the Young Irelanders enviously appreciated the unprecedented crowds at the laying of the foundation stone for the O'Connell monument in 1864, but they too adopted monument-building to rally support – a committee dominated by Dillon, Martin and Sullivan was formed on William Smith O'Brien's death in 1864 to erect a monument, and Sullivan vigorously championed a monument to Henry Grattan in 1864 which was unveiled to Home Rule rhetoric in 1876. Patriotic Protestants also formed committees to erect monuments – it was the enthusi-

5 These were among the aims of the National Association of Ireland of which John Gray was a prominent member. See R.V. Comerford, 'Conspiring Brotherhoods and Contending Elites, 1857-63' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland*, vol. v (Oxford, 1989), pp. 415-30.

6 For details about these commissions see Judith Hill, *Irish Public Sculpture: A History* (Dublin, 1998).

asm of Lord Cloncurry and Lord Charlemont that brought a statue of the poet Thomas Moore (the first broadly nationalist statue) to College St, Dublin in 1857; the statue of the viceroy, the Earl of Carlisle, erected in 1870, was claimed to represent a figure who had benefitted Ireland; the equestrian statue of Lord Gough, a highly successful field marshal in the British army, erected in 1880, was justified by his Irish birth; and even a monument to Prince Albert, who had negligible connections with Ireland, could have patriotic overtones, demonstrated in the debate over the site of the monument in 1864. Thus although it was Young Ireland's theories of cultural nationalism that had sent out the call for monuments of Irishmen, it was picked up by separately-formed committees under varying political influences. Their values and power were translated into the subject, sculptural style and positioning of the monuments, the scope of the subscriptions and the character of the dedication ceremonies.

Where they were well represented in council chambers, moderate Catholic nationalists had the pick of the sites. In Dublin, Cork and Limerick they unhesitatingly chose the main axes of central streets and squares, making their monuments the ornaments of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Georgian buildings which in all three cases had become the commercial heart of the cities. In Dublin these places also tended to be symbolic – from its place at the foot of Sackville Street the O'Connell monument was within viewing distance of buildings in which O'Connell had been active; the place earmarked for Grattan in College Green 'teems with suggestions of all the chief events of his career' from his student days in Trinity to his speeches in the Irish Parliament.⁷

Because these were places of maximum visibility they were also favoured by other interest groups. In 1855 the mayor of Limerick proposed that the corporation allocate the site at the centre of Richmond Place, a crescent on the main commercial thoroughfare of Newtown Pery, for a monument to Viscount Fitzgibbon, killed at the battle of Balaclava in the Crimean War.⁸ This was successfully contested in the council by a group led by Maurice Lenihan, who also waged a vigorous campaign in his newspaper the *Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator*, and the Fitzgibbon monument was subsequently erected on Wellesley Bridge, then at the edge of the city. In Ennis, Co. Clare, Michael Considine, the secretary of the Trades, was inspired to initiate a monument to O'Connell to counter the proposal by the town commissioners to place cannon from the Crimean War on the site of the old courthouse in Ennis, the place where O'Connell had been elected MP of Clare in 1828.⁹

7 *The Nation*, 15 January 1876.

