

review of books | recently published books

Irish Hunger and Migration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization

Edited by Patrick Fitzgerald, Christine Kinealy, and Gerard Moran

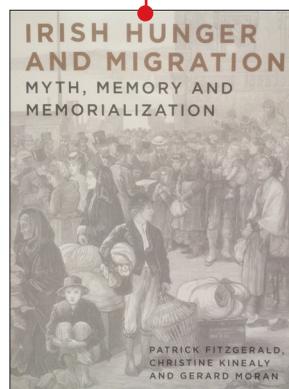
The biennial Ulster-American Heritage Symposium, which explores Ulster's connections with the United States, celebrated its 20th anniversary at two venues in 2014: Quinnipiac University in Connecticut and the University of Georgia in Athens. Since 1976, venues have alternated between sites in Ulster and North America. The 2014 U.A.H.S. also marked 20 years since the sesquicentennial of the Great Hunger. Over the past two decades, Famine scholarship has incorporated new perspectives and disciplines, including migration studies, that have reinterpreted one of history's, and Ireland's, great tragedies.

This year, Quinnipiac University, home of Ireland's Great Hunger Institute and Ireland's Great Hunger Museum, published the proceedings from both 2014 conferences. This book, the third such publication of U.A.H.S. proceedings, gathers the work of 14 experts in the fields of famine, migration studies, and memory studies. The contributors to this volume are Marguerite Corporaal, Patrick Fitzgerald, David Gleeson, Christine Kinealy, Jason King, Brian Lambkin, Mark McGowan, Gerard Moran, Kay Muhr, Maureen Murphy, Andrew Newby, Nini Rodgers, Catherine Shannon, and Damian Shiels.

This collection of essays presents some of the findings of recent scholarship and considers the Great Hunger in an international and interdisciplinary context. These studies examine aspects of famine and migration in a broad chronological and geographical framework. They also address the process of memorialization, notably the roles of memory and myth. The result is testament to the importance of the ongoing examination of the bonds between Ulster and America.

Irish Hunger and Migration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization is edited by Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald (Mellon Centre for Migration Studies), Professor Christine Kinealy (Director of Ireland's Great Hunger Institute, Quinnipiac University) and Dr. Gerard Moran (European School, Lacken, Brussels).

– Turlough McConnell
(Quinnipiac University Press / 198p / \$35)

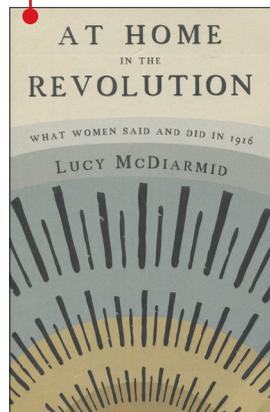


At Home in the Revolution: What Women Said and Did in 1916

By Lucy McDiarmid

Lucy McDiarmid's contribution to the study of the Easter Rising in its centenary year has been five years in the making, and it's paid off. An American academic, McDiarmid focuses her keen scholarly tools on unique, alternate, and colorful moments in history that typify larger claims about cultural politics.

At Home in the Revolution, her most recent work towards this aim, at its broadest, is a study of changing gender norms at the time of the Rising. But more excitingly, it does this through a rigorous study of women's words, ideas, and actions at the time that spans class, levels of political involvement, and political leanings – she gives a voice and a platform to just about every woman who wrote something about the Rising as it was happening, from the famous like Kathleen Clarke and Countess Markievicz to working class wives who kept diaries.



To do this, she uses diaries, letters, eyewitness statements, military pension applications, and autobiographies written by loyalists, nationalists, suffragists, women who fought at the G.P.O., and women who didn't leave their home and wrote of tennis season beginning with the same interest as they documented news of James Connolly being shot. That means that this account of the Rising necessarily focuses on alternate stories of the Rising, often in minute detail

(e.g. using bayonets as cooking utensils), delivered from unique and previously un-studied perspectives, giving McDiarmid the first opportunity to generalize the significance of these accounts that other historians have ignored. It is the skill and incisiveness with which she does this that gives the book its force.

As a study of women in 1916, the book is both situated within and outside of the discourse of feminism. To apply contemporary notions of the term to these women's writings would be anachronistic, and yet not to situate their accounts within the context of gender (as in contemporaneous questions of unmarried women dressing a man's wounds around his genitals) would elide the fact that these are stories of Irish women and men negotiating space at a time, as McDiarmid writes, "in which gender roles are uncertain."

The book is at once a political study of shifting gender relations as well as a thoroughly researched, vivid, emotional, and often comic look at forgotten stories of the Rising that will entertain as much as it will enlighten.

– Adam Farley
(Royal Irish Academy / 300p / €25)