The representations of poverty and nomadism in Irish and British art, 1760 – 1875

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the representation of Irish poverty and nomadism in Irish and British art during the period 1760 to 1875. It assesses how a diverse range of Irish and British artists’ visually interpreted Irish poverty and nomadism in paintings, drawings, illustrations and prints. This research analyses how the visual construction of the Irish poor and nomadic evolved in an attempt to sanitise, prettify, condone or absolve the poor. In a thematic manner, images are questioned within frameworks including benevolence and philanthropy, the urban and rural landscape, the domestic space and migration. The marginalised of society are the focus of this study including tinkers, Gypsies, landless labourers, the professional and ordinary beggar, itinerant musicians, pedlars and fortune-tellers. Artists acknowledged different strata within the poor, in particular where these nomads were categorised at a lower social level to the sedentary poor in both Irish and British society. The running theme throughout this thesis is artists’ perceptions of Irish poverty and nomadism, which were often based on personal agendas such as religion, family background or moral values. The co-dependency between Ireland and London, in the area of opportunities, markets and audience provides a comparative analysis of artworks. This study also reveals that images of Irish poverty and nomadism mirrored cultural and social changes in the period under review.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted to any other university for award.

Julie Brazil

Signature: ____________________
Acknowledgements

I am grateful, for the generous help, of staff of the library in Trinity College, Dublin, Special Collections and the Glucksman Library (University of Limerick), National Art Library (Victoria and Albert Museum), John Rylands University Library (Manchester), Prints and Drawings Collections and Reading Room in the National Library of Ireland. Special thanks go to Dr. Eimear O’Connor and staff in the Irish Art Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin who provided me with invaluable material on Irish artists, and also to Heather Birchall in the Whitworth Art Gallery (The University of Manchester) for her time, patience and generosity in providing photographs of material. A particular expression of gratitude goes to Dr. Brendan Rooney in the National Gallery of Ireland for his insightful chats and kind time afforded to me, and to Anne Hodge and Niamh McNally in the Department of Prints and Drawings (National Gallery of Ireland) whose support and interest in my research has been uplifting. Finally to Dr. Claudia Kinmonth who provided me with images and answered numerous enquiries.

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<td>Ford Madox Brown papers</td>
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<td>NAL</td>
<td>National Art Library, London</td>
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<td>NGI</td>
<td>National Gallery of Ireland</td>
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<td>NLI</td>
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Introduction

Adopting a thematic approach, this dissertation examines how images changed and developed from the European Christian concept of poverty in art in early modern Europe into the Irish and British context in the period under review. This thesis takes on an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Irish poverty and nomadism, primarily from art and social history perspectives. Its main sources are artworks, and because it examines the subject of the poor, and particularly vagrancy, social history must have considerable input. This research highlights how paintings, drawings and prints can offer evidence of varying degrees of poverty. What this work sets out to prove is that, in the visual context, there existed different strata under the rubric of ‘poor’ and these differences were identified and represented by artists. It examines artistic interpretations of vagrant people, predominately Irish, who existed on the margins of society in both Ireland and Britain. British government reports and writings in the nineteenth century on Ireland and Irish poverty show that many different types of people and groups were considered vagrants, including tinkers\(^1\), Gypsies\(^2\), landless labourers, the lone tramp or professional beggar, itinerant musicians, pedlars\(^3\) and fortune-tellers. These marginal people of Irish and British society will be researched in this work within the context of the family structure whether it is the single wanderer, the child or the family unit. The interdisciplinary nature of this work combines the critical and theoretical skills of the art historian and draws on the analytical skills of the social historian.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, itinerant people in Ireland and Britain had greater symbiotic relationship with rural communities compared to the urban context. As a result, the visibility of vagrancy was markedly different in both

\(^1\) ‘Tinker’ is the ‘antiquarian’ association with the trade of the tinsmith and was the term used for the Irish Travelling community up to the mid-twentieth century. An Irish government report in 1963, *Report of the Commission on Itinerancy*, was the first official attempt to define the community collectively known as tinkers or ‘itinerants’. Nineteenth-century references that acknowledge differences between Irish tinkers and English Gypsies include John Sampson, ‘Tinkers and their talk’ in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, ii, no. 4 (1890) and David MacRitchie, ‘Irish tinkers and their language’ in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 1, no. 6 (1889).

\(^2\) The capitalised spelling of ‘Gypsy’ will be used throughout this thesis. It is the preferred term by the community itself and has been used since the founding of *The Gypsy Lore Society* at the end of the nineteenth century. The eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth-century spelling of ‘gipsy’ is only referenced in titles of artworks or sources from literature of this period.

\(^3\) Throughout this thesis the nineteenth-century spelling of ‘pedlar’ is used.
communities. In the rural community a night’s lodging was often given in exchange for casual labour but in urban centres the visibility of vagrants, in particular beggars, led to them receiving alms more easily on the street. Despite the varying degrees of visibility, social commentators and writers documented the extent of vagrancy in both urban and rural spheres. The provision of visual representations by artists highlighted negative overtones of the marginal poor in urban spaces in contrast to the rural landscape. The status of the nomad in Ireland is difficult to define in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century in written sources. However, paintings, prints and drawings of the wandering poor, prior, during and after the Famine⁴ are supplemented by contemporary poor law reports and travel writings. The migrant Irish poor in London are included in this investigation as there was mass exodus to the English capital during and after the Famine. What this work sets out to prove is that, in the visual context, the development of Irish poverty and vagrancy mirrored cultural and social changes in both Ireland and Britain from 1760 to 1875.

This thesis investigates the manner in which Irish poverty and nomadism was exhibited and interpreted within both the private and public domain. Themes such as benevolence and philanthropy, the urban and rural landscape, the domestic space and migration are used to explore the representations of poverty and nomadism. Investigating artworks in a thematic framework allows for an in-depth discussion and analysis to show how representations of poverty and vagrancy were determined as a subject in view of production and consumption. How paintings were exhibited and commissioned is paramount to this study, to provide evidence for what was popular and acceptable within both the Irish and British markets. However, drawings and sketchbooks provide for the initial conception of ideas and research within the art-making process. This is imperative for information that a finished artwork cannot provide. Alternative sources of media addressed by this thesis are illustrations and prints of paintings. This research evaluates the impact of the circulation of the prints of paintings, while illustrations in periodical journals, books and in the format of Cries is another necessary and valuable source. In this capacity, prints and the manner in which they reached their audience provides information into how subjects became popular for artists but also how ideas spread and became influential from one country to another, in this case between Britain and Ireland. This

⁴ Upper case ‘Famine’ denotes the Great Famine in the 1840s in Ireland.
study excludes photographs (even though the photographic process of daguerreotype was invented in 1839), as the cut-off point of 1875 falls short of the rise in technological advances that encouraged the popularity of travelling photographers, anthropological studies and the production of lantern slides.\(^5\)

To date there is no comprehensive study specifically on the visual representation of Irish poverty and nomadism in nineteenth-century Ireland or Britain. This study draws from a wide source of paintings, prints, illustrations, drawings and sketchbooks to assess the development of Irish poverty and nomadism in a thematic process. To establish a wide-ranging overview of how poverty and nomadism in visual representations from 1760 to 1875 developed, this work draws on a considerable number of artists. In Ireland, artworks depicting the poor created by Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1740-1808), Thomas Roberts (1748-77), George Grattan (1787-1819), Joseph Patrick Haverty (1794-1864), William Brocas (c.1794-1868) and Daniel Maclise (1806-70) are explored. Adopting a comparative analysis of perceptions of nomadism in Ireland and Britain, this study highlights how the art market, audience and sources for paintings differed. For the British context images of vagrancy, including Irish and British poor by George Morland (1763-1804), William Mulready (1786-1863), Luke Fildes (1844-1927) and Ford Madox Brown (1821-93) provide the comparative analysis.

The co-dependent between Ireland and London, in the area of opportunities, markets and audience has been acknowledged by many writers on topics concerning Irish art and artists.\(^6\) For this study, London-based artists who came to Ireland and represented the poor provide evidence of the ‘outside’ perspective. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Francis Wheatley (1747-1801) and Maria Spilsbury Taylor (1776-1820)\(^7\) worked in Ireland for a prolonged period, while

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\(^5\) For example the eviction lantern slides of late 1888 to 1890s, see Fintan Cullen, ‘Marketing national sentiment: lantern slides of evictions in late nineteenth-century Ireland’ in *History Workshop Journal*, liv, no. 1 (Autumn, 2002), pp 163-179; for the subject of the rural Irish poor as ethnographic inquiry and the use of photography in Victorian anthropology see Justin Carville, ‘Resisting vision: photography, anthropology and the production of race in Ireland’ in Ciara Breathnach and Catherine Lawless (eds), *Visual material and print culture in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2010), pp 158-175.

\(^6\) Irish painters who left Ireland to create a new career in London include James Barry (1741-1806) and Daniel Maclise. See Tom Dunne (ed.), *James Barry 1741-1806: the great historical painter* (Cork, 2005) and Peter Murray (ed.), *Daniel Maclise, 1806-1870: romancing the past* (Cork, 2008).

\(^7\) In this thesis the artist is referred to in a combination of her maiden and married name. After her marriage to John Taylor in 1808 she was officially named in exhibition catalogues as Maria Taylor and she referred to this name when titling the cover of her sketchbooks. For the purposes of this
David Wilkie (1785-1841) visited the West of Ireland in 1835 in order to find a new source for his work and became intrigued with the poor. Wilkie’s trip was three years prior to the implementation of the poor law in Ireland. He was followed within ten years by a number of British painters who, like Wilkie, were in search of a landscape and culture untouched by the industrial revolution. These visiting artists included Francis William Topham (1808-77), Frederick Goodall (1822-1904), Alfred Downing Fripp (1822-95) and George Washington Brownlow (1835-76). On regular visits to Ireland, the Scottish artist Erskine Nicol (1825-1904) documented the effects of famine and poverty in eviction and emigration scenes throughout the 1840s, 50s and 60s. In 1844, Topham arrived in Ireland for a working tour of the west with Fripp, whereas Brownlow arrived well after the Famine in the 1860s.

This thesis highlights how the marginal poor piqued the interest of Irish and British artists but confirms that the poor were never a sustained study within any artist’s career. It also takes into account why artists chose to represent poverty and nomadism when the market and consumption of such works were slim. As Donald Preziosi argues, an art object possesses the ‘status’ of an ‘historical document’ and from an artwork a variety of readings can include the ‘character of an age, person or people’ but ultimately it is a ‘product of an historical milieu’. Therefore, this study focuses on artists’ perceptions of Irish, and in some cases British, poor and vagrancy and determines how an artist’s social, religious and national background affected the interpretation and representation of such subjects. However, when the poor appeared in artworks it was often under particular forms of presentation. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it was not common practice for artists to paint poverty or nomadism. In the key work of John Barrell, on which Tom Dunne builds his argument, the representation of the English poor from 1730 to 1840 was curtailed by moral and social constraints about how the rich viewed the poor.

The engagement between the artist, society and those who lived on its margins is the crux of this research. As both Irish and British society had to deal with dramatic social changes in the period under review, the most outstanding issue was industrialisation and its effects on class positions. Images of vagrancy, in particular, chapter the name Spilsbury Taylor will be used as it delineates between her career as a single and married woman.

9 See John Barrell, The dark side of the landscape: the rural poor in English painting 1730-1840 (Cambridge, 1980).
highlighted the tension between vagrants and sedentary society, patron and artist, consumer and audience but also the artist as creator or social commentator. The artists’ own social status, religious backgrounds, financial endeavours and gendered perspectives all affected how poverty and vagrancy were portrayed. This thesis also considers the issue of different media, including painting, prints and drawings, how they were shown to the contemporary audience. The cross-contextualisation of audience, the gallery space and the commercial world is examined by using critical reviews in contemporary journals and investigating the role of prints of artworks. Primary research includes artists’ letters, diaries and sketchbooks. Documents for Irish artists were scant, yet British painters proved more fruitful. Letters and personal documents for David Wilkie, Ford Madox Brown and William Mulready provide both opinions and ideas for paintings, catalogues for exhibited works and reviews by patrons and admirers of artworks. Maria Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks in the National Gallery of Ireland\textsuperscript{10} are valuable visual diaries that document life on the Tighe estates in Wicklow and Kilkenny and as a source they provide original ideas and concepts for her oil paintings. The National Library of Ireland holds a vast number of drawings and prints, including the extensive Brocas collection.\textsuperscript{11} In particular, the work of William Brocas RHA (c.1794-1868) is very significant to this study, and his drawings of marginal children in the urban environment offer a unique perspective of the Irish context in the nineteenth century.

The images used in this thesis offer thematic viewpoints on poverty. The majority of works are from Irish and British public art collections. Images were also sourced from art auction catalogues. Caution had to be exercised when going through catalogues or lists of works in institutions such as the British Royal Academy or the Royal Hibernian Academy in Ireland. In some cases, a descriptive title can be misleading, for example paintings or artworks with the word ‘Gypsy’ in the title have to be approached with caution as they may not be a reference to this nomadic group. Wheatley’s series of drawings on the Palmerstown fair, in the early 1780s, were titled \textit{Gipsy Encampment}. Wheatley’s drawings illustrate barrel-shaped tents that were makeshift pubs yet were mistakenly identified as Gypsy camps. Many contemporary writers included Irish poverty and vagrancy in their work, for example Mrs S.C. Hall’s \textit{The sketches of Irish character}, Dorothy Wordsworth’s \textit{The

\textsuperscript{10} Hereafter NGI.
\textsuperscript{11} Hereafter NLI. These drawings are used in chapter 5.
Grasmere Journal and Charles Dickens’s work about the Irish slums in St. Giles in London. These works provide textual references to beggars, tinkers and other Irish nomadic groups, who were a constant recognisable subject in popular culture, and ultimately reflected what was being produced in the visual context.

Research in the area of nineteenth-century Irish art has, until recently, been neglected. This has been attributed to the fact that not many Irish painters stayed in Ireland, and if they did, their choice of topics was limited. Art historians such as Fintan Cullen emphasise the invaluable contribution that visual sources can make to Irish historiography. His examination of the visual representation of Ireland and its people from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth century by native and foreign painters highlights the potential scope for research in this area. Apart from Cullen’s work, there is a modest selection of publications that deal with the topic of the visual representation of Irish people and to a lesser extent of Irish nomadism.

In his article on the subject of the lack of a nationalistic art in Ireland in the nineteenth century, Cyril Barrett asserts that the taste for Irish subjects was mainly for seascapes and landscapes with a continental influence. Arguing that styles responded to market forces, Cullen emphasises that Irish artists depended on London-based patronage and acceptance of their work by the British Royal Academy often cemented a solid career. These artists were focused on giving an English audience what they desired and overt political Irish topics were not popular particularly in the early to mid-nineteenth century. As Miriam Rainbird suggested, the ‘perceived lack of artistic production’ from Ireland encouraged the idea that the Irish were both racially and culturally inferior. A case in point is Cork-born artist Daniel Maclise, who lived in London and exhibited at the Royal Academy, but in

14 For further reading on the visualization of Irish peasants see Peter Murray, Whipping the herring: survival and celebration in nineteenth century Irish art (Cork, 2006); Brendan Rooney (ed.), A time and a place: two centuries of Irish social life (Dublin, 2006); Raymond Gillespie and Brian Kennedy (eds), Ireland: art into history (Dublin, 1994).
16 Cullen, Visual politics, p. 18.
17 For example Daniel Maclise created paintings of Irish topics that caused public confusion including The Installation of Captain Rock (1834), after which he represented Ireland that suited English tastes, see Peter Murray (ed.), Daniel Maclise 1806-1870: romancing the past (Cork, 2008), p. 45.
content only a few of his paintings reflected his Irish roots. But notwithstanding this acknowledged paucity, Claudia Kinmonth has identified many paintings that document customs and everyday life in nineteenth-century Ireland.

When using the visual source what must be considered is that ‘picture making has its own history and traditions which govern the final appearance of a painting.’ In the case of this work, the ‘traditions’ that are being examined are the processes of the images, in particular early ideas in drawings and sketchbooks. Understanding early process elements of an artwork also provides a closer examination on a section of society whose history was dependent on the observations of the educated middle and upper classes such as artists and writers. Peter Burke claims that social historians, who are often uncomfortable when referencing visual culture, rarely use images in their research. In this research, the nature of the interdisciplinary framework creates an awareness of the shortcomings of using images as a standalone source. The social history perspective allows for a more rounded inquiry and contextualisation of the artwork that was produced. Francis Haskell argues that when using images the researcher must consider that the visual source has its own language including individual purpose, convention, style and technique. In this thesis, the analysis and interpretation of images is inclusive of background knowledge of the artist and the context of how and why the artwork was produced, while contemporary definitions of poverty and vagrancy allows for further interpretation of the image.

The concept of ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor developed as a marker to distinguish between those who were genuinely in need of help or assistance and those who chose vagrancy as a way of life. In administrative terms the poor house system, in the timeframe of this research, enabled this form of social division and labelling to flourish. This classification of the poor, in particular vagrants, stemmed from early modern Europe, as Tom Nichols found in his research on beggars in art. In medieval Ireland, the restorative power of work to combat the problem of

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23 Tom Nichols refers to the classification of the poor between ‘able bodied’ and ‘sick poor’ in the 1580s in Rome when admitting the poor into hospital. Tom Nichols, The art of poverty: irony and ideal in sixteenth-century beggar imagery (Manchester, 2007), p. 10.
vagrancy was first considered alongside the idea of specific buildings that would contain the wandering poor and place them into forced labour.\textsuperscript{24} The British government’s approach to the problem of vagrancy, in both Ireland and England from 1760 to 1875, was based on laws and definitions of vagrancy constructed in the middle ages. In England the ‘Act for the Relief of the Poor’ of 1563 was passed with the specific intention of repressing and eradicating vagrancy rather than aiding the poor.\textsuperscript{25} As a result of this act, many trades of the itinerant class were listed as a crime, including begging, peddling and tinkering. This act allowed for the prosecution of many types of rootless sections of society including soldiers and mariners, entertainers, unlicensed healers and fortune-tellers, as their chosen methods of earning a wage were considered damaging to the Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{26} According to Patrick Brantlinger and Donald Ulin, in England nomadism and vagrancy were among the most highly reported and vilified crimes as they contravened not only specific laws but also the high regard for property, particularly in the Victorian period.\textsuperscript{27}

Constantly changing attitudes towards the able-bodied poor triggered many statutes and laws that would identify vagrancy and make it illegal. Consequently, Gypsies, tinkers and sturdy or professional beggars were placed were deemed able-bodied poor or undeserving. A.L. Beier describes how from the sixteenth century in England and Europe, vagrancy was identifiable by varying degrees of poverty, usually where a person gained an irregular income from casual labour in agriculture, or was able-bodied and categorised as ‘fit to work’ but unemployed. The most negative aspect, and where vagrants were considered as the gravest threat, was in their rootlessness; this meant they could evade taxation and as such exist outside civilised society. That they had no sense of social duty and contributed nothing to the government led many to believe that nomadism was ‘lawless, dangerous, and suspected of spreading vice and corruption’.\textsuperscript{28}

The majority of images used in this thesis can be classified as works about the undeserving poor. There is a particular emphasis on images of nomads such as

\textsuperscript{24} Sir George Nicholls, \textit{A history of the Irish poor law: in connexion with the condition of the people} (London, 1856), p. 28.
\textsuperscript{28} Beier, \textit{Masterless men}, p. 4.
Gypsies or fortune-tellers, yet the Irish tinker was represented less. In the nineteenth century, tinkers were nomadic family groups and it was this difference that set them apart from the wandering lone tramp.\textsuperscript{29} As Ciara Breathnach highlights, the pitfalls of researching a ‘marginalized, uncategorized group’ such as tinkers is a difficult one, as they did not ‘adhere to the dictates of administration under British or Independent Irish rule’.\textsuperscript{30} As a group, the Irish tinkers in nineteenth century Ireland mainly occupied the rural rather than the urban centre.\textsuperscript{31}

In the case of European Gypsies, their nomadism became a source of curiosity in the late eighteenth century when their ethnic origins began to be explored by scholars. In 1783, a German study of Gypsies by Heinrich Grellmann was the first comprehensive examination of these nomads in terms of numbers and migratory patterns.\textsuperscript{32} Grellmann fuelled the mystery around Gypsies and referred to the women’s ‘unrestrained depravity’ and hinted at the practise of cannibalism.\textsuperscript{33} It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Gypsies in England were associated with a cultural rural myth that inspired poetry, literature and painting.\textsuperscript{34} Scholars known as ‘Gypsiologists’ emerged in the late nineteenth century and their studies, rather than creating an ethnographic study, gave credence to the theory that Gypsies were a ‘primitive’ or ‘pure-blood’ race.\textsuperscript{35} Their efforts led to the formation of the \textit{Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society} in 1888 in England.

According to Laurence M. Geary, the occurrence of frequent famines and economic uncertainty in early nineteenth-century Ireland periodically forced families and single persons into a wandering lifestyle to earn a living.\textsuperscript{36} High levels of

\textsuperscript{29} Aoife Bhreatnach, ‘Fair days and doorsteps: encounters between Travellers and settled people in twentieth-century Ireland’ in Ciara Breathnach and Aoife Bhreatnach (eds), \textit{Portraying Irish Travellers: histories and representations} (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2006) p. 7.


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., pp 18-19.


\textsuperscript{33} Fraser, \textit{The Gypsies}, p. 195.


\textsuperscript{36} See Laurence M. Geary, “‘The whole country was in motion’: mendicancy and vagrancy in pre-famine Ireland’ in Jacqueline Hill and Colm Lennon (eds), \textit{Luxury and austerity: historical studies}, xxi (Dublin, 1999), p. 121.
unemployment in both the agricultural and textile industries meant the number of landless beggars rose dramatically.\textsuperscript{37} In his economic history of Ireland in the early nineteenth century, Louis M. Cullen outlines that the crisis was in part caused by high prices of grain due to a series of bad harvests in the early part of the century followed by an agricultural crisis in 1820 that was the result of a recession in Britain a year earlier.\textsuperscript{38} Niall Ó Ciosáin’s perspective on the beggar differs slightly from Geary; he accords agency to a professional begging class who chose vagrancy as opposed to the vagrant poor person forced into mendicancy through economic pressures.\textsuperscript{39}

An important primary source for this thesis is the First report for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland (hereafter 1835 report), surveyed prior to the introduction of the Poor Law Act of 1838.\textsuperscript{40} In 1833 the British government formed the Irish Poor Inquiry Commission with Richard Whately, the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, was appointed Chairman. This commission, which reported in 1835, recommended the creation of a board to plan and supervise wide schemes of national improvement. In this thesis interviews from the 1835 report provide contextualisation in conjunction with images of vagrants and the poor. The report featured accounts of the ‘conditions of the poor classes’, which were examined under a variety of headings including the sick poor, able-bodied out of work and vagrancy. From this source there are numerous witness statements including a cross-section of Irish society; from the beggar to shopkeepers, priests and the landed gentry. The commission was set up at micro level and was officiated by two commissioners, one Irish and one English, so that ‘knowledge of the Irish scene and an outsider’s objectivity could be combined in the conduct of the examinations’.\textsuperscript{41} This report provides a substantial amount of primary evidence of the opinions

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Louis M Cullen, \textit{An economic history of Ireland since 1660} (London, 1972), pp 103-4.
\textsuperscript{39} Niall O Ciosáin, ‘Bocoughs and God’s poor: deserving and undeserving poor in Irish popular culture’ in Tadhg Foley and Sean Ryder (eds), \textit{Ideology and Ireland in the nineteenth century} (Dublin, 1998), pp 93-112.
\textsuperscript{40} For a precise study on the political and ideological context of the introduction of the Poor Law Act of 1838 into Ireland see Peter Gray, \textit{The making of the Irish poor law, 1815-43} (Manchester, 2009). For a thematic and ideological analysis of the history of poverty and welfare throughout the years of the Irish poor law see Virginia Crossman and Peter Gray, \textit{Poverty and welfare in Ireland, 1838-1948} (Dublin, 2011).
\textsuperscript{41} Mary Cullen, ‘Breadwinners and providers: women in the household economy of labouring families, 1835-6’ in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (eds), \textit{Women surviving: studies in Irish women’s history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries} (Dublin, 1989), p. 89. Cullen used the 1835 report as a source to determine the ‘role of women in the household economy of labouring families’.
expressed by the middle classes of nineteenth-century society about the wandering and homeless class in Ireland prior to the Famine. What emerged from the 1835 report was a hierarchy of class amongst the poor, including beggars, tinkers and Gypsies. Nomads, including those who found themselves evicted during famines or wandering in search of employment such as the landless labourer, were below the ordinary poor. The true objective of the poor law in Ireland was to ‘diminish pauperism’ and to ‘transform the unproductive pauper into a productive labourer’.42

The introduction of the poor law into Ireland in 1838, with George Nicholls (1781-1865) appointed ‘resident commissioner’ with the task of implementing the legislation, in effect stratified the lower classes even more into deserving and undeserving poor. This concept of ‘less eligibility’ was enforced by the workhouse administration rules within Poor Law districts.43 With the arrival of the workhouse or ‘houses of industry’ in Irish society began the negative branding of the poor where they were ‘badged and licensed to beg … vagrants were to be swept into the houses for terms of hard labour’.44 The workhouses became the only means of relief for the poor in Ireland and were considerably harsher than in England. Christine Kinealy states that the differences in the poor laws between both countries made a strong statement that poverty in Ireland needed to be dealt with in a much stricter way, which gave a clear message that the Irish poor were even lower than the undeserving British poor and needed to be dealt with accordingly.45 The policy of accepting vagrants into the workhouse was often opposed by officials and the clergy. Caitríona Clear cites the case of Gerald O’ Donovan, a chaplain to Loughrea Union in 1874, who tried to prevent ‘vagrants, tramps, idlers and bad women’ from entering the workhouse and interacting with the ‘decent poor’.46 In that instance vagrants were less of a priority than the poor who found themselves in poverty and destitution due to stringent circumstances.

The illegality of vagrancy was entrenched through a variety of acts in the nineteenth century including the Vagrancy Act of 1824, the Poor Relief Extension Act of 1847 and the later Vagrancy Act of 1871. The 1824 act declared a desire to

43 Crossman and Gray, Poverty and Welfare, p. 4.
suppress vagrancy and outlined punishments for ‘idle and disorderly persons’. The 1824 act specified the conditions of being homeless as ‘lodging in a barn or outhouse; or in the open air, or under a tent, or in a cart or wagon’ and if found guilty of any these offences the punishment was imprisonment with hard labour. The later Poor Relief Extension Act of 1847 referred to distinctions between pauperism that could be changed through poor relief as opposed to vagrancy which was proving to be ‘unamendable to exorcism by the workhouse test’. Under both the 1824 and 1847 acts the definition of being vagrant included a person committing a crime either by ‘begging or wandering abroad without visible means of support, lodging in the open air, going from one Poor Union to another seeking relief, loitering around warehouses, possessing picklocks and other suspicious instruments, gambling, fortune-telling and being an “incorrigible rogue” or an idle and disorderly person’. According to Clear it was these guidelines that led to erratic rises in indiscriminate arrests of homeless people during and after the Famine. These arrests included the vulnerable and deserving poor of society that comprised the disabled (including mentally ill and the blind), children and the elderly. Vagrancy was considered a social illness, associated with ‘degeneration’ and linked with mental and physical weakness.

This thesis examines the economic and social devastation of the Great Famine of the 1840s as means of context for images that were produced during and after this watershed period in Irish history. As Joel Mokyr’s quantitative and qualitative historical study revealed, the variety of factors leading to Ireland’s Famine were numerous. Apart from crop failure, he pointed to the lack of natural resources of coal and iron, the effect of the Union with Britain in 1800, high population, absentee landlords, the lack of industries and the long-term effects of

51 Ibid., p. 124.
52 Clear, ‘Homelessness, crime, punishment and poor relief in Galway’, p. 120.
53 In research, the exact dates for the Famine are disputed. For studies on Ireland’s Great Famine see Christine Kinealy, The great Irish Famine: impact, ideology and rebellion (New York, 2002); Liam Kennedy, Paul S. Ell, E.M Crawford and L.A Clarkson, Mapping the great Irish Famine: a survey of the Famine decades (Dublin, 1999); Chris Morash and Richard Hayes (eds), Fearful realities: new perspectives on the Famine (Dublin, 1996) and Christine Kinealy, This great calamity: the Irish Famine 1845-52 (Dublin, 1994).
high emigration as the primary causes of the 1840s Famine.\textsuperscript{54} These economic and class distinctions in rural Ireland in the nineteenth century have been researched by scholars such as Cormac Ó Gráda and David Fitzpatrick.\textsuperscript{55} Their work provides key knowledge and understanding when analysing artworks that relate to issues such as inbound and outbound migration.

The Famine decimated the Irish population, which had reached just over eight million by 1841; one million people died from hunger and the proceeding mass emigration cut the population by twenty five per cent.\textsuperscript{56} The devastation of the Famine affected all social classes. While it bankrupted a small group of landlords, and diseases filtered through the middle classes, it totally decimated the lower classes.\textsuperscript{57} In his work on the demographic changes in Ireland, S.H Cousens concluded that despite the devastation of the Famine and the high degree of pauperism, the Irish poor had a strong resistance to emigration and the connection between the people and the land had not been weakened.\textsuperscript{58}

Lack of paintings about the Famine and the reluctance of Irish and British artists to depict scenes of hunger and deprivation are well documented.\textsuperscript{59} The popular explanation for the poor artistic response was that Irish artists desired to succeed in London and Famine depictions were not sought after by the British consumer. While a small minority of artists created images on the social effects of the Famine, mainly evictions,\textsuperscript{60} the dearth of an artistic response to the tragedy was a contributing factor of colonialism. Catherine Marshall suggests that the problem was not necessarily the representation of poverty itself but rather the ‘ politicisation of that poverty in a colonised country’.\textsuperscript{61} The most thought-provoking images were by Irish artists who

\textsuperscript{55} Cormac Ó Gráda, \textit{The economic development of Ireland since 1870} (Cheltenham, 1994) and David Fitzpatrick, \textit{Irish emigration, 1801-1921} (Dundalk, 1984).
\textsuperscript{56} Kinealy, \textit{The great Irish Famine}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{57} Liam Kennedy, Paul S. Ell, E.M Crawford and L.A. Clarkson, \textit{Mapping the great Irish Famine: a survey of the Famine decades} (Dublin, 1999), p. 16.
\textsuperscript{60} For example, Robert George Kelly (1822-1910), \textit{An Ejectment in Ireland} or \textit{A Tear and a Prayer for Erin} (1848-51), Henry Jones Thaddeus (1859-1929), \textit{Eviction Scene} (1889) and Lady Elizabeth Butler (1846-1933), \textit{Evicted} (1890).
created drawings for prints for the *Illustrated London News* established in 1842. Examples include illustrations by James Mahoney (1810-79), which documented the crisis in the 1840s and later political works by Aloysius O’Kelly (1853-c.1941) in the 1880s. The Famine, in this thesis, highlights the blurring of a period in history when a vast portion of the Irish population became homeless and rootless. It also be given due consideration as the representations of this period by artists and the consumption of the images in the press would have been a commercial endeavour driven by a middle-class English audience. The *ILN* philosophy was one of authenticity, hiring artists to create the images for the engravings and having its own staff of engravers and printing facilities on the premises. The *ILN* was the first periodical to regularly send artists out on field work. This promoted the image of the ‘on the spot artist sketch’ for the periodical and it consistently advertised its ‘accuracy and faithful depiction’.

How the British audience consumed the image of the Irish and their social problems depended on their visual representations in contemporary periodicals. Although artists represented poverty in a wide range of themes and types, as analysed in this thesis, the image of the Irish peasant as violent, drunk and lazy became the dominant stereotype in the latter part of the nineteenth century. L.P. Curtis theorised, representations of simian Irish people regularly appeared in periodicals in Britain in an attempt to convey and reinforce the idea of the Irish as an inferior race. However, Roy Foster viewed Curtis’s theory as problematic claiming that *Punch*, the contemporary paper that published many of the satirised images of the Irish, was in its early years just as opposed to many other sections of English society.

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including its own lower classes. The development of images of poverty and vagrancy in both Ireland and England evolved with changing social and religious ideals of poverty and how to alleviate it, and this is evidenced in both commercial and fine art images.

This thesis explores the development of images of Irish poverty and nomadism by Irish and British artists and queries how these depictions changed so markedly from one of giving charity to the poor in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century to one of threat circulated in the mid to late nineteenth century. This research begins with an exploration of gendered perceptions of poverty comparing the work of Francis Wheatley, George Morland and Maria Spilsbury Taylor in order to highlight the influence of evangelical ideals. Even though Wheatley and Morland were not evangelicals, in their work they conveyed elements of contemporary thinking around alms giving and benevolence as a form of duty. Their paintings evoke the concerns of the wealthy pious population in England where ‘success, pleasure and profit … were immoral and spiritually dangerous’ and the giving of alms to the poor was an attempt to reconcile this conflict. In contrast, Spilsbury Taylor had experienced being part of the Moravian church in early childhood and even though she was no longer a member in adulthood she continued to reference spiritual elements of Moravian teachings in her paintings. She documented the Irish tenant, either labouring or being instructed through religion and religious driven education by wealthy women and landlords during a seven year stay in Ireland. In the case of this artist her gender and patronage contributed to a unique body of work. The earlier work of her contemporaries Wheatley and Morland is contrasted with Spilsbury Taylor’s images in order to show the variety of the gendered perspective and the development of images of an enlightened charity in both England and Ireland.

Chapter 2 examines the representations of the Irish beggars in art during the years 1760 to 1834. Images produced in the mid to late eighteenth century of beggars in the Irish context were produced by Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1740-1808) in his drawings of Cries. Hamilton was a highly regarded Irish portrait painter employed by the wealthy and the upper classes. The focus of this chapter is on the radical change

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70 Charlotte Yeldham, Maria Spilsbury 1776-1820: artist and evangelical (Farnham, 2010), p. 20.
of the perception of the poor, who went from a predominantly rural space, one of acceptance and integration, to becoming a visible and problematic threat within the urban space. The contrast of the rural with the urban space is explored in paintings by Francis Wheatley, Thomas Roberts, George Grattan and Daniel Maclise. The iconography of the beggar develops and emerges during the timeframe from an observed figure in the work of Hamilton to a more fantastical, literary driven and rural based figure in the work of Maclise by 1834.

In Chapter 3, the representations of the nomadic pedlar (hawker) and fortune-teller are examined and contrasted between Ireland and England. The interior of the domestic space consistently arises as a theme throughout the chapter. In particular, the portrayal of the female fortune-teller and her construction in the visual context was largely hinged on the spectacle of the ‘exotic’. These images convey the ‘outside’ world represented by the nomad in juxtaposition with the ‘inside’ of the security of home. Family values were often symbolised by the presence of the front door in an image. The ‘woman of the house’ also became part of this contrived composition. Her attitude and need for the services that were provided by the caller decided on the success of the business deal between both parties, whether it was in the sale of goods, a skill, lodgings or charity.