8 Maurice Lenihan, *Limerick: Its Histories and Antiquities* (1866; reprinted Cork, 1967), p. 513.

9 Ignatius Murphy, 'From Russian Gun to O'Connell Monument', *The Other Clare*, v (April 1981), pp. 45-6.

Considine used his considerable powers of oratory to secure popular support for his project which pressurised the town commissioners to relocate the canon. A.M. Sullivan also employed oratory and journalism to win the argument for a monument to Grattan in College Green in 1864 against the ambitions of a committee formed to erect a monument to Prince Albert immediately after his death in 1861. At the corporation meetings in February 1864 the argument favoured Albert with moderates like John Gray expressing pride to show loyalty to the queen, and more radical figures like Devitt also expressing unwillingness to show 'disrespect to Her Majesty'; 32 voted in favour of a monument to Albert, 14 against.¹⁰ The fiery rhetoric was left to Sullivan who in the council chamber and at public meetings appealed to Catholic consciences, employing the language of piety: a nationalist should 'kiss the stones of that place and declare them holy, for the national memories they consecrated'.¹¹ With popular support behind him and with a number of nationalists feeling they had done their imperial duty, the site was secured for Grattan at a corporation meeting in May 1864; with 19 votes in favour of Sullivan's proposal and 11 against, six nationalists had changed sides (although not John Gray), but a considerable number of those who had initially supported the Albert monument had absented themselves, indicating that the claims of loyalty had weakened but not snapped.¹²

The Albert Monument was erected on Leinster Lawn in 1872, near to the Royal Dublin Society and the National Gallery, institutions for the arts and sciences which Albert had promoted during his lifetime, and, as Sullivan remarked, a quiet place, where 'the people of Dublin would be little inclined to interfere'.¹³ Two years previously a statue to the Earl of Carlisle had been unveiled in Phoenix Park, another peripheral place with which he was associated. There were conflicting opinions within the corporation and the ultimate power of nationalist public opinion was again demonstrated in the case of the equestrian statue to Lord Gough: an initial request in 1872 for a site on Foster Place was granted by the corporation, the subsequent request in 1878 for a place on the southern side of Carlisle Bridge was also granted, but objections from the O'Connell monument committee and the role of a different corporation department meant that this site was finally refused, and Lord Gough too was consigned to Phoenix Park.¹⁴

Sculptural style was less a signifier of political allegiance than site. A debate in the *Freeman's Journal* in the early 1860s on the relative merits of classicism

¹⁰ *The Nation*, 20 February 1864.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *The Nation*, 7 May 1864.

¹³ *The Nation*, 5 March 1864.

¹⁴ A full account in *Statement of Proceedings Taken to Erect, and to Obtain a Suitable Site for Erecting Thereon, The Gough Equestrian Statue*, by John H. Foley, Esq., R.A.

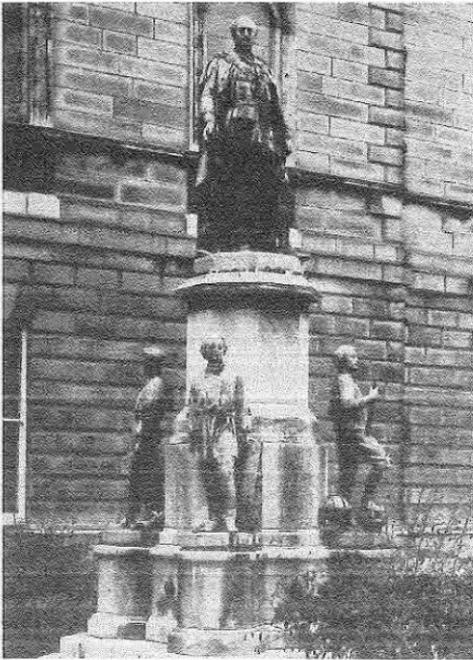


Plate 1 The Albert Memorial, Leinster Lawn, Dublin; sculptor John Henry Foley, 1872. Prince Albert is flanked by figures symbolising Art, Science, Industry and Agriculture.

and realism in the representation of O'Connell for the national monument, however, did suggest that style might have significance, for whereas a classical figure that would show him 'in calmness and repose ... calmly hopeful of his country's rejuvenation'¹⁵ would distance O'Connell from his specific political achievement, 'a living, speaking, acting O'Connell – an O'Connell that will tell of freedom's battles, and how they were won'¹⁶ could have a more overt nationalist message. But the classicism of Limerick's O'Connell of 1857, draped in a toga, presenting him in 'his ever solemn dignity',¹⁷ represented John Hogan's well-developed style, the classicism of which he had tempered for the public monument, dressing O'Connell in contemporary clothes under the toga and executing it in bronze which produces a more variegated surface than marble, the ideal material for classical sculptors but less well adapted to the Irish weather. O'Connell holds the text of the Act of Catholic Emancipation in his left hand, and Catholicism was a prominent theme at the unveiling ceremony where a third of those standing on the platform were priests.¹⁸ The mayor, however, was concerned to diffuse any implication of sectarianism: 'I am well aware that many of my fellow-citizens differed from the late Mr

¹⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 4 November 1863.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27 May 1864.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15 August 1857.

¹⁸ *Limerick Chronicle*, 15 August 1857.



Plate 2 O'Connell Monument, The Crescent, Limerick; sculptor John Henry Foley, 1857. Plate 3 Earl of Rosse, St John's Mall, Birr; sculptor John Henry Foley, 1876. His scholarly and scientific achievements are represented by the robes of the Chancellor of the University of Dublin, the globe, and the book.

O'Connell in religion and politics, but I am certain that all those who respect talents of the very highest order, public spirit and patriotism will also respect his memory'. So Limerick was presented with a sculpture, in which a timeless ideal was tempered by details which recalled the struggles and achievements of nationalism which, in turn, were diffused by spoken rhetoric.

Similarly conflicting messages were conveyed by John Henry Foley and his contemporaries who matured as sculptors in the 1860s and 70s in a style that had evolved from classicism in Victorian Britain. Here classical idealism, which tried to convey qualities such as nobility and an impression of calm seriousness, was tempered by the desire to show specific character and the particular details of costume.¹⁹ But, intended to provide an example to the public, the realism was carefully subscribed – it was the characteristics of public duty and private virtue, a sense of vigour, boldness and fairness, that were presented. The overall effect of such figures tended towards the restrained solidity of classi-

¹⁹ See Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven, 1982).

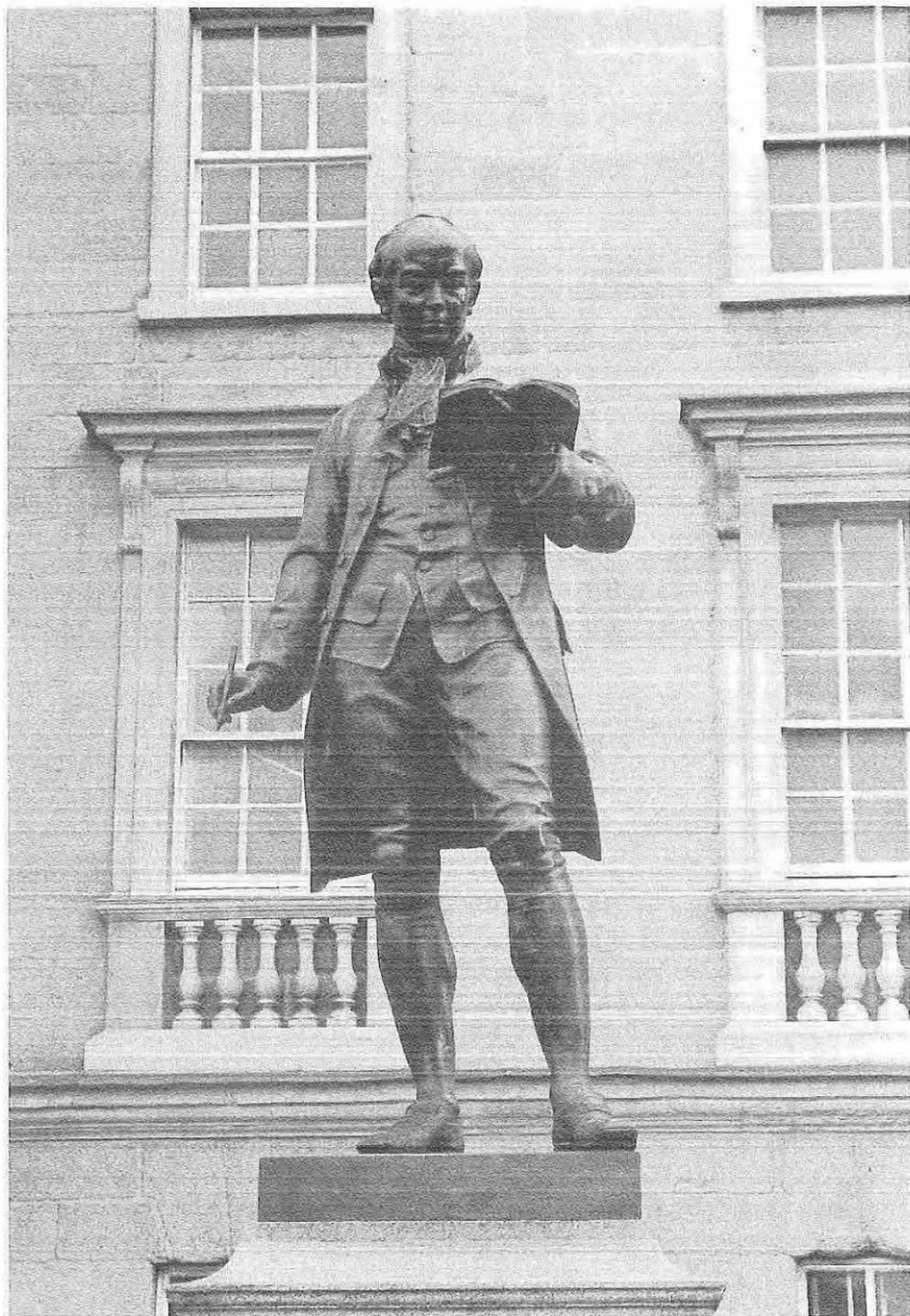


Plate 4 Oliver Goldsmith, outside Trinity College, Dublin; sculptor John Henry Foley, 1864.

cism, clearly evident in Foley's O'Connell in Dublin and his Earl of Rosse in Birr, in Thomas Farrell's John Gray and Christopher Moore's Thomas Moore. This priority also influenced the choice of specific details: O'Connell was noted for wearing a specially-designed green repeal cap at repeal meetings, but it was his celebrated cloak, not unlike a toga when seen in silhouette against the sky, that Foley chose as sartorially defining for his Dublin figure; and there was the priest's cloak for Father Mathew, the robes of the Order of St Patrick for the Earl of Carlisle, and the robes of the Chancellor of the University of Dublin for the Earl of Rosse. Foley stood out among his contemporaries for his ability to model a good facial likeness and to render the details of costume so that the bronze surface was broken and animated. This can still be seen in the statues of Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke outside Trinity College. This detailing, appreciated in the mid nineteenth century as part of the aesthetic, also endowed a public statue with a strong material presence.

Foley accepted commissions from committees of all political persuasions and applied himself equally to each. But, born and trained in Dublin (although living and practising in London) he did express an interest in his more nationalist commissions, writing to the Grattan committee that despite overwork 'the impulse of national feeling [gave him] a deep interest in the subject'.²⁰ And he did respond to the requirement for characteristic gestures for these figures with strong images that, once executed, had the effect of symbols. Thus he presented Grattan with his arm raised in the expansive and compelling oratorical gesture for which he was famous, and Father Mathew's downward extending benedicting right hand, his left hand clasping the temperance medal to his heart, while sentimental, was more expressive of the atmosphere of early nineteenth-century temperance than the more conventional priestly gesture presented by Mary Redmond in her statue of Father Mathew erected in O'Connell St in Dublin in 1891. Thomas Farrell's stone carving of William Smith O'Brien presented a determined figure, arms folded, one leg set purposefully forward; an image which recalled the fact that O'Brien had led the abortive Young Ireland rising in 1848, despite the subscription appeal which had emphasised the personal qualities of O'Brien: 'A good son, brother, husband, father, friend, neighbour, citizen'.²¹ In each case the rhetoric of the unveiling ceremonies indicated that the moderate Catholics and reconstructed Young Irelanders were concerned not to alienate those more moderate than themselves, so that the general moral integrity and talents of the figure portrayed and the ideal of unity were reiterated to diffuse impressions of exclusive Catholic allegiance and memories of violent fighting. This ideal of unity had become a particularly

20 Letter, Foley to Grattan committee, 8 April, 1869; *The Origin, Progress and Completion of the Grattan Statue, Compiled by the Hon. John P. Vereker* (1881), Ms. 1703, Trinity College, Dublin.

21 John Morisy, *A Wreath for the O'Brien Statue: Its Origins, Its Inauguration* (Dublin, 1871).

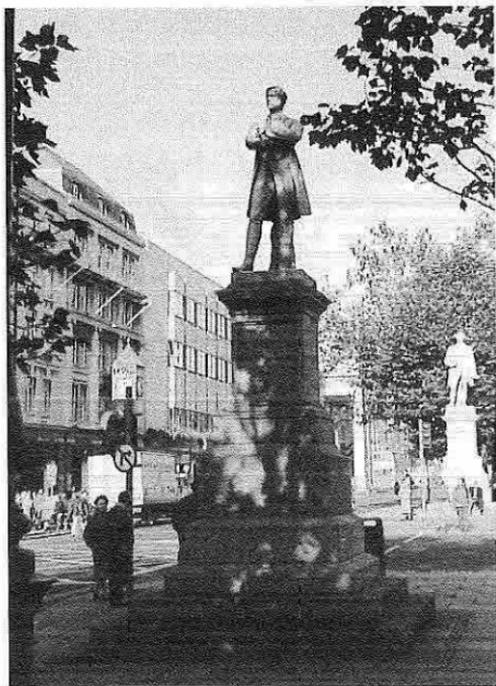


Plate 5 William Smith O'Brien, O'Connell Street, Dublin; sculptor Thomas Farrell, 1870. The statue of Sir John Gray, also by Farrell and erected in 1879, is visible behind.

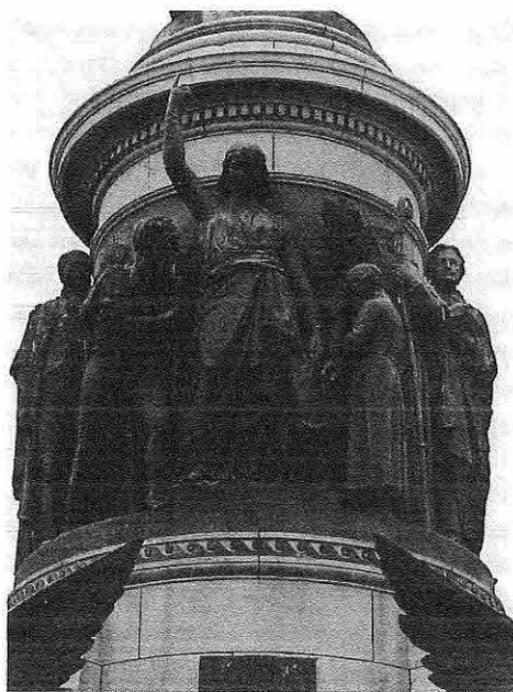
forceful theme by 1876 in the hands of Home Rulers when the Grattan statue was unveiled and much was made of Grattan's credentials as a Protestant orator who had championed Catholic Emancipation.²²

Thus, in the hands of Hogan, Foley and Farrell, Ireland gained a number of portrait statues emitting the civic qualities of statesmanship and control, whose gestures, clothes and features recalled the events and tenor of Irish history. The public was invited to read these specific Irish details within a peaceful urban context. The statues were not unlike their counterparts in England and Scotland. The same was true of the use of national symbols. Victorian sculptural convention, admitting a screened version of personal character, also admitted national symbol. Again distinctiveness was conventionalised; the most prevalent being the use of god and goddess figures to personify virtues and activities. So, many of the sculptors who entered the competitions for the O'Connell monument in Dublin included representations of Law, Eloquence, Patriotism, Civil and Religious Liberty, reflecting on the career and reputation of O'Connell.²³ Similarly, around the base of his design, Foley included four seated winged classical goddesses – Nike, the goddess of victory – each with attributes to

²² *Irish Times*, 7 January 1876.

²³ Two competitions were held in 1864–5. See *Dublin Builder*, 15 February 1865 and 1 March 1865 for comments on the entries. No one was chosen and Foley was commissioned.

Plate 6 O'Connell Monument, Dublin; sculptor John Henry Foley, 1864-82. Detail of the drum showing Erin holding a scroll on which is carved 'An Act for the relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects', trampling on broken chains, and gesturing upwards to the figure of O'Connell.



denote 'the qualities of mind and power exemplified in the career of O'Connell' – Patriotism holding sword and shield; Fidelity carrying a compass with an Irish wolfhound at her feet; Courage strangling a serpent, Eloquence holding a text.²⁴ Erin, the female personification of Ireland, also appeared in several competition entries,²⁵ and in Foley's monument she was placed at the front of the drum which rose above the Nike figures and formed a base for the pedestal to support O'Connell. Here, larger than life, at her feet the broken chains of liberty, on her humbly lowered head a crown of shamrocks, she gestures upward to O'Connell. Erin and the wolfhound stand out as the only symbols already used by nationalists in Ireland – by O'Connell in his repeal campaign, the trades on their banners and Young Ireland – to denote Ireland: a drawing depicting the monster meeting at Tara in 1843 published in the *Illustrated London News* showed the outsize banner marking O'Connell's stage decorated with harp, round tower and wolfhound,²⁶ and O'Connell's Triumph Car, a central part of the procession for the laying of the foundation stone of

24 Foley's presentation to the O'Connell committee was reproduced in *Freeman's Journal*, 14 December 1867.

25 For example, in the Gothic design of Pugin and Ashlin, and in different moods reflecting different periods of Irish history in Joseph Farrell's entry.

26 Illustrated in Gary Owens, 'Hedge Schools of Politics: O'Connell's Monster Meetings', *History Ireland*, ii, no. 1 (Spring 1994), p. 36.

the monument in 1864, was decorated with a figure of Erin, a round tower, an Irish landscape and shamrocks.²⁷ Even so the bowed figure of Erin owed much to Victorian ideas about the role of women as supporters of male achievement.²⁸

The drum, decorated with a frieze in the neo-classical manner, gave Foley the opportunity to illustrate O'Connell's achievements in more detail. He sculpted a dynamic and multi-layered parade of figures to illustrate 'the great theme of [O'Connell's] labours' but which, representing the different classes and professions in Irish society, presents a strong image of its cohesiveness. This was dear to the heart of the moderate Catholic nationalists who appreciated O'Connell for laying down the conditions for social development. This had been articulated by the committee when it assessed the significance of his life: '[His] life was devoted to endeavouring to elevate the country, to give it freedom, commerce, trade, and manufactures, to have its people employed, and happy; and along with that to elevate the mind of the country, and inspire it with something that would lead to great and exalted deeds hereafter'.²⁹ Along with Foley's reputation as a sculptor, this imagery probably influenced their final decision to commission Foley. Interestingly, and probably reflecting the fact that Foley lived in England, the detailed design of the drum tended to reflect English perceptions of Irish society rather than the social ordering that O'Connell had helped to create. There was the bishop and peasant flanking Erin, reflecting the fact that Ireland was predominantly Catholic and agricultural. But there was no separate figure to represent the trades who had played such an important part in monster meetings and at elections – a figure of a lord mayor stood for municipal authority, commerce and trade, an artisan figure stood with the artist, and there was a poet, historian, lawyer, judge, philosopher and scientist – groups that were small and unrepresentative of mid nineteenth-century Ireland. Only the Albert monument was also decorated with subsidiary figures – four young men representing Art, Science, Industry and Agriculture – although there had been plans to build a fountain at the foot of the John Gray statue embellished with figures of Ireland and patriotism wearing 'the civic crown – the reward of great and generous public services' – the water a specific reference to Gray's persistence in implementing a public water supply for Dublin.³⁰ There were other examples of distinctively Irish details associated with the monuments, but they tended to be concealed or secondary; the Celtic cross just visible at the back of Father Mathew in Cork, the plan of the substructure of the O'Connell monument in Dublin in the

27 *Freeman's Journal*, 9 August 1864. The Bakers' banner in the 1864 procession depicted Erin with her hands outstretched to a sunburst, and a round tower.

28 Belinda Loftus, *William III and Mother Ireland* (Dundrum, 1990), pp. 57–60.

29 *The Nation*, 4 June 1864.

30 *Freeman's Journal*, 25 June 1879.

form of a high cross laid on its side, the silver trowel with which the mayor ceremonially set the foundation stone in 1864 decorated with Celtic interlace, round tower, Celtic cross, bard and harp and then buried with other 'relics'.

If the political ideology underpinning the monuments was only subtly expressed in stone and bronze, the activities surrounding the projects did put them in one of two camps for contemporaries; those that were financed by public subscription and unveiled to vast crowds, and those financed by the donations of a few and unveiled to a politely clapping audience. Thus the efforts of patriotic Protestants to claim their figures for Ireland were dramatically overshadowed by nationalists – the demonstration that accompanied the laying of the foundation stone for the O'Connell monument in Dublin was the most spectacular seen in Dublin at that date, while the Albert monument, lacking its statue of Prince Albert, was merely viewed by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1872; in 1870 an estimated 20,000 turned out for the unveiling of the statue of Smith O'Brien seven months after the Earl of Carlisle had been unveiled at a private ceremony in Phoenix Park.

There was a strong feeling in England that Ireland after the famine, largely unexplored, and unexplained in literature, was more alien than other foreign countries. It was as though, as Thomas Flanagan has written, 'England had resolutely locked the door against an ugly, insoluble mystery. Ireland itself was locked in with the mystery, a land of incoherences, half-formed ideals, and warring images'.³¹ But, on the evidence of the monuments, one important and in many ways heterogeneous group, the moderate Catholic nationalists, had opened the door, stepped a good way over the threshold and was shouting loudly and clearly, in grammatical English. The portrait statues of Irish figures were easily comprehensible to the English and the impression they gave was of a desire for acceptance on largely English terms. The Young Ireland project of the 1840s had been realised with qualifications. With Grattan, Smith O'Brien, O'Connell and John Gray lining the central thoughtfare of Dublin, Protestants rubbed shoulders with Catholics. But, their credentials for such public exposure were that they had worked for the rights of the Catholic majority and those who had not had peripheral locations: the rhetoric at the unveiling ceremonies of these 'Catholic nationalists' also evoked unity on Catholic terms. Thomas Davis's request that the portrayal of national figures evoke nationalist emotions was also realised, but in a subdued manner. The distinctive features, gestures and sartorial details were recognisable and, judging by subsequent reproductions, became symbolic. But they were less distinctively Irish than the Celtic crosses erected in Catholic cemeteries by the Fenians to honour the Manchester Martyrs, or the pikemen, Erin figures and Celtic crosses that would be prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century for the 1798 centenary. The

31 Thomas Flanagan, 'Literature in English, 1801-91', in W.E. Vaughan, *New History of Ireland*, p. 510.

figures could evoke the 'self-denial, justice, beauty, valour, generous life and proud death' for which Davis had hoped, but it would be difficult to distinguish this ideal from the Victorian aim of presenting public honour and private virtue to stimulate emulation. Finally, the statues had the unquestioned political message that Young Ireland required of art, but there was less an implication that Ireland should have a separate, distinctive existence than that Ireland be considered equivalent to England, its pantheon of heroes matching those elsewhere.