Chapter 4 deals with the itinerant musician and the important role of the distribution of prints of paintings and draws parallels between the representation of the blind musician in Britain and Ireland. David Wilkie’s *The Blind Fiddler* (1806) and Joseph Patrick Haverty’s two painting about a blind piper in the 1840s are examined to provide evidence of favourable subjects that circulated between Britain and Ireland. Chapter 5, meanwhile, compares the art markets of Dublin and London by examining two contemporaries, William Brocas and William Mulready and the work that focused on the marginal child. Both artists chose the child as a device in their work. Their approaches differ as Mulready used the child alongside outcasts of society whereas Brocas by contrast represented the child as marginal. The images constructed by Brocas of child street mendicants, mainly identified in Dublin, are distinct from other work produced by the artist. In these images the child is the ‘outsider’ within urban society. In contrast, paintings by Mulready depict the child as an observer to poverty. Mulready's images of children placed alongside vagrant Lascar sailors in *Train Up a Child* (1841) and another with a nomadic black pedlar entitled *The Toy Seller* (1857-63) reflect many changes within British society.
In Chapter 6 paintings created predominately by artists Francis William Topham, George Washington Brownlow and Erskine Nicol during and after trips to the west of Ireland show that Victorian ideologies of the role of the family, in racial terms were strongly associated with the reputation of transient Irish migrants to Britain. The landscape of the west was not of importance to these British painters; instead they were drawn to the cabin interiors and to consistently portraying the family unit. In the work of Brownlow and Topham, an array of images of quaint cottage interiors, fulfilled the criteria demanded by the middle-class British consumer. Nicol, however, depicted the Irish family unit on the move, either after being evicted or heading towards a point of transport to a new destination. The influx of Irish migrants to London throughout the period of the Famine was considered uncontrolled and became associated with a threat to law and order as crime increased. This further cemented the popular belief of the strong criminal element in the Irish character.\footnote{Roger Swift, ‘Crime and the Irish in nineteenth-century Britain’ in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), \textit{The Irish in Britain 1815-1939} (London, 1989), p. 163.} This chapter builds on both the internally displaced within Ireland and their depiction in the visual, but the nomadic or the single Irish male and family unit who became vagrants on London’s streets. In London, Luke Fildes interchanged from being a journalistic illustrator and painter, concentrating more on painting after his highly acclaimed work \textit{Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward} (1874). Earlier, Ford Madox Brown represented in a painting entitled \textit{Work} (1852-65), the social unrest in society that arose from inbound and outbound migration that included the displaced Irish family unit. The paintings featured in this chapter will show the stark contrast between works produced in Ireland and England that depicted Irish poverty, emigration and eventual vagrancy of the Irish family unit on London’s streets.
Chapter 1  Enlightened poverty: representations of benevolence and philanthropy in art

The focus of this chapter is on the work of the English female regency painter Maria Spilsbury Taylor (1776-1820) (her maiden name was Spilsbury until 1808) and her interpretations of the Irish poor and benevolence. Primarily based on Spilsbury Taylor and her work during a seven-year stay in Ireland, the chapter also explores contrasting images of the English poor and benevolence by George Morland (1763-1804) and Francis Wheatley (1747-1801). Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, according to Helena Rosenblatt, was ‘about reinvigorating and redefining religion, rather than destroying it’, where ‘enlightened Christians shared a commitment to a few central ideas and values’ and sought to ‘reconcile their faith with the new sciences emerging in Europe’. 72 This chapter takes into consideration the effect of Enlightenment ideals on benevolence towards the poor and how this was represented in art.

Giving alms to the poor was a virtuous act that was entrenched in philosophical thinking. This chapter analyses the variety of interpretations of benevolence towards the English and Irish poor. It argues that when placed together the work of Spilsbury Taylor, Morland and Wheatley, which deal with benevolence and philanthropy, are heavily gendered. More importantly, Spilsbury Taylor represented the dominance of women in the domain of philanthropy, which Morland and Wheatley overlooked. The philanthropic sources for Spilsbury Taylor’s paintings in Ireland were put in place by her female patron Sarah Tighe (1743-1822). The chapter focuses on the power of charity, and in particular benevolence, and how it was represented in the work of Morland and Wheatley in contrast to Spilsbury Taylor’s interpretations in the Irish context. Paintings by Spilsbury Taylor, Morland and Wheatley were a visual response to a form of ‘social control’ of the poor in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Ireland and England. Morland and Wheatley worked in the late eighteenth century and Spilsbury Taylor in the early years of the nineteenth century. At certain stages throughout their careers, Spilsbury Taylor, Morland and Wheatley exhibited in the Royal Academy in London.

With regard to Spilsbury Taylor’s work, the chapter focuses on an array of drawings from eleven sketchbooks and also oil paintings. She represented the Irish poor during her stay in Ireland with the Tighes of Rossana in County Wicklow. Spilsbury Taylor and her patronage by the Irish landowner Tighe provides a useful case study in this chapter. In Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks, contrasting types of the Irish poor appear, namely the tenant living within the boundary of a walled Irish estate and the poor who lived outside of this sphere. Tighe and other neighbouring landlords introduced a series of educational and religious initiatives on their estates in County Wicklow, and these were in part documented and referenced by Spilsbury Taylor in her paintings and sketchbooks. Sarah Tighe was the landowner of both the Rossana and the Woodstock estate in County Kilkenny. Spilsbury Taylor’s images contribute to the argument that the visual construction of benevolence and philanthropy towards the poor, in particular the Irish poor, incorporated ideals and concepts of the Enlightenment. Benevolence, in particular, focused on the types of recipients of alms, which lent to the division of poor into deserving and undeserving, evident in Spilsbury Taylor, Wheatley and Morland’s work. This context of benevolence forced the artist to consider its conception visually.

In early modern Europe, Philip T. Hoffman noted that fear grew among the clergy that increased alms-giving and bequests by pious churchgoers to the poor would result in paupers choosing a life of begging over labour. These ideologies had an impact on commissioned works for example, early modern European images of benevolence such as Bartolomé Esteban Murillo’s (1617-82) *Saint Thomas of Villanueva Giving Alms to the Poor* (1678) (figure 1.1). Murillo’s painting was part of a commissioned altarpiece by the monastery of San Augustín in Seville for the Cavaleri chapel that was dedicated to its saint, Thomas of Villanueva. Thomas of Villanueva (c.1488-1555) was from a wealthy background and joined the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine at Villanueva in 1516. His generosity to the poor and compassion for the orphans of his diocese led to his canonization in 1658. In this

73 Eleven sketchbooks by Spilsbury Taylor are housed in the Prints and Drawings Department, NGI.
74 An alternative spelling for this estate is Rossannagh.
75 She died at the age of forty four in Ireland and is buried in the graveyard of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Drumcondra.
76 Philip T. Hoffman, ‘The church in economy and society’ in Brown and Tackett, Enlightenment, reawakening and revolution, p. 79.
78 Ibid.
painting, the poor offered an opportunity for the contemporary viewer to be reminded of their sins and benevolence was the key to salvation and more importantly the route into heaven. Charity was heavily intertwined with biblical implications, in particular in a dominant Catholic country such as Spain. This chapter argues that paintings like Murillo’s had an impact on Spilsbury Taylor, Morland and Wheatley’s work which echoed the influence of Enlightenment ideals in Irish and English society during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. However, instead of a direct religious iconography for charity and benevolence, Spilsbury Taylor, Morland and Wheatley broke away from the traditional modes of images inspired by Christianity from early-modern Europe. Instead they illustrated the middle and upper classes giving charity to the poor.

Crucial work about Spilsbury Taylor’s religious background completed by Charlotte Yeldham has considered the importance and early influence of the Moravian Church therefore it will be dealt with in brief here. Spilsbury Taylor’s upbringing was rooted in the Moravian Church in London. Moravians were a small splinter Protestant group originating in the fourteenth century who emigrated from Moravia in 1722 and settled in Herrnhut in Germany. The community became established through the committed work of young pious leaders and eventually their Church spread throughout Europe and America. Spilsbury Taylor’s father was a member of the Moravian Church (The Unitas Fratrum) at Fetter lane in London and was pro-active in the affiliated Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen. Shortly after Jonathan Spilsbury joined the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen in 1782 his daughter was admitted into the church.

Prior to her sojourn in Ireland Spilsbury Taylor’s work exhibited an interest in the poor. For example in the work *The Drinking Well in Hyde Park* (figure 1.2), engraved in 1802, Spilsbury Taylor depicted a woman giving to another a cup of water from a spring in Hyde Park. The representation of poverty and, more importantly, benevolence is not obvious from the image until closer inspection by the viewer. The wealthy woman to the right, taller in height and dressed in clothes of a light tone, gives a woman to the left water into one hand and alms into another. The

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woman who receives is dressed in dark attire from head to foot but she is a shade lighter than the black footman who stands to the far right. By the benefactor’s side is a young female child who witnesses the act. The benevolent act takes place in the shelter of two large trees, and also featured is another woman with three children to the left of the composition, while in the right foreground a dog drinks from the same water source. Spilsbury Taylor is intent on showing the importance of teaching children benevolence and charity to those in need, and the responsibility for this lesson lies squarely with the mother.  

In eighteenth-century England, Patricia Comitini states that a belief system existed where philanthropy was paramount for the improvement of the human condition. It fundamentally contributed to the ‘private notions of morality, family and benevolence to the public needs of good citizens, industrious labourers and inter-class harmony’. Within the rural context, Jessica Gerard claimed that philanthropy was crucial in maintaining ‘the system of patriarchal control and deference’. Rural charity was distinctively different to urban philanthropy. This was due to ‘an unavoidable public duty’ felt by the landlord, which was related to inherited power, wealth and privilege of a landed family that was passed down through the generations. Spilsbury Taylor’s image of a woman giving alms to another is central to the concept of ‘one’s Christian duty’ but is also a representation of power and control, signified by the act of benevolence. Spilsbury Taylor, with this image, presented a woman of power, the power here symbolised by the black footman to the right and a woman seeking alms and painted at a lower level to the benefactor. This painting was produced in c.1802 when the artist was at the beginning of her career; she was single and living in London with her parents.

Spilsbury Taylor’s entry into the profession of painting was helped considerably by both of her parents. Her father, Jonathan Spilsbury (1737-1812), a portrait painter and print maker, encouraged her from an early age to draw from antique casts and prints of fashionable paintings. Her mother Rebecca Spilsbury (née Chapman, c.1744-1812) was a painter but not in a traditional capacity as she did not

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83 Ibid., pp 79-80.
86 Ibid., pp 184-5.
87 See list of works in Yeldham, *Maria Spilsbury*, p. 173.
receive an income from her work. 88 In the early nineteenth century, women generally were not given a formal art education but the exception to this rule were the daughters of professional painters as was the case for Spilsbury Taylor. 89 In 1790, at the early age of sixteen, Spilsbury Taylor began exhibiting at the Royal Academy and then later at the British Institution. 90 She worked mainly in oils, and her primary source of income was from portrait painting but early subject matter also included children, religion and literary themes with charitable institutions also being featured. A painting identified with a theme of charity The House of Protection for Destitute Females of Character, Two Girls Applying for Admission which suggests the workhouse was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1806. 91 The titles of her paintings suggest that she was not only swayed by popular art interests and, despite market trends, she was not afraid to depict poor relief in early-nineteenth century England.

In as much as her religious convictions had a clear impact on her work, the subject of education also figures strongly in Spilsbury Taylor’s paintings. This focus on education in her art was inspired by her father and later, her husband, John Taylor (1784-1821), who was heavily involved in teaching and helped set up schools for children of the poor. In 1804 Spilsbury Taylor painted The Schoolmistress (Sunday Evening; A Young Lady Teaching Village Children How to Sing) (1804) (figure 1.3). According to Maria Luddy, of all the different types of philanthropy undertakings, childcare work was the most ‘empowering’ for the middle and upper classes. 92 Similar to The Drinking Well in Hyde Park, the female figure as role model and educator is significant. 93 In both Moravian and Methodist teachings great emphasis was placed on the education of children and establishing Sunday Schools. 94 The focus of education by the middle classes such as the evangelicals was used to keep the poor in a ‘subordinate position’ yet priority was placed on them being

88 Ibid., p. 9.
89 Women were not allowed into the Royal Academy Art School until 1860 with the admission of the first female student, Laura Hertford. See Deborah Cherry, ‘Women artists and the politics of feminism’ in Clarissa Campbell Ott (ed.), Women in the Victorian art world (Manchester, 1995), p. 54.
90 Yeldham, Maria Spilsbury, p. 35; Ruth Young, Father and daughter, Jonathan and Maria Spilsbury Taylor 1737-1812, 1777-1820 (London, 1952), p. 7.
93 Another example includes Maria Spilsbury Taylor, A Clergyman’s Wife Teaching Village Children to Read (1808).
Female philanthropy work focused on destitute women and vulnerable children, as there was a strong aspiration towards ‘controlling’ the outcasts of society and ‘guiding’ them towards a middle-class standard of decency and morality.

The painting showcases Spilsbury Taylor’s technical capacity for portraying crowd scenes, a skill that was used to great effect in her later Irish genre paintings. There are strong contrasts between dark and light within the painting and in the symbolic placement of the figures, the most important of whom is the female teacher in the middle. The children also take centre stage, with their mothers placed on the periphery. The fact that the teacher is illuminated with light and dressed in white clothing alludes to an evangelical influence. Spilsbury Taylor created genre works with religious content including *Christ Feeding the Multitude* (1804) and *The Second Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* (1808).

During her career, Spilsbury Taylor was a popular and much sought after artist. In England, she made a considerable income from commissions, and her most notable patron and admirer was the Prince Regent, George IV (1762-1830). However, interest in her work had greatly declined by the end of the nineteenth century, and the omission of Spilsbury Taylor in contemporary history of art is an example of what Griselda Pollock termed ‘reference, deference and difference’, where an artist, male or female, can be written out of the canon in one decade and re-emerge in popularity in another. For example, Morland’s work was highly fashionable and sought after throughout the nineteenth century, but was, according to John Barrell, placed into storage of galleries and museums by the twentieth century. Morland and Spilsbury Taylor were the victims of fashion and changes of taste.

That Spilsbury Taylor and her achievements are not properly acknowledged in the canon of art is not surprising considering the lack of regard for women painters. The art critic George Moore wrote in 1893 that ‘the world would certainly be poorer by some half-dozen charming novels, by a few charming poems and sketches in oil and watercolour; but it cannot be maintained, at least not seriously, that if these …

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triflings were withdrawn there would remain any gap in the world’s art to be filled up. While Moore’s opinion of women painters echoed the thinking of the time, in the eighteenth century, recent research suggests that women in the role of patrons and artists had played a significant part in Europe’s cultural environment. A female painter’s training, either professional or amateur within the domain of cultural production in the nineteenth century, became the means by which women artists were measured.

In Spilsbury Taylor's early paintings in England, important themes in her work were the English rural idyll and the cottage as the hub of learning and communicating family values. The spaces most significant during this period in her work were the interior of the kitchen and scenes taking place at the front door. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the rural idyll was synonymous with the setting for educational instruction, motherly protection and charity, or benevolence, as evidenced in The Schoolmistress (figure 1.3). Spilsbury Taylor’s contemporaries Morland and Wheatley also represented rural themes but dealt with benevolence in a different manner. Wheatley, who visited and painted in Ireland in 1779, is discussed in Chapter 2, depicted scenes of particular types of charity and benevolence in his work that included the male as alms giver. Morland produced numerous paintings of labourers and their families, in particular jovial scenes in front of the idyll cottage, however he also explored the theme of benevolence in two ways. In one painting he illustrated a female landowner giving alms to a child and another represents a male benefactor providing charity to a group of nomads. By exploring paintings that represented benevolence by Wheatley and Morland an overview can be given to what was happening in England in the late eighteenth century in contrast with Spilsbury Taylor’s later work in Ireland.

In the mid-eighteenth century, landscape painting changed focus, described by Ann Bermingham as an ideological movement in that it presented ‘an illusionary account of the real landscape’. Artists were focused on certain elements of rural England including laneways, farms and river scenes rather than the previous

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topographical studies of important landmarks. These works were concerned with the ambience and charm of rural life rather than the exact recording of it. In landscape paintings, while the poor were acknowledged and represented, painters did not portray the actual conditions of their lives.

Morland’s *The Squire’s Door* (figure 1.4) is of a young child receiving alms from a wealthy female landowner, away from the natural environs of the poor. The woman, dressed in riding attire, is pictured in front of two columns at the door of her house. It is not certain if the child is homeless or receiving alms, perhaps she belongs to the man who attends to two horses in the background of the composition. There is a distinct class difference communicated in this painting between the child and the woman through clothing. The act of benevolence was visually more associated with the poorer sections of society within the rural sphere and usually at the cottage door, so it is unusual to find a rich person giving alms at the front door of the estate house. Solkin stated that paintings with the theme of the ‘cottage-door ... were generally understood as landscapes of a highly artificial and idealising sort’. But as images they incorporated the beliefs of the Enlightenment and the idealism of giving charity, which highlighted the divisions between the rich and the poor. It was these images of benevolence within the domestic arena that replaced the overt religious content of early modern European art.

In contrast with Morland’s depiction of alms-giving Wheatley’s *Love and Charity* (figure 1.5) presents a young man giving alms to a male beggar. The painting was created for publication in a title page of the book *Bell’s British Theatre* published by John Bell (1745-1831) in 1791. Therefore, it is likely that the painting was created before his trip to Ireland. The scene is based on the play *The Country Lasses* by Charles Johnson (1679-1748) and Wheatley’s painting was used as an illustration in Bell’s publication. This painting incorporates the moral deed of the young man giving charity to a male beggar without the knowledge of his female companion. The painting’s composition is split into two, to the left is the rustic scene of a small cottage and receding landscape while to the right of the painting the reality

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104 Ibid., p. 10.
105 For example the work of Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88) and his paintings of rural poor.
106 For example Francis Wheatley painted cottage scenes of alms giving including *Rustic Benevolence* (1791), oil on canvas, private collection.
of rural poverty is displayed. This dichotomy of opposing representations is also communicated between the three figures. The young woman has her back to the two beggars and does not witness the begging or giving of alms. She is dressed in white, which in the visual narrative of the painting separates her from the male figures. In England in the eighteenth century, landowners conceived their landscape as a ‘cultural and aesthetic object’. Barrell stated that increasingly the rich had to look after the poor through charitable means, which was often associated with fear.

In contrast to Spilsbury Taylor’s *The Drinking Well in Hyde Park*, the female figure in *Love and Charity*, although attired in the universal white dress that symbolised evangelicalism, is not the distributor of alms. Instead the female’s suitor provides the alms and thus protects her from the harsh realities of poverty. The nature of subservience in Morland and Wheatley’s paintings and the focus of the actual act of alms-giving from one person to another was reflective of the period. However, in Spilsbury Taylor’s work in England, alms-giving and philanthropy was depicted through women, with no male representation apparent. Practical reasons suggest that the environments inhabited by male and female painters contrasted. Spilsbury Taylor explored the theme of women involved in female dominant environments such as teaching while Wheatley drew from the patriarchal role of men in society.

In Wheatley’s *Mother and Child* (n.d) (figure 1.6), a woman pleads for alms or assistance with a young child by her side. It is difficult to assess if this piece was painted in England or Ireland, as it is currently undated. Wheatley painted in Ireland during the period 1779 to 1783, and it is possible that this work was created there or based on memories of the trip, as both the mother and child have auburn hair synonymous with usual representations of Celtic races. A landscape features in the background but also within the composition is the base of a column to the extreme right, suggesting a grand entrance to an estate house. Wheatley omits to paint the person to which the young mother is pleading, an unusual route to take in the late eighteenth century, unlike, for example, his *Love and Charity*. Wheatley’s painting resembles a portrait work as the figures take up the entire pictorial space; the young

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110 Barrell, *The dark side of the landscape*, p. 3.
woman clasping her hands, an indicator of the act of begging in the traditional religious context of early modern European painting.

While Wheatley’s *Love and Charity* conveyed the spirit of asking for benevolence, Morland’s *The Benevolent Sportsman* (1792) (figure 1.7) represented the act of receiving alms. According to Ralph Richardson, one of many of Morland’s nineteenth-century biographers, the artist completed *The Benevolent Sportsman* in a week for a Colonel Stuart at the price of seventy guineas. The *Benevolent Sportsman* features an act of benevolence towards English society’s most marginalised group, the Gypsies. A family of Gypsies is shown receiving alms; the construction of a rudimentary barrel tent to the left of the painting with cooking pots scattered in front of it suggests a nomadic lifestyle. The tent in this painting mimics others that Morland portrayed in paintings about Gypsy encampments; in particular of one on a Common. Comprising three adults and a child, these are presumably nomadic in nature and have set up camp on either a landowner’s estate or, more likely on a Common. Hampstead Heath, a Common on the boundary of London’s suburban sprawl, became a haven, at the end of the eighteenth century for the ‘displaced and impoverished poor’. This painting encapsulated the moral attitude of the wealthier classes in the Georgian period in England and the complex issues relating to vagrancy. The work could be described as a collision between two very different classes where the gentleman with money and power decides that these homeless Gypsies are indeed entitled to his pity and charity. The sportsman has not contended their camp on his estate, if it is his land, and further assistance is given through alms handed down to a young male Gypsy. In this work Morland portrayed the narrative of the giving of alms rather than the plea, which was the more traditional image of early modern European painting.

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113 Morland painted a series of works based on Gypsies camping within the landscape for example *Gipsies* (c.1800), oil on canvas, 35.5 x 47cm, the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg and *Gypsies on a Common* (1789), 51 x 65 cm, private collection, reproduced in Marian Kamlish, *George Morland: a London artist in eighteenth-century Camden* (London, 2008), p. 52. In the latter painting there are two barrel shaped tents, a cooking pot hanging over a campfire and a woman placing laundry to dry on bushes near the camp. Another reference to a barrel shaped tent with a family group of Gypsies along with a cart and campfire is illustrated in William Mulready, *Gipsy Encampment* (1810), oil on canvas, 31.8 x 40.6 cm, NGI.
Morland’s life was dogged by ill health and financial problems. He came from a wealthy family and created his own successful painting career but ended up an alcoholic with crippling debts.\textsuperscript{116} His short but prolific career produced, according to John Barrell, as many as 4,000 paintings and drawings.\textsuperscript{117} In terms of patrons and consumers there was a huge contrast between Morland and Spilsbury Taylor. The latter built up good relations with the upper classes, including royalty, whereas Morland, despite being of barony stock himself\textsuperscript{118}, despised the upper echelons of society and fraternised instead with peasants and Gypsies.\textsuperscript{119} He loathed having to bend to the will of his patrons and became one of the first English artists to deal with an agent or gallery directly rather than the client.\textsuperscript{120} This gave Morland complete control over content, size and other relevant concerns with his work. Because of this freedom, Morland’s rural paintings were known to have disturbed his contemporary public, in that the peasants shown were not as industrious as had been previously presented for example by Gainsborough.\textsuperscript{121} In \textit{The Benevolent Sportsman}, these idle poor, the Gypsies, are given alms freely. Despite Morland’s negative attitude towards the wealthy class, in this painting he placed the alms-giver at a higher level to the nomads.

In contrast, Spilsbury Taylor’s wealthy patrons were important to her and she travelled to Ireland with her family to stay with the Tighes of Rossana in 1813. Ruth Young suggests that John Taylor’s ill health was the primary reason why the family moved to Ireland, but also because the Tighe family wanted to renew their old friendship with the artist,\textsuperscript{122} a relationship which began when the artist was a child. In 1789 Jonathan Spilsbury had been invited to become an art tutor to Tighe’s children. The Spilsbury family moved sporadically from the Woodstock estate in County Kilkenny to the Rossana estate in County Wicklow accompanying the Tighe children, Elizabeth (1774-1857), Caroline (1777-1861) and William (1788-1816). Tighe was unusual in that she had both her son and daughters educated. She is known to have followed the writings of Rousseau’s \textit{Emile} and followed its main ethos of the importance of the emotional role of the mother in child rearing and

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 94.
\textsuperscript{117} Barrell, \textit{The dark side of the landscape}, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{118} Richardson, \textit{George Morland, painter, London}, p. 11. According to Richardson, Morland was heir to the baronetcy of Morland of Sulhamstead Banister.
\textsuperscript{119} Barrell, \textit{The dark side of the landscape}, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p. 95.
\textsuperscript{121} Barrell, \textit{The dark side of the landscape}, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{122} Young, \textit{Father and daughter}, p. 32.
child-centred education.\textsuperscript{123} Spilsbury Taylor's mother Rebecca noted the extent of poverty in close proximity to the Rossana estate during this first visit, which she found ‘disturbing’\textsuperscript{124} The artist returned to London with her parents a year later.

Whatever the reasons that drew Spilsbury Taylor and her husband to Ireland there was a ready supply of work for a portrait painter. The Act of Union in 1801 amalgamated Ireland with Britain in government legislation with the view of a united kingdom that would ‘become the heart of the empire’.\textsuperscript{125} The end of the seat of Parliament in Dublin led to dramatic change and decline for the city both culturally and socially.\textsuperscript{126} Patronage for artists was minimal and the city became a cultural abyss forcing artists to exhibit or leave permanently for London.\textsuperscript{127} The only sustaining form of art was portraiture. The subsequent years that Spilsbury Taylor spent in Ireland represented a formative period in the development of the artist’s relationship with her patron.

Tighe’s support of Spilsbury Taylor was unusual, for as stated by Andrew Hemingway, the English landed gentry did not feel inclined to use their wealth or power to contribute financial and emotional support to artists.\textsuperscript{128} Hemingway claimed that in contrast to France, there was very little state support for painting from public funds in Britain; although George IV emerged as an important patron.\textsuperscript{129} Lack of support for artists was more precarious in Ireland, although in Spilsbury Taylor’s case the shared links of the evangelical movement with her Irish patron helped considerably. Sarah Tighe (nee Downes) married William Tighe in 1765. She was an ardent follower of the Methodist movement in Ireland, which by the early nineteenth century, had grown rapidly in popularity. The success of the spread of Methodism was based on itinerant preachers, outdoor service, hymn-singing and spiritual discipline.\textsuperscript{130} The role of women was particularly important in the establishment of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[123] Yeldham, \textit{Maria Spilsbury}, p. 24.
\item[125] For a concise study of the act of union in Ireland and its establishment in legislation see Patrick M. Geoghegan, \textit{The Irish act of union: a study in high politics, 1798-1801} (Dublin, 2001).
\item[128] Andrew Hemingway, \textit{Landscape imagery and urban culture in early nineteenth-century Britain} (Cambridge, 1992), p. 35.
\item[129] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Methodism where older single or widowed women who would not have had family duties brought the teachings to remote parts of the country.  

The Rossana estate in Ashford in the county of Wicklow was roughly 3,500 acres, having been amassed through marriages and other business endeavours from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century. The house itself was built in the early eighteenth century and was a three-storey brick house that was later altered by the Tighe family. Mary Delany (1700-1788), after a visit to Rossana, describes a river that ran through the estate and admiringly took note of the fine gardens, trees and views of the surrounding countryside. Extensive planting of trees on the estate was of exotic species, including large Spanish chestnuts. Spilsbury Taylor made many notes of the grounds of the estate in her sketchbooks and the grand trees provide dramatic backdrops for her oil paintings. The drawings and subsequent paintings that emerge from Spilsbury Taylor’s observations during her stay on the Rossana estate provide an invaluable understanding into the working practices of a female painter.

Spilsbury Taylor was first and foremost a portrait painter. Commissions for portraits were her family’s main income, so in the portraits she rigidly followed formulaic rules of presentation for prestigious sitters. According to Yeldham, women exhibited ‘more portraits at exhibitions of the Royal Academy than any other class of work’, as portraiture was considered suitable for women’s earthly talents like intuition, sympathy and ‘insight into character’. Tighe commissioned a group portrait of herself and her two grandchildren. In Portrait of Sarah Tighe (Portraits of a Lady of Distinction and Two of her Grandsons) (1814) (figure 1.8) Tighe is dressed in black, marking her place in society as a widow. Yeldham claimed that heroine worship evolved after the 1830s in the work of female painters where ‘ordinary female experiences … such as love and maternity … mourning’ were elevated and revered as subjects for paintings. The austere background showing a classical

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131 Ibid., p. 121.
132 The Tighe papers (MSS 29, 634-83) in the NLI holds records for the estate from 1832-1941.
fireplace and an antiquity bust are softened with the juxtaposition of the innocence of the young children. Their delicate skin tone and rosy cheeks contrast sharply with the surrounding brown tones of the background and the dark colours of their grandmother’s clothing. One of the children plays on the floor with a toy while the other leans into the lap of its grandmother who affectionately holds the child’s hand. The skills that Spilsbury Taylor acquired as a portrait painter enabled her to compose a successful painting that encapsulated both the power and gentleness of Tighe, in her roles as both landowner and matriarch.

During her time in Ireland, Spilsbury Taylor consistently worked in sketchbooks. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was common practice for ladies of the landed gentry to record their memories and experiences through writing in the form of letters and diaries, but also visually in sketchbooks and notebooks. But unlike the leisurely pastime of art for women of the upper classes, Spilsbury Taylor was a professional middle class painter and her sketchbooks were a reflection of this and a vital source of ideas for her paintings. The sketchbooks showcase sharp observations of class difference and an insight into an artist's practice, particularly a female painter working in a male dominated world. Her drawings describe life in early nineteenth-century society in Ireland, not only of the poor and also of her own place within the everyday workings of a landed estate. They give a personal account of the upper classes working with the poor through philanthropy and education. Her detailed figurative character studies also offer a further layer of explanation for some of her oil paintings.

Philanthropy gave upper class women the rare opportunity to fulfil a public role and this aspect of their lives was referenced in Spilsbury Taylor’s drawings. In many of the drawings women either teach or look after a group of children. As was often the case, the relationship between tenants and the landlord were recorded, but the majority of work carried out within the locality with the destitute poor went unrecorded. Amanda Vickery highlights this issue when she researched Mrs Elizabeth Shackleton (1726-81), a woman of the landed gentry who resided in the North of England and who was enthusiastically involved in the day-to-day dealings of her immediate neighbourhood. Many of her encounters were with servants, tenants, farmers and workers yet her meetings with the poor or marginalised

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138 Measurements and sizes of the sketchbooks vary and are listed in the bibliography.
appeared to have gone unrecorded. Similar to Tighe, women philanthropists in Ireland in the nineteenth century ‘responded to the extent of poverty in Ireland by instituting various types of charitable organisations which catered for the poor at all levels’.

The artist’s work was often not dated, which has made it difficult to put it into chronological order. Spilsbury Taylor and her husband spent their first four years in Ireland at Rossana from 1813 to 1817 and for the remaining three years they resided in a Dublin townhouse owned by Tighe. In the artist’s sketchbook, each drawing responded to a subject differently. Some were captured quickly with a few lines suggesting a fleeting idea or moment that needed to be remembered. While other drawings convey more detail with concentrated efforts in shading, textures and composition. Spilsbury Taylor recorded life in daily routines including labourers gathering firewood, tarring boats or children playing within hay stacks in front of the Willybank cottage as demonstrated in the sketch Willybank, Rossana (figure 1.9). Acts of charity are also represented; in another drawing a female member of the Tighe family visits a small cottage on the estate and hands alms to a group of children. In the drawing Murragh Cottage (figure 1.10) the cottage appears to be a cottier’s house with one window beside the door in the front elevation. The two drawings offer different types of cottages on the estate; the Willybank cottage was the Tighe family retreat on the estate and the smaller thatched cottage would have belonged to a tenant. In Murragh Cottage, she includes a pony and trap to the left of the building. The animals in the foreground suggest rich grazing land and the cottage appears well maintained and devoid of the squalor often referred to by nineteenth-century travel writers. This drawing is evidence of Tighe as an improving landlord with a well-managed and pristine estate.

Sketching outdoors at the beginning of the nineteenth century was associated with the male artist and the prestige of the Grand Tour in Europe. Richard Sha points out that the artist worked from the subject of the landscape in situ which meant he was a ‘tourist’ and the art produced from this experience was ‘the sensations of

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taking real property’ in particular if the landscape was part of a colony.\footnote{Richard Sha, ‘The power of the English nineteenth-century visual and verbal sketch: appropriation, discipline, mastery’ in \textit{Nineteenth-century contexts}, xxiv (2002), p. 73.} Drawings that depicted the landscape of a foreign country were, in effect, acts of ‘appropriation and enclosure’ where the artist laid claim to a picturesque view outside of his/her native country.\footnote{Ibid. The author refers to many books on the art of drawing and sketching that were published in the early nineteenth century including Samuel Prout, \textit{A series of lessons in landscape drawing} (London, 1820).} As Richard Sha stated, sketching ‘plein-air’ ‘reduced real landscapes and real people to the status of picturesque objects’.\footnote{Sha, ‘The power of the English nineteenth-century visual and verbal sketch’, p. 73.} Spilsbury Taylor’s drawings in her sketchbooks reiterate this idea, as the tenants’ homes appear in good condition and were drawn as a measure of their ‘quaintness’ to the artist. The sketch is by nature, quick, and the true skill of a good draughtsman is to put down in a few lines exactly what it was that first initiated interest in the subject. In Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks, some of the drawings are finished pieces, while others are progressed further and end up as a finished oil painting.

Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks are an intimate insight into a female artist’s own interpretation of an environment that contrasted greatly with her urban roots. The drawings indicate both rich and poor subjects, inferring a desire on the part of the artist to take in a diverse and alien culture and landscape. For instance, the artist was intrigued not only by the poor tenants who lived on the estate but also people who lived on the margins, including homeless beggars. These sketchbooks were only to serve as a source for the artist's own work, and their private nature must be considered when using them in contemporary research. The oil paintings that came from these initial sketches and drawings were for public consumption.

Agricultural improvement was at the forefront for Tighe when she invested money in new methods of ploughing on her 300-acre model farm.\footnote{O’ Donnell, \textit{The Rebellion in Wicklow}, p. 21.} She set up cottage industries on her estate in Kilkenny to help tenants to increase their earnings and initiatives were facilitated for women and young girls. Spilsbury Taylor depicts three young girls making lace in the kitchen of a small cottage (figure 1.11). Claudia Kinmonth states that the sketch is probably a description of a cottage orné. The lace that the young girls are making in the sketch was bound for the luxury market and so this home industry encouraged householders to improve standards of cleanliness to
ensure that the lace was kept white. The girl’s hair is cut very short, which appears severe and out of place as hair was often a symbol of the feminine beauty of women in portraiture. In this case, it is more of a comment on hygiene concerns and was a common way to keep control of head lice infestation. Spilsbury Taylor’s eye for this detail proves that her drawings were accurate in observational sense. Written in pencil at the bottom of the sketch are the names Mary Cashion, Ellis Mollone and Catherine Cody. The written names and a desire to record them show that Spilsbury Taylor personally knew the girls and this also directly places the artist in the room.

Lace making was initially encouraged by patronage and philanthropy in order to boost the income of poor tenants. Lace making in Ireland reflected a nineteenth-century obsession in England with this tradition. It was synonymous with national pride. Historical associations of lace making were linked to the idealization of women and their place in the home, as this drawing so evidently portrays. Making lace, a traditional cottage industry, was symbolic of a pre-industrial age and was in direct opposition to its associated ‘evils’ including urbanisation. Interiors of the cottages belonging to the tenants were also tackled by Spilsbury Taylor including a drawing of a fireside (figure 1.12) that spans two pages of her sketchbook. The drawing consists of a cottage interior, with the focus on one wall that includes a fireplace and a door. Seated in the space are two females and a young child. The artist paid attention to small details in the drawing by including a jacket and a fishing rod that hang on the wall. While the tenants are portrayed as poor in the drawing, they appear contented and, similar to the exterior drawing of Murragh cottage; the interior is neat and well furnished. This drawing shows the ease of movement that Spilsbury Taylor had within the estate and access and entitlement to go from the Rossana house into a small tenant’s cottage. Spilsbury Taylor’s movements also reflected the control Tighe had over her tenants.

Spilsbury Taylor visually recorded the duty of care practised by wealthy families towards the Irish tenants through their charity but also in religious instruction. While men preached the gospels and its teachings, it was the women who provided philanthropic services that provided for the poor and outcast, which was,

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147 Ibid.
according to Maria Luddy, fuelled by a ‘moral and spiritual right’. Tighe was known for her ‘charitable and educational initiatives’. She was considered a fair and generous landowner, and viewed education as a valuable and necessary tool for both male and female children. Tighe strove to educate her tenants both practically and spiritually, and organised mass meetings with visiting religious leaders including the founder of the Methodist Movement John Wesley (1703-91). Wesley had previously preached to Tighe’s tenants on the Rossana estate in 1789, and Spilsbury Taylor was commissioned by Tighe to capture the very mood of this gathering in a painting in 1815 entitled *John Wesley Preaching in the Open Air at Willybank, on the Estate of William Tighe* (figure 1.13). In her journal in 1789, the renowned writer Mary Tighe, daughter in law of Tighe, wrote about having breakfast with Wesley in Gardiner’s Row in Dublin. Amongst other discussions she described Wesley’s attitude to beggars, where she claimed ‘his words were all tenderness & compassion’. Wesley’s visits to Ireland were of considerable importance, which were referenced by other contemporary artists in their work.

Wesley stands on a stone seat that encircles a large tree and preaches to a group of men, women and children. The setting for the sermon is in front of the Willybank cottage, which is placed to the far right of the painting. According to Yeldham, the audience consists of servants, estate workers and John Taylor and his children. Many of the figures who stand directly in front of Wesley clasp their hands in devotion but the figures who stand further away appear to be indifferent. The proportion of Wesley's figure is small when compared to the standing group placed directly in front of him. The title of the painting does not allude to Tighe’s organisation of this sermon on her husband’s estate. Tighe was involved in many charitable and educational initiatives, which left her in considerable annual debt.

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151 John Wesley (1703-1791), a preacher and theologian and founder of the Methodist Movement in England. Wesley organized visiting societies by the mid-eighteenth century, where the aim was to relieve but also ‘cleanse’ the homes of the English poor. Frank Prochaska, *Women and philanthropy in the nineteenth century* (Oxford, 1980), p. 98.
153 For example Giuseppe Bortignon’s (1778-1860) print of Richard Westall’s (1765-1836) *Irish Peasants* (1803), stipple etching, 39.4 x 43.4cm, The British Museum. The painting shows Wesley preaching to a group of women and children in front of a cottage door. The print was published in London in 1803.
154 Yeldham, *Maria Spilsbury*, p. 149.
In 1788, she initiated the building of an almshouse for widows in Inistigoe, county Kilkenny, the village of their Woodstock estate. Philanthropy in Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century was intertwined with both Catholic and Protestant run institutions and in some cases upper class women were involved in the management. The greater part of this female-driven charity was aimed towards widows and outcasts of society including prostitutes and female ex-prisoners. According to Luddy this type of benevolence was in the form of visitation to the poor on the estates, the establishment of schools for the tenants’ children and the dispensing of advice on household matters to cottagers.

According to Vickery ‘domestic virtue’ in historical terms was the attempt by women ‘to justify their efforts at moral reformation both within the family and outside the home’. In Spilsbury Taylor’s early paintings executed in England, upper class women are represented teaching young children to sing or read and by doing this she represented women working outside of their domestic environment. More importantly, in Ireland, Spilsbury Taylor and Tighe’s relationship was one of support, both financial and emotional, which became a crucial part of the relationship. Spilsbury Taylor’s paintings and sketchbook drawings carried out within the estates of Tighe provide a record of an existence that highlights a dominant female presence but also of a domestic role that would otherwise have gone unrepresented. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg states ‘women’s sphere had an essential integrity and dignity that grew out of women’s shared experiences and mutual affection …women lived within a world bounded by home, church and the institution of visiting … it was a world inhabited by children and by other women’. The sketchbook drawings, in particular, highlight this nuance of female dynamics within the Tighe estate.

158 Ibid., pp 21-2.
Spilsbury Taylor visited the Roundwood estate near Rossana, and documented a school set up for the tenants’ children by the landlord John Synge,\footnote{For history of the Synge landowning family in County Wicklow see W. J. McCormack, \textit{The silence of Barbara Synge} (Manchester, 2003).} which taught using the Pestalozzi method. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) a Swiss educational reformer, believed in the importance of the child learning the basics of education through reading, writing and remembering facts but he advocated the development of the child’s individual capacity to think and problem-solve on their own initiative.\footnote{Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, ‘Letters on early education, addressed to J. P Greaves, translated from the German manuscript, London, 1827’ published in \textit{The Science News-Letter}, xv, no. 411 (1929), p. 121.} Synge met the educationalist in Switzerland in 1814.\footnote{McCormack, \textit{The silence of Barbara Synge}, p. 125.} A drawing in one of Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks of the Pestalozzi school was later turned into a watercolour entitled \textit{Pestalozzi School founded by Mr. Synge} (c.1814-19) (figure 1.14), currently in a private collection.\footnote{Maria Spilsbury Taylor, ‘Sketch of Pestalozzi School’, sketchbook (19, 428), Department of Prints and Drawings, NGI.} The children in the painting appear calm and contented in the classroom, with a sense of quiet industry. Both the sketch and the painting highlight issues such as the role of religion in the running of schools in Ireland. This image is of a light and airy space, which would have been in contrast with the fashion of representations of education that included punishment and discipline during this period.\footnote{For example William Mulready, \textit{Idle Boys} (1815), oil on panel, 78.8 x 66.6cm, private collection.}

Another sketch entitled \textit{Dispensary Lane School} (figure 1.15) evolved into an oval shaped painting (whereabouts unknown), which was sent to George IV as Spilsbury Taylor’s first Irish subject painting.\footnote{Yeldham, ‘A regency artist in Ireland’, pp 204-5.} As stated earlier, the artist enjoyed the patronage of George IV in her early career and while in Ireland continued to receive commissions from him.\footnote{Young, \textit{Father and daughter}, p.31. Young states that the prince Regent occasionally stopped by to visit her in her studio.} The sketch refers to a school set up in Dublin by Spilsbury Taylor’s husband and Miss Isabella Hamilton. As Luddy claimed, the urban areas were the most established for childcare work and the elements at the core of this philanthropy were education and protection.\footnote{Luddy, \textit{Women and philanthropy}, p. 71.}
The drawing itself has two types of children in the composition and is a moral tale around the benefits of education. In the centre stands a young girl holding the hands of two younger children who are well dressed with hats and shoes. They are each carrying a small bag, while she carries a book. A woman on the far right gives alms into the hand of a child with tattered clothes, who is in turn standing next to a smaller crying child. The woman points to two other children on the far left of the sketch that are in ragged clothes and are brawling. This sketch points to the positive contribution of the philanthropic wealthy woman and the importance of a moral education to reform the darker side of the human character.

In England the education of poor children became a pressing issue, as the handicraft industry, which had absorbed them, began to decline with the onslaught of the industrial revolution. The influx of families moving to urban areas also resulted in large numbers of unsupervised children roaming the streets.\(^\text{170}\) In the Irish context, charity schools were set up to cater for poor children, but as these had little regulation over them, many became short lived.\(^\text{171}\) The main established form of education was through charter schools which were set up between the years 1730 to 1830 in an attempt to create the antidote to Popery, to improve the habits of the population and finally to ‘inculcate right thinking and loyalty’.\(^\text{172}\) While the improving male landlord was usually on the board to set up a charity, it was often the women who offered their actual time for philanthropic endeavours, and who found themselves out of the safety of their social circles and working in the more squalid and dangerous areas of town and cities.\(^\text{173}\)

Luddy asserts that since ‘women could not partake fully in public life their one area of power lay within the institution of the family’\(^\text{174}\) and in Spilsbury Taylor’s paintings and portraits of the Tighes and other landed families, this is clearly communicated. The extension of this female dominated power from the domestic to the public domain was created through the establishment of orphanages, poor schools and refuges.\(^\text{175}\) In 1790 in Dublin, Mrs Tighe and a Mrs Este set up the Female Orphan House, a Protestant orphanage, that was designed to cater for young

\(^{171}\) Luddy, *Women and philanthropy*, p. 73.
\(^{173}\) Vickery, *The gentleman’s daughter*, p. 277.
\(^{175}\) Ibid.
girls between the ages of five and ten where they were clothed, given a proper diet, lodged and taught the basics of reading, writing, math and religious instruction.  

Spilsbury Taylor's *Pattern at Glendalough* (1816) (figure 1.16) was commissioned by George IV after he received the *Sunday School* painting. For this commission he requested a larger canvas depicting Irish ‘manners’ and Spilsbury Taylor decided on a crowd scene of the pattern at Glendalough. The reasons behind Spilsbury Taylor’s choice of subject for the commissioned painting are unclear; however, the pattern provided source material that contained references to Irish rural practices. According to Young, Customs Officers who were shipping the work to the Royal Court in London were so impressed by it that they demanded a duplicate of the painting. In the following section, two paintings out of a series of three on the theme of this pattern are examined. The paintings, *Pattern at Glendalough* and *Patron day at the Seven Churches Glendalough*, both produced in 1816, reference observations from her sketchbook but they also show the inter-relationship between rich and poor within Irish rural society. A painting of this pattern had been undertaken three years earlier by the Irish artist Joseph Peacock (1783-1837) entitled *The Patron or Festival of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches of Glendalough* (c.1813).  

*Pattern at Glendalough* represents an Irish custom that was not within the boundaries of the Rossana estate. Instead, the setting for the painting was not only a site of religious significance for the Irish rural community but was also a tourist destination in the early nineteenth century. Glendalough was a priority location for religious gatherings but also for antiquarians and artists alike. A pattern was different from a fair in that it was a fixed annual event that celebrated the day of the local patron saint with ‘acts of devotion’. The traditional relationship between the saint and the particular area held great significance and the shrines not only represented boundaries but also ‘the boundaries between one settled territory and the other, or

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176 Luddy, *Women and philanthropy*, p. 76.
177 Young, *Father and daughter*, p. 33.
178 The third painting is in the NGI’s permanent collection and is on a waiting list for restoration. Maria Spilsbury Taylor, *Patron's Day at the Seven Churches, Glendalough* (c.1816), oil on canvas, 106.5 x 128.5cm.
179 Joseph Peacock, *The Patron or festival of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches of Glendalough*, c.1813, oil on canvas, 219.5 x 350 cm, Ulster Museum.
180 For an historical background on the pattern see W.H. Crawford, ‘The patron or festival of St. Kevin the seven churches, Glendalough, county Wicklow 1813’ in *Ulster Folklife*, xxxii (1986), pp 37-47.
between cultivated and uncultivated land.\textsuperscript{181} A monument or holy well usually symbolized the saint's cult, in any sacred place within Ireland.

The attendance of Spilsbury Taylor, or indeed any woman, at a pattern appears unusual, particularly for a woman with strong religious beliefs. Letitia Bushe (c.1705-57), an earlier Anglican landowner had written about the idea of attending an annual gathering at St. John’s Well in County Meath in 1740 but decided against it due to ‘drinking & other wickedness’s succeed their penance’ and where she felt that ‘these patterns & other Popish ceremonys, have a great resemblance to Heathen worship’.\textsuperscript{182} The pattern was often a scene of faction fighting and drunkenness and many were banned by the Catholic clergy.\textsuperscript{183} Bushe’s apparent anxiety over the gathering does not translate in Spilsbury Taylor’s paintings of Glendalough.

The painting depicts stalls with people selling a variety of wares and manning refreshment tents. In the fore and middle ground, the attendees of the pattern, along with the stalls, are dispersed in front of the round tower. Both of Spilsbury Taylor’s paintings of the pattern have been discussed at length by authors, in particular, in social and historical context.\textsuperscript{184} However, both examples of Spilsbury Taylor’s pattern paintings are cited here because they depict acts of benevolence. For example, in \textit{Pattern at Glendalough} Spilsbury Taylor placed a female figure, dressed in fashionable blue and white clothing, giving alms to a young boy (figure 1.17). The triangle composition positions the woman and the child beggar at the centre of the painting. Even though the figures are small, they are pivotal to the reading of the narrative. Again the viewer is reminded of the corner stone of the artist’s religious and social beliefs but also the importance of the female benefactor, even at a social event like the pattern.

In the second painting, \textit{Patron’s Day at the Seven Churches Glendalough} (figure 1.18) which is in private collection, some of the figures are duplicated from the first painting. Similarly, there is a noticeably strong female presence. Spilsbury Taylor claimed the space of the pattern and reinterpreted it as a feminine space through her use of women and children in the paintings. In \textit{Patron’s Day at the Seven Churches Glendalough}.


\textsuperscript{183} Ó Giolláin, ‘The Pattern’, p. 204.

Churches, Glendalough, to the right of the composition a wealthy family instructs their young son to give alms to a male beggar (figure 1.19). This representation mimics the moral narrative of *The Drinking Well in Hyde Park* (figure 1.2) completed in London sixteen years earlier. Both paintings explore the theme of the young being encouraged or taught to give to the poor by a mother figure. This small group of people, in particular the male beggar, also provides proof of the importance of her sketchbooks and that she placed characters in her group scenes that were at times people she observed in her daily routine.

The male beggar who receives the alms from the young child in *Patron's Day at the Seven Churches Glendalough* was observed by Spilsbury Taylor in her sketchbook. The sketchbook entry consists of two drawings of the same beggar on the one page, showing a front and side profile. The beggar carries a bag on his back and a smaller one around his chest along with a walking stick. In the drawing, the artist made notes of his clothing inscribing on the bottom of the drawing: ‘dark blue coat, light brown … cap with a blue band’. In the drawing, it appears as if the beggar is wearing bandages on his head as he holds his top hat in his hand. This page was torn in the sketchbook and due to its delicate condition a photographic reproduction was not permitted.

The Irish beggar intrigued Spilsbury Taylor. Another example of a beggar in her sketchbook was a named individual. *Silvester Mackdoniel, an Irishbeggar Man* (figure 1.20) is a detailed observational drawing, where Spilsbury Taylor listed the type of garments he wore. Other notes about colour include ‘red brown cloak, grey coat, … waistcoat, stockings, sleeves, w shirt’. In the drawing, Spilsbury Taylor observed the posture and stance of the beggar as he leans on his walking stick and holds his hat in his hands. The composition of the drawing is effective, as the beggar is placed to the extreme left of the page. There is no background to this figure, similar to the other beggar, so it is unclear whether Spilsbury Taylor witnessed them at the pattern or if they ventured into Rossana seeking alms. This drawing is not a quick sketch for memory’s sake. It is clear that Silvester, as a subject, held Spilsbury Taylor’s interest in a way that far surpassed any other character within the sketchbook and within her social circles.

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185 Drawing is in sketchbook (19, 431), Department of Prints and Drawings, NGI.
In a contemporary book on sketching from nature published in 1823, John Hassell highlighted the importance of representing the poor in a very simple manner where ‘the same plain ornamented dress should accompany your figures; the wild Irish peasant is, in a picturesque light the very acme of perfection: it is the same with the Welsh peasantry’. The poor, in effect, were props within a landscape and real attention to them as a social class was not encouraged in drawing. Spilsbury Taylor’s drawing of Silvester Mackdoniel is an exception to this rule. The sheer extent of detail that Spilsbury Taylor lavished on this drawing, the accompanying notes and the strong sense of personality and character that is conveyed defied what was advised in nineteenth-century drawing books. Spilsbury Taylor’s drawings of these Irish beggars were unusual subject matter for a female painter who mainly dealt in family portraits of the upper classes.

In the painting Pattern at Glendalough, George IV received a fictional composition that was laced with religious symbolism. Nonetheless the painting also contained snippets of social realism in the form of the professional beggars. By emphasizing the female and the family element within the work the pattern was neutralized and properly constructed for a regal English audience. As Yeldham stated, the representation of women in Spilsbury Taylor’s work ‘appear as guardians and nurturers of morality’ but also on another level they challenged ‘existing hierarchies’. In effect, Spilsbury Taylor was a mediator between the ‘wild’ Irish poor and the ‘civilized’ consumer of her work. This mediation becomes more apparent as she included herself drawing the scene on the extreme left of the painting Patron’s Day at the Seven Churches Glendalough. Spilsbury Taylor wanted to verify that this was painted by a woman.

Spilsbury Taylor contrasted with her contemporaries, Morland and Wheatley, in that religious Enlightenment and the role of the female as educator and alms giver held far greater importance to her than documenting the actual deliverance of benevolence or philanthropy. In Morland’s The Squire’s Door and The Benevolent Sportsman, the context of charity is about duty of care by the rich towards the poor. In Wheatley’s Mother and Child and Love and Charity the reference to benevolence was sourced from contemporary culture such as plays, and his images are the

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187 Yeldham, Maria Spilsbury, p. 5.
recognition of charity in the cultural context. The work of Morland and Wheatley was the foundation for images of benevolence that Spilsbury Taylor built on. Spilsbury Taylor codified philanthropy and charity that Tighe and other Irish landowners created in the Irish context, a further development from what she was producing in London.

If she was restricted in portrait painting, she was free to express her own interests in her sketchbooks and genre paintings. These reveal deeper thoughts and ideas on the notion of identity, primarily on the people she observed in and around the Rossana estate, but also of her own place within society. Spilsbury Taylor was not only an outside observer from England, she was also seeing the tenants through the eyes of an evangelical. She brought with her a heavily spiritual and enlightened perspective arising from her London-based experiences, which she then translated into an Irish context. As an artist, Spilsbury Taylor looked at the holistic role of charity between women philanthropists and the poor.

Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks are evidence of a link that visually connected the vast chasm between rich and poor in early nineteenth-century Irish society and are further evidence of social interaction and observation. These professional sketchbooks of a working female painter are important archival evidence of how the middle and upper English classes perceived the Irish poor in the early nineteenth century. What emerges from Spilsbury Taylor's work are the perceptions of the Irish poor as being unique and different to the English poor and what is communicated is the desire to educate and reform them through religious conversion and instruction. In her paintings and sketchbooks, these aspirations are presented as having been successfully achieved. Finally, the Irish beggar emerges from Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks as the ultimate figure of difference between the Irish and English poor and, as argued in the following chapter, their place in Irish art was conflicted and ideological.
Chapter 2 ‘Very near to God’\textsuperscript{188} : the Irish beggar in art.

This chapter examines how the Irish beggar was visually interpreted in drawing by Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1740-1808) and in painting by Thomas Roberts (1748-77), George Grattan (1787-1819) and Daniel Maclise (1806-70). It argues that representations of beggars by these artists, though few in relation to the chronic poverty Ireland suffered prior to the introduction of the poor law and the Famine, differed in content and context from 1760 to 1834. The beggar was placed into an Irish framework that had its roots in sixteenth-century European images of poverty.\textsuperscript{189} This chapter links what Robert Jutte and Tom Nichols identified as early modern European trends of a specific visual language used to depict beggars, consisting of recognizable symbols and iconography.\textsuperscript{190} While religion heavily influenced the production and reception of beggar imagery in sixteenth-century Europe, in Ireland social and cultural ideologies affected the portrayal of the Irish beggar. The most significant evidence for this was the reluctance of Irish artists to create artworks based on the poor, even though Ireland as a country had high numbers of beggars.\textsuperscript{191}

This chapter argues that the representations of beggars in the Irish context went through a transformative process that was heavily influenced by trends in European art but was also dictated by an English market. An example of the effects of European trends and English markets is in evidence in the work of Irish painter Hugh Douglas Hamilton. Hamilton moved to London in 1764, from there worked and lived in Italy for twelve years and permanently returned to Ireland in 1792.\textsuperscript{192} In 1760, having just completed art school, he created a series of drawings based on marginal people in Dublin city, which included hawkers, streets entertainers and

\textsuperscript{188} Chapter title is based on a reference to beggars in Dublin in 1918. They were described as being closer to God than in any other city, cited in Sidney Davis, \textit{Dublin types drawn by Sidney Davis} (Dublin, 1918), p. xxiv. By showing benevolence to the poor it paved the way for the wealthy to be redeemed. Matthew 19:24 ‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God’.

\textsuperscript{189} For discussion and in-depth research on European images of beggars see Tom Nichols, \textit{The art of poverty: irony and ideal in sixteenth-century beggar imagery} (Manchester, 2007).


\textsuperscript{191} See Laurence M. Geary, “‘The whole country was in motion’: mendicancy and vagrancy in pre-Famine Ireland’ in Jacqueline Hill and Colm Lennon (eds), \textit{Luxury and austerity: historical studies}, xxi (Dublin, 1999).

beggars. These drawings were assigned to be illustrative prints, but this never materialised. The series of drawings convey a unique and honest perspective of the marginal in eighteenth-century Dublin society. When Hamilton returned to Ireland he portrayed the marginal once more but in an idealised manner that followed academic convention rather than a frank representation of the poor.193

During the eighteenth century the Irish rural and urban poor were feared by the classes who could afford to commission or buy paintings.194 The distribution of alms in Ireland had its roots in a wider European context of ‘deserving and undeserving’ poor.195 The ‘undeserving’ were described as being ‘the tough vagrant with little intention of getting a job and ready to turn to crime when necessary’ while the ‘deserving’ were ‘the relatively well-meaning destitute searching for the means of subsistence while suffering incapacity from age, disablement or general inadequacy’.196 The section of society that escaped judgement where benevolence was concerned was the sick and infirm. In the eighteenth century their condition was especially appealing for alms giving.197

Hamilton’s drawings include four beggars. They vary in age, gender and disability, with three male figures and one female. The male beggars are deserving poor in that they are depicted as being sick or crippled. Hamilton’s beggars are unique as some of them were based on real people who begged in the city, and reference to these characters exists in contemporary writing.198 The traditional European visual concept of the beggar, which was portrayed as visible, crippled and overtly looking for alms, was echoed in Hamilton’s A Cripple Beggar (figure 2.1). A young male amputee sits on a circular seat, on which he drags himself along with the aid of two wooden handles; he holds one in his left hand and the other is placed on

196 Robert Humphreys, No fixed abode: a history of responses to the roofless and rootless in Britain (London, 1999), p. 87.
198 For example reference to Dublin’s beggar’s in the humorous pamphlet, Anonymous, The beggars (of St. Mary’s parish) address, to their worthy representative, Hackball, president of that antient and numerous society; and a list of the toasts drank ...on Monday the 11th of February, 1754, at the Cows-Head in Liffey-street (Dublin?, 1754?).
the ground. These beggars were observed during a period in Dublin’s history that was on the cusp of major structural change not experienced since its medieval beginnings.\textsuperscript{199} This chapter argues that an examination of these beggar figures can offer a clearer understanding of how the marginal existed and functioned within the urban space.

Hamilton’s drawings are in contrast to the marginal figure placed within the rural landscape, such as can be seen in Thomas Roberts’ oil painting \textit{A Frost Piece} (c.1769) and Grattan’s painting \textit{Blind Beggar Woman and Child} (1807). The spaces that beggars occupied influenced how they were represented in art and, as this chapter will argue, were important to help differentiate between deserving and undeserving poor for the contemporary audience. Roberts’ image shows influence of the Dutch tradition in landscape painting, where figures in the composition were secondary and used for depth and scale. Roberts depicted a marginal figure that was common within Irish society. However, within the painting the marginal figure is a small part of a larger composition of figures and dramatic landscape. In contrast, Grattan created a full-length portrait of a blind beggar woman and her child, and its exhibition in 1809 created unease for the viewing public.

This chapter concludes with the political painting \textit{The Installation of Captain Rock} (1834) by Daniel Maclise. By highlighting the fashion of depicting beggars that developed from 1760 to 1834, this chapter will argue that attempts were made to create artworks based on the Irish marginal poor with a visual language and iconography that was specific to Irish culture. By referring to both drawings and oil paintings, this chapter considers the circulation and audience of the artwork and how this shaped the artist’s direction in representing the Irish beggar. For example the illustrative print published in the broadsheet format was sold to the literate middle classes and had a low commercial value in contrast to the commissioned or exhibition-based single artwork in watercolour or oil.\textsuperscript{200} The images of Irish beggars


\textsuperscript{200} Sean Shesgreen, ‘Images of the Irish underclass: the innovative continuity of Hugh Douglas Hamilton’s “Cries of Dublin”’ in Laffan, \textit{The Cries of Dublin}, p.51. Shesgreen applied this theory to the only set of published Dublin \textit{Cries} by an anonymous artist, where he found tack marks on the upper margins of the sheet. Anonymous, \textit{The Dublin Cries, or a representation of the various Cries and callings throughout the Streets, Lanes and Allies of the City and Liberties of Dublin} (c.1803), private collection.
convey shifting patterns of representation between the realism of the eighteenth century to Maclise’s literary driven *The Installation of Captain Rock* in 1834.

Irish images of begging have clear links to the European tradition. In the middle ages, religious orders, in particular the Franciscans, preached that ‘beggars were holy, and that the holy should live as beggars’, which led to a flourish of charity giving to the poor. However, this charitable fervour came to an end in the later part of the fifteenth century in Europe. The undesirable elements of vagrancy, including begging, was linked to social disobedience and this conflicted with the stylised ‘deserving poor’ associated with religious virtue. Despite this clash, however, images of beggars still proliferated throughout the sixteenth century. According to Nichols, the wandering figure often appeared in ‘guilty self-awareness’ and was represented in a realistic manner in paintings and altarpieces. This manner of representation offered the contemporary viewer an indication that the vagrant was an ‘archetype of human depravity’. In some cases the placement of the poor figure within the outer wings of an altarpiece alluded to his closer connection with the world of the common man rather than to God. In the ‘low art’ market of woodcuts, broadsheets and illustrated books the commercial world provided for the heavy demand for beggar imagery. In these works the beggar was often depicted as a cripple or with some physical deformity in the fifteenth century but by the sixteenth century he or she was defined by pitiful gestures and a ‘subordinate composure’.

Strong evidence emerges from sixteenth-century images of beggars of attempts to convey differences between the honest beggar and the ‘undeserving’. In a painting by Pieter Bruegel the elder (c.1525-1569) entitled *The Beggars* (figure 2.2), five beggars are portrayed severely crippled with amputated legs. In this work Bruegel painted a group of lepers as they enter Antwerp in order to beg on Copper Monday. A woman in the right background holds a begging bowl. Even though the figures are disabled, the small painting was a commentary on false beggars and Bruegel symbolised their cunning status by illustrating foxes’ tails pinned to the clothes of four of the figures.

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205 Nichols, *The art of poverty*, p. 73.
206 Ibid.
Bruegel’s comic characterizations of the beggars’ faces convey little admiration or sympathy. The artist created a sense of detachment from the scene through the means of comic method. Svetlana Alpers states that Bruegel used this form of representation of the Flemish peasant as a means of posing questions rather than ‘imposing judgement’. The beggars are in front of the town’s walls and placing them in this context represents their exclusion from sedentary life. Given the fact that they are lepers, they would have been alienated from society out of fear and quarantined. The connection of the spread of disease being associated with the rootless of society was a prevailing theme. For instance, in Venice in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century the iconography of Saint Roch was synonymous with the plague. Saint Roch was reputed to have been a pilgrim who treated plague victims during his journey from Montpellier to Rome but caught the disease himself and was nursed back to health by an angel. In the visual context Saint Roch is dressed in a cap and cloak of a pilgrim and reveals a plague bubo on his thigh, an important marker for the visible diagnosis of the disease. According to Philip Cottrell the imagery of Saint Roch emerged during a period of high suspicion towards vagrants. Government policies throughout Europe were put in place outlawing itinerancy in order to protect urban centres. Patrons who commissioned a votive painting that included Saint Roch, the symbol of healing, donated it to a community affected by a plague.

In the Irish context, beggars were illustrated with certain stylistic conventions taken from the European tradition. In the work of Hamilton, there are examples of Dublin beggars that reflect contemporary attitudes towards labelling the marginal in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Hamilton was an internationally-renowned artist who spent the final seventeen years of his life in Dublin where he painted neo-classical portraits and subject pictures of Irish and English elites. His drawings of Dublin’s poor were executed early in his career. In this series there are sixty-six drawings. William Laffan suggests that this substantial amount of work was too

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208 Phillip Cottrell, ‘Poor substitutes: imaging disease and vagrancy in Renaissance Venice’ in Nichols, *Others and outcasts*, p. 64.
209 Ibid.
211 Christine M. Boeckl, *Images of plague and pestilence: iconography and iconology* (Kirksville, 2000), pp 4-5.
expensive to engrave in the one lot. Currently no engravings from these drawings have emerged and this creates uncertainty about their original purpose; one theory is that Hamilton failed to find a publisher for even a small selection of the works. Eventually he had the drawings bound for his own personal use. He entitled the album of drawings *Cries of Dublin &c, drawn from the life by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, 1760.*

The popular illustrations of *Cries* in Irish and British art and culture has been researched and well documented. The *Cries* consisted of engraved portraits (placed as a single figure on a sheet or in a group of characters on the one sheet) of street hawkers with captions of their shouts or occupations underneath the image. The street sellers inspired authors, composers and artists to create works about them and they were represented, but not exclusively, in ballads, broadsheets and prints. *Cries* were produced and published in major cities including Dublin, Paris, London, Bologna, Rome, Zurich, Moscow and Philadelphia. Unlike in Ireland, England’s *Cries* sustained their popularity throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Early copies of the *Cries* in London from the seventeenth century were bound and published in the form of a small pamphlet or alternatively circulated on the one broadsheet by the publisher. Originally drawn by an artist, they were then sent to an engraver and engraved on copperplates. The distribution of *Cries* was market led as they were easy to sell by a print seller. Despite the European trend of the *Cries* being sold cheaply in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a more up market taste began in the late eighteenth century for the production of prints of itinerant traders. When Francis Wheatley created and

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214 Ibid., p. 9.
221 Ibid., pp 406-8.
exhibited his series of fourteen small oil paintings *The Cries of London* from 1792 to 1795 in the Royal Academy, they had an impact on tastes in the high art market. From these paintings, twelve were engraved and published between the years 1793 to 1797. A review of an auction of Francis Wheatley’s prints of his *Cries* series in *The Freeman’s Journal* claimed that the artist’s prints were published in intervals at the price of 7s.6d. each in plain and 15s. in colour.

The majority of characters in Hamilton’s *Cries* were street sellers and hawkers but there are references to other marginal groups such as beggars and street entertainers. There is only one known series of Dublin *Cries* published, which was by an unknown printer in the 1770s. In George Panter’s article written in 1924 about this broadsheet of *Cries*, he claimed that the sellers were not copied from London *Cries*. For instance, in the anonymous *Cries* and Hamilton’s drawings women are illustrated selling black and white puddings and Carlingford oysters, commodities unique to Dublin. In the urban context the Georgian cities of both Dublin and London had street sellers and other marginal figures in certain designated market areas. In Dublin, street sellers had a long tradition that dated back to the medieval period. They were reputedly very animated and advertised their goods in a loud vocalized manner. In Dublin, hawkers and street sellers operated within market areas of the city including Ormond Market, Newgate, Clarendon, New Market, the Glib and St.Patrick’s. By the mid to late eighteenth century in Dublin, similar to London, the importance of clean, open spaces devoid of the lower classes became a primary concern. The Wide Street Commissioners, appointed in 1758 to create a system of intentional planning, provided areas of leisure and civic ceremony. Designated areas of the city were ‘walled and gated’, including St. Stephen’s Green, to keep out undesirables such as beggars. Hamilton completed his *Cries* drawings in 1760, prior to the major architectural and infrastructural improvements in the city.

224 Ibid., p. 83.
225 *The Freeman’s Journal*, 1 Mar. 1924.
228 Toby C. Barnard, ‘Hamilton’s “Cries of Dublin”; the society, the economy of mid-eighteenth-century Dublin’ in Laffan, *The Cries of Dublin*, p. 27.
By the 1780s and 1790s Dublin’s urban landscape had changed dramatically with a ‘neo-classical template’ of buildings including the Four Courts and a new canal system.232

The fear of the unknown wandering stranger being a carrier of disease continued well into the eighteenth century. The destitute poor engaged with the wealthier of society on the street through begging, and this visible action was a constant reminder for the elite of society of a delicate balance that needed to be kept in check. The visibility of beggars within urban cities caused a deep sense of unease, as one writer in 1796 elucidated:

In my late walks about London and its environs, I have observed with concern the multiplied swarms of beggars of every description … impressed with the idea that more of these miserable objects are beggars by choice than by necessity, I leave them with the wish that our laws or the magistrates, whose business it is to put these laws in execution, would at least endeavor to lessen their number, or by some badge or other means of distinction enable kind hearted Christians to discern their proper objects.233

In the same year a French traveller to Dublin wrote of the ‘displeasing sight of beggars’ hanging onto railings in front of Georgian buildings and seeking alms, at times by force, if it was not ‘forthcoming by good-will’.234 The author concluded that his experience in Dublin left him hardened to beggars and their pleas for alms.235

Prior to 1838 in Ireland, there were no government led schemes that provided for people living in extreme poverty. This was in contrast to England where in each parish the poor law system was in place.236 During times of famine or other economic crisis the poor migrated to the city of Dublin in the pursuit of work or alms.237 The main responsibility for providing poor relief was with religious charity services.238 The House of Industry in Dublin, established in 1772-3, took care of vagrants and beggars and it was found that numbers usually increased during very

234 De Latocnaye (translated by John Stevenson), A Frenchman’s walk through Ireland 1796-7 (Belfast, 1917), p. 17.
235 Ibid.
236 McDowell, The Irish administration, p. 165.
cold winters. This was considered by the poor to be the last resort and many of the inmates are documented as being infirm, ill, blind or insane.\textsuperscript{239} In 1775, it was documented that 1338 people were admitted, some of their own free will but others forced into administration.\textsuperscript{240} The threat of the House of Industry consistently hung over the poor as observed by a French traveller to the city, where he wrote that even though inmates were fed well and had clean beds, ‘the love of liberty is so rooted in the heart of man there are few who come of their own will’.\textsuperscript{241}

The areas in which the poor lived also influenced the high itinerancy of the rural population. Farming families who lived on poor quality land survived on the seasonal harvests and during the summer months left their homes and lived off charity and begging in Dublin rather than consuming their small food supplies for the following winter.\textsuperscript{242} In 1731 Surveyor General of Ireland Arthur Dobbs wrote:

> It is very well known that great numbers of native Irish in the mountainous parts of the Kingdom, that have houses and small farms, by which they might very well maintain themselves, when they have sown their corn, planted their potatoes and cut their turf for firing, do either hire out their cows or fend them to the mountains, then shut up their doors and go begging the whole summer until harvest, with their wives and children, in the most tattered and moving conditions they can appear in.\textsuperscript{243}

Just as the wandering stranger was a threat in sixteenth-century Europe, English and Irish government authorities implemented methods to curtail the movement of the homeless with a succession of acts targeting vagrancy.\textsuperscript{244} The authorities considered curtailment of movement as a valid method in controlling outbreaks of diseases.\textsuperscript{245} Similar to the London writer’s suggestions of badging the poor, attempts were made in Dublin to distinguish between the types of homeless beggars. Beggars from rural areas often swarmed the city and built temporary dwellings,\textsuperscript{246} and the Dublin authorities created labels such as ‘strange’ or ‘foreign’

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{240} Anonymous, \textit{Observations on the state and condition of the poor, under the institution, for their relief, in the city of Dublin; together with the state of the fund &c, published by order of the corporation, instituted for the relief of the poor, and for punishing vagabonds and sturdy beggars, in the county of the city of Dublin, March 25th, 1775} (Dublin, 1775), p. 9.
\textsuperscript{241} De Latocnaye, \textit{A Frenchman's walk through Ireland}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{242} Arthur Dobbs, \textit{An essay on the trade and improvement of Ireland} (Dublin, 1731), p. 47; also cited in O' Carroll, ‘Contemporary attitudes towards the homeless poor 1725-1775’, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{243} Dobbs, \textit{An essay on the trade and improvement of Ireland}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{244} For example Act of the Relief of the Poor (1563).
\textsuperscript{245} O’ Carroll, ‘Contemporary attitudes towards the homeless poor, 1725-1775’, pp 66-75.
\textsuperscript{246} Costello, ‘Public spaces for recreation in Dublin’, p. 164.
to describe beggars that migrated into the city. Jonathan Swift produced a pamphlet in 1737 that was a commentary on the problems that eighteenth-century Dublin faced. Swift claimed that Dublin was ‘infested’ with ‘strollers, foreigners and sturdy beggars’ and he considered their numbers had increased after the establishment of the poorhouse. According to Swift, people living in Dublin paid for the poorhouse and he found it unacceptable that beggars left rural areas to seek admission with no contribution from rural landlords. He suggested the enforcement of badges on Dublin beggars, worn visible on the shoulder to differentiate from those who had migrated to the city.

Swift’s view of the threat of the wandering beggar to Dublin city was an idea that was popular throughout eighteenth-century Europe. Michel Foucault claimed that the association of social disorder and spread of disease was ‘the haunting memory of “contagions”, of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear’. In his argument Foucault referred to a small French town at the beginning of the eighteenth century, which was struck down by the plague. The town was closed completely to strangers and each family imprisoned in their home; as a community they were under constant surveillance.

The very act of a stranger wandering into town also brought into question ‘who’ governed him as he was not ‘bound as others [were] by the local properties and conventions’. The wandering stranger it appears, in view of position and personality, was measured in terms of ‘movement and migration’. For Swift, the threat of the homeless was a necessary problem that had to be tackled in order for the city to improve.

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247 O’ Carroll, ‘Contemporary attitudes towards the homeless poor’, p. 64.
248 Jonathan Swift, A proposal for giving badges to the beggars in all parishes of Dublin. By the Dean of St. Patrick’s (Dublin, 1737), pp 5-6. Cited in O’ Carroll, Contemporary attitudes towards the homeless poor’, p. 66.
249 Swift, A proposal for giving badges to the beggars, p.6.
250 Ibid.
252 Foucault, Discipline and punish, pp 195-8.
254 Ibid.
In Hamilton’s drawing, *Hae Ball, King of the Beggars* (figure 2.3), the figure is an example of Swift’s term ‘a beggar native of the parish’ who is known to the ‘Church minister, to the Popish priest, or the conventicle teachers’. Hae Ball was referred to in an anonymous pamphlet in 1750; in the toasts, Hae Ball’s well-wishers hoped that ‘he never be reduced to lay down his chariot, for want of friends to draw it’. The tone of the pamphlet suggests that Hae Ball was a beggar who was a permanent part of the city and was not migrant. Hamilton’s drawing features three people- the beggar in his wheeled chariot, his young male minder and a woman giving alms. Swift’s sentiments towards visiting beggars to the city were reiterated in the pamphlet; it issued a strong warning to those who came specifically in search of alms, the writer stating that they had to belong to the city parish. The depiction of alms giving in this drawing reiterates the importance of the named beggar; or rather he is singled out as a ‘deserving’ recipient for charity as he was a permanent part of the city space.

Both Hae Ball and the cripple beggar (figure 2.1) were represented as the pathetic of society, injured and unable to move easily due to their disability. They represented the deserving poor but more importantly they were a non-threatening force within the city. These drawings drew attention to the growing desire of the general public to label or distinguish what was a deserving poor beggar from someone who was able-bodied and idle. The third beggar is an elderly blind man being led by a small dog (figure 2.4). The similar theme of a blind beggar man was drawn in c.1800 (figure 2.5) by Lady Charlemont. Even though there is roughly forty years between the two drawings, the figures appear very similar in stature and character. Hamilton’s drawing, however, appears more of an observational one as the man keeps his walking stick in front of him in the more accurate position. This small observation by Hamilton perhaps provides evidence of his drawings being ‘on the spot’ and also highlights the artist’s training. The repeated motif of a blind beggar with a small dog by both Hamilton and Charlemont in their drawings suggests a fascination with beggars as an art subject. When both artists depicted this figure they represented the connection that the public had with the same beggar. However, the consistent anxiety of religious and philanthropic charities along with government

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256 Anonymous, *The beggars (of St. Mary’s parish) address, to their worthy representative, Hackball*, p.6.
officials in assessing who deserved alms and who did not continued into the nineteenth century. In the case of vagrants in Dublin, in 1807, further appeals came to ‘cleanse’ the streets ‘from the Augean filth, the beggars’.258

Hamilton examined gender in his drawings of beggars with an observational work of a female figure and her child in *A Beggar Woman* (figure 2.6). This drawing contrasts with the other three as it was drawn in red chalk.259 What is peculiar about this beggar is that, if not for the descriptive title, she appears to be an ordinary woman holding her baby in her arms. She is well dressed, with a hat, shawl and fashionable shoes on her feet. The grandiose pose of the woman is in contrast to the male beggars but also the other characters in the album, namely female hawkers with faces ravaged by age and poverty. The female beggar’s features are reminiscent of the classical model, often used for the female form in the academy. She was not a threat, unlike the roaming and rootless status of the male beggar. In this case, perhaps she was a victim of economic instability, not a social threat, and was therefore presented in a respectable manner by Hamilton.

The style of Hamilton’s drawings in comparison to the later *Cries* by Wheatley in London, is less sophisticated. Hamilton focused on the full portrait of the figure and portrayed details of dress that suggest a similar format to Wheatley’s *Cries*. However, Hamilton’s drawing, including the faces of the figures, was more crudely executed than that of Wheatley. In contrast to Wheatley, Hamilton ignored the space of the city in the drawings even though the characters were observed and sourced from the streets of Dublin. Textual and visual evidence suggests that beggars were viewed in slightly varied ways between Dublin and London. For instance, the named Dublin beggar was a popular format written and illustrated as late as 1918. In a publication entitled *Dublin Types Drawn by Sidney Davis* (similar to Hamilton), different types of beggars were observed. Davis referred to Dublin’s beggars and the level of tolerance towards them in contrast to London, suggesting that in Dublin ‘there is more charity towards the undeserving and a general feeling that the poor and ragged men and women may after all be very near to God’.260 Observations from travellers to Ireland in the middle of the nineteenth century noted the amount of beggars but also their reception by the middle classes in Ireland. For example, Sir

259 There are three other figures drawn in red chalk; a young male baker, a fish woman and a car man.
John Forbes writing about his trip to Ireland in 1852 described how beggars who loitered at the doors of guesthouses and were often left alone by the person who owned the business, whereas in England the authorities would have been called.\footnote{Sir John Forbes, \textit{Memorandums made in Ireland in the autumn of 1852} (2 vols, London, 1853), i, 56.}

Hamilton’s drawings showcased the beggars in the urban context. The rural setting for the Irish beggar, however, went through transformative stages from the 1760s to the 1830s. For example, in some cases, paintings of landscapes with rural figures in the late eighteenth century followed some visual tricks from seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting, of which many prints of landscapes were brought into Ireland by the elite of society who travelled on the Grand Tour. In the later part of the eighteenth century, a significant development in Irish painting was the idealized or imagined landscape. This was instigated by the Dutch painter, William van der Hagen (c.1720-45), who worked in Ireland as a landscape artist.\footnote{Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, \textit{Ireland’s painters 1600-1940} (New Haven and London, 2002), pp 68-73.} These Dutch visual influences sparked the ‘reception of a new way of thinking and seeing’ for Irish artists.\footnote{John Turpin, ‘Continental influence in eighteenth- century Ireland’ in \textit{Irish Arts Review} (1984-87), iv, no. 4 (winter, 1987), p. 51.} In the painting \textit{A Frost Piece} (figure 2.7), the painter Thomas Roberts mimicked another Dutch tradition in art, which was the depiction of the poor within a landscape. Roberts, who was born in Waterford and trained in Dublin, belonged to a group of landscape Irish artists who were highly successful in both Ireland and England throughout the 1760s.\footnote{Artists included George Barrett (1732-84) and Robert Carver (c.1730-1791). For a full detailed account of the life and work of Thomas Roberts see William Laffan and Brendan Rooney, \textit{Thomas Roberts: landscape and patronage in eighteenth-century Ireland} (Tralee, 2009).} Hamilton’s drawings were created with the purpose of being eventually printed as \textit{Cries}, which would have been circulated within the paying public domain and resulted in reaching a wider audience. Roberts’ oil painting, however, was exhibited in Dublin in 1769 when the painter was twenty-one years of age.\footnote{Ibid., pp 216-7.}

Late eighteenth-century oil paintings were bound by strict rules of presentation dictated by the academy, in particular when it came to figures placed within a landscape. As Anne Crookshank claimed when the poor were depicted in an urban or rural landscape painting they were often tiny figures set into ‘sanitized’ views such as James Malton’s (1761-1803) street scenes devoid of refuse or filth.\footnote{Anne Crookshank, preface in Laffan, \textit{The Cries of Dublin}, p. 9.}
In *A Frost Piece* (figure 2.7) Roberts depicted an Irish wandering figure in a landscape with three other rural figures and a small cottier’s cabin. The painting shows elements of the Dutch style with an expansive sky and dramatic landscape. Roberts included class divisions within the painting with the two hunters and their dogs to the right, in the far middle distance a labourer with his cart and horse and finally, to the left foreground an elderly male figure, presumably homeless. William Laffan and Brendan Rooney interprets the elderly figure as a wandering blind hermit being led by a small dog on a lead (figure 2.8), who was perhaps hired to occupy a cave on the demesne as part of a hermitage. The figure echoes Hamilton and Lady Charlemont’s drawings of the blind beggar with the small dog. Roberts’ reference to the Dutch model was also a popular recourse for English painters, who placed the poor labourer in images that were based on the tranquillity of the rural idyll. The figures were represented contently working in the fields of wealthy English landowners. Another element of inheritance from Dutch painting was re-interpreting the ‘boorish’ figure of the peasant and following the trend of illustrating contemporary clothing.

In the early 1780s Francis Wheatley created a series of drawings on the Palmerstown and Donnybrook Fairs on the outskirts of Dublin. In 1779, Wheatley fled from London to Ireland to escape his debts. In an historical painting he recorded the first meeting of the Irish Volunteer Corps entitled *A View of College Green with a Meeting of the Volunteers on 4 November 1799 to Commemorate the Birthday of King William*, (1779-80). However, Wheatley also portrayed people who occupied the opposite end of the social spectrum and the Palmerstown and Donnybrook fairs would have been similar to other Irish fairs that were plagued with drunken fights and popular with the wandering poor. Wheatley was an admirer of the Dutch artist Philips Wouwermans (1619-1668) and owned drawings by the artist.

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269 Ibid., p. 109. Previous to this Dutch influence English painters represented figures in English landscapes based on the French classical tradition and used a generic Italianate peasant.
272 Webster, *Francis Wheatley*, p. 48.
evidence of this Dutch influence in Wheatley’s pen and watercolour works completed in Ireland within a four-year period.

For example in *The Palmerstown Fair* (c.1782) (figure 2.9) Wheatley illustrated observant details of the whiskey tents, stalls and the people who attended them but, in the Dutch manner, the sky dominates the composition. Naturalism was an important component of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting and Wheatley incorporated this into *The Palmerstown Fair* with the crudely constructed tents and atmospheric effect with an unusual viewpoint. The setting within the drawing is at the crest of a hill. Seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting also incorporated commercial life at a local level either women milking cows or river ferries providing transportation of local produce or people, as a few examples.\(^{273}\) In *The Palmerstown Fair*, Wheatley illustrated an important local market that was specific to Dublin and its surrounding environs yet in his representation could have described any place in Europe. Mary Webster, Wheatley's biographer, claimed that the twenty or so images that he created of the fairs were popular and sold almost as soon as they were completed.\(^{274}\)

Wheatley’s interest was in the people who attended the fair. To the extreme left of the image, three figures, two females and a male, are seated on the ground. The male figure appears intoxicated and one of the women has a baby wrapped in a shawl on her back. The group are gathered around a cooking pot, while a woman in a tent fills a mug with beer from a barrel. In the centre of the composition, a woman converses with a man who has a bag on his back and carries a long walking stick. These drawings were not created *in situ* but in Wheatley’s studio from notes and small sketches.\(^{275}\) After his return to England in 1783, Wheatley portrayed the English poor and later created and exhibited his paintings of London’s hawkers. A couple resting at the side of the road are portrayed in his drawing *Itinerant Peasants* (1786) (figure 2.10), a work that shows the painter’s interest in the wandering poor.


\(^{274}\) Webster, *Francis Wheatley*, p. 48. Wheatley continued to draw these fairs even when he returned to England.

\(^{275}\) Ibid.
Roberts and Wheatley’s works exhibit the poor within a staged landscape. The figures, in particular in Roberts’s case, were a quaint inclusion and secondary to the scene. George Grattan, on the other hand, tackled the theme of poverty with a full length portrait of a destitute mother and child. In Blind Beggar Woman and Child (1807) (figure 2.11), completed nearly thirty years after Roberts’ painting, Grattan created a different piece in terms of structure and overall theme of work. The painting depicts two figures resting at the side of a road. The mother is blind and this very visible disability marks the victim as not only being poor but also marginal and helpless. The representation of beggars in the early nineteenth century in a painting was generally avoided and critics demanded that if they were included into a landscape they had to abide by certain stylistic rules. Richard Payne Knight wrote in 1805 that the ‘dirty and tattered garments, the disheveled hair, and general wild appearance of gipsies and beggar girls are often picturesque’. Five years later, Uvedale Price defined the ‘picturesque’ in the manner of the power of painting to give ‘value to insignificant objects, and even to those which are offensive’. In Knight and Price’s writings they considered the validity of beggars as a subject only possible at the hands of a painter with exceptional skill. The potential for the beggar figure to become aesthetically beautiful according to Knight was through the ‘harmonious variety of tint, and light and shade, blended with everything else that is disgusting’. When artists chose a subject of a ‘disgusting’ manner and created a product that was saleable and believable to the fine tastes of the art-buying patron, this successfully showcased their talent.

Grattan’s portrayal of poverty is an exception to the rule as a subject for painting in the early nineteenth century. The clothes of the figures in Blind Beggar Woman and Child are specific and imitative of contemporary dress of the poorer class. Both the child and the woman wear a simple style of dress with the woman wearing a large check apron, a cloak and a white cap under hat, most probably made from straw. Mairead Dunleavy claimed that in the early nineteenth century in Ireland, absolute poverty meant that people were unable to set aside money to buy

276 Uvedale Price, Essays on the picturesque as compared with the sublime and the beautiful; and on, the use of studying pictures for the purpose of improving the landscape (3 vols, London, 1810), ii, p. xiv.
clothes, even from a hawker, and so covered themselves in any available rags. The attention to detail in their clothing, along with the dramatic size of the figures within the composition, forced the contemporary viewer to observe the representation of poverty on an emotional level. Likewise, the graphic portrayal of the woman’s blindness in the painting did not accommodate the sensitive perspective of the gallery spectator. It was the realism of poverty portrayed in this painting that defied the criteria that Knight and Price had outlined for the ‘picturesque’. Grattan paints the child’s bare feet in such a way that they are a stark contrast to the woman’s shoes, and the skin of both sitters contrasts with the darker tones of their clothes and also the landscape.

The theme of blindness in paintings was a popular topic in art throughout the nineteenth century. By representing blindness, artists created a more sympathetic approach to a subject that was generally perceived as vulgar for the contemporary audience. In the early nineteenth century, sight was easily lost due to a variety of diseases, including smallpox and syphilis, but also accidents. Paintings that conveyed the topic of blindness usually had pity and helplessness at the core of the narrative. Kate Flint argued that a blind person in a painting ‘forcibly’ brought attention ‘to the fragility of sight’ and highlighted ‘a challenge to those who assert the dominating nature of the gaze’. The position of the young girls’ seeing eyes at the same level of the woman’s blind eyes creates a situation of opposites, sight versus blindness. Grattan paints the eyes without the coronary irises; however, in later paintings in England the infliction of blindness is signified by the literal shutting of the eyelid. An example is John Everett Millais, *The Blind Girl* (1854-6). This compositional device was used by Grattan to place the child in the position of communicator with the viewer.

Despite painting one of the figures as blind, Grattan’s painting received negative criticism during its exhibition in Dublin in 1809. A reviewer wrote that Grattan’s figures were ‘so faithfully represented as to produce disgust when the artist conceived he was exciting admiration’. He further stated that in Ireland ‘such a subject cannot even claim novelty to arrest attention; we have beggars sufficiently

279 Ibid.
280 Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the visual imagination* (Cambridge, 2000). For further reading on the topic of blindness represented in art and literature in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century refer to chapter 3 entitled ‘Blindness and insight’, pp 64-92.
281 Ibid., p. 64.
numerous in the streets without aligning them a place in the “Exhibition of the Arts”.

The painting is evidence of how Grattan rejected traditional convention and placed beggars into the gallery space. However, the 1809 review shows that the subject was not welcomed in the arena of public exhibition. By creating a full portrait of vagrants, Grattan made a unique statement and clearly sympathised with his subjects.

Even though there were more extreme cases of mendicancy and vagrancy in pre-Famine Ireland, there existed the ‘distinction between poverty and destitution’ within Irish society where ‘independence and self-sufficiency, however marginal, were treasured’. Perhaps the offensive nature of Blind Beggar Woman and Child for the 1809 reviewer was accorded by the small fraction of dignity that Grattan portrays in this piece towards his sitters, who are essentially begging for a means of survival. Grattan successfully illustrates the vulnerability of both figures as the young girl gently holds on to the woman’s wrist. A clear message of responsibility that burdens the young girl is symbolized by the earthenware pitcher that she holds in her right hand, indicating that she manages their survival. Charles E. Orser states that the earthenware pitcher that was painted into numerous Irish paintings and represented in illustrations from early to mid-nineteenth century as a visual symbol used by artists to signify poverty. According to Orser, the poor in rural areas used the stoneware containers for the rations of food from the storehouse.

The painting was purchased by Grattan’s alma mater, The Dublin Society’s Figure Drawing School, in 1807. According to Walter Strickland, the school agreed to Grattan’s request to bring the painting to London for exhibition after its purchase.

As stated earlier, prior to 1838, the mendicant institutes cared for the poor, which were run by charity institutions. The poor often looked after the destitute in

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283 Ibid.
284 Laurence M. Geary, “‘The whole country was in motion’: mendicancy and vagrancy in pre-famine Ireland” in Jacqueline Hill and Colm Lennon (eds), Luxury and austerity: historical studies xxi (Dublin, 1999), p. 125.
286 Ibid., p. 93.
287 John Turpin, ‘The Dublin Society’s Figure Drawing School and the fine arts in Dublin 1800-1849’ in Dublin Historical Record, xxxix, no. 2 (1986), p. 43.
society and according to Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall this burden was often great, as a beggar was never refused at the door of a cabin stating that:

the itinerant beggar was never without a wallet … much of this evil—for an evil it was and is—arose from the natural generosity of the Irish character: a sort of pleasure derived from giving: but much of it may also be attributed to a superstitious notion that to refuse charity is a sin, charity literally “covers a multitude of sins” and that it goes to purchase an abridgement of punishment thereafter, for the giver and those whom the giver holds dear.  

The Halls considered this type of mendicancy as a trade and they claimed that the poor law was an amendment for the ‘evil’ associated with beggars and a viable solution to end voluntary and private charity.

In Ireland, representations of the interior of the poor house and the buildings of houses of charity were rarely a subject for art prior to 1838. Generally, in both Ireland and Britain, images of charity buildings and alms houses were more for illustrative purposes such as Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Pugin’s print of the pass-room in Bridewell (figure 2.12) published in 1808-11. The illustration shows women detained in the institution after being arrested for vagrancy. These women were kept for seven days before being deported back to their respective parishes. Male and female vagrants of all denominations were housed in the Bridewell, and as evidenced in this print, the sexes were held in separate accommodation. In the illustration, some of the women have their infants with them. The role of the Bridewell, as claimed by Ackermann, was to ‘train up the beggar’s child to virtuous industry, so that from him no more beggars should spring’.

The professional or sturdy beggar was labelled the undeserving poor and in the Irish context the ‘boccough’ was one such figure in early nineteenth-century Irish society. The Irish born painter Daniel Maclise (1806-1870) painted two boccough figures on the right of his 1834 painting The Installation of Captain Rock (figure 2.13). The painting, which has been described by Tom Dunne as a most ‘complex

289 Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall, Ireland, its scenery, character &c (3 vols, London, 1843), iii, 350.
290 Ibid., pp 350-1.
291 Exceptions to this are a drawing and an illustrative print by William Brocas created c.1811 of Moira House in Dublin. A View of Moira House, pencil on paper, 9.9 x 15.2cm, 1963 (TX) 41 and Moira House Dublin (c.1811), etching, 13.6 x 21.5 cm, 2129 (TX) 50, published in Hibernian Magazine (1811), Prints and Drawings Department, NLI.
292 Rudolph Ackermann, The microcosm of London (4 vols, London, 1808-11), i, 92. Other illustrations of institutions included in these volumes are of the Foundling Hospital and the asylum of St. Luke’s Hospital.
293 Ibid., p. 93.
294 Ackermann, The microcosm of London, p. 94.
and puzzling’ image, presents a chaotic theatrical scene of rural agitation in nineteenth-century Ireland. The Irish professional beggar was given the term ‘boccough’, which originates from the Gaelic ‘bacach’ and translates as ‘lame’. The boccough was noticeably different from other wandering poor: in 1861 William Hackett observed that ‘these mendicants are not to be confounded with ordinary chance beggars, victims of adversity or improvidence; they are totally distinct, and have no point of resemblance except that both solicit alms’. By placing the two boccough figures within this painting, Maclise acknowledged an important but conflicting element of Irish rural society. Born and educated in Ireland, Maclise worked predominately in London and was highly successful. He created a strong reputation as an academic painter after he attended the Royal Academy from 1827 to 1829. He painted The Installation of Captain Rock at the beginning of his career, but more importantly, in England. This painting, along with his earlier Irish scene of Snap Apple Night (1832) and the later The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife (1854) was heavily based on Irish themes and referenced Ireland’s cultural, social and political concerns.

The painting is based on the fictive memoirs of a character called Captain Rock, written by Thomas Moore (1779-1852) in 1824. The Memoirs of Captain Rock, according to Leon Litvack, was a ‘fierce indictment of the misgovernment of Ireland’. In the Royal Academy exhibiton of the painting in 1834 Maclise referred to an excerpt from the literary book Tipperary Tales, which appeared to be a source for his painting:

a hunchback mendicant had elevated himself upon the shoulders of one of the heterogeneous assemblage, and, with the old military cap worn by the former leader of the faction, crowned Delaney as Captain rock, mutterin ‘upon this Rock, I will build my church’, while the Boccough unbuckling his wooden leg flourished it with a deep shout that for a moment stilled the groups.

In the First report for inquiring into the conditions of the poorer classes in Ireland in 1835 (hereafter 1835 report) there were many references to the

professional Irish beggar in rural society. As beggars, they were visible in the community, standing out with pronounced ailments and diseases. In County Roscommon in the parish of Boyle, a labourer named Michael O’ Brien stated that:

There is a particular class of beggars, called “boccoughs”, who resort to deceptive means of exciting compassion; they are usually found at fairs and markets, are the most immoral class among the poor, and are believed, in their mode of living, to resemble gypsies. Boccough is an Irish word, signifying a beggar who strolls about, affecting the appearance of impotence or scrofulous disease.300

From this account, there was an obvious distinction between the regular beggars, who were local and forced into begging for survival, and those who were rootless and classed as being similar to Gypsies in their itinerant lifestyle. The reputation of boccoughs appeared to be built on suspicion and caricature. This is evident in another account where in the parish of Killimore in Galway, a landlord stated that:

I was at a fair in Loughrea, and saw four men in different parts of the town, some having their legs bandaged and others their arms; they were repeating, or rather roaring prayers, and asking alms from the passengers. Next day there was a fair at Eyrecourt, to which I was going, when, to my great astonishment, I saw the identical four men running on before me, without a bandage on either of them, and appearing as supple as they could wish to be ... a great many cannot get work and are obliged to be, but I believe many use that plea merely as an excuse.301

Luke Gibbons states that The Installation of Captain Rock should have been a history painting but the content claims too many references to the Irish poor and instead is a scene that mimics the Dutch painting tradition of portraying low life.302

The boccough in particular symbolises a figure in nineteenth-century society associated with drunken revelry and superstition. Maclise’s boccoughs are reflective of how Brueghel portrayed his lepers in The Beggars. Even though Maclise relied on caricature, and perhaps the Dutch tradition for representing the poor, he later revealed in a letter to his niece the importance of observation of the human figure for a painting. He wrote ‘I advise you to adhere closely to the model before you, whatever it may be, and not attempt to idealize upon it; at the same time, you must not caricature it. If you spend many sittings in painting an eye to perfection, it is

301 First report ... inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes, p. 483.
worth the trouble, but a whole figure rapidly done is worse than nothing.’

Maclise’s opinion on the importance of not creating a caricature is not mirrored in The Installation of Captain Rock.

Fintan Cullen considers that Maclise’s painting might ‘suggest an up-to-date subject matter of rural agitation, but in fact what we are offered is an undisciplined assembly of grotesques’. The two boccaugh figures are examples of the ‘grotesque’ that Cullen refers to in the painting. A reviewer of the work in Fraser’s Magazine in 1834 placed emphasis on how the boccaugh appeared: ‘a boccaugh or sham cripple, mad with patriotism and pothien, unbucks his wooden leg, and flourishes his crutch, ... he is actively drunk; another leans on him passively ditto, and his face is expressive of a hiccup’. The faces of many of the figures in the painting have severe expressions but the two boccaughs are the most contorted.

The boccaughs had piqued the critic’s interest in Fraser’s Magazine but they also attracted intense criticism from Maclise’s contemporaries. In the painting, reflective of its source Tipperary Tales, the boccaugh originally placed a cap on the new leader or ‘Captain Rock’, but Maclise changed the composition in 1843 (noted in the bottom right hand corner of the painting). Instead Maclise painted in a young female figure to present the cap of leadership. This change in the narrative of the painting highlighted the negative reception of the Irish boccaughs by the contemporary audience. Yet the boccaugh’s role in Tipperary Tales was specific and important. Even though the dancing boccaugh was changed in his status within the painting, the second boccaugh, who instructs the young peasant how to shoot from a rifle, encourages him to aim at the viewer.

The wandering boccaugh is noted by Dunne, who claims that, traditionally, this figure was a negative one. According to Niall O Ciosáin boccaughs gave a ‘stylised prayer or blessing in return for alms and lodging’. Generally this type of beggar was witnessed mainly in the western part of Ireland. Instead of monetary charity people gave potatoes and in some cases lodgings for a night. This

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304 Fintan Cullen, Visual politics: the representation of Ireland 1750-1930 (Cork, 1997), p. 44.
305 Fraser’s Magazine (1834), x, p. 118.
307 Ibid.
309 Ibid., pp 94-5.
‘spontaneous giving’ was associated with a long tradition in Irish society of sharing food with the needful person who called to the door.\textsuperscript{310} In Hackett’s text the professional beggar carried a number of bags to hold the various types of alms given to them by the Irish poor.\textsuperscript{311}

In the painting the dancing boccough holds up his fake leg and crutch into the air and they are positioned where they make a sign of the cross (figure 2.14). The dancing boccough appears to be the principal character of this group of people to the right of the painting.\textsuperscript{312} Maclise’s boccough corrobates Ó Ciosáin’s statement that there existed a general belief among the settled community that these beggars had their own religion and they made ‘use of a convenient pun between a crutch and a cross, a pun which also worked in Irish, since crutches are “maidí croise”, “cross sticks”’.\textsuperscript{313} In the painting, Maclise made it clear that this character was to be identified by the nineteenth-century viewer as a boccough. Maclise’s biographer Nancy Weston points out that the painter understood the standing of the boccough in Irish society and did not seem to mind that his English audience would only identify a ‘duplicitous’ beggar.\textsuperscript{314} The position of the boccough within the composition of the painting is clearly designated. The height of the false leg and the crutch is at the same level as the protagonist in the narrative, the young man destined to take over the leader’s role from Captain Rock. This creates a visual bridge where the eye is led to the right of the painting, and so the viewer is aware of the boccough’s presence in the painting. This placement of the boccough suggests the figure carries a weight of importance as a visual symbol. According to Ó Ciosáin, the boccough was well established and written about in nineteenth century Irish culture.\textsuperscript{315} Professional beggars were surrounded by superstition and were given ‘counterculture motifs’ including rites of passage and their own religion, while the symbol for mendicancy

\textsuperscript{310} Helen Burke, \textit{The people and the poor law in nineteenth century Ireland} (Dublin, 1987), p. 10.
\textsuperscript{311} Hackett, ‘The Irish Bacach’, p. 270. By the time that Hackett wrote this article, he indicated that the boccough had all but disappeared from Irish society. Visual evidence of beggars carrying bags are in Spilsbury Taylor’s drawing in sketchbook (19, 432) and in Daniel MacDonald’s (1821-53), \textit{The Bowling Match at Castlemarty, Cloyne} (1847), oil on canvas, 103 x 131cm, Crawford Art Gallery. Mairéad Dunleavy described this beggar as a \textit{bacach}, as he holds a walking stick and numerous bags, see Mairéad Dunleavy and Cormac Ó Gráda, ‘A bowling match at Castlemarty, Cloyne’ in David Dickson and Cormac Ó Gráda (eds), \textit{Refiguring Ireland: essays in honour of L.M. Cullen} (Dublin, 2003), p. 226.
\textsuperscript{312} Fraser’s Magazine, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{313} Ó Ciosáin, ‘Boccoughs and God’s poor’, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{314} Weston, \textit{Daniel Maclise: Irish artist}, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{315} Ó Ciosáin, ‘Boccoughs and God’s poor’, p. 97.
and perjury was the use of crutches.\textsuperscript{316} The boccough is also painted in darker contrast to the other figures that are bathed in light.

In 1835 in \textit{The Dublin Penny Journal} a story was published about the boccough’s curse, where a young woman declines to help a ‘poor old beggarman, lame and half blind’ who ‘crawled’ to her door seeking help. In her admonishment of him she tells him to ‘go along an’ work, there’s many a waker man than you breakin’ stones on the road below’, and it is at this point where he issues his curse on her and her home.\textsuperscript{317} This story in a popular weekly journal clearly defines the attitude towards the boccough by the young woman but also highlights the general opinion that boccoughs were consistently reluctant to carry out work for a living. Yet a more positive attachment had developed within Irish society for the wandering beggar, who was a different type of character to the boccough, as in the following proverb ‘ní bacach an fear siúil ach bochtán Dé’ or ‘the wandering man is not a boccough but one of God’s poor’.\textsuperscript{318}

The iconography of the Irish beggar was adapted and re-interpreted by Irish artists when they incorporated the poor into their work. The images of beggars in Irish society also reflected the divide in attitude of officials and the poor of society to begging and alms giving. The 1835 report indicated that there was pride amongst the poor when it came to begging. For instance, when illness descended on a family, and despite the chronic situation that they found themselves in, begging was the last option. As one observer noted in the 1835 report in reference to a sick adult with children, ‘it seldom occurs that [they] resort to begging during his sickness; what little he wants, and that is chiefly meal and milk to make gruel and whey, is freely brought to his house’.\textsuperscript{319} This reluctance to beg was also indicated by a local doctor as he explained:

I have seen them bowed to the last degree, and they will not allow themselves to be reckless; it really surprises me how the poor creatures bear up against the greatest distress caused by illness; there is a pride among them which makes them scorn the reproach of being a beggar.\textsuperscript{320}

Religion had played a key role for beggar imagery in the sixteenth century in Europe, in particular in Italy. But in Ireland, market forces in the early nineteenth century

\textsuperscript{316} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{317} \textit{The Dublin Penny Journal}, iv, no. 163, 15 Aug. 1835.
\textsuperscript{318} Quoted in O Ciosáin, ‘Boccoughs and God’s poor’, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{319} First report ... for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes, p. 314.
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid., p. 317.
hindered the desire for visual topics of poverty, in particular of begging and beggars. There was little demand for this work as the visibility of actual beggars in the urban space was too familiar. However, culturally, the Irish beggar had its place within Irish society and the mythology associated with the wandering figure was created within the rural space. The marginal figures in Maclise’s *The Installation of Captain Rock* were used as a cultural symbol for rural Irish politics. Even though the religious orders held an important role in taking care of the poor and destitute in Ireland, the boccough figure had a stronger link with the cultural and social fabric of rural life, which Maclise took on board. Rather than the beggar figure placed into a painting to be a virtuous reminder for charity giving, Maclise used the boccough in association with a darker narrative. Perhaps the connection was with the rootless position of the boccough, which made it easy for him to pass information from town to town. Or simply he was such a contested, even loathed, figure within rural life by the 1830s that he symbolised the darker nature of a discontented rural society.
Chapter 3  Callers to the door: constructions of the pedlar and fortune-teller within the sedentary domestic space

Visual representations of nomadic callers to the door or within the domestic space of the sedentary community in Irish and English art were frequently produced in the late eighteenth and into the mid-nineteenth century. This chapter analyses a variety of visual sources including commercial prints from London Cries, illustrations from the work of Mrs S.C. Hall and a sketchbook drawing by Maria Spilsbury Taylor (1776-1820). It also examines watercolor and oil paintings by English and Irish artists including William Jones (active 1726-d.1747), Thomas Heaphy (1775-1835), William Mulready (1786-1863) and Nicholas Joseph Crowley (1819-1857). Images by these artists portray what Toby R. Benis termed an ‘encounter with the homeless’.321 This chapter contends that the chosen artworks provide a basis to investigate how the world of the wandering poor collided with the perceived safety of the domestic space. Images produced during this period consisted of male and female pedlars (or hawkers) and fortune-tellers, which were pre-dominantly female. The fortune-teller, portrayed in a gender distinction that became crucial in the narrative of a painting, was often under the guise of a Gypsy. In some cases, fortune-tellers did not belong to this ethnic group but played on the associations.322

This chapter argues that the construction of female types including pedlars and fortune-tellers, produced from 1760 to 1849, were representations of a figure that was a threat to the domestic space. The visiting nomad was an integral part of Irish and English cultural and social life that was recorded by Dorothy Wordsworth and Mrs S.C. Hall and referenced in literature and travel writing. Literary sources had a considerable impact on how artists represented Gypsies, while paintings based on travels in North Africa by English artists contributed to the construction of the ‘exotic’ image of the male pedlar in English art. Evidence of the exotic is found in the painting The Travelling Druggist (1824) by Mulready. For this painting, Mulready incorporated Oriental influences that were seeping into British culture in the 1820s. Orientalism was the representation of ‘authentic’ scenes of the East for

322 In the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century many vagrants were labelled as ‘gipsy’, even though they did not share ethnic origins. Nomads were grouped together due to the similarity of a wandering lifestyle see David Mayall, Gypsy identities 1500-2000: from Egipcyans and moon-men to the ethnic Romany (London, 2004), pp 265-6.
European consumption that began in the early to mid-seventeenth century but became popular and highly marketable throughout the nineteenth century. In Ireland, the exotic of the female Gypsy fortune-teller was depicted in a painting by Crowley entitled *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* (1843).

Throughout the chapter the concept of space and its importance in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century painting will be discussed. By exploring the inter-relationship between the outside world and the domestic space, this chapter will elucidate the interpretations of English and Irish artists’ work. Many paintings had completely different themes when it came to portraying the male and female caller to the door. The associations of the rural context highlight how nomads were perceived as belonging within an environment that allowed the freedom to wander, which eventually became a marker to distinguish the exotic nature of the Gypsy fortune-teller by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The pedlar (hawker) contributed to the establishment of consumerism in Europe. The pedlar in early modern England and Europe was unpopular with authorities due to the unfair monopoly he/she had over small traders in towns. As a subject in art, images of pedlars, including illustrations and paintings, spread throughout Europe.\(^{323}\) During the sixteenth century the pedlar sold printed goods including cheap broadsheets, ballads and, in some cases, books.\(^ {324}\) Pedlars were transient and many were practically homeless.\(^ {325}\) They were forced to carry licenses, which were highly sought after, as in many cases it prevented them from being punished as beggars.\(^{326}\) By the late eighteenth century in England such licenses were deemed inappropriate as they were given out indiscriminately, open to abuse and caused problems with smuggling of luxury goods from the colonies into England.\(^ {327}\)

As a social group pedlars fulfilled an important economic role, which resulted in their establishment as ‘cultural mediators’.\(^ {328}\) According to E.P Thompson, pedlars selling corn for bread door to door created problems for traders in country markets in

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326 Spufford, ‘The pedlar, the historian and the folklorist’, p. 22.
327 *Third Report from the committee, appointed to enquire into the illicit practices used in defrauding the revenue* (London, 1784), p. 45.
328 Spufford, ‘The pedlar, the historian and the folklorist’, p. 15.
England in the early part of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{329} The type of goods sold indicated not only the status of the seller, but pedlars were also in effect ‘cultural agents’ in that they promoted ‘the message of social transformation through the purchase of goods’.\textsuperscript{330} There existed hierarchies and different levels of prosperity among pedlars, with tinkers, ballad singers, entertainers and sellers of books positioned on the lowest level.\textsuperscript{331} By the eighteenth century in England, the pedlar was the ‘modern commercial salesman’ who offered a personal service that included large-scale advertising and trade catalogues, and in some cases they offered credit to their customers.\textsuperscript{332} The type of items they sold increased to ‘fashion’ goods, which included drapery, haberdashery, ribbons, buckles and buttons, watches, jewellery, glassware, ceramics and other luxuries.\textsuperscript{333}

The significance of the threshold and its sanctity was symbolic in the seventeenth century. In Dutch society Simon Schama referred to the threshold as a border between the sanctum of the home and the ‘soiling world’.\textsuperscript{334} The strictly held tradition of taking your shoes off upon entering a home further emphasized the strong division between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’. In the visual culture of seventeenth-century Dutch painting the pedlar was portrayed in comic representations.\textsuperscript{335} The settings for these paintings were usually rural. The subject of peddling or hawking was resurrected in the mid to late eighteenth century with the illustrations of street sellers in the \textit{Cries}.

The prints of the \textit{Cries} regularly featured female hawkers of urban areas.\textsuperscript{336} In his work on the London and Dublin \textit{Cries} Sean Shesgreen noted that the visual treatment of female hawkers often differed from one artist to another, in particular in the work of Francis Wheatley and Paul Sandby (c.1731-1809). In Sandby’s \textit{Rare Mackerel, Three a Groat or Four for Sixpence} (c.1759) (figure 3.1) the woman is

\textsuperscript{331} Beier, \textit{Masterless men}, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{335} For example Jan Steen (1626-79), \textit{A Pedlar Selling Spectacles Outside a Cottage} (c.1650-3), oil on oak, 24.6 x 20.3cm, The National Gallery, London.
\textsuperscript{336} The background to Hugh Douglas Hamilton’s \textit{Cries} have been discussed in chapter 2.
intimidating, boisterous, loud and physically unattractive.\textsuperscript{337} Yet in Wheatley’s \textit{New Mackerel, New Mackerel} (1796) (figure 3.2) the hawker is an idealized and prettified humble caller. In both prints the scene takes place at the front door of the potential customer’s house and the hawkers carry their mackerel in baskets.

The woman in Sandby’s print is aggressive in her demeanor as she bellows out her call. The hawker’s customer appears wary of her as she opens the door. Shesgreen noted a distinct difference in how female hawkers were portrayed by a variety of artists, and he suggested that Sandby’s image considered ‘class and gender conflict; the world upside down, where woman dominates man and hawker threatens householder’.\textsuperscript{338} The hawker in Sandby’s print wears layers of tattered clothes. Her appearance is mannish and her face resembles that of a young boy. The small dog also emphasizes the aggressiveness of the hawker, as it antagonizes a cat on the doorstep. The potential customer opens the door only a fraction while another woman keeps behind her at a safe distance.

The threat posed by dubious hawkers to the home of the wealthy was reported in contemporary newspapers. In the \textit{Freeman’s Journal} in 1788 it was written that a couple posed as hawkers, who worked in Dublin purportedly selling haberdashery goods. At the home of a wealthy family they convinced the servants to allow them into the house. It recounted how one of the hawkers distracted the servants while the other stole valuable items. The article ended with a warning to the public that ‘gentlemen and others should give strict orders to their domestics not to admit those hawkers on any pretext whatever, as a strict observance of this caution would probably prevent many burglaries and robberies’.\textsuperscript{339} Not only was there the problem of hawkers stealing from properties, but they were also suspected of being distributors of stolen goods.\textsuperscript{340} It was believed, for example, that farm labourers and servants pilfered small items from their places of employment and sold them to hawkers to supplement their meagre wages.\textsuperscript{341}

In complete contrast, Wheatley’s 1796 print displays the mackerel seller in a subservient manner as she hawks the fish on a platter to her customers at their door. As discussed in chapter 2, these prints were first created as paintings by Wheatley,

\textsuperscript{337} Shesgreen, ‘In search of the marginal and the outcast’, pp 222-5.
\textsuperscript{338} Shesgreen, ‘In search of the marginal and the outcast’, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{339} \textit{The Freeman’s Journal}, 10 Jun. 1788.
\textsuperscript{341} Ibid.
and his target audience and market was different to Sandby. For instance, Wheatley exhibited *New Mackrel, New Mackrel* in the Royal Academy of Art in 1795.\(^342\) The Royal Academy was established in 1768, nine years after Sandby’s print was circulated. The aims of the Royal Academy were to advertise and ‘elevate an intellectual’ type of art and to radically separate ‘high art’ from other lower forms such as printmaking.\(^343\) Therefore the audience to the Royal Academy was of a higher social class than the consumer for Sandby’s printed *Cries*. Wheatley’s *Cries* satisfied his audience’s demand for rustic scenes of poverty in painting that developed in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In the visual construction of the mackerel seller, Wheatley created a hawker whose demeanour was more presentable for his audience. The hawker’s attire is neat and similar in style to her customers. The Georgian townhouse indicates a wealthy household and therefore this print provides evidence of class divisions among the working poor. In both Sandby and Wheatley’s prints the pedlars’ customers are servants of the upper classes.

The urban fascination with the lower classes of late eighteenth-century life led to the later development of the ‘romanticism’ of the pedlar in the rural context in nineteenth-century Irish and English art. These paintings of the poor were sought after more for their vices than their virtues, where the immorality of the poor was represented, for example by their drinking, and could be judged by the middle and upper class audience.\(^344\) The cottage, as a setting, became vital in the narrative of the poorer classes as Sir Martin Archer Shee wrote in 1809, ‘we soon find that vice can pervade the cottage as well as the palace, and it is very possible to be ignorant and awkward, without being innocent or picturesque’.\(^345\) David H. Solkin considered Shee’s point of view on how the poor were depicted as ‘showing their true colours’, which signalled an abandonment of the pastoral art of the past.\(^346\)

There was a cultural difference between Ireland and England in how hawkers and callers to the door were integrated in rural and urban communities, and this translated into the visual culture. In *Sketches of Irish Character*, Mrs. S.C. Hall wrote

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\(^{346}\) Ibid.
about a female pedlar with the trade name 'Peggy the Fisher Woman' who was a regular caller to the rural community in Bannow, County Wexford. The contemporary reviews of *Sketches of Irish Character* took Hall’s reminiscences as being accurate descriptions of life in Bannow. Hall’s publications were intended for both the Irish and English audience but in the early years were more popularly received in England. In her writing Hall described Peggy as a woman of much satire and visual interest and expressed the wish to ‘bodily’ bring this character to the reader. Instead she gave a detailed description of the pedlar:

> her linsey-woolsey gown, pinned up behind, fully displayed her short scarlet petticoat, sky-blue stockings, and thick brogues: a green spotted kerchief tied over her cap then a sun burnt, smoke-dried, flatted straw hat and the basket of fish, resting on a wisp of hay completed her head gear.

This pedlar, according to Hall, was often found selling other commodities including French silks, laces and brandy and when the farmer’s wife could not pay in cash, ‘they paid her in kind’, which Hall claimed she astutely sold elsewhere. Hall referred to Peggy’s homeless status, as she claimed that the pedlar made a home ‘anywhere’ as she was welcomed everywhere and the ‘best bit and sup in the house were readily placed before her’. Hall’s fascination with Peggy reflected the symbiotic relationship that pedlars had with the Irish sedentary community. The accompanying illustration (figure 3.3) was by John Rogers Herbert (1810-90) A.R.A. Herbert was later commissioned to paint nine fresco paintings in the Peers’ Robing Room at Westminster Palace in 1850. In *Peggy, the Fisher Woman*, the pedlar is placed within the domestic space rather than outside at the front door such as the hawkers in Wheatley and Sandby’s illustrations. This indicates a difference in space and environment between the rural and urban in the visual context.

In the same volume another account by Hall of a caller to the domestic space is the local woman by the name of Mabel O Neil and the author’s description noted ‘the peaceable cotters considered Mabel O’ Neil as a sort of wild woman, and, in

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347 Peter David Finlay, *The Irish as “other”: representation of urban and rural poverty in early-Victorian travel writing on Ireland* (Ph.D. Queen’s University Belfast, 2004), p. 133.
348 Ibid., p. 135.
350 ibid, p. 6.
351 Hall, *Sketches of Irish character*, p. 6
352 W. Justin O’ Driscoll, *A memoir of Daniel Maclise, R.A* (London, 1871), p. 132. Daniel Maclise was commissioned to paint the frescos in the Royal Gallery in 1858. O’ Driscoll cited that Maclise was impressed with Herbert’s painting skills, p. 208. Maclise also contributed illustrations to publications by Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall.
truth ceded to her the rights of hospitality more out of fear than in love’. Hall’s description of Mabel portrays tattered clothes and a bag that held food given to her by the charity of others. However, Hall’s description of her physical attributes hints at a person not of Irish descent and described her ‘skin, eyes, and hair, almost betokened foreign origin yet her features were remarkable for the shrewd, observant character’. The accompanying sketch to Hall’s account entitled Mabel O’Neil’s Curse (figure 3.4) by English illustrator John Gilbert (1817-1897) represents Mabel within the domestic space sitting beside an open fire. In Ireland, the fear of the curse drove many women to allow strangers into their home regardless of how they felt about them. Begging door-to-door, at the houses of both the rich and poor, was culturally different and with a unique history in comparison to England. In the 1835 report, one interviewee, Michael Bourke a labourer, stated that ‘I give lodgings to beggars, but would not admit every sort’. He claimed that he had to become more cautious of the type of beggar he allowed into his home after an incident when his blanket was cut into two and one half was stolen.

The construction of the female fortune-teller in the visual culture of the late eighteenth and into the middle of the nineteenth century mirrored the construction of this figure in literary sources. A recurrent motif in eighteenth-century genre painting, more popular in England than in Ireland, the fortune-teller was used to create a moral narrative in a painting, in particular when juxtaposed with a vulnerable young woman and her vanity. The exotic representation of the fortune-teller was a fundamental part of the composition in the painting The Fortune Teller (figure 3.5) by William Jones (active 1726-d.1747). Fortune-tellers were recorded in sixteenth-century England as being ‘Egyptian’ woman who can “tell marvelous things by looking into one’s hands”.

353 Hall, Sketches of Irish Character, p. 284.
354 Ibid., pp 283-4.
355 John Gilbert was an illustrator and painter who contributed drawings of historical scenes to the ILN.
357 For example references to fortune-tellers are in William Shakespeare’s, As you like it, Miguel de Cervantes’, La Gitanilla, William Wordsworth’s Vagrant Muse and Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre.
358 For example Francis Wheatley’s painting entitled A Wood Scene with Gypsies Telling a Fortune exhibited in 1778 in the Royal Academy, cited in Graves, The Royal Academy of arts, iv, 243.
The Gypsy was first recorded in England in 1505 and the name was descriptive of their origin, which was originally thought to be from Egypt. It was in the late eighteenth century when scholarly research, by linguistic and historical means, discovered that European Gypsies migrated from India. As a group they symbolise transience and mobility in immigration that has continued since the middle ages, yet as Jean-Pierre Liégeois states ‘not all Gypsies are nomads, and not all nomads are Gypsies’. Heinrich Grellmann (1753-1804), the German linguist, in the late eighteenth century, first considered that Gypsies were a separate group from vagrants. Grellmann’s theory is seen by David Mayall and others as a ‘watershed’ period in the study and research of Gypsies.

By presenting and focusing on the exotic element of their persona, fortune-telling became a popular way to earn an income. Little information exists on William Jones, and according to Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, he could have been either Irish or English. Walter Strickland noted that Jones worked in Dublin in the first half of the eighteenth century. In The Fortune Teller an elderly woman in a red cloak and black head scarf reads coffee grinds at a table surrounded by a group of five young women. The scene is in a bedroom with the bed to the left of the painting, hidden behind drapes. A young child in the foreground of the composition pulls along a toy horse, while the figure of another woman to the left of the painting bares both her breasts to the viewer and is the only person facing forward. The woman next to her partially bares one breast. The inclusion of the young child amongst the women having their fortunes read implies a moral lesson of the innocence of youth that becomes easily corrupted by vanity in early womanhood. Beside the left female in blue, a mirror is placed on a table facing the viewer. To the

360 Okely, The Traveller-Gypsies, p. 3.
361 Ian Hancock, ‘The emergence of Romani as a Koîné outside of India’ in Thomas Acton (ed.), Scholarship and the Gypsy struggle (Hertfordshire, 2000), p. 1. The origin of the Gypsies is from a military caste that left India ‘during the first quarter century of the second millennium in response to a series of Islamic invasions’.
364 Ibid.
365 Okely, The Traveller-Gypsies, p. 4.
366 Evidence that Jones painted in England comes from signed and dated (1738) set of over doors, four in total in Kimbolton Castle referenced in Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Ireland’s painters, 1600-1940 (New Haven and London, 2002), p. 76.
extreme right another older woman, probably the servant, stands in front of an open fire and appears to be making more coffee in a pot.

In Jones’ painting, the fortune-teller corrupts the virtue of the domestic space, in particular the bedroom. The presence of the fortune-teller, a nomadic and marginal figure, was a specific iconography chosen by Jones. Myths surrounding the fortune-teller were given credence, as evidenced in late eighteenth-century pamphlets. In 1792, a London pamphlet exposed the vulnerability of young females at the hands of fortune-tellers. The pamphlet’s introduction gave a detailed account of the dangers of seduction and the possibility of non-consensual sexual contact even rape. This publication conveyed the contemporary idea of women being naive customers at the hands of the fortune-teller. The author described a distinction between two types of fortune-tellers; the first were regular, who had a fixed place of operation and were publicly known. The second, known as the ‘Empiricks’ lived in remote parts of the town but frequently changed their dwellings ‘for fear of detection’. They acquired customers by ‘walking up and down the public streets, and slipping small bills or advertisements into the hands of such innocent looking young girls’. The accompanying image (figure 3.6) to the pamphlet shows a decrepit fortune-teller examining a young woman. This young woman is stripped to the waist and reveals both her breasts, similar to the figure in blue in Jones’s painting.

However, the cult of the fortune-teller in English eighteenth-century society portrayed different agendas. Gypsies’ inherent differences to sedentary communities were observed and exploited in folklore and literature. These sources put emphasis on certain characteristics such as the nomadism of Gypsies, as they were portrayed as being ‘close to nature’ or ‘wild and free’. For example, the print Group Portrait of Three Ladies and a Child (figure 3.7) by Anthony Cardon (1772-1813), a Flemish printer who worked in London conveyed a lighter tone of narrative. This print, described by the British Museum as a ‘group of ladies and a child; the lady on the right dressed as a Gypsy with the child’, highlighted the eighteenth-century fascination with fancy dress and role play. The women are identified by an inscription on the bottom of the print, as the Marchioness of Donegall, Mrs May, Miss May and the Earl of Belfast (the small child wrapped in the shawl on the

369 Ibid.
370 Okely, The Traveller-Gypsies, p. 2.
Gypsy's back). Both Cardon’s print and Jones’s painting provide evidence of the fascination that the wealthy had with the services provided by the fortune-teller. While Jones’s painting explores the result of female Gypsy fortune-tellers being allowed access into the domestic sphere of the wealthy, Cardon’s print provides the impression that Gypsy culture had on the upper classes. Cardon’s print shows the exotic fascination of landed gentry who role-played by dressing as a marginalized figure such as the Gypsy. The place of the female Gypsy within the context of the rural, but also more importantly of the domestic sphere, both rich and poor, highlights a highly fluid figure within the visual but also the public’s imagination. The intimate settings, where the female upper classes, both young and old, are comfortably portrayed communicating and physically touching through the examination of the palm, brings together two worlds that were very separate in reality.

In the English context, the female fortune-teller was the distraction to aid a theft in Thomas Heaphy’s (1775-1835) *Credulity* (1808) (figure 3.8).³⁷¹ In the painting, a young woman who is in the middle of preparing game for a meal is enticed to have her fortune told by a Gypsy woman who leans in through a kitchen window. While the Gypsy fortune-teller captures the young woman's attention, her young male accomplice enters in through the front door unnoticed and steals from a cupboard. The cat also takes advantage of the young woman's naive nature and steals a mackerel from a bowl placed on a stool. There is an abundance of food in the image, some of which is placed on the floor, in the rafters of the room and even falling from her lap. This image went against the usual depiction of the ‘deserving’ settled poor as happily domesticated, harmonious and industrious, which is emphasized by the quick manner in which the woman abandons her chores to indulge in her own vanity. The nature of this story about the stupidity of the poor and the threat of the nomad resulted in Heaphy’s painting having to be conveyed in a comic manner due to the ‘disturbing’ subject.³⁷² Deborah Epstein Nord described Gypsies in nineteenth-century English society as existing on the periphery and that they ‘were present but separate, often within view but almost never absorbed, encountered but

³⁷¹ Another painting on the topic of Gypsies and stealing was by Francis Wheatley entitled *A Gypsie’s Theft Detected* exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1797, cited in Graves, *The Royal Academy of arts*, iv, 244.
³⁷² Solkin, *Painting out of the ordinary*, p. 97.
seldom intimately known’.\(^{373}\) In England, it was recorded that male beggars went
door to door to beg and often had female travellers who accompanied them. These
women did not beg but disguised themselves as Gypsy fortune-tellers as one
observer noted:

> They watch for the master and the mistress to leave the house, and then they
try to get hold of the servants. They beg money, food, clothes, or anything;
and if a silver spoon is in their way they will not “tumble over it”; they will
steal it.\(^{374}\)

Another more sinister invasion of the domestic space was the inference that
Gypsies stole children, which was a popular theme in both literature and painting.
The print *The Stolen Child Discovered amid the Crew of Gypsies* (1805) (figure 3.9)
of a painting by Maria Spilsbury Taylor, depicts the story of a child stolen from a
wealthy family by a band of Gypsies. The print, the second in a series, narrates the
moment when the Beadle, hired by the family, enters a barn to find the child
surrounded by three female Gypsies stealing his clothes. The child stands out from
the Gypsies as he is dressed in white. The female Gypsies appear aggressive in the
print, with one of the women grabbing his arm while the second appears to be
shaking her fist at the crying infant. The theme of the stolen child was grounded in
folklore and legend that continued into the latter part of the nineteenth century.
Within literature the elusive and nomadic nature of Gypsy life meant that they were
close enough to enter a home and steal a child yet ‘remote enough to be permanently
out of reach’ of both the authorities and parents.\(^{375}\) The detail in the print elaborates
on what the Gypsies were wearing, the large family group they travelled in, and to
the right of the print three Gypsies sit around a fire with a cooking pot. The detail in
the clothes and appearance of the female Gypsies along with the tripod of sticks of
the campfire begs the question, did Spilsbury Taylor actually observed Gypsies in
England or did she use other sources such as her contemporary George Morland’s
paintings or literature?

There is evidence of a female Gypsy fortune-teller in one of the artist’s
sketchbooks. The costume of the female Gypsy to the left of *The Stolen Child*, in
particular her headscarf and the campfire with the tripod of sticks are similar in a
drawing (figure. 3.10) that Spilsbury Taylor created of a woman carrying out a palm

reading on a young boy. On the woman’s back, two babies snugly fit in her shawl but she is on her own in contrast to the group dynamic of *The Stolen Child*. This drawing could be an original idea for the series of paintings on the theme of the stolen child. One form of evidence for this theory is that the sketch is within a frame in the sketchbook and to the right margin; Spilsbury Taylor wrote ‘Plate 7’ which indicates that it was to become an illustrated print, perhaps a source for *The Stolen Child* series.

In the visual context, communication between unsupervised children of the settled community with Gypsies was unusual. Spilsbury Taylor did illustrate an element of fear in the drawing as one boy hides behind the child who is having his fortune told. As evident in this drawing and the print, the theme of the Gypsy fortune-teller oscillated between the exotic visitor and a threat. Alternatively, this drawing could also have been the early idea of a painting, which Strickland referred to as the work *Gipsy and Children* (whereabouts unknown) that was sold to a collection in 1835. The description in the catalogue indicated that this painting was an example of the ‘artist’s best performance’. Another work by Spilsbury Taylor entitled *Gipsies at a Cottage Door* was exhibited in 1816 and the date suggests that the origin of the work was in Ireland.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the sketchbook was an important form of visual communication. In Spilsbury Taylor’s case she used them to observe, formulate and compose her ideas for her oil paintings. Another method of recording was in writing, which similar to the sketchbook, enabled the female landed class to express their views in relation to the poorer classes. There was a fascination with visiting nomads among the public, and snatches of communication between nomads and the settled community were recounted by the English writer Dorothy Wordsworth (1771-1855). In a journal she recorded her observations about the labourers and beggars that inhabited the area of the Lake District where she lived. As Patricia Comitini stated, Wordsworth’s writings ‘deal with the social meaning and effect of poverty on people … are the key to understanding the triad of a specific kind of feminine subjectivity, one that exhibits familial love, charity and domesticity based on class

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376 Strickland, *A dictionary of Irish artists*, ii, 434. The collection belonged to John Crosbie Graves. Strickland also mentions another earlier painting by Spilsbury Taylor with the descriptive title of *The Stolen Child and Gipsies*, which was later engraved.
377 Ibid., 434.
378 Dorothy Wordsworth was the sister of the Romantic poet William Wordsworth (1770-1850).
difference'. In her journal, Wordsworth noted an encounter with a tinker woman begging with her child at her door and her detailed description included their physical appearances and what they wore:

On Tuesday, May 27th, a very tall woman, tall much beyond the measure of tall women, called at the door. She had on a very long brown cloak and a very white cap, without bonnet; her face was excessively brown, but it had plainly once been fair. She led a little bare-footed child about two years old by the hand, and said her husband, who was a tinker, was gone before with the other children. I gave her a piece of bread. Afterwards on my road to Ambleside …I saw her husband sitting by the roadside …the man did not beg.

Wordsworth was clearly fascinated with the tinkers who called to her door. She documented her decision to give them alms but excluded the voice of the female tinker in her writing. Wordsworth’s descriptions of the clothes that the tinker wore and her appearance in this excerpt are comparable with the visual details that Spilsbury Taylor produced in her drawing of the female Gypsy. Both Wordsworth and Spilsbury Taylor documented how Gypsies and tinkers appeared to them. They focused on ethnographic appearances but they also highlighted the important role Gypsy and tinker had in earning money by means of begging or fortune-telling. It is clear from Wordsworth’s description of the female tinker showing up at her door, that she gave her a piece of bread and felt that her duty was done. As Comitini noted, however, the caller to the door did not issue a plea for food or money; instead Wordsworth took the decision upon herself to give her food. Wordsworth’s entry described the family unit of the visiting tinkers and the dynamics within it. The mother and child had the job of begging from door to door, but the father who was mentioned by the female tinker did not partake in the act of begging. This intrigued Wordsworth. The family unit was deemed important to the tinker woman in that she informed Wordsworth of the existence of a husband. Wordsworth’s construction of the beggars, in both physical appearance and their clothing signified the importance she placed on class and how it was differentiated. Comitini noted that a missing bonnet, lack of shoes and skin browned from a life lived on the road was outside the normality of her class status. These signifiers meant that the tinkers were different, yet Wordsworth’s description of them in her journal and the charity of her alms

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379 Comitini, Vocational philanthropy and British women’s writing, p. 134.
380 Dorothy Wordsworth, Grasmere Journal (1800) cited in Comitini, Vocational philanthropy and British women’s writing, pp 134-5.
381 Ibid., p. 135.
giving acknowledged their existence and therefore allowed them to be ‘integrated into [the] cultural and discursive landscape’.  

Images of the visiting nomadic caller in painting also displayed evidence of an exotic influence that stemmed from the circulation of work by painters who travelled to North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, including Turkey, from the late eighteenth century. In 1825, William Mulready painted and exhibited The Travelling Druggist (figure 3.11) in the Royal Academy.  

In his account book Mulready noted the sale of ‘Druggist’ to M.W Ridley for three hundred and fifteen pounds in the same year.  

What is presented to the viewer is a pedlar dressed in Oriental clothing selling rhubarb, a common ingredient that was used in the mixture for cold and flu remedies.

The taste for Orientalism in English cultural life in the mid to late eighteenth century dominated the area of decoration including ceramics, furniture and details in architecture. In painting, images produced were westernized but costumes in particular were the most obvious way that artists brought Orientalism into English and European visual culture. Orientalism was a dominantly French genre and its popularity increased well into the nineteenth century. Charles Baudelaire wrote about the French painter Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863) who travelled to Algiers and Morocco to find an alternative source for his painting. The most popular subject was classical history painting yet Delacroix’s work, according to Baudelaire, would ‘communicate the intoxication distilled by all this exotic detail’. In Muready’s The Travelling Druggist, the exotic was displayed within the sphere of domestic rural England. It is unclear what specific source Mulready used for the iconography of this figure; either Turkey or Egypt. However, the date of 1825 suggests that Mulready would have been influenced by the onslaught of ‘Egyptomania’ that gripped the country in the 1820s. Travel books on the antiquities in Egypt and Turkey were

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382 Comitini, *Vocational philanthropy and British women’s writing*, p. 136.
383 Graves, *The Royal Academy of arts*, iii, 323.
385 For example Francis Wheatley’s, *Pedlar at the Cottage Door* (1791) depicts qualities of the Orient with the pedlar’s costume. Wheatley’s painting was exhibited in 1791 in the Royal Academy, cited in Graves, *The Royal Academy of arts*, iv, 244.
published early in the eighteenth century and often included detailed engravings of costumes.\textsuperscript{389} The real pursuit of the Orient by British painters did not happen until the 1840s.\textsuperscript{390}

In \textit{The Travelling Druggist} the contrast between the seller at the front door and the safety of the interior domestic space is emphasized with the mother and her sick child standing behind the half door, while a second child is placed outside. There is a moral message within the painting, which is symbolized by a bird trapped in a cage in the upper left-hand side of the composition, and this perhaps comments on the overly protected sick child in its mother’s arms. The young girl also symbolizes the healthy lifestyle of fresh air and play with a skipping rope in her hands.\textsuperscript{391} Many pouches drape from the pedlar’s belt and a wooden box hanging from his neck holds all his ingredients for sale. In his right hand a small weighing scales provides the measurements of what the housewife needs. The traditional inclusion of Oriental costume in the portraits of wealthy English people in the eighteenth century signified ‘a visual biography’ of commerce, diplomacy and wealth.\textsuperscript{392} Artists who travelled to the east in the eighteenth century often accompanied their patron within an entourage to create these portraits along the journey.\textsuperscript{393} In contrast, Mulready’s interpretation of eastern influences in his work translated into the domestic genre scene in the English rural idyll rather than an epic portrait.\textsuperscript{394}

The pedlar by the mid to late nineteenth century was very much in evidence in rural life in Ireland and England. The nomadic caller transformed into a figure of idealistic connotations of a rural idyll that was in danger of disappearing by the 1850s. The wandering pedlar in particular became transformed into a figure that was admired and in some instances envied. Frederick S. Arnold wrote in 1898:

\textsuperscript{389} Jullian, \textit{The Orientalists}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{393} One such artist was the French painter Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702-89 ), who travelled with Lord Duncannon to Constantinople in 1738; cited in Christine Riding, ‘Travellers and sitters: the Orientalist portrait’, pp 48-9.
\textsuperscript{394} For example Thomas Phillips, \textit{George Gordon, Lord Byron} (1814), oil on canvas, 127 x 102 cm, Government Art Collections, Britain.
Who has not, when the peddler and the umbrella-mender set forth on dusty roads once more, and the whirr of the scissors-grinder’s wheel is heard in the streets, felt a something in him that makes him, too, wish to leave his office or study in the town, to wander out, aimless but hopeful, into the country?  

Along with the construction of the male pedlar and his associated freedom, Gypsies were represented with specific rural associations. The Gypsy-fortune teller re-emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, more as an exotic representation rather than a threat. 

In the nineteenth century, itinerants that travelled in family and extended family groups were most likely to have been tinkers who were Irish, or Gypsies who had Indo-European origins. According to A.L. Beier, tinkers were an ‘elusive’ group in the early modern period in England. Their trade was low in status and they were often viewed by authorities with contempt, usually arrested for drunkenness and larceny. However, in Britain descriptions between tinkers, Gypsies and in certain cases Irish migrants were, at times, confused. For example in 1839, Edwin Chadwick published a personal ‘confession’ of an offender, aged twenty one, the son of ‘honest parents in Manchester’ after he was arrested for vagrancy. In his statement the young man gave a detailed account of his migratory profession, where he carried a covered hawkers basket with trinkets and small goods of buttons, pearl, bone and wood as an ‘excuse for travelling’. The accused made reference to the use of cant amongst this group, in particular, Gypsies, beggars and thieves. He stated that ‘the vagrant cant is a lower style than the thieves: they use it to tell one another what they get at different houses … the gipsies are the worst of thieves…they have no religion; are heavy cursers; go in families; never marry…in winter they live in towns, if very severe’. He claimed that the ‘travelling class’ of which he belonged to were, in part, made up of Irish descent.

But in Ireland, there was a more neutral attitude to Gypsies and tinkers and both groups were not, according to Aoife Bhreatnach, ‘definitively labelled and

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397 Ibid.
399 Ibid., p. 29.
stigmatised’. The record of migration of Gypsies to Ireland, even though scant, exists. Pádraig Mac Gréine refers to two distinct travelling groups;

Between tinkers and gypsies there is little or no resemblance, save in fact that they are itinerants; but there the resemblance ceases. They do not intermingle or intermarry, they speak different languages, or ‘cant’ as it is sometimes styled; and their religions are different.

Tinkers travelled the roads of Ireland, seeking shelter in farmsteads and often carrying their own tents. The origins of tinkers vary, according to many historians, anthropologists and folklorists. One theory is that tinkers originated from the Famine years of the 1840s where the displaced Irish tenants took to wandering the roads of Ireland in search of casual labour. Another opinion is that they are descended from the wandering itinerant craft workers in pre-Christian Ireland. In 1898 Frederick S. Arnold wrote that in Shakespeare’s Winter Tale, the character Autolycus is presented as a ‘peddler and a traveller with a pack on his back, but he is a rogue … he has a dozen different trades to ply, all shady enough; he is no honest merchant’. Arnold wrote this article for the Journal of American Folklore and in it he put forward a theory that the great British poets and writers including Shakespeare referred to the travellers and nomads in their work as Irish tinkers. Arnold considered that the arrival of Gypsies into England, from the east, in the early part of the sixteenth century were too ‘orientalised’ in traits, including skin colour to be the character of Autolycus in Shakespeare’s play. Yet he considered that Shakespeare drew his source for Autolycus from a wandering tribe distinctive to England prior to the sixteenth century, the tinkers. Arnold claimed that Irish tinkers kept within their own community and never married outside of it, had their own language and were in England prior to the arrival of the Gypsies. Hugh Douglas Hamilton, whose drawings are discussed at length in Chapter 2, illustrated a tinker in 1760 (figure 3.12). His attire is in a respectable state and he is represented on his own, plying his trade, which was in tinkering or mending broken metal containers. An interviewee

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406 Ibid., pp 218-19.
for the 1835 report gave an account of a tinker class amongst the beggars, where ‘the wives and families accompany the tinker while he strolls about in search of work, and always beg. They intermarr[y]y with one another, and form a distinct class’.\(^{407}\)

In 1890, Hugh Dorian, a writing clerk in Derry wrote of yearly visitors, who were nomadic and who consisted of ‘tinkers, pedlars, pipers, fiddlers, show-men and beggars, and many otherwise idle with no profession’.\(^{408}\) Even though Dorian appeared to put the nomadic groups under the category of ‘idle profession’ he noticed and wrote about the tinkers and their family group dynamic. He described how ‘encamping in a village or villages, they tried to keep as close to each other as possible, but every tribe, half tribe or family [of tinkers] knew where to set up, and without asking liberty they took possession of some man’s fireside’.\(^{409}\) As claimed by Aoife Bhreatnach, tinkers and Gypsies were seen by the settled community as being separate from other ‘vagrant men and women whose position and status in Irish society were unlike those of nomads’.\(^{410}\)

The tinker, in the nineteenth century, had a variety of trades required by the settled rural community, unlike the tramp, who often solely begged for alms for survival. However, tinker and Gypsy women and children regularly begged to generate an income, similar to the spouses and family of the landless labourer. Male tinkers or Gypsies did not partake in begging. Similar to the English Gypsies, Irish tinkers provided services including farm labouring, chimney sweeping, horse dealing and tinsmithing. The nomadic lifestyle had an ‘economic advantage’ for the tinkers as they were able to move to the area where the demand existed for goods and services.\(^{411}\) Large numbers of people were highly mobile in Ireland in the nineteenth century; therefore, according to Ciara Breathnach, lines between seasonal migrants and tinkers were difficult to distinguish by nineteenth-century authorities.\(^{412}\)

Erskine Nicol (1825-1904) created a painting entitled *Gipsies on the Road* (figure 3.13), featuring three figures in a group scene, two females and a male. The

\(^{407}\) *First Report ... Inquiring into the Condition of the Poorer Classes*, p. 495.


\(^{409}\) MacSuibhne and Dickson, *The outer edge of Ulster*, p. 213.

\(^{410}\) Bhreatnach, *Becoming conspicuous*, p. 29.


\(^{412}\) Breathnach, ‘Historical sources pertaining to Traveller’, p. 20.
women are dressed in clothing that would not have been dissimilar to the settled poor. A stoneware jug is placed into the foreground of the composition as discussed in Chapter 2 this was a visual marker representing poverty. In the 1850s the fortune-teller came to symbolise the potential lost rural enclave that concerned painters during this period. This concern was English dominated, as Ireland did not experience the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution. One artist who layered the romanticism of the rural space with the nomadic figure and transformed the fortune-teller from a threat to a more exotic figure was Nicholas Joseph Crowley. His painting *Fortune Telling by Cup Tossing* (c.1843) (figure 3.14)\(^{413}\) was engraved in 1844 by the Royal Irish Art Union.\(^{414}\)

The Royal Irish Art Union (hereafter RIAU) was founded in Dublin in 1839 and contributed to Ireland’s cultural landscape until 1859. Crowley studied at the Dublin Society School and was made associate member within the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1836.\(^{415}\) He moved to London after 1837,\(^{416}\) but after 1844 had addresses in both London and Dublin, which suggests that he frequently moved between the two cities.\(^{417}\) As a painter Crowley drew considerable critical attention in England when he exhibited. For instance, in 1840 *The Art-Union* critiqued a painting by him entitled *A Brown Study* as ‘pleasing and effective’ and stated that as a painter they were ‘justified in already ranking [him] high in his profession’.\(^{418}\)

*Fortune Telling* is set in the domestic sphere of a kitchen, where a young woman has her fortune read through tea leaves by an elderly female. The fortune-teller wears a patterned scarf on her head and a shawl that drapes around her shoulders. She also wears distinctive jewellery on her fingers. These references to Gypsy women’s bright colours and personal adornment were indicated to be the result of an Oriental tradition.\(^{419}\) Both figures stare intently into a delicate china cup held up by the fortune-teller. To the right background of the painting, a window displays a landscape. This window is significant in this piece, perhaps symbolising the transient life of the fortune-teller, who was fully welcomed into the home of the young client. Crowley draws on the distinct age difference between both sitters, the

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\(^{413}\) I wish to thank Dr. Brendan Rooney for bringing this image to my attention.
\(^{414}\) The Royal Irish Art Union is discussed at length in chapter 4.
\(^{415}\) Strickland, *A dictionary of Irish artists*, p. 238.
\(^{416}\) Ibid.
\(^{419}\) Mayall, *Gypsy identities 1500-2000*, p. 126.
naivety of youth in contrast to the knowing look of the fortune-teller. The superstition of fortune-telling was a topic that was examined by other painters such as Daniel Maclise and Sir David Wilke.\footnote{For example Daniel Maclise, \textit{All Hallow's Eve} (1832), to the left of this painting a woman fortells the fortune of a group of women sitting around her by means of divination. A later painting by Maclise entitled \textit{The Peep into Futurity} or \textit{An Irish Girl Trying her Fortune} was selected and engraved by the RIAU in the years 1854-59; David Wilkie, \textit{Josephine and the Fortune-Teller} (1837), oil on canvas, 211x 158cm, National Gallery of Scotland. The subject for the painting was Josephine’s memoirs of Napoleon. The scene depicts Josephine as a young woman in Martinique having her destiny as Empress foretold on her palm.}

Crowley’s \textit{Fortune Telling} was reviewed in \textit{The Art-Union} when it was exhibited in the British Institution in 1843. It was described as a work ‘of great merit—the merit of which will be most fully appreciated by those who understand something of Irish character’.\footnote{The Art-Union, v, no. 50 (1843), p. 68.} The writer acknowledged the differences of characters between Ireland and England and the reception by both audiences. If Crowley painted \textit{Fortune Telling} in England, he was there during the publication of George Barrow’s \textit{The Zincaii: Gypsies in Spain} (1841), which encouraged other works about Gypsies in literature and opera.\footnote{Okely, \textit{The Traveller-Gypsies}, p. 7. Okely cites George Borrow’s, \textit{Lavengro} (1851) and the \textit{Romany Rye} (1857) along with Mérimée’s \textit{Carmen} (1845).} However, as already examined in this chapter, English audiences were exposed to images of fortune-tellers and female Gypsies callers to the domestic space. It was in this critique of Crowley’s painting that the writer suggested that the RIAU should engrave \textit{Fortune Telling}, which they conceded to a year later.\footnote{The Art-Union, v, no. 50 (1843), p. 68.}

Crowley tapped into the rising investigation into Gypsies as a specific authentic ‘English’ race that was ethnically different to the sedentary population but exotic enough to be admired and Orientalized. The Irish and English response to the representation of the Gypsy was similar and probably influenced by the same source of English literature. The emergence of the Gypsy Lore Society in the 1880s led to the differentiation process in categorizing the sub-divisions between English Gypsies and Irish tinkers. The Irish tinkers were considered an inferior race to the ‘authentic’ Gypsy, as links with the Orient were not obvious.\footnote{Fortune-telling by Cup Tossing was also exhibited in Dublin in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1844; Stewart, \textit{Royal Hibernian Academy of arts}, p. 184.} It was not until the Celtic
Literary Revival in Ireland in the late nineteenth century that the Irish tinker figure, with its perceived links to a Celtic Ireland, would be considered and constructed.  

The images of female hawkers depicted in the eighteenth-century Cries highlighted the shift in taste among consumers of commercial art in London. This was led by the Royal Academy and their quest to educate the nation’s artistic tastes. The deconstruction of the female pedlar (hawker) for a new market was never mirrored in the Irish context. The illustrations of the 1830s in Hall’s annotations of Irish character were testament to this. Hall focused on the ‘otherness’ of the Irish and included the nomadic female which was illustrated in the drawings produced for the publication.

In contrast, Gypsies had darker narratives in the visual context. These narratives were derived by artists from literature and folklore, but topics such as rape, child abduction and theft were associated with the female figure. The questionable morality of women ties many of the paintings together, in particular those created within the last period of the eighteenth century. The morality of young women was seen to be easily taken and abused by sinister elderly Gypsy women yet on the other hand artists mocked the female’s vanity within the sedentary population. From both written and visual material, the main concern was the vulnerability of sedentary women at the hands of the female Gypsy. While pedlars had a functional and symbiotic use within the rural sedentary community, the Gypsy fortune-teller posed a more difficult and contested figure. Gypsies within English society were problematic due to the itinerancy of their lifestyle, and fortune-telling, specifically, was associated with an element of primitivism and superstition. Parallels exist between the representations of Gypsies in literature and the visual in that they were given ‘one-dimensional’ parts and have ‘predictable symbolic function’. As a group, the Gypsies strong ties with their own community and their ‘antagonism’ towards the ownership of property fundamentally made them ‘inassimilable’ within the English nation.

The domestic space was employed as a backdrop to showcase the exotic in painting. Mulready’s interpretation of Orientalism in English culture married the

427 Ibid., p. 1128.
meeting of two worlds, the East and West, at the front door. The consumption of the exotic, in both England and Ireland included the wandering nomad. With Mulready’s pedlar, the nomad was no longer an English native but travelled from further afield. In Crowley’s depiction of the fortune-teller, the Gypsy was a figure that transformed into a multi-cultural presence.
Chapter 4 Circulation of the prints of paintings and the popularization of the itinerant musician

This chapter focuses on representations of the itinerant musician and how the subject was disseminated and received within a London and Irish audience from 1760 to 1848. By examining closely the works of two artists, David Wilkie’s (1785-1841) *The Blind Fiddler* (1806) and Joseph Patrick Haverty’s (1794-1864) *The Blind Piper* (c.1840s) and *Patrick O’ Brien: the Limerick Piper* (c.1844), this chapter will highlight the importance of the circulation of prints of paintings. Throughout the nineteenth century prints of important artworks were circulated within the London and Irish markets by the means of a sole engraving or as a prize through an art union. This chapter sets out to investigate if the subject of the itinerant musician, in this case between London and Ireland, was aided and if a market was created by the wide circulation of prints of the artworks. Prior to photography, the reproductive print was in demand to such an extent that trained engravers built businesses in Dublin and London. The historiography of the itinerant musician within Irish culture will be discussed. By examining images of the iconography of the itinerant musician that transformed from Wilkie’s *Blind Fiddler* to the associated nationalist theme of the 1840s in Haverty’s paintings, this chapter will trace the change of representations in Irish art, its audience and reception in both London and Ireland.

This chapter contends that although most people were not privy to exhibitions at the academies of Dublin and London, an analysis of how prints of paintings were distributed can provide an alternative overview of both the fluidity of ideas for subjects in art and an alternative method of distribution. In this case prints of Wilkie’s *The Blind Fiddler* and Haverty’s two versions of *The Blind Piper* provide evidence of the interchange of the subject of the itinerant musician between the two markets of Dublin and London through the prints of their paintings. The role of the Royal Irish Art Union (RIAU) considerably developed the Irish nation’s taste in art and art consumption and also influenced the type of subject matter that was to become popular. For art unions in the British Isles, the associated journal *The Art-Union* critiqued and reported on artists’ work in regular exhibitions in London and Dublin. It often reported on the state of the arts in Ireland and followed the set-up of

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the RIAU in Ireland. The background to the RIAU is examined in this chapter as it
chose Haverty’s The Blind Piper for a prize in 1848, which led to the painting being
engraved. For the iconography of the itinerant musician, this chapter examines
poverty, nomadism and the devices used by artists to portray them. Images of
itinerant musicians by other artists including Hugh Douglas Hamilton, George
Grattan, Maria Spilsbury Taylor and Joseph Peacock (c.1783-1837) illustrate how
this nomadic figure was involved in many different aspects of Ireland’s cultural and
social landscape from 1760 to 1848. For instance, there are examples of musicians on
their own within the urban setting, in a family unit within the domestic space, in a
portrait and attending fairs or visiting the estate within the rural landscape.

The disregard for itinerant musicians in early modern Europe was influenced
by the fact that they were viewed as lowly vagrants or beggars.429 Itinerant pipers,
fiddlers or harpers known as ‘minstrels’ in sixteenth-century England were often
associated with immorality as they played at places where dancing, games or acting
took place.430 In the Irish and English visual context, the itinerant musician
transcended different spaces, from the urban and rural landscape to the domestic. The
images that are discussed were selected for the social position of the musician rather
than the role and representation of music itself. In eighteenth-century English art few
examples exist of upper-class families being entertained within their drawing rooms
by professional musicians or members of the family.431 The more popular
representation was the poor and wandering entertainer, which by the nineteenth
century was linked with the social spheres of the lower classes. These images convey
music as a means of survival rather than its more obvious function as a leisurely or
educational pursuit.

Wilkie painted The Blind Fiddler (1806) (figure 4.1), which was exhibited in
London in the Royal Academy in 1807.432 From this painting, prints were created.
The importance of the travelling musician as a motif for artists was particularly
evident in this work. Even though this painting was based on a Scottish itinerant
musician and was highly influenced by the Dutch seventeenth-century genre, it

429 Tim Carter and John Butt (eds), The Cambridge history of seventeenth-century music (Cambridge,
162.
431 Richard Leppert, Music and image: domesticity, ideology and socio-cultural formation in
432 Algernon Graves, The Royal Academy of arts: a complete dictionary of contributors and their work
depicted a specific cultural tradition that had healthy support from the viewing public and patronage in both Ireland and England. Allan Cunningham wrote in 1836 that it was a painting about a ‘class truly British … in unity of purpose it is perhaps one of the best works of the painter’. The composition of the painting is divided into two sections- the fiddler and his family, including his wife and two children to the left, with the settled family of the house consisting of eight figures of men, women and children to the right. Cunningham described the scene as:

*a cold winter day…*a blind and wandering fiddler, with his wife and two children has sought shelter or rest in a shoemaker’s cottage, and as a requital for such hospitality, has taken his fiddle from the case, screwed the pegs with a careful hand, slanted his left cheek over the instrument like a man who loves his craft and is treating the family to one of his favorite tunes.*

This painting conveyed the trend of representing the ‘everyday life’ that became important in the visual arts in the early part of the nineteenth century. There were few artists who became successful based solely on this even though it was a popular genre. In this painting Wilkie proved to be master of the minute detail. The communication between the characters, with each other and within the domestic space is the corner stone of the rich narrative within the painting. The depiction of the fiddler and his itinerant family convey a social awareness. The viewer is in no doubt about the vagrancy of the fiddler and his family and its attached hardships for this group of four. The fiddler’s wife is painted in a manner that is devoid of the beauty that female wanderers were often associated with. Her facial features have no delicacy or finesse to them; in fact at first glance she appears very masculine. For Cunningham she appeared out of place within the painting and described her as a ‘course cummer, good enough, the painter may say, for a blind man, yet surely too old in her looks to be a suckling mother’ (figure 4.2). She holds a sleeping child in

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433 Allan Cunningham, *The cabinet gallery of pictures by the first masters of the English and foreign schools in seventy-three line engravings; with biographical and critical dissertations* (2 vols, London, 1836), i, 23.
434 Ibid., pp 23-4.
435 Thomas Faed (1826-1900) painted a version of this theme in 1856 entitled *Home and the Homeless*, which encompasses the division between the sedentary community and the homeless wandering poor; Christiana Payne, *Rustic simplicity: scenes of cottage life in nineteenth-century Britain* (Nottingham, 1998), pp 64-65.
her arms while in the background her son warms his hands in front of the open fire. At her feet lies a basket filled with small wares that she peddles.\footnote{Undated and untitled newspaper clipping critiquing The Blind Fiddler in album of notes, press-cuttings and other miscellanea concerning the life and work of David Wilkie (NAL, David Wilkie, MSL/1865-12-29).}

As a family they appear detached and dwarfed by the joviality and presence of the family to the right. There is no physical communication between husband and wife or parents with their children. This is symbolized by the fiddler concentrating on his playing. This is in contrast with the entertained family, where there are strong bonds between the mother and her child on her lap who reaches out to her father who in turn interacts with her. The baby is full of life, unlike the piper’s baby who appears morbidly listless in its mother’s arms. The young boy to the extreme right of the painting mimics the tragedy of the life of these vagrants as he pretends to play on a bellows with a stick. He is in shadow in comparison to the fiddler and his expression is depicted in a manner that borders on the grotesque. There are elements of the carnival to this painting\footnote{David H. Solkin, \textit{Painting out of the ordinary: modernity and the art of the everyday life in early nineteenth-century Britain} (New Haven and London, 2008), p. 160.} but there is more of a direct interpretation of the vagrant life of the musician that borders on social commentary.

A print of \textit{The Blind Fiddler} (figure 4.3)\footnote{Other copies of prints (excluding book illustrations) of The Blind Fiddler housed in the British Museum include a woodcut printed by Dobbs Bailey &Co, published in London with the dates 1806-1845, 16 x 21 cm; wood engraving by Henry Vizetelly, published in London between 1835-1853, 40.7 x 54.8cm and an etching published by G. Gilbert, published in London between 1806-1855, 17.8 x 30.2cm.} engraved in 1811 was dedicated to Sir George Beaumont, the patron of the painting, who donated it to the National Gallery.\footnote{‘The engraved works of Sir David Wilkie, R.A’, \textit{The Art-Union}, ii, no. 12 (1840), p. 11.} \textit{The Blind Fiddler} was exhibited again in 1812 in the Pall-Mall in London along with other paintings by Wilkie.\footnote{A catalogue of the pictures, painted by D. Wilkie, R. A now exhibiting at no.87, Pall-Mall (NAL, David Wilkie, MSL/1865-12-29).} A sketch of the painting was also exhibited in the show. English copyright law in relation to engravings of paintings was vague and at times unfair to the artist. When a painter or engraver kept the artwork out of the public domain, it was protected against copies of it being published.\footnote{Typed letter entitled ‘British Artistic Copyright’, D. Roberton Blaine to John Rogers Herbert R.A, 12 Feb.1856 (NAL, William Mulready, MSL/1961/4461/73), p.1.} However, once an artist publicly exhibited or sold a painting or engraving they lost the copyright of their work.\footnote{Ibid.} The print highlights the amount of detail that Wilkie placed into his painting; however the expressions of the characters, in particular the
fiddler and his wife changed considerably, and appear more positive in nature. The print of the painting altered the overall emotional content of the work, which caricatures the figures.

In Ireland, the blind piper was fashionable as a subject. Many young children’s sight was affected by smallpox, which was rampant in Ireland during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. During frequent outbreaks of epidemics, smallpox was propagated by conditions of poverty including poor diet along with cramped and unhygienic living conditions. However, contagious diseases were also spread by the high numbers of wandering beggars. Smallpox was finally controlled in Ireland by the success of a public compulsory vaccination system in 1863. The only opportunity for earning an income for a blind young person was training in a musical instrument, which enabled them to attain a small livelihood from an itinerant lifestyle. Irish depictions of itinerant musicians contrast with English images, in that the name of the musician was known to the artist and usually placed within the title of the work.

For example in his Cries drawings Hamilton composed Blind Daniel the Piper (figure 4.4) where the musician sits on a chair. The chair is highly fashionable in design, and it is unlikely that an itinerant musician would have carried such a cumbersome item; nevertheless it gives a tone of importance and regality to the figure. Apart from the chair there is no other descriptive background in the drawing, which suggests an urban setting. Hamilton focused fully on the blind piper and successfully conveyed a lonely figure. The portrayal of the itinerant musician in an urban space was a rare one within Irish visual culture, particularly in painting.

Another unique example of an itinerant musician occupying the urban space is George Grattan’s painting entitled The Blind Piper (1801) (figure 4.5). Grattan again explored poverty and blindness in his later work Blind Beggar Woman and Child discussed in chapter 2. The Blind Piper appears to be set in the back streets of a city, presumably Dublin. The piper stands holding the traditional union pipes similar to the instrument that ‘Daniel’ plays in Hamilton’s drawing. The clothes worn

444 Laurence M. Geary, Medicine and charity in Ireland, 1718-1851 (Dublin, 2004), p. 73.
by the men in both images did not change, despite the forty-year time span between them. The clothing ensemble includes a tricorne hat, knee breeches, frock coat, waistcoat and stockings. William Laffan states that the piper’s outfit in Hamilton’s drawing became the mainstay outfit for the itinerant musician throughout the nineteenth century. He suggests that Hamilton’s depiction was familiar for artists and, in effect, became part of the cultural iconography when they painted itinerant musicians.⁴⁴⁷

Grattan’s reference to the itinerant blind musician in a dark isolated street was adopted by another artist in the late eighteenth century. When compared to a lithograph entitled ‘the piper’ by French artist Theodore Gericault (1791-1824) in 1821, the musicians were used as a form of representation of disharmonious social difference. Gericault’s piper was created in London when the artist spent a period of time there after he finished the controversial painting The Raft of the Medusa (1818-1819). Shesgreen noted that Gericault’s series of prints ‘take the depiction of back streets and back-street characters as far in the direction of anti-nostalgia … and still pretend to aesthetic purpose or hope to win buyers among the respectable classes’.⁴⁴⁸ Grattan’s piper represents a much darker, grittier version of the lone blind piper than that conveyed by Hamilton in his drawing of Daniel. The background to Grattan’s painting is strikingly lit and has the appearance of a stage set, where the emergence of buildings set the tone of isolation for this figure. Both artists capture the piper with his head down, and Grattan’s figure is standing which conveys a feel of awkwardness. The most notable observation from both these images is the lack of an audience, as there is no evidence of them entertaining the city’s inhabitants. Richard Leppert claimed that music of the poor was ‘ubiquitous, central to their lives’ and a ‘part of what constituted a community of class, a means of self-definition’.⁴⁴⁹ The absence of an audience signified a sense of detachment and isolation and appeared a deliberate action by both Hamilton and Grattan.

In the early nineteenth century the depiction of ‘celebration’ in the form of fairs and large gatherings at markets was popular in both Irish and English visual culture. In his work, Solkin considered the theme of ‘carnival’ where the genre paintings of entertainment or ‘ritual spectacles’ fell under subjects such as fairs,

⁴⁴⁹ Leppert, Music and images, p. 214.
popular festivals, sports, comic shows and dancing.\textsuperscript{450} In Europe, from the seventeenth century to the later part of the nineteenth century, laws were passed in an effort to ban or curtail carnivals or popular festivals. In most cases they were deemed unacceptable due to the ‘feasting, violence, drinking and outrageous clamour’ that was associated with them.\textsuperscript{451} In Joseph Peacock’s \textit{The Patron or Festival of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches of Glendalough} (figure 4.6) he painted the musician alongside a female ballad singer and placed them in the right foreground of the painting. Both figures are standing on something that elevates them above the ground. Men surround them, either standing on the ground or on horseback. The fiddler’s hat is tied to his waist and both figures appear to be painted in a crude manner (figure 4.7). As a painter Peacock was drawn to the ‘familiar life’\textsuperscript{452} and as the evidence of the painting shows he was very much interested in the different strata of Irish society. The types of characters seen at the fairs throughout Ireland often included ballad singers, both male and female.

The attempt to control fairs and other religious gatherings such as the pattern at Glendalough was done through Penal Laws which legislated against them.\textsuperscript{453} They were curtailed in an effort to ban ‘popery and superstition’ but authorities were more concerned about large assemblies of ‘hostile people’.\textsuperscript{454} Later, the Catholic Church became part of a process of ‘disowning’, not only the actual pattern itself but also how culturally and symbolically it was a space for the habitation of the ‘other’.\textsuperscript{455} In this case, Peacock represented a space where the itinerant musician and balladeer thrived and mingled with all classes of Irish society.\textsuperscript{456} In the nineteenth century, ballad singers were placed in the background of paintings such as Peacock’s work. However, there were exceptions including the portrait of a ballad singer by Daniel Maclise (1806-1870) which he painted 1858.

The travelling musician in the foreground in \textit{The Wedding Dance at Rossana} (figure 4.8) by Spilsbury Taylor was recurrent in paintings of an Irish ethnographic

\textsuperscript{450} Solkin, \textit{Painting out of the ordinary}, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{453} Stiofán Ó Cadhla, \textit{The holy well tradition: the pattern of St. Declan, Ardmore, County Waterford, 1800-2000} (Dublin, 2002), p. 9
\textsuperscript{454} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{455} Stallybrass and White, ‘Bourgeois hysteria and the carnivalesque’, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{456} The subject of male and female balladeers were later developed by Jack B. Yeats (1871-1957) in his illustrations and paintings in the early twentieth century.
nature, in particular when it came to the Irish poor. In England, the poor were placed within landscape paintings as hardworking and loyal dedicated servants while in Ireland they were heavily depicted as boisterous and lazy characters. However, in Solkin’s research the culture of entertainment in paintings, particularly in the early nineteenth century, shows that it was a popular topic in both countries.

Both Charlotte Yeldham and Claudia Kinmonth verify that the subject of the painting is of a wedding celebration. Tom Dunne gave an alternative analysis of the painting when he interpreted the scene as a ceremonial harvest dance. The occupants of the house look out from the drawing room window, at a safe and symbolic distance from the celebrations. The composition of the painting, where the landlord is separated from the tenant, is achieved with the placement of figures of the gentry within a large drawing room window to the right of the painting. They occupy a small part of the composition and are clearly divided from their tenants who make up the majority of the narrative. The light that comes from the drawing room of the house illuminates the dancers and their audience. The figure of the itinerant musician, placed in the foreground of the painting, was researched by Maria Spilsbury Taylor in one of the sketchbooks that she kept during her stay in Rossana. The detail that she lavished on his initial drawing allowed her to copy him directly into the composition of the painting. However, in this painting, the piper is not alone as there are two other male musicians, a fiddler and a tin whistle player, in the mid-foreground.

A group of people dressed in straw costumes dance in a circle in the centre of the painting. These figures were most likely traditional mummers. Mummers were members of the community who disguised themselves in masks and costumes and approached houses or pubs to perform a dance or play in exchange for money. However, straw head dresses were used in other traditional festivities including wren

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458 Charlotte Yeldham, Maria Spilsbury (1776-1820) artist and evangelical (Farnham, 2010), p. 151; Claudia Kinmonth writes a descriptive piece on this painting in Brendan Rooney (ed.), A time and a place: two centuries of Irish social life (Dublin, 2006), pp 75-7.
460 Ibid.
461 Maria Spilsbury Taylor, ‘Piper’, c.1814-1819, pencil on paper, sketchbook (19, 433), 23.5 x 33cm, Department of Prints and Drawings, NGI.
boy celebrations on St. Stephen’s day. The description of a straw head dress in 1920 stated that a coronal arrangement placed on the top of the head dress mimicked the disc of the sun.\textsuperscript{463} The ritual involved the dancing of a male and ‘sham’ female in a ‘mock conjugal union’ which to the writer implied the survival of a ‘sexual rite’.\textsuperscript{464} In certain places in southwest Ulster, weddings were often interrupted by groups of men in straw boy costumes, again symbolizing a fertility ritual.\textsuperscript{465}

In the painting the itinerant piper provides the music, along with the other musicians, for the dance. The significance of the itinerant piper (figure 4.9) in this painting and in the sketchbook is that he is actively engaged as part of a collective gathering. Spilsbury Taylor diverged from the more traditional representation of a lone musician such as Grattan or Hamilton’s urban piper.\textsuperscript{466} He, along with beggars and other vagrant characters including Gypsies, piqued Spilsbury Taylor’s interest in the nomadic culture.

Wilkie’s \textit{The Blind Fiddler} influenced painters in both England and Ireland. For example in Frederick Goodall’s (1822-1904) \textit{The Irish Piper} (1847) (figure 4.10), produced forty years after \textit{The Blind Fiddler}, elements of Wilkie’s painting can be clearly seen. Goodall was an English artist, and \textit{The Irish Piper} was one of many paintings of Irish themes that he produced following a visit to Ireland in 1844. The similar setting of Wilkie’s interior domestic scene was mimicked by Goodall, except that he depicted the musician on his own. Goodall as a painter was of a lower ranking to Wilkie. He contextualised the itinerant musician into an Irish context by using the bagpipes, although references in exhibition catalogues show that he painted pipers in Brittany as well. Goodall’s painting referenced the Dutch tradition as Wilkie had done in his \textit{Blind Fiddler}.

An important cultural institution for the promotion of arts in mid-nineteenth century Ireland was the establishment of the Royal Irish Art Union. The initial setting up of the RIAU coincided with that of the London Art Union, and it was

\textsuperscript{463} Miscellanea, ‘Straw head dresses’ in \textit{The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities of Ireland}, x, no. 1 (1920), p. 61.
\textsuperscript{464} Ibid., p. 62.
\textsuperscript{466} Other examples of the lone piper in Irish art include Samuel Lover (1797-1868), \textit{The Irish Piper} (n.d), pencil on paper and Frederic William Burton, \textit{Paddy Conneely, a Galway Piper} (1840), pencil and watercolour on paper; Prints and Drawings Department, NGI.
eventually considered a more successful branch than its English counterpart. The seeds for the RIAU and other art unions in Britain began with the House of Commons Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures of 1835 with the agenda of expanding and spreading the aesthetic appreciation and knowledge of the principles of art and design. The RIAU was officially founded in 1839. The Report of the committee of selection of the Royal Irish Art Union; or the society for the encouragement of the fine arts in Ireland, by the purchase and diffusion of the works of living artists, for the year 1839-40 noted that Irish art did not have a healthy market in Ireland but that the setting up of the RIAU would help create a positive change. This was aided by the introduction, in its first year, of inviting subscribers to join from abroad. However, it was noted that the ‘Irish in England’ were slow to become subscribers; it was hoped that in the following year the RIAU would ‘procure a large accession of strength in London’. In England, art unions formed part of an overall movement to make the arts being accessible to all classes of society. One such change saw restrictions on admission to galleries and exhibitions slowly lifted, and in Ireland in 1845 the Hibernian Academy opened its doors to the poorer classes. Lynda Nead referred to the critical attacks on the Royal Academy in London in 1863, and indeed these accusations of elitist attitudes led to a Parliamentary Commission, eventually resulting in free admission for the working classes on Saturdays.

In Ireland, the setting up of the RIAU was spurred by a severe decline in exhibitions at the Royal Hibernian Academy and the domination of portrait painting over other genres. The RIAU comprised members of the public who subscribed at least one pound per annum into the union. From these members, twenty-one were elected to create a committee. This committee was in charge of selecting and

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467 Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions, together with minutes of evidence, appendix and index, H.C. 1845, p. viii.
469 Report of the committee of selection of the Royal Irish Art Union; or the society for the encouragement of the fine arts in Ireland, by the purchase and diffusion of the works of living artists, for the year 1839-40 (Dublin, 1840), p. 9.
470 Ibid.
471 The Art-Union, ii, no. 16 (1840), p. 71.
472 Black, ‘Practical patriots and true Irishmen’, p. 140.
473 Nation, 9 Aug. 1845.
475 Ibid., p. 168.
476 Black, ‘Practical patriots and true Irishmen’, p. 140.
purchasing original artworks from Irish artists.\textsuperscript{477} At the end of each year, the purchased artworks were included in a lottery as prizes for the members. However, subscription to the union entitled each member to an engraving, exclusive of the art union, of a chosen painting. It was stipulated that the artist had to be resident in Ireland for at least a year prior to submission of work.\textsuperscript{478} With the distribution of prizes, the committee created an exhibition of the selected works for the public where members were encouraged to invite friends and it was stated that ‘a vast concourse of persons of all classes, sexes, and ages thronged the rooms for the three successive days’.\textsuperscript{479}

The first engraving the RIAU issued was after Frederick William Burton’s (1816-1900) \textit{The Blind Girl at the Holy Well} (figure 4.11). It was originally meant for distribution in 1839 but materialized in 1841.\textsuperscript{480} \textit{The Blind Girl at the Holy Well} proved popular with the RIAU subscribers and the print became highly sought after.\textsuperscript{481} Burton’s painting illustrated a sentimental Irish subject that was religious in content and based on the vulnerable blind person. The figures are well dressed and placed in an idealized landscape, which features a large Celtic stone cross to the left of the image. These symbols, which were specific to Irish culture, appeared more frequently in art during this period, reflecting the increasing desire for nationalism to be expressed in a visual capacity. The first engraving of Burton’s painting was presented to Queen Victoria in 1841, where the frame was adorned with emblematic Irish symbols including a bard playing on a harp, the Irish wolf dog, the round tower and the ancient cross.\textsuperscript{482}

Burton was commended in the journal \textit{The Art-Union} for his achievement in creating a painting that was ‘not only creditable in the highest degree to him as an artist and a man of feeling and observation, but a production to which the rising school of Ireland may look with pride and satisfaction’.\textsuperscript{483} In 1841, the painting \textit{The Young Mendicant’s Novitiate} by Richard Rothwell (1800-1868) won second prize.\textsuperscript{484}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{477} Ibid.
\bibitem{478} \textit{Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions}, p. viii.
\bibitem{479} \textit{The second annual report of the committee of selection of the Royal Irish Art Union; or the society for the encouragement of the fine arts in Ireland by the purchase and diffusion of the works of living artists, being that for the year 1840-41} (Dublin, 1842), p. 14.
\bibitem{480} The print was engraved in London by Henry Thomas Ryall, who was the portrait and historical engraver to Queen Victoria.
\bibitem{481} \textit{Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions}, p. 43.
\bibitem{482} \textit{The second annual report of the committee of selection ... being that for the year 1840-41}, p. 12.
\bibitem{483} \textit{The Art -Union}, i (1839), p. 72.
\bibitem{484} Black, ‘Patriots and true Irishmen: the Royal Irish Art Union 1839-59', p. 141.
\end{thebibliography}
The Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions indicated that the circulated prints would result in an increased knowledge of contemporary painting for the general public. The report claimed that the union enabled the subscribers to easily possess a collection of engraved or original artworks that would become ‘the nucleus of a rising collection’ and within a family encourage conversations about ‘Art’.\textsuperscript{485} If the aims of the RIAU was to circulate prints of paintings that they viewed as being superior and of high art quality, then their chosen examples are important to consider within the larger context of shaping the nation’s artistic taste in the mid-nineteenth century.

In its second year, the committee claimed that the success of the RIAU was reflected in exhibitions at the Royal Hibernian Academy where:

\textit{\ldots} instead of being merely filled with portraits, commissioned pictures, which vanity or affection may have prompted, a very large proportion of works of originality \ldots adorned its walls, at once gratifying its visitors and improving public taste.\textsuperscript{486}

The process of creating a print from a chosen painting was thorough and the printer was selected for their high quality of work and reputation. For instance, Burton’s \textit{Blind Girl at the Well} took over a year to print by Messrs McQueen at Tottenham Court-Road in London.\textsuperscript{487} The subjects within the paintings selected were marginal in context, representing people who were considered ‘outsiders’ in society. In 1845, Stewart Blacker (1813-1881), the secretary of the RIAU was questioned about the nature of the chosen subjects for the prints. It was suggested to him that an art union could be successful in changing the type of subject matter that the public desired:

by offering prizes for works connected with religious and national art, rather than by selecting, as they are now obliged to do, from the annual exhibition of art, subjects solely at the choice of the artists, guided often by the vicious or imperfect taste of the public.\textsuperscript{488}

Burton’s painting mirrored the taste and popularity for the sentimental in subject painting, which reflected the taste of the RIAU for subjects that embodied contemporary ideas.\textsuperscript{489} The rise of sentimentality in art during the Victorian period

\textsuperscript{485} Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions, p. xxi.
\textsuperscript{486} The second annual report of the committee of selection \ldots being that for the year 1840-41, pp 6-7.
\textsuperscript{487} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{488} Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{489} The second annual report of the committee of selection \ldots being that for the year 1840-41, p. 9.
satisfied the search of the buying public for art that was low-key in emotion rather than giving an intellectual or moral gratification. 490

The engravings from paintings chosen by the RIAU were circulated within Ireland but also throughout the British colonies and other European countries. 491 This, coupled with critiques of art exhibitions in The Art-Union, exposed both an Irish and English audience to artworks by Irish painters. The circulation of the subject of an itinerant piper by the Irish artist Joseph Patrick Haverty was crucially important as it was an interpretation of a vagrant that was transformed into a symbol of nationalism. Haverty produced two paintings in the 1840s about a blind Limerick piper named Patrick O’ Brien. O’Brien became blind at the age of twenty-six and consequently moved to Limerick city, where he played regularly on Hartstonge Street. 492 This is where Haverty reportedly met him. Haverty was born in Galway and worked there most of his life but he also spent time in Dublin and Limerick. In Limerick he received support and patronage for his painting, 493 whereas in Dublin patronage was, at times, unforthcoming. The writer of his obituary in the Nation claimed that Haverty’s paintings, among them Monster Meeting, which was left in his studio ‘with its face to the wall, in some lumber-room in Dublin for want of a purchaser’. 494 In choosing the subject of a blind piper, a figure commonly seen on the streets of Limerick, Haverty found a topic that had wide audience appeal. As a painter, Haverty produced altarpieces for many churches in Ireland and had experience in providing artwork for a variety of audiences. 495

The RIAU listed a painting by Haverty, The Limerick Piper, as a prize won by Joshua Fade Duckett, Duckett’s Grove, Carlow valued at 25 pounds in 1841. 496 Seven years later, another painting of the Limerick piper by Haverty was engraved in 1848 and three hundred copies were given out as prizes. 497 The two versions of the theme of the blind piper vary in certain degrees, most notably with the manner in

491 Report from the Select Committee on Art Unions, p. ix.
493 Strickland, A dictionary of Irish artists, i, 454; Nation, 6 Aug. 1864.
494 Nation, 6 Aug. 1864.
495 Haverty replicated Esteban Murillo’s Immaculate Conception for the chapel in St. Joseph’s hospital in Limerick city, Nation 6 Aug. 1864.
496 The second annual report of the committee of selection ... being that for the year 1840-41, p. 16.
which Haverty painted the musician accompanied by a little girl. Both paintings feature a young girl but her function changes within the composition.

In *The Blind Piper* (c. 1840s) Haverty painted O’ Brien seated in a side profile with reputedly his daughter sitting beside him. Both figures are dressed in fine clothes that have disintegrated into rags. In this painting, the young girl represents the piper’s sight as she gazes out towards the viewer. The physical contrast between the piper and his small minder reflects the harshness of the situation, particularly on the young girl. Haverty painted O’ Brien in a dignified manner, as claimed by Sighle Bhreatnach-Lynch, the dishevelled socks and his ragged suit betray vulnerability in his situation as a blind wandering figure. *The Blind Piper* can be considered nationalistic due to the use of subject and the placement of the figures within a landscape that is distinctively Irish.

As mentioned earlier, Haverty produced a diversity of topics in his work, which found favour with a variety of audiences, and Daniel O’ Connell’s portrait, which was engraved in 1836, is an example of the political appeal of his work. While there are contrasts in age and social status between O’ Connell and the blind musician, there are similarities in treatment. Both figures were painted twice by the artist and both are painted in the portrait format within a landscape setting. One of O’ Connell’s portraits (figure 4.13) is housed in the Reform Club in London. The two versions of O’ Connell are similar in composition, except that the hound is painted differently; in the portrait in the Reform Club, the hound has its back to the viewer. Although Haverty placed both O’ Connell and the piper in the wild scenery of Ireland’s countryside, these two figures occupied opposite places in Irish nineteenth-century society. Haverty represented O’Connell dressed in his trademark cloak and, in terms of his political career, at the height of his power. Fintan Cullen stated that the portrait reflected a past Celtic nostalgia. O’ Connell stands proud and tall, imposing against the backdrop; a young and perhaps fearless leader is portrayed. In

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498 In the NGI permanent collection since 1864.
503 Cullen, *Visual politics*, p. 100.
contrast, the piper is old, incapacitated by blindness and accompanied by a female child.

In a written account of poverty in Limerick in 1858, the German traveller Julius Rodenberg described his wanderings through the Irishtown area of the city. His descriptions of Limerick contextualised the environment that Haverty occupied. Rodenberg witnessed ‘the whole wretchedness of humanity’ and in his account he illustrated:

… a man without legs, walking on his hands; there a woman crawling across the street on hands and knees, like an animal. In a doorway sat two bagpipers playing in turns. A band of ragged fellows were collected and listening to the well-known strains; but no one sang to the melodies.504

The connotation of poverty and destitution was so overwhelming that people were unable to sing and be joyous with the pipers. The association with a downtrodden nation can be ascribed to a certain degree with the itinerant piper in Haverty’s portrait. In Grattan’s The Blind Piper (figure 4.5) the dislocation of the marginalised vagrant piper within the urban space had more of a truthful reflection of isolation and poverty. However, Haverty transformed the lone piper into a new type of representation that symbolised instead a new visual movement to represent the Irish nation and its people.

In Haverty’s second version of Patrick O’ Brien (figure 4.14) the piper faces the viewer. Again a girl is included in the composition and she appears to be giving money to the musician, which she is about to drop into his hat that is on the ground beside him. The child is a completely different figure to the first painting, with red hair, very pale complexion and dressed in upper-class finery. A small dog, which is playfully reaching towards the young girl’s donation, replaces the musician’s daughter as a companion to the piper. Similar to the NGI’s painting, the piper is yet again placed in what might be termed a classical Irish setting. During the nineteenth century popular prints and reproductions from paintings made them more accessible to every class. In European art a trend developed where artists began to value the power of popular culture and used subjects of ordinary people to educate the masses. The move towards a broader audience gaining access to contemporary art within galleries pushed the Royal Hibernian Academy to show paintings by a variety of Irish artists including Haverty. It was stated in the Nation that subjects were

‘modelled this time for the smith and the carpenter, the huxter and the mason. It only remains to be seen if people are still too rude to grasp at so cheap and noble a pleasure, or whether they will early use it’. The contrast of Haverty’s two images of the itinerant musician is that he is accompanied in the portrait with a little girl or his daughter. In contrast to Hamilton’s drawing and Grattan’s lone piper, Haverty hints at the possibility of a family unit, as in the NGI painting, rather than a sole wanderer isolated and ‘dislocated’ within an urban environment. Unlike Grattan’s piper lurking in a side street, Haverty’s musician occupies a positive and affirmative space that was easily recognisable and relatable for an Irish audience by the mid-nineteenth century.

In Wilkie’s *The Blind Fiddler*, the impact of a wandering life in the early nineteenth century was succinctly presented within a domestic framework. The circulation of the print of Wilkie’s iconic image provided a framework for contemporary artists in England that eventually influenced how the subject was presented in Ireland. Haverty choosing the subject of the blind piper is of huge importance. Unlike Wilkie’s version of the wandering musician and his family that symbolized the degenerative effects of nomadism, the opposite was the case in Haverty’s interpretation of itinerancy in the 1840s. The dates of Haverty’s two paintings of the itinerant musician reveal the close proximity to the Irish Famine. While Haverty’s portrait of O’Connell was clear in its visual appeal and associated symbols of Irish nationalism, the blind piper, as a subject and in the growing sentiment at the time, communicated across all classes. The popularity of the subject of the blind musician was proven by its success in being chosen by the RIAU to be engraved. By placing the itinerant piper within a rural context, the image was a visual reflection of nationalism in Ireland during this period. However, by including markers of vulnerability represented by blindness, age and a young child, a sense of fragility is suggested, perhaps an indication of the state of Ireland. Yet Haverty’s revision of his piper reclaimed him by placing him within the rural context. Haverty’s piper was built on a visual discourse of itinerant musicians that dated back to Hamilton’s drawings of 1760. The diverse images that illustrated vagrant musicians from 1760 to the 1840s prove that as a subject, it was popular in

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505 *Nation*, 9 Aug. 1845.
507 My thanks to Eimear O’Connor in Triarc for her discussion on the idea of vagrancy and its role in the creation of symbolism in Irish identity in art.
both England and Ireland. However, in the Irish context the itinerant musician was easily reconfigured in the 1840s for the needs of a nationalist audience and was readily absorbed into popular culture.
Chapter 5 ‘Train up a child’\textsuperscript{508}: representations of marginal children

The drawing \textit{Poverty in Waiting} (figure 5.1) is part of the Brocas print and drawing collection in the National Library of Ireland.\textsuperscript{509} It was not widely exhibited but it forms part of a thematic body of drawings that were created by William Brocas (c.1794-1868) in the mid-nineteenth century in Ireland. This chapter examines the visual tradition associated with portraying the child and poverty in the work of two contemporaries, Brocas, who worked predominantly in Dublin and William Mulready (1786-1863) in London. It juxtaposes these artists because Mulready’s interpretation of the child was, in some cases, centred on the marginality of adults within a composition, while Brocas focused on the ragged street child. The obvious difference between the works of the two artists is in the type of medium used; Brocas’ drawings are pencil or charcoal on paper and Mulready’s work is oil on canvas. While Mulready’s paintings were publicly exhibited, in Brocas’ case his drawings were kept within the private domain and were never publicly exhibited. Drawings of street children by both Brocas and Mulready occupy a distinctly different sphere to paintings and as a visual source are imperative for this study.

This chapter explores the techniques of these two artists in order to highlight contrasts in contemporary tastes between the Irish and English market and audiences for such works. While there was a rise in the visibility of the ragged street child in London’s visual culture in the mid to late nineteenth century, there was not the same artistic response in Ireland. This analysis will adopt a comparative approach using selected works from both artists to examine the different artistic methods used in constructing the visual narratives around the child figure in art. Considerable research has been carried out in the area of child representations in British and European art but little work has been conducted on Irish art.\textsuperscript{510}

\textsuperscript{508} The title originates from William Mulready, \textit{Train Up a Child in the Way he Should Go} (c.1841). The phrase is from Proverbs 22:6, ‘Train up a child in the way he should go and he will not thereafter depart from it’. This Proverb was popularly used as a theme by British painters including George Washington Brownlow (1835-76), \textit{Training Up a Child} (1869), oil on canvas, 63.5 x 89cm, private collection.

\textsuperscript{509} Hereafter NLI. The Prints and Drawings Collection in the NLI holds approximately two thousand drawings, sketchbooks, watercolours and prints belonging to all members of the Brocas family.

\textsuperscript{510} For example see Anna Green, \textit{French paintings of childhood and adolescence, 1848-1886} (Burlington, 2007); Anne Higonnet, \textit{The pictures of innocence: the history and crisis of ideal
In 1844, William Mulready commented on the reception of certain subjects in art by his London audience where he claimed that:

… in the present state of the art almost any subject matter may be raised into importance by truth and beauty of light and shade and colours with an ostentatious mastery of execution. Expression, if strong or character bordering on caricature are recognized by the people. Female beauty and innocence will be much talked about and sell well. Let it be covertly exciting…and it will be talked more about and sell much better…but let excitement appear to be the object and the hypocrites will shout and scream and scare away the sensuality.\textsuperscript{511}

Mulready therefore considered the delicate balance that he as a painter working in London at the time had to constantly consider. The theme throughout the previous chapters shows that, for artists, poverty as a topic had to be represented using certain criteria in order to be acceptable to a contemporary audience. By consistently using the child figure in their work, Brocas and Mulready created a new visual language incorporating the child, especially when they placed poverty within the narrative.

\textit{Poverty in Waiting} depicts a male child standing in the doorway of a Georgian house; the stance of the child lends the drawing an ominous tone. He wears a long coat, long trousers and shoes, and a top hat that casts a shadow over his face and creates a black band across his eyes. While not completely ragged, the inference is that he is poor. However, it is the title, written underneath the image, which guides the viewer to interrogate the drawing on another level, suggesting perhaps that the viewer is witnessing the child on the cusp of committing a crime due to harsh circumstances. The hidden eyes of the child convey awareness, on the part of the artist, of the futility of these children’s lives, who were too large in number to be kept track of by authorities and charities. There are many publications on the poor, ragged street child of London’s East End of the 1860s and 1870s when children were represented in both photography and painting as an ethnic other and labelled as

‘savage’ or ‘street Arabs’. While photography is not used in this instance it is worth noting that the growth of philanthropic work in European city slums coincided with the rise in popularity of photography. Photographs were used as a marketing tool for campaigns that raised awareness and funding. The vulnerability of the represented street child evolved further in the later period of the nineteenth century, in particular with photography. In the case of the philanthropist Thomas John Barnardo (1845-1905) in 1877 the representations of ragged street children became controversial when photographs and captions were doctored and made deliberately misleading to increase benevolence for his charity. He was brought to court after issuing leaflets that had supposed photographs of before and after images of street children once they were admitted and 'saved' with the aid of Barnardo’s institution. His doctored photographs brought up many issues and public debate about ‘the moral standards used to judge photographs and the confusion over whether they were objective documents of social reality or subjective works of art’. Charles Darwin also used photography for his work, a thesis on the natural selection of human expression which he published in 1872 entitled *The expression of the emotions in man and animals*. In this book he published an array of photographs exhibiting the human expression and children were an important source as Darwin viewed them as ‘experimental blank slates’ to study the gamut of adult human emotion.

In Mulready's case even though his observational drawings and notes of children and street children were taken from life, his development of them as subject for his oil paintings was translated into something very different. Mulready represented in painting the domestic worlds that children inhabited, such as the home where protection and education was provided by the family unit. Within the safe cocoon of familial representation, Mulready was able to freely depict children

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alongside pariah figures of urban London society such as a black nomadic pedlar in The Toy Seller (1835), and later in 1857-63, along with a group of homeless Lascar beggars in How to Train Up a Child (1841). In the 1835 oil painting The Toy Seller, Mulready placed the child and the wandering marginal figure into a rural idyllic landscape. This painting was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1837. The same topic later emerged as Mulready’s final painting, between 1857 and 1863 in a much larger canvas, and which was never finished. The rootless poor in both versions of the The Toy Seller and How to Train Up a Child were representative of the influx of migrants into London, in which Mulready took interest and made consumable for the British audience. The success of the paintings was due to the inclusion of the child figure.

Brocas worked primarily as an engraver, and the artist relied heavily on drawing as the primary step in the process of print production. Therefore, these drawings were for private consumption. In a rare case, Brocas developed one of his drawing into an oil painting, such as Donnybrook Fair. In Brocas’ drawing Poverty in Waiting, the caption underneath suggests that the intention of the artist was ultimately to produce the work as an engraving. A comparative analysis of Brocas’ drawings and his extant prints reveal that not all sketches were used. In contrast Mulready’s oil paintings were circulated in the public domain as finished pieces, exhibited in the Royal Academy or sold as commissions to patrons. Brocas and Mulready inhabited two different arenas of artistic merit. Mulready belonged to the prestigious world of the Royal Academy in London, while Brocas, who remained in Ireland, was a member of the Royal Hibernian Academy from 1828 to 1863. Brocas’ reputation and talent as an artist was at a much lower rank to Mulready’s. However, the legacy of Brocas’ work is an unusual recording of nineteenth-century social life and customs, and he is the only known artist to have left behind a substantial collection of representations of poor child subjects in Irish art in the early to mid-nineteenth century. In examining the work of Mulready and Brocas, this chapter will evaluate the use of the child in thematic artworks of poverty as a subject treated in two very different ways. It will also contextualise images which not only

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316 William Brocas, Donnybrook Fair (nd), oil on canvas, Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore, UCD.
incorporate children as vagrants but also their placement alongside the wandering poor in both the rural and urban setting in art.

What appears as an uncomfortable comparison in sources can reveal a more ‘holistic account’ for the investigation of how children of poverty were represented in the middle of the nineteenth century. By using contrasting sources of drawings with oil paintings, a more layered examination will allow for a better understanding of the theme of children and poverty. Brocas’ drawings, which represented an ‘on the spot’ response to poverty, could be seen as more of a primary source than Mulready’s oil paintings. The process of oil painting, by its very nature, involves slow work over several months or even years in the artist’s studio. Oil takes longer to dry and therefore allows for considerable changes to a painting.

However, it is not only the methods or types of mediums used by Brocas and Mulready that are central to this chapter but also the concept of space and how both artists conveyed and manipulated it in their work. Despite the difference in media and the professional merit of the artists, the main focus is on the manner in which they interpreted the child, the reception of the work and the darker social narratives interlaced in the artworks. Their drawings and sketchbooks show that both artists made observations of street children. However, Mulready did not develop his sketches into urban scenes in his paintings but instead used the figure of the child as a communicator or a visual bridge between the homeless and rootless figures and the contemporary viewer. In contrast, Brocas in his drawings represented the marginality of the urban poor child in his drawings but chose not to develop these further. The treatment of the poor child as a subject in art embodied a sense of vulnerability within society especially between rural and urban contexts. In Victorian culture there developed ‘stark’ contrasts between the rural and urban as the countryside was created, in art and writing, as a mythological space to counterbalance the harsh reality of the industrialised era. In Brocas’ case his

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519 Loose drawings and sketches by Mulready are housed in the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. See also Anne Rorimer, *Drawings by William Mulready* (London, 1972).
520 For instance pictorial contrasts between rural and urban images of labour in the Victorian period are discussed in Tim Barringer, *Men at work: art and labour in Victorian Britain* (New Haven and London, 2005). Barringer claimed that the rise in popularity for agricultural themed paintings with urban patrons, critics and exhibition selectors took place during the 1840s and 1850s in England, pp 102-8.
drawings are situated in the urban context, while Mulready’s works are located in the rural setting.

The child in art was a universally used subject, with popular depictions in religious scenes centred on the Christ child or portraits of wealthy children in early-modern European art. It was not until the seventeenth century that depictions of peasant children emerged as a more popular subject in their own right. The most popular and best-known artist for ragged street children was Spanish artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682). In his painting *Urchin Hunting for Fleas* (c.1648) (figure 5.2) a young boy is placed within an architectural space, sitting against a wall. The detail painted by Murillo showcased the child’s feet, where the silhouettes of dirt on the soles are the visual starting point in the narrative of the painting. Murillo’s skill in painting created an image of a subject that depicts a ‘melancholic’ feel, but more importantly ‘a beautiful image [is] created out of an unappealing subject’. The viewer almost imagines sores on the child’s bare legs but his skin is clear and healthy, as with his physical appearance. Murillo’s painting is set in the urban context and this child represents the problems of orphans in Seville during the painter’s career.

In England, the eighteenth century was the era of the child and childhood. Painters such as Thomas Gainsborough and later Maria Spilsbury Taylor created a visual iconography around children. Ludmilla Jordanova has outlined that history has been repeatedly written about children with heavy ‘moral assumptions’. This she claimed lies in the frequency and synonymous way children, nature or natural imagery appeared in the use of language when writing about the history of childhood. Jordanova warned of the difficulty of finding the voice of the child from the past ‘because the adult world dominates that of the child’ and their representation in art poses even greater difficulties. For instance, the peasant child was used by Gainsborough and Spilsbury Taylor to interweave topics such as religion, morality and education within the narrative. In Gainsborough’s case he created paintings based on the peasant child in the single-figure portrait that were

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521 Also catalogued as *The Young Beggar* in the Musée du Louvre see Xanthe Brooke and Peter Cherry, *Murillo: scenes of childhood* (London, 2001), p. 86.
522 Ibid.
525 Ibid., p. 5.
contrived poses and mimicked the poor rather than being observational. In one painting he used his own daughter as a model.\textsuperscript{526}

Gainsborough exhibited regularly in the Royal Academy and had numerous commissions from the royal court.\textsuperscript{527} His paintings of the English rural child including \textit{Peasant Girl Gathering Faggots} (1782) (figure 5.3), were heavily sentimentalised and proved popular with his patrons, selling for high prices.\textsuperscript{528} Gainsborough’s peasant child portraits epitomised the problems for artists, in eighteenth-century England, in the representation of the child in poverty. In letters to his contemporaries, Gainsborough referred to the rural idyll as a place of escape from the hard work and demands of portraiture and a hectic social life: ‘I’m sick of Portraits and wish very much to take my Viol da Gam and walk off to some sweet Village where I can paint Landskips and enjoy the fag End of Life in quietness & ease’.\textsuperscript{529} These portraits of poor peasant children were a respite for Gainsborough, a light relief from the trials of portraiture. Gainsborough had found a type of subject that was a combination of invention and observation; he often went horse riding in rural areas, which allowed him reprieve from the intensity of portrait painting.\textsuperscript{530} He painted \textit{Peasant Girl Gathering Faggots} after he left Bath and returned to live in London in 1774, the last period of his career before his death in 1788. John Barrell claimed that Gainsborough’s images of the rural poor changed following his return to London. Instead of painting a pastoral idyll, he now represented the rural poor at labour or ‘enjoying the benefits from a sober and industrious life’.\textsuperscript{531}

Gainsborough’s deliberate corruption of the image downplays the plight of rural child workers and in a way he detached himself from the social issue that he used as a source for his painting. Gainsborough was an admirer of Murillo’s paintings, which were held in private collections in London.\textsuperscript{532} In contrast to Murillo’s \textit{Urchin Hunting Fleas}, Gainsborough delivered a rural idyll- the primary

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{526} Thomas Gainsborough, \textit{Margaret Gainsborough Gleaning} (c.1750s), oil on canvas, 73 x 63cm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
\item \textsuperscript{527} Gainsborough became a founder member of the Royal Academy in 1768. Reynolds was president.
\item \textsuperscript{528} John Hayes (ed.)\textit{The letters of Thomas Gainsborough} (New Haven and London, 2001), p. 146. Another example is Thomas Gainsborough, \textit{A Peasant Girl with a Dog and Jug} (1785), oil on canvas, 174 x 125cm, private collection.
\item \textsuperscript{529} Ibid., p. 68 (Letter to William Jackson, 4 Jun. year unknown).
\item \textsuperscript{531} John Barrell, \textit{The dark side of the landscape} (Cambridge, 1980), p. 66.
\item \textsuperscript{532} Waterhouse, \textit{Gainsborough}, p. 35.
\end{itemize}
concern for the artist- with the element of poverty simply veiled and re-interpreted to aid consumption by his contemporary audience.

Gainsborough’s painting reflects a form of idealism of children and poverty. In Ireland, the representation of child poverty was influenced by trends in Europe and Britain. A case in point is a drawing by Hugh Douglas Hamilton; his drawings of Dublin street hawkers, discussed in Chapter 2, included a chimney sweep accompanied by a small child (figure 5.4).533 The life like element of this drawing was the fact that the child would have been lowered into the chimney to clean it. In the eighteenth century, child sweeps were often sent through a chimney naked due to too narrow a flue, which explains why Hamilton drew the figure wrapped in a blanket and bare foot.534 Drawing allowed Hamilton the freedom to depict what he saw, rather than creating an idealised representation for his audience. This method of working changed, however, when Hamilton went to Italy to study after completing the Cries, and did not return to Dublin until 1791. On his return he created a painting about Dublin’s destitute children which embodies trends and ideals that he learned in Europe.535

William Ward’s 1806 mezzotint of Hamilton’s now destroyed painting536 entitled The Reverend Walter Blake Kirwan Pleading the Cause of the Destitute Orphans of Dublin (c.1799) (figure 5.5) interpreted a sermon by the renowned Reverend Kirwan (1754-1805). According to an anonymous critical review of the painting in 1800, the image concerns Reverend Kirwan pleading to his wealthy congregation to aid the admission of eight destitute orphans.537 In the scene the orphaned children are placed under the pulpit where the Reverend Kirwan preaches. An audience made up of the wealthy upper classes sit in a crowd to the right, while the Reverend Kirwan and a row of classical columns separates the poor from the wealthy. While the crowd are mixed in gender, there is a predominant representation

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533 In many of Hamilton’s Cries drawings children accompany the male and female street hawker including Stockings Mended, Rubbish Pickers, A Rambling Cobler & his Boy, Brogues and Eggs.
535 Hamilton formed a strong friendship with the sculptor Antonio Canova (1757-1822) in Rome. For research on this alliance see Fintan Cullen, ‘Hugh Douglas Hamilton’s letters to Canova’ in Irish Arts Review, 1984-87, i, no. 2 (summer, 1984), pp 31-5; idem, ‘Hugh Douglas Hamilton in Roma, 1779-1792’ in Apollo, cvx (February, 1982), pp 86-91.
of females. The idealism of poverty in Gainsborough’s painting is recognisable in Hamilton’s *The Reverend Walter Blake Kirwan*; Hamilton’s painting, however, shows an attempt at a descriptive work of the importance of providing care for the destitute poor.

The Reverend Kirwan was an active member on the board of the Orphan House for Destitute Females in Dublin, which also included members of the Tighe family. The admitted girls, from the ages of five to ten years, ‘were instructed on the principles of the established religion’ and were taught ‘reading, writing, cyphering, needlework, geography, washing and every part of household work’ with the intention of them entering domestic service from the age of sixteen to twenty-one. It was stipulated that a Governor who wished to admit a child had to enter into a bond ‘conditioned’ for the payment of fifty pounds sterling. The success of Reverend Kirwan’s sermons, with collections of a thousand to twelve hundred pounds, was commented on by De Latocnaye, a French traveller to Dublin. Reverend Kirwan’s sermons were ‘fashionable’ for the ladies of high society and were the main contributors for charity.

The close connection with religion to charity and poor-relief was strong in pre-Famine Ireland and this was inextricably linked with class. Fintan Cullen considered Hamilton’s painting to be a ‘potent mixture’ of the indigenous poor and the colonial elite within the context of the 1798 rebellion and views it as being fiercely political. Cullen states that the Catholic orphans represent the vulnerable poor who are receptive to influential rebellious ideals from France, so in effect, saving the children eventually leads to their conversion to Protestantism and salvation and ‘ensures national unity’. It was painted after the Catholic Relief Acts

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538 Third report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry...1826 [H.L. 1801-1833],ccxv, p. 90.
539 Ibid., p. 92.
540 Third report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry, p. 93.
542 Ibid; also reference to women being the main alms givers in Reverend Kirwan’s sermons is in a letter from William Drennan to Martha McTier (31 Mar.1794) in James Agnew (ed.), *The Drennan-McTier letters, 1794-1801* (2vols, Dublin, 1999), ii, 41.
544 Cullen, “ The cloak of charity”, p. 66.
545 Cullen, “The cloak of charity”, pp 70-3.
in 1778 and 1782\textsuperscript{546} and the establishment of the seminary for the education of priests in Maynooth in 1795.

The Irish response to child poverty in Hamilton’s painting suggests a growing awareness of the problems of child destitution in Dublin. Upper-class indifference to the plight of Dublin’s poor children was satirised in a pamphlet by Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) in 1729. As a solution to the problems of child beggars, in both the rural and urban environment, Swift suggested they be served as food to the Protestant landed classes of Ireland.\textsuperscript{547} Despite its inherent irony, Swift’s pamphlet reflected the difficulties that Ireland experienced in absorbing the poor into gainful employment in the late eighteenth century. He considered work as the only salvation for the poor, but conceded that ‘we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land’.\textsuperscript{548} This was a point of attack on the English ruling classes and how Ireland’s economic state was failing to provide adequate employment for the lower classes.

Hamilton’s painting establishes the place of poor children within the benevolent protocol of late eighteenth-century visual imagery. The background of the work reflects an influence of Italian painting with the columns and placement of figures in front and behind these dividers of internal space. In comparison to Brocas’ drawings, this image appears controlled, deliberate and more on the side of Irish politics rather than with the plight of pauper children. For Mulready, the child figure was contrived in his work and again had political agendas that eclipsed the artist’s concerns for depicting the child figure in its own right.

Throughout the nineteenth century the construction of childhood emerged within a scientific framework that incorporated both physiognomy and psychology.\textsuperscript{549} Debates raged about childcare, child labour and what it meant to be a child.\textsuperscript{550} The studies of children and childhood by leading academics such as Hugh

\textsuperscript{547} Jonathan Swift, A modest proposal for preventing the children of poor people from being a burthen to their parents or country and for making them beneficial to the publick (Dublin, 1729), p. 10.
\textsuperscript{548} Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{550} For example Monica Flegel, Conceptualizing cruelty to children in nineteenth-century England: literature, representation and the NSPCC (Farnham, 2009); for child labour in the nineteenth century
Cunningham, Harry Hendrick and Philippe Ariès have offered detailed and scholarly investigations into the lives of children from the medieval period to contemporary times.\footnote{See Hugh Cunningham, \textit{The invention of childhood} (London, 2006); Philippe Ariès, \textit{Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life} (New York, 1962) and Harry Hendrick, \textit{Children, childhood and English society, 1880-1990} (Cambridge, 1997).} According to Hendrick ‘definitions of childhood, along with relationships between children and society, changed repeatedly from the early 1700s through to the mid-nineteenth century’.\footnote{Hendrick, \textit{Children, childhood and English society}, p. 9.} Scholars agree that the nineteenth century was the most difficult era for children, those born into privilege were over-protected by wealthy parents, but on the other end of the social scale, children from the poorer classes were exploited for cheap labour and spent their childhoods in heavy industries such as the cotton mills and coal mines. Contemporary critics and writers often commented on and wrote about the hardship endured by children of the poorer classes in both Britain and Ireland. Many social surveys conducted throughout the nineteenth century declared that children made up a ‘separate and significant section of the poor’, and as studies into children and childhood became increasingly popular, ‘they were moved centre stage’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 11.}

Both Brocas and Mulready were cautious in how the child figure progressed from their drawings and observations. In Brocas’ case, he did not develop his drawings further and in Mulready’s work, the child was never in poverty but instead illustrated contemporary issues surrounding marginality. In fact the complicated and veiled manner in which both of these artists represented the child figure in their work highlights the varied texts and social commentary centred around children and their place in society. And although both these artists depict poor children in the urban context surrounded in difficulty, their works varied dramatically in popularity between the Dublin and London markets.

Mulready was the son of Irish immigrants who left Ennis in County Clare in 1792 to start a new life in London.\footnote{Pointon, \textit{Mulready}, p. 17.} His father was a skilled artisan who worked as a leather breeches maker.\footnote{For guilds in eighteenth-century Dublin and assessment of Catholic percentages see chapter six ‘Catholic merchants, traders and manufacturers’ in Fagan, \textit{Catholics in a Protestant country}, pp 159-186. According to Fagan the guild of breeches makers had low numbers of Catholic members, p. 182.} The Mulready family were Roman Catholic and although his father was a craftsman, when they reached London they struggled...
financially, which Marcia Pointon claimed was due to their minority status.\footnote{Pointon, Mulready, pp 17-8.} Despite this, however, Mulready still received a good education.\footnote{Kathryn Moore Heleniak, William Mulready (London, 1980), p. 5.} In a rare case of upward mobility, Mulready created a successful career as a painter and increased his social status.\footnote{Pointon, Mulready, p. 18.} He was accepted into the Royal Academy Schools in 1800 and soon achieved high acclaim for his drawing. What would prove a successful and prolific career allowed him to ascend the social ranks of Victorian London. Unlike his contemporary Daniel Maclise (1806-1870), Mulready rarely tackled Irish subjects in his work, and this no doubt aided his career greatly.

Mulready began depicting children in his paintings as early as 1807, and they are portrayed fighting, playing and being at one within their surroundings. They are an unmistakable force and have a specific role.\footnote{Heleniak, William Mulready (London, 1980), p. 83.} Many commentators claim that the artist’s most realistic work was carried out in the early part of his career, featuring Dutch-inspired landscapes and interior scenes, and by the 1850s and into the last period of his life he ‘developed ... lyrical subjects in rural settings’.\footnote{Marcia Pointon, ‘Urban narrative in the early art of William Mulready’ in Ira Bruce Nadel and F.S. Schwarzbach (eds), Victorian artists and the city: a collection of critical essays (New York, 1980), p. 140.} His paintings became more concerned with the idealism of art rather than the portrayal of actual life.\footnote{Ibid.} Mulready was a very successful painter and received many commissions towards the end of his career. Even though destitute street children were represented throughout Brocas' oeuvre, Mulready’s paintings placed children into the world of high art.

In numerous sketches Mulready drew and made notes of how children played and interacted with one another, not only within the domestic sphere but also on the streets of London. In these drawings, communication is an important factor and his obsession with capturing types of clothing, poses and body language all reflect the important physicality that emerges in his work. The child is painted with theatrical virtuosity, rather than being mere decoration or the receptacle for adult nostalgic ideals of what childhood should entail. For instance, in one set of observational works Mulready drew children playing around a table, concentrating on their physical movements, while in another sketch he observed clothes and figures moving on the street (figure 5.6). F.G. Stephens, Mulready’s biographer who published the
artist’s memoirs in 1867, gives an account of Mulready’s fascination with the aestheticism of a young child he had seen sitting on its mother’s lap. According to Stephens, Mulready was captivated by ‘the fine turn of an arm … to the well knitting of a shoulder … or the clear, unwavering glance of an infant’s eye’.562 Children are often represented in scenes of rustic domestic interiors, rather than in middle-or upper-class family situations.563 These quick drawings show a genuine interest on the part of the artist to consistently capture the rudimentary elements of the child figure and childhood. This groundwork was essential for Mulready when he began his oil paintings.

In comparison to Mulready, Brocas occupied the lower arena of nineteenth-century commercial art. The Brocas family were important printmakers and educators and William was the son of Henry Brocas Senior (c.1762-1837)564, the Master of the Dublin Society’s School of Landscape from 1800 to 1837.565 Under the tutelage of Henry Senior engraving and landscape painting in watercolour was prioritised.566 The Society’s objective in education was purely a functional and commercial endeavour where students were prepared for the trade of craftsmen. The majority of lessons involved drawing the figure, animals, flowers and ornament design.567 Education in drawing also prepared students for the manufacture industry of textiles, carving and furniture, which was one of the contributing factors behind the establishment of the three Dublin Society Schools.568 The subject of landscape drawing was specifically for decorative or ornamental art that usually ended up within an interior scheme, and the ‘neoclassical, romantic or naturalistic landscape with its strong moral and emotional charge’ began to develop in the fine arts in the

563 Heleniak, William Mulready, pp 120-1.
564 Henry Brocas Senior had four sons; James Henry Brocas (c.1790-1846), Samuel Frederick Brocas (c. 1792-1847), William Brocas, RHA (c.1794-1868) and Henry Brocas Junior (c.1798-1873). For historical background of the Brocas family and the collection in the NLI see Patricia Butler, ‘Introducing Mr. Brocas a family of Dublin artists’ in Irish Arts Review: Yearbook, xv (1999), pp 80-6.
565 Many renowned Irish artists were trained in this school including George Petrie (1790-1866), Francis Danby (1793-1861) and Sir Frederick Burton (1816-1900). These artists immigrated to England and went on to establish high profile careers.
566 Strong emphasis was on topographical drawing and many pupils were hired by Richard Griffith (1784-1878) to contribute to both topographical and antiquarian studies.
later early and middle part of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{569} Both Henry Senior and his son and successor, Samuel Frederick, acquired English ‘picturesque’ landscape drawings and watercolours for the students to copy.\textsuperscript{570}

Within this system Brocas was educated and became a member of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1854. His drawings in the NLI are executed in a variety of media including pastel and pencil, either on loose sheets of paper or bound together in sketchbooks. This collection is, to date, a largely unused visual resource that while considered charming and naive, still documents the social life of nineteenth-century Ireland across all strata of class distinctions. The artist’s eclectic mix of subject matter, including animals, wealthy patrons and their children, was influenced by his career as an engraver. However, Brocas’ drawings of vagrant children stand apart from the popular subjects that ended up in publication or as illustrations.

By the mid-nineteenth century the rise in population of the child vagrant on London’s city streets created a source of inspiration for artists searching for sentimental subjects. Of particular interest was the child hawking small items such as matches, buttons or flowers. Production for these sentimental paintings came about in the later period of the 1880s and 1890s,\textsuperscript{571} while the interest in street children and their rising visibility can be traced to the middle part of the nineteenth century. London artists were by far the most prolific in their depictions of street children. Vagrancy was a stamp of ‘otherness’ placed on street children that created an aura of the ‘exotic’ and also conveyed alienation that stigmatized them as being beyond help. A process of documenting and labelling the urban poor in London in the 1850s was carried out by the social researcher and journalist Henry Mayhew. In a survey published in 1851, Mayhew listed the variety and types of street sellers and pedlars working on London’s streets. A contribution by Andrew Halliday in Mayhew’s \textit{London labour and the London poor} observed that:

... beggars of this class use their trade to excite compassion and obtain a gift rather than to effect a sale. The box of matches, or the little deal box of cottons, is used simply as a passport to the resorts of the charitable. The

\textsuperscript{569} Turpin, ‘The School of Ornament of the Dublin Society’ , p. 46.
\textsuperscript{570} Butler, \textit{The Brocas collection}, p. vii. One painter in particular was John Varley (1778-1842) who was a teacher and friend to William Mulready.
\textsuperscript{571} For instance the painter Augustus Edwin Mulready (1844-1903), the grandson of William Mulready.
police are obliged to respect the trader, though they know very well that under the disguise of the itinerant merchant there lurks a beggar.\textsuperscript{572}

However, subjectivity in Brocas’ drawings of poor children exists as proven in another charcoal drawing \textit{Barefooted Boy Seated on the Ground, his Hat and Dog by his Side} (c.1814-1868) (figure 5.7). The soft medium of charcoal allowed Brocas to delicately portray a degree of vulnerability in the child’s pose. The age of the boy is indeterminate but he appears to be in his early teens. The composition is in the usual pose of destitution as he sits tightly huddled on the ground wearing a knee-length coat, showing bare legs and feet. He gives the impression of abject poverty with his hat placed upended in front of him seeking alms. The dog, his companion, is lightly sketched in the background as the primary focus is the begging boy. Unfortunately these drawings cannot be accurately dated, as is the case with the majority of work in the collection.\textsuperscript{573} As Monica Flegel suggests the delinquent street child was one of complexity for Victorian society reflected in its fiction such as \textit{Olivier Twist} (1837-39) by Charles Dickens. Flegel claims that the child figure disrupted the ‘binary oppositions between adult and child...and between the child salvageable and the child lost’.\textsuperscript{574}

Brocas’ drawings indicate he was interested in the urban poor and he observed levels of destitution within the poor themselves. For instance in another study featuring a young female child, \textit{The Young Mendicant-a Child Beggar on the Dublin Streets} (figure 5.8) Brocas illustrated absolute poverty in that the child has bare feet and scant clothing. In this watercolour he used a very limited palette consisting of shades of brown and grey. She is quite young and although she may not have originally been alone, Brocas chose to paint her in isolation. These drawings of the single child, alone within the urban environment instigated a curiosity in Brocas that he rarely brought to a mature conclusion in painting.

With many of Brocas’ drawings of the poorer class there are marked differences between depictions of the rural and the urban. His depictions of the poor in the rural scene were often sentimental and at times saccharine. But in his drawings of the ragged child in the urban context he created work that was sharper in


\textsuperscript{573} The broad dates of 1814 to 1868 are catalogued for the majority of the drawings.

observation. Brocas depicted the poor child and the family unit in a more benign manner in the rural setting even though, in reality, their conditions might not have been any better off. The street children in Brocas’s drawings are alone and abandoned in their urban environment, which is portrayed as an inhospitable place.

In contrast, the drawing *Woman and her Two Children Begging for Alms* (c.1814-1868) (figure 5.9) in black crayon and pastel shows a woman and her two children emerging from shadows cast by a street lamp. Brocas successfully conveys a sense of desperation in this drawing by using the stark contrast between light and dark. The woman's face is very haggard in appearance and both young children cling onto her desperately. By applying the charcoal in such a dark manner, the highlights of colour bring out the figures slightly but they appear subsumed by darkness. In some of the drawings the hint of urban infrastructure around the figures was minimal but in others the opulence of Dublin was highlighted by the inclusion of a street lamp, a Georgian front door with railings or an elegant column or pilaster. In all of the drawings Brocas focused his attention on the figures and the harrowing visible effects of poverty. Contemporary urban spaces became more divided in the latter part of the nineteenth century, particularly the growth of the slum areas in Dublin, when it seemed to the upper classes that poverty and disease lurked around every corner.\(^\text{575}\)

The social problems of Dublin’s inner city were considerable by the mid-nineteenth century with the ‘exodus’ of the professional and middle classes to the suburban areas in the south.\(^\text{576}\)

Brocas again represented the mother and child figure in the work *Beggar Woman Seated with Young Child on the Steps of a Doorway* (figure 5.10). This pencil drawing shows a woman wearing a cloak with a hood and a bonnet on her head with her young child sitting on her lap. The contrast between her poverty and the opulence of the steps of a Georgian house represents the vast schism between both classes in Dublin. Brocas used visual devices of class in his work to convey the vulnerability of the urban poor whereas the rural poor are romanticised. The mother and child trope became even more popular in later nineteenth-century paintings. For example, in early nineteenth-century paintings of female flower sellers, the subjects were represented as young and idealised, but this evolved after the 1880s into the

\(^{575}\) Murray Fraser, *John Bull’s other homes: state housing and British policy in Ireland, 1883-1922* (Liverpool, 1996), p. 64.

\(^{576}\) Ibid., p. 65.
image of mothers trying to sell their flowers with children in tow.\textsuperscript{577} This significant shift in the representation of the British flower seller was, according to Kristina Huneault, in response to the social changes towards the state of motherhood and the welfare of the child.\textsuperscript{578}

Mulready skirted around the topic of child labour in his work, offering scant sketches of child chimney sweeps (figure 5.11). Of course child labour was a subject that would have been hard to sell and certainly would not have been popular with his patrons but Mulready, like Brocas, kept a visual log of contemporary social ills. In the drawing, the sweep approaches a group of four well-dressed boys. His body posture is very threatening as he leans in to beg. His figure is the darkest part of the composition with the exception of the black shoes of the tallest boy. Even though some of the boys are taller than him they all recoil in horror at the sight of the young labourer. This drawing is an exception to the rule in both composition and subject matter as it is the colliding of two very different worlds and thus stands out from the artist’s other child genre work. In a proto-industrial economy, it was expected that children contributed to the household income.\textsuperscript{579} By the middle of the nineteenth century, debates arose about the treatment of the child workers by their masters, and the occupation most commented on was that of the child chimney sweep.\textsuperscript{580} The visibly appalling work conditions of child sweeps led to the Chimney Sweeps Act in 1834 and 1840 and regulation of both acts in 1864. In Mulready’s drawing the difference between the children on the left to the chimney sweep is a visual treatment that Mulready used in his other work about groups who existed on the margins of society. The nature of drawing is the direct and immediate response to the object observed by the artist. The evidence of these drawings suggests that the street child filtered into the imagination of both Brocas and Mulready at a consciously moral level. Brocas’ drawings reflected the change within Irish and European society towards poor children in urban cities that did not truly come to fruition until the latter part of the nineteenth century. However, unlike the work of later French male and

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\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{577}] Kristina Huneault, \textit{Difficult subjects: working women and visual culture, Britain 1880-1914} (Aldershot, 2002), p. 91.
\item[\textsuperscript{578}] Ibid., p. 91.
\item[\textsuperscript{579}] Jordanova, ‘Children in history: concepts of nature and society’, p. 19.
\item[\textsuperscript{580}] Considering they were widely publicised in the nineteenth century, child chimney sweeps were not numerically high as chosen first jobs that children entered into in Britain, see Humphries, \textit{Childhood and child labour in the British Industrial revolution}, p. 212.
\end{itemize}
female painters, Brocas’ drawings of street children appeared not to be as commercially viable.\(^{581}\)

In an unusual drawing entitled *Begging for alms* (c.1814-1868) (figure 5.12), a young female girl gives alms to an elderly beggar man who has his hat stretched out to receive the money. This drawing has all the hallmarks of rapid execution, as the child and the beggar stand in front of a lightly sketched figure, which resembles a statue. The young girl and the male beggar are the only two figures in the drawing, and the child appears to be unsupervised. This theme of juxtaposing a child with a marginal figure was also revisited by Mulready towards the end of his career.\(^{582}\) In two paintings of this experiment, *Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go* (c. 1841) (figure 5.13) and *The Toy Seller* (figure 5.15), Mulready created works that were both commissioned by patrons and had mixed responses by their audience. The paintings’ narratives revolve around the child figure. The child is linked to the 'other' in a form of physical communication that is exclusively for the viewer. Another important feature of both paintings is that they are set within contrived landscapes.

The link between children and nature has, according to Jordanova, always existed where the child was seen as an 'object', similar to nature, to be appreciated for ‘their beauty and physical perfection’ yet at the same time feared for their ‘instinctual, animal-like natures’.\(^{583}\) In Mulready's work the juxtaposition of the child and the foreign vagrants is a visual response to the social Darwinist theories that were espoused during the middle of the nineteenth century. Darwin wrote about children passing through evolutionary stages and according to Hendrick ‘as does the species which presented children as threats in that they stood at the beginning of evolution ... they were savages’.\(^{584}\) In Mulready's *Train Up a Child* the painting is about the encouragement and education of a young child to give alms to vagrants who beg on the side of the road. This painting signifies the evolution of the child in Mulready’s work where ‘the actions of the adults only become comprehensible to the response of the child’.\(^{585}\) What immediately catches the viewer’s attention is the striking difference between the luminous white skin of the two young ladies and the

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\(^{581}\) For children represented in French modern painting see Anna Green, *French paintings of childhood and adolescence, 1848-1886* (Burlington, 2007), p. 2.

\(^{582}\) Mulready created a narrative around a visiting pedlar and a family unit with children at a front door in *The Travelling Druggist* (1825) discussed in chapter 3.

\(^{583}\) Jordanova, ‘Children in history’, p. 6.

\(^{584}\) Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, p. 36.

\(^{585}\) Pointon, *Mulready*, p. 111.
child in contrast to the dark skin of the three beggars. In relation to Mulready’s drawing of the child chimney sweep, evidence shows that Mulready was thinking about how the marginalised could become a source of fear. The drawing also represents Mulready’s experimentation of using a visual device of a darker right side invading the space of figures who occupy the left side of the composition. Mulready modelled these figures on Lascars, who were Indian sailors hired by British companies throughout the middle to late nineteenth century. On numerous occasions Mulready referred to the painting as ‘Lascars’ in his account book, where he logged his sale of paintings.\footnote{William Mulready, account book (NAL., William Mulready, MSL/1961/4463). Cited in Pointon, Mulready, p. 121.} Lascars were hired by the East India Company for a return voyage to England from India, and consequently left in port towns in Britain with no means of support. Lascars stayed within the location of the docks in London and were very visible, as they were perceived as being dirty and violent.\footnote{Kenneth Little, Negroes in Britain: a study of racial relations in English society (2nd ed., London, 1972), pp 207-8.} An English worker in a lodging house in St. Giles, London claimed that ‘they have none or scarcely anyone who will associate with them but prostitutes and no house will receive them except the public house and the apartments of the abandoned’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 208.} Coverage of the mistreatment of Lascars by the East India Company in contemporary papers highlighted their uneasy assimilation in Britain\footnote{For example letters to the editor about the treatment of Lascars in The Times, 23 Jan. 1844 and The Times, 28 Sept. 1853.} and inter-racial marriages caused consternation.

Mulready’s ‘Lascar’ title of the painting suggests, according to Marcia Pointon, that it was not to the taste of his patron Thomas Baring, MP, as it gathered many titles including the current one at certain stages when exhibited.\footnote{Pointon, Mulready, p. 121.} Mulready exhibited \textit{Train Up a Child} in Paris in 1855, which won him the order of the Legion d’Honneur.\footnote{Ibid.} In the painting two out of the three beggars are partially hidden; only their eyes are seen, in particular the beggar whose outstretched hand moves towards the young boy who is clearly keeping his distance, even while giving alms. The third beggar hides his face completely, as he places his head into his knees. The child is placed at a higher vantage point to the three beggars, who are crouched down as low and subservient as they can physically get, with one sitting in a nearly foetal position.
In the European context, in the early seventeenth century, the poor were seen as a necessary reminder for the rich to practise ‘virtue and to show humility’.\(^{592}\) In the case of *Train Up a Child*, Mulready’s choice of Lascar beggars, as a subject, was questioned by a contemporary critic who found the painting ‘not agreeable, and certainly not easily intelligible’.\(^{593}\) In contrast, after its exhibition in the Royal Academy in 1841, it was considered ‘amongst the best picture of its class in the collection ... the character and expression identify every character in the scene; the colouring and composition are equally flawless’.\(^{594}\) Words used by the critic such as ‘character’ and ‘scene’ reflect the style of the painting, in particular the colours used by Mulready and the background, which is painted like a ‘backdrop’ for a play. Mulready was a regular visitor to the theatre with season tickets for the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden and Theatre Royal, Drury Lane during the years 1839 to 1844.\(^{595}\) If Mulready used the natural environs of the docks, where Lascars were seen, as the background for this piece; the Victorian spectator would have being horrified. Two respectable women and a child placed into such a dangerous setting would have caused consternation. Despite vast contradictions in how it was received in public, Mulready viewed this painting as being his most successful.\(^{596}\)

In 1835 Mulready painted a small canvas, and titled it *The Toy Seller* (figure 5.14). The painting is about a man peddling goods to a mother and her child at their front door, a topic Mulready had examined earlier in 1825 with *The Travelling Druggist* (discussed in Chapter 3). The extraordinary element to this painting is that the pedlar is black. In this canvas, Mulready had put down the foundation for one of the most important and socially controversial paintings of his career, which would evolve twenty-two years later. *The Toy Seller* (1857-63), a most recognisable and distinctive oil painting, was the largest canvas produced by Mulready with dimensions of 111.8 x 142.2cm. It was also the final work created (but not finished) before he died. The small dimensions of the 1835 *Toy Seller* suggests that Mulready was working out the logistics for his larger offering. The study of *The Toy Seller* varies distinctly with the later version and the gestation time between both works.


\(^{593}\) Heleniak, *William Mulready*, p. 102.

\(^{594}\) *The Times*, 28 Jun. 1841.

\(^{595}\) Letters to Mulready confirming his addition to the list for seasonal tickets to the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden and Drury Lane in 1839, 1841 and 1842 (NAL, William Mulready, MSL/1961/4461/153 and MSL/1961/4461/154).

\(^{596}\) Stephens, *Memoirs of William Mulready*, p. 84.
shows that Mulready reflected heavily on the topic. In Mulready’s account book in 1836, he penciled in a note saying that he painted the outline of the composition of *The Toy Seller* onto a large canvas but no further mention was made of it again until 1857. Apart from the important issue of size, both paintings are also very different in the area of colour, composition and background. All three elements and their evolution are very important and key to how the later version can be read.

Cora Kaplan suggested that Mulready’s preliminary composition mirrored the anti-slavery images that circulated America and England in the 1830s. Following the emancipation of slaves in 1833 in England, much debate arose concerning English society’s perception of black people, which highlighted often obscure perceptions and negative attitudes. There was an influx during the 1840s and 1850s of slaves on the run from America who found asylum in Britain and this inevitably added to the pre-existing African Diaspora. Mulready deliberately tackled a very political and racially motivated topic, and one that was certainly made even more potent by the placing of a small white child within the painting. *The Toy Seller* introduced a trope of race, where a narrative was created on the highly topical issue of slavery, but he chose to depict it at the cottage door. In the 1835 painting, the physique of the pedlar is stocky with no defined muscles, which is in sharp contrast to the later painting. In the later version of *The Toy Seller* (figure 5.15), the athletic form of the pedlar creates a more visual punch, and the message of subservience to the toddler, translates more successfully. The sheer bulk and aestheticism of the black figure coincides with physical strength, but this strength is counter balanced with ‘passivity and pathos’, a visual tool commonly used in propaganda images by the anti-slavery movement. The figures in this painting allude to a ‘scriptural’ link to the bible and the nativity story where ‘the trio of figures … evoke the visit and gift

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of the magi, with the ironic twist that the black king is now an itinerant pedlar and his gift is for sale’. 602

When Mulready depicted this man as an itinerant pedlar, he deliberately broke with a familiar convention of portraying black servants on the periphery of the composition. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was fashionable for ladies and courtesans to have a black servant boy to do menial tasks and female owners were keen to display the contrast of dark skin against white in commissioned portraits. 603 According to Angela Rosenthal, ‘a celebration of whiteness in representation’ of white wealthy women portrayed in eighteenth-century European art, must be considered in terms of ‘style, taste fashion and how they are all subject to, and intricately linked with, larger concerns about cultural identity’. 604 The exoticness of the pedlar clearly demarcates him as different to the mother and child. The fact that the pedlar is selling items for children rather than for adults immediately brings the viewer’s attention to the child.

The child is the visual bridge in the composition, the figure that calmed the contemporary viewer and made the presented subject more palatable. Similar to *Train Up a Child*, the child in the composition is elevated at a higher level to the marginalised figure. However, instead of the child fearing the pedlar, its awkward body language communicates rejection. The child, for Mulready, became more symbolic for him as an artist and in his final painting he used the small figure to give him confidence to bring a topic into the exhibition space that otherwise would have been unacceptable.

Images of children, in particular the child in poverty or associated with poverty, were lacking in nineteenth-century Irish art. But as this chapter highlights, there is alternative evidence in the form of Brocas’ drawings, which are outside the conventional and traditional canons of painting. The evidence of Brocas’ drawings not being developed further into prints suggests trepidation on the part of the artist. Perhaps an Irish market was not ready for the consumption of child poverty, but the more likely case, was that it was too small and controlled. London offered a more dynamic environment in which the artist could experiment and explore topics,

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603 Little, *Negroes in Britian*, p. 189. There was considerable migration of black people from the colonies to England, residing in both urban and rural areas, p.193.
proven by Mulready’s radical canvas *The Toy Seller*. Even though Mulready chose to avoid child poverty in his canvases, he still used the child figure to highlight issues of marginality that were relevant and topical for his London audience. In contrast, Brocas drew children in dire poverty, drawings which were never exhibited or contemplated in the public arena. Both artists were affected by social constraints as to what they could produce, but ultimately Mulready had more of a chance to broach issues of race and the associated problems in mid-nineteenth-century London. On the one hand, marginality, poverty and the social pariah was not a popular subject, but as this chapter argues the clever inclusion of the child figure certainly made the works of Mulready more marketable.
Chapter 6 The Irish family in poverty: settled, migrant and vagrant

This chapter examines visual interpretations of the poor and vagrant Irish family painted in both Ireland and Britain within the period 1835 to 1874. The beginning of the chapter will focus on the settled family unit in the west of Ireland and the draw of the ‘other’, which artists found in the small fishing communities. Galway, in particular the Claddagh, attracted London-based painters from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. By the late nineteenth century, British travel writers and photographers were also dispatched to Ireland to document and record the level of poverty there, as concerns about Irish Catholic poverty increasingly became associated with economic and social ‘liability’. The limitations of photographic sciences required long daylight exposures but painters did capture poverty in the interior space of the cabin, and a social message was also strongly communicated visually. This was particularly evident in the work of Francis William Topham (1808-77) and George Washington Brownlow (1835-76).

This chapter also examines families represented on the move, caused by the Famine, lack of employment and eviction. Evidence of this in the visual context can be found in the work of the Scottish artist Erskine Nicol (1825-1904). While images of eviction have been discussed in recent research, this chapter will add to the discourse by examining and analysing paintings of migrant families. The images show families in transit, in some examples just immediately after eviction, en route to a 'famine ship' to take them to America or England. The paintings of family representations depicted by Topham, Brownlow and Nicol became dislocated in representation when the Irish were the infrequent subject for British painters in England. The famous painting Work (1852-65) by Ford Madox Brown (1821-93) incorporated the perceived role of the Irish population within English society. However, to provide a wider scope and understanding of the concerns of vagrancy within London, Luke Fildes’s (1844-1927) Applicants for Admission to a Casual

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605 Nineteenth-century folklorists and photographers for tourism and commercial work were also drawn to the west; the most notable were Robert John Welch (1859-1936) and photographs taken by Major Robert Rutledge Fair of Connemara and its people for Mr. James Hack Tuke (1819-1896). See Ciara Breathnach (ed.), Framing the west: images of rural Ireland 1891-1920 (Dublin, 2007).

606 Melissa Fegan, ‘“Isn’t it your own country?”: the stranger in nineteenth-century Irish literature’ in The Yearbook of English studies, xxxiv (2004), p. 34.

Ward (1874) is also examined. Brown painted *Work* within the years 1852-65 and it was commissioned by Thomas Plint, a businessman and stock broker. Fildes’s *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* was completed seven years after Brown’s *Work* but its conception began as an illustration in 1869 for the *Graphic*. Fildes painting was publicly exhibited in 1874 in the Royal Academy which required a barricade around it to cordon off the large crowds who came to view the piece.

The focus of Brown’s painting in this chapter is how the Irish family unit was represented within the composition, the most obvious element of which was its disintegration. Similarly, Fildes highlights the dislocation of the dispossessed by representing both the family unit and the lone pauper.

Images that display working-class and poor family vistas became more prolific in both Ireland and England after the 1840s. The representation of the family developed from significant changes in style in late eighteenth-century European family portraiture. Kate Retford suggests upper class families were represented with a sense of the domestic environment but also, more importantly, the portrayal of the ‘daily rituals of family life’. In essence these paintings were a private moment between members of the nuclear family with ‘no awareness of an external gaze’. In the nineteenth century, artists painted familial relationships in interior scenes, which according to Anna Green was the ‘ubiquitous model of the bourgeois nuclear family’ and was represented ‘as a unit of affection rather than one of business’.

Topham and Brownlow used this same structure and logic in their work when they

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609 W. L. Thomas, a former worker for the *ILN* set up the rival paper *Graphic* in 1869. Thomas hired artists including Fildes, Hubert von Herkomer (1849-1914) and Frank Holl (1845-88) to illustrate the paper which was a general interest piece with ‘pictures of beggars and workmen … fancy balls, new town halls, royal visits and portraits of famous people’. The topics of social subjects were not consistently published. See Julian Treuherz, *Hard times: social realism in Victorian art* (Manchester, 1987), p. 54; for an overview of the illustrated papers and the representations of the poor and urbanization see Michael Wolff and Celina Fox, ‘Pictures from the magazines’ in H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds), *The Victorian city: images and realities* (2 vols, London, 1973), ii, 559-82.
613 Ibid.
painted the settled Irish family unit within the cottage interior. The common factor between these two painters is that they both concentrated on the family and did not paint overt political agendas of the time, which omitted evictions of tenants by their landlords. Topham, however, did represent the dire living conditions and extreme poverty of the cottiers in the west of Ireland and his work stands apart from Brownlow in that it represents, in a realistic manner, elements of social conscience. In contrast, Brownlow included Victorian sentimentality and in his case what he excluded from the image was just as important as what he represented. As Green states ‘the silences of painting’ can be just as influential and this must be considered when assessing the work of Topham, Brownlow and Nicol.  

Topham and Brownlow as artists were not as well known or established as the Pre-Raphaelite painters in England. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) was founded in London in 1848 and constituted Daniel Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) and John Everett Millais (1829-96), with Ford Madox Brown as a close associate whose paintings were a strong influence on the movement. The characteristics of the work of the PRB include a mixture of realism with elements of symbolism and these painters are considered the major contributors to nineteenth-century British art.

The Irish family was connected with contemporary politics including famine, land agitation and separation from the rule of Britain. As Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch states, the small but steady production of Irish subject paintings by British artists reflected mainly genre domestic scenes of the poorer classes and few took on the major contemporary political concerns of the time. Yet these paintings of domesticity, family unit, evictions and ultimately vagrancy in England highlighted the uncomfortable relationship that the British public had both with Ireland and its population. As Miriam Rainbird states the ‘relationship of Ireland and the Irish to England was unusually ambiguous and multivalent’ and this seeped into the art production by Irish and British artists and the use of Irish subjects for art. The

617 Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, Ireland’s art Ireland’s history: representing Ireland, 1845 to present (Omaha, 2007), pp 54-5.
English audience will be the focus of this chapter as many of the paintings discussed were exhibited in London.

The rise of the popular image of the Irish man portrayed as a simian figure coincides with the Victorian preoccupation with family values, morals and racialisation. According to Lewis Perry Curtis ‘the simianizing of Paddy in the 1860s emanated from the convergence of deep, powerful emotions about the nature of man, the security of property, and the preservation of privilege’. 619 On the other hand, the Irish female was relatively ‘invisible’ in nineteenth-century British illustrative journals. Cullen discusses the use of the Irish female models ‘exploited by male artists’ and it was within this relationship, from model to mistress, where ‘new possibilities for the Irish female emigrant began to emerge’. 620

The west of Ireland as a destination for painters began to prove popular towards the end of the nineteenth century as the search for the ‘other’ in cultures and customs intensified among European artists. Irish painters studied in Paris and Antwerp and later followed the lead of European painters in visiting the villages in Brittany in northern France and painting the people and their culture. 621 British painters, in search of a new subject, had journeyed to the west of Ireland as early as 1835. The best-known figure at the time was the Scottish painter David Wilkie (1785-1841) who travelled for over a month along the western seaboard from south Mayo to Kerry and Cork. From this trip he completed two works for exhibition in the Royal Academy in London, *The Peep-O-Day Boy’s Cabin, in the West of Ireland* (figure 6.1) in 1836 and *The Whiskey Still* in 1840. Both paintings are set in the interior of a cabin with the Irish family represented in an epic drama.

The influence of Dutch seventeenth-century painting appears in Wilkie's use of satire but also in pictorial devices such as composition and how figures were

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621 Irish painters include Aloysius O’Kelly (c.1850-1926), Henry Jones Thaddeus (1859-1929) and Helen Mabel Trevor (1831-1900), see Julian Campbell, *The Irish Impressionists: Irish artists in France and Belgium, 1850-1914* (Dublin, 1984); for an in-depth assessment on the life and work of the artist O’Kelly see Niamh O’Sullivan, *Art, nation, empire* (Dublin, 2010); for Thaddeus see Brendan Rooney, *Henry Jones Thaddeus* (Dublin, 2003).
positioned within a painting. In particular, the ‘low life’ types originating from this tradition were of major influence on Wilkie’s work. The painting *Peep-O-Day Boys Cabin* features three adult figures placed within an interior scene of a cabin, while a naked baby lies on the floor beside its father. It is a dark and oppressive painting, the only source of light coming from the open door. The cabin is crammed with clothing and objects on the floor and on the surrounding walls. This includes an axe wedged into the mud floor to the right of the painting. There is a sense of urgency and drama within the narrative as a young woman enters the cabin to inform the couple of impending danger towards the young man.

In 1835, Wilkie wrote to his friend Sir William Knighton that on his arrival in Ireland, ‘the scene that presented on landing, so repugnant to the philanthropist, is to the painter most highly interesting, Velázquez, Murillo and Salvator Rosa would here find the fit objects of their study’. As a painter, Wilkie claimed the discovery of the west of Ireland; however, in his writings he wrote of another visiting artist who had been to the area a week before him and who worked in watercolours. This worried Wilkie as he envisioned an influx of other painters. After his trip along the west, Wilkie came to the conclusion that ‘the rustic life that you paint would be here found in perfection, and being of that simple kind, with all its wildness and poverty, it is an approach to pastoral life, which, with all its homeliness, is best adapted to grandeur and poetical effect’.

Within ten years a shift occurred in how the west of Ireland and its inhabitants were presented in visual terms. Topham and Brownlow depicted interior cottage scenes in two very diverse ways, Topham in the manner of realism and Brownlow in the sentimental Victorian genre. These artists were not of the same distinction as Wilkie, who was knighted and Painter in Ordinary to William IV and later Queen Victoria. Topham, who was born in Leeds, moved to London in 1829 for further discussion of this see David H. Solkin, *Painting out of the ordinary: modernity and the art of the everyday life in the early nineteenth-century Britain* (New Haven and London, 2008), pp 10-13.

This can be seen in his early paintings and in his debut work *The Village Politicians* (1806). Letter reproduced in Fintan Cullen (ed.), *Sources in Irish art: a reader* (Cork, 2000), p. 62. For a detailed discussion and analysis of Wilkie’s painting *The Peep-O-Day Boy’s Cabin, in the West of Ireland*, his trip to Ireland and his representations of the Irish poor see Fintan Cullen, *Visual politics: the representation of Ireland 1750-1930* (Cork, 1997), pp 116-35.

Cullen, *Sources in Irish art*, p. 62. Cullen claims that the painter Wilkie refers to was the watercolourist and antiquarian George Petrie (1790-1866).

Ibid.

In a letter from Wilkie to William Collins quoted in Cullen, *Visual politics*, p. 131.
and began exhibiting at the Royal Academy in 1832. He joined the Artists Society in Clipstone Street near Fitzroy Square, which was devoted to the 'systematic study of veritable rustic figures from the life'. 628 Tom Pocock states that members of the society took it in turns to persuade tramps, beggars, ballad-singers and street musicians to pose for them in their studio. 629 With companion and fellow painter Alfred Fripp (1822-95), Topham visited Ireland in 1844. 630 His The Young Mother, Galway (figure 6.2) is a watercolour of a mother holding her baby tenderly in her lap. He paints the folds of her dress in fine detail and he conveys the bond she has with her child. In contrast with Cottage Interior, Claddagh, Galway (1844-5) (figure 6.3) Topham focuses on the two figures and presents the idealised peasant rather than the actual poverty.

Cottage Interior, Claddagh Galway is an example of the rudimentary living conditions in which people lived. A close examination of the representations of poverty highlights diverse social attitudes. Ciara Breathnach uses contemporary sociological research to divide poverty into two types, relative and absolute; the former means a lack of resources to obtain the type of food, accommodation and availing of amenities within a given society while absolute poverty is ‘the minimum necessary for survival’. 631 When Breathnach applied these theories to the nineteenth century, she found that both relative and absolute poverty varied from one to the other in the West of Ireland. 632 In this painting Topham represented relative poverty. Despite the appearance of a scant and unfurnished interior, the cabin provided shelter for a family. Evidence of an income is represented by an elderly woman, sitting behind the young standing woman holding the child, making nets. This indicates that the family had a means of income even if it was small. Topham's palette of earth colours mimics those found within the landscape of the west of Ireland. The structure of the house has a wealth of detail, with exposed timbers revealing that it was made from local materials, and left in their original state.

The background settings of Brownlow’s paintings differ between the west of Ireland and England but the sentimentality and structure are similar. In contrast to Topham, Brownlow’s work had definite appeal to an English middle-class market.

629 Ibid.
630 Examples of Fripp’s work produced in Ireland are published in Claudia Kinmonth, Irish rural interiors in art (New Haven and London, 2006).
631 Ciara Breathnach, The congested districts board of Ireland, 1891-1923 (Dublin, 2005), p. 29.
His *The Fisherman’s Cottage* (or *A Claddagh Fisherman’s Fireside*)\(^{633}\) (figure 6.4) is a classic Victorian domestic scene supplanted to Ireland. To the right of the painting, two young children play bubbles from a small bowl that rests on a stool, while the mother removes a pot from the fire using a cloth; all being viewed seem oblivious to any intrusion. The painting suggests a scene of an ordinary nature rather than one of social poverty. Kinmonth argues that the stark reality of poverty would have been less commercially viable and this painting, in particular, has parallels with the tradition of Gainsborough’s ‘contented’ pastoral subjects.\(^{634}\) While this might the case, another suggestion would be the ‘export’ factor of the family unit as subject matter and also the value placed on the notion of family by the intended Victorian British audience. Brownlow conveys a sense of normality in painting by representing an everyday scene rather than one of abject poverty as depicted by Topham. The family, although barefoot, appear better off than in *Cottage Interior, Claddagh*, with toys for the children, a china jug and plates on a small table. The depiction of the two children at play in the foreground of the work appears ‘English’ in style in contrast to Topham’s interior scenes twenty years earlier.

The exception to Brownlow’s other Irish work is *The West of Ireland in 1862* (figure 6.5), one of four paintings he showed in his last exhibition in Dublin.\(^{635}\) In this painting, the drama echoes the plight of the poor of the west of Ireland, and children are the markers who communicate the level of destitution. The main protagonist, a young boy who occupies the centre of the painting, stares directly out at the viewer. To the left a priest gives the last rites to a dying child on a bed constructed from boards and rocks, while to the right the child’s parents are clearly distraught. Brownlow cleverly divides the composition into two and allows the viewer to see what is happening in two separate rooms at the one time. This pictorial device had been used in an illustration that was published in *Punch* in 1850 entitled *Rent Day* (figure 6.6). It is possible that Brownlow was influenced by this composition as the print is of an Irish topic and set within an Irish cabin. The obvious difference between both images is the use of the simian features of the Irishmen and women in the *Punch* print, whereas Brownlow used quite stylised portrait faces, in particular for the young children.

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\(^{633}\) Title was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1861 cited in Kinmonth, *Irish rural interiors in art*, p. 26.  
\(^{634}\) Ibid.  
\(^{635}\) Ibid.  

Topham travelled around the west of Ireland just prior to the Famine, in contrast, Brownlow visited in the aftermath of the 1860s. However, as evidenced in Brownlow’s painting *The West of Ireland in 1862* images in the contemporary journals such as *Punch* and the *ILN* had some form of influence on British artists. Topham’s images of poverty, to a degree, show elements of realism but it is the journalistic illustrations documenting the Famine that provide examples of absolute poverty as the Irish population struggled to survive. In *Miss Kennedy Distributing Clothing to the Impoverished Children in the Town of Kilrush, County Clare* (1849) (figure 6.7), the daughter of a poor law inspector for Kilrush Union, gives out clothing to a group of women and children.

The aspect of benevolence instead of an eviction was explored by the illustrator and the contrast between the benevolent child with the emaciated group of females and children is stark. The accompanying article to the illustrated print claimed that ‘amidst this world of wretchedness, all is not misery and guilt. Indeed, it is a part of our nature that the sufferings of some should be the occasion for the exercise in the virtue of others’.\(^\text{636}\) The benevolence of the child was claimed as ‘saintly’ and ‘patriotic’ as she gave away her own clothes to the child victims of the Famine.

The function and audience for journalistic illustrations were in sharp contrast to the art institution such as the academy or the art collector. Topham was restricted by his audience and market in London but what about the Irish painter’s response? The effect of the potato blight on the food supply was the theme of a painting by Daniel MacDonald (1821-53) entitled *The Irish Peasant Family Discovering the Blight of their Store* (1847) (figure 6.8). This painting was constructed within the parameters of the sentimental scene typical of the mid-nineteenth century. The emotional element of the painting was far more important to convey, for the artist, than its portrayal of reality. The painting depicts a family in distress upon discovering that their store of potatoes is rotten. The triangular composition of the figures in the painting aids the viewer when interpreting the story. The pose of the young woman to the right of the painting conveys the desperation of the entire scene. Her anguish symbolises the severity of the destroyed food supply. The male figure sitting clasping his hands and the little girl in bare feet to the left narrate the levels of

\[^{636}\text{ILN, 22 Dec. 1849.}\]
poverty that the family are in. The dire situation is finally punctuated by the baby who lies behind the child on the ground to the far left, completely forgotten about in the wake of the catastrophe. The obvious difference between MacDonald’s painting and the *ILN* illustration (figure 6.7) is that the figures were painted within traditional academic guidelines while the illustrated print conveys emaciated victims of the Famine. As a source, the images from these illustrations have been widely referenced, written and commented on. Emily Mark Fitzgerald states when using journalistic illustrations it is important to note that the visual meaning behind them was ‘articulated from within a dense network of image production and consumption’. However, the influence and impact of the *ILN* coverage of the Famine and the illustrations proved important, in particular as a source for British painters. Where Brownlow mimicked compositional devices from periodicals, George Frederic Watts (1817-1904) used newspaper reports of the Famine and painted *The Irish Famine* (1849-50) (figure 6.9) in response.

Watts worked on the painting without ever having been to Ireland and claimed his sources were from prints depicting stories about the Famine in the *ILN*. He eventually went to Ireland after 1850 where he visited his friend Aubrey de Vere (1814-1902). De Vere wrote to Watts saying ‘you would find much to interest you deeply in Ireland, besides its scenery, including not a little of which you must have had a second-sight vision before you painted your “Irish Eviction”’.

This later change is significant as it could indicate sensitivity with the word ‘eviction’ in the title and could explain the alternative title of *Irish Famine*. The words ‘eviction’ or ‘ejectment’ in the title of a painting during and immediately after the Famine was highly political for an artist and created public consternation, in particular if the painting was shown in London. Cullen proved this point in his

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639 Aubrey de Vere was a poet and writer born in Curragh Chase, county Limerick.


641 Another example is Frederick Goodall’s (1822-1904), *An Irish Eviction* (1850), watercolour on paper, Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. Goodall depicts a family outside of their cottage after an eviction. His representation of the aftermath of an eviction, with no constabulary present, rather than illustrating it taking place might have made the painting more consumable for a middle class British audience.
discussion about the painting *An Ejectment in Ireland* (with the alternative title *A Tear and a Prayer for Erin*) (1848 -1852) by the Irish artist Robert George Kelly (1822-1910). Cullen states that with the exhibition of *An Ejectment in Ireland* Kelly brought ‘rural politics into the world of the London art gallery’. Kelly’s painting was negatively reviewed in the press and it was debated in the House of Commons.

The provenance of the work suggests that Watts kept it in his own collection and displayed it in 1881 in a purpose-built gallery, which the artist had commissioned on his own property to showcase his work. Watts’s *Irish Famine* belonged to a collection of four paintings that were concerned with poverty in London and included titles such as *Found Drowned*, *The Seamstress* or *The Song of the Shirt* and *Under a Dry Arch*. Watts’s own attitude to the function of a painting was based on the foundation of how a painting communicated and was read by an audience. In 1890, he wrote an article that was published in *The Magazine of Art* where he claimed that:

> Everything in a work of art must accord. Though gloom and desolation would deepen the effects of a distressing incident in real life, such accompaniments are not necessary to make us feel a thrill of horror or awaken the keenest sympathy. The most awful circumstances may take place under the purest sky, and amidst the most lovely surroundings.

The Famine’s representations in both the commercial and fine art world interchanged and the divergent responses convey the highly political and sensitive nature within England of paintings about the Famine. The impact of the Famine had other consequences that continued to re-appear in paintings, one of which was the displacement of Irish families within Ireland and their eventual emigration to Britain. In the work of Scottish artist Erskine Nicol, the vagrancy of Irish families appeared continuously in his work. Nicol had trained in Edinburgh before embarking on a career in Dublin in 1846. The subsequent four years were spent teaching art privately but also painting Ireland and its people. Although he eventually settled in London, Nicol often visited Ireland for several months at a time to his studio, which was

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642 Fintan Cullen, ‘Ireland in England: painting history?’ in *The Irish Review (1986-)*, no. 36/37 (2007), p. 49. Kelly’s painting was first exhibited in Dublin in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1848. This was followed by an exhibition in London in the British Institution in 1853.

643 Ibid., p. 52.


located in County Westmeath.\textsuperscript{646} In his work he tackled many themes including inward and outward migration and landlord tenant relations, which have been the topic of research in recent times.\textsuperscript{647} While his eviction scenes are relevant to this chapter, emphasis is also placed on the paintings depicting family migration and on the significance of the family unit in visual terms. Topham and Brownlow placed the Irish family into a domestic visual stereotype while Nicol captured the more unnerving evidence of displacement and Irish families moving to England and elsewhere in an attempt to escape from severe poverty.

Nicol’s \textit{An Ejected Family}, (1853) (figure 6.10), an iconic work housed in the National Gallery of Ireland, portrays a family on the roadside. They have been evicted from their home, which is placed to the far left of the composition. Nicol presents three generations to the viewer, and the family now begin their journey, one that has been ultimately forced upon them. In the Victorian tradition of sentimentality, a young boy lies on an embankment to the right of the painting as he gazes towards the house, which is bathed in rays of sunlight, while in contrast dark clouds gather on the horizon on the right hand side. Despite the theme, however, the painting is not an accurate record of the actual violence and distress suffered by tenants during an eviction.

The painting was exhibited in the Royal Scottish Academy in 1854. This was most likely a strategic move due to its content, which was too sensitive for display in Dublin or London.\textsuperscript{648} In the image itself the family’s vagrancy status is represented by a small bundle wrapped in a red cloth, and as Bailey states, the house in the background remains intact and has not being destroyed or burnt out.\textsuperscript{649} Nicol’s interpretation of this event and how he chooses to present it in the visual suggests a sanitized representation of homelessness. He represented the family quite a distance away from the house rather than depicting the eviction itself.

The representation of the itinerant Irish family in Walter Howell Deverell’s (1827-54) \textit{The Irish Vagrants} (1853-4) (figure 6.11) deals with the growing social problems that were associated with the influx of Irish families into Britain

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{646} Bhreathnach-Lynch, \textit{Ireland’s art Ireland’s history}, p. 55.
\item \textsuperscript{647} For reference and discussion on Nicol’s images of evictions see Bailey, ‘The art and politics of eviction imagery, 1840-1890’.
\item \textsuperscript{648} Bailey, ‘The art and politics of eviction imagery’, p. 39. For example Kelly’s painting had been exhibited a year earlier and caused public debate in the House of Commons, see Catherine Marshall, ‘Painting Irish history: the Famine’ in \textit{History Ireland}, iv, no. 3 (1996): 46-50.
\item \textsuperscript{649} Bailey, ‘The art and politics of eviction imagery’, p. 39.
\end{itemize}
desperately seeking work after the Famine. Cullen claims that the representation of the family unit was paramount, with the mother and child figure very effectively utilised to draw on the emotional response of the viewer.  

This painting is of a group consisting of two males, a female and three children, looking for agricultural work in a rural setting, a rare depiction in comparison to paintings representing them searching for work in the larger cities. The story of the painting rests on their ignored plight by a woman, who passes the group of figures on horseback; there is no visual sign of sympathy or benevolence on her part. The pathetic situation is further implied by one of the children running alongside her with his arms outstretched. It is the children in the composition who communicate the harsh reality of the situation to the viewer; they beg and plead to the potential benefactor, where the adults do not. Instead the two male figures appear to be resting against the trunk of a tree, unresponsive to the situation, while the young mother stares off into the distance with a look of tension and bitterness. Deverell himself wrote how he painted the ‘stern head of the Irish woman’ who ‘seems to offend greatly the few casual visitors I have had tho’it is certainly one of the most just and natural expressions I have ever done’.  

The face of the woman appears to have ‘simian’ features that were more commonly represented in contemporary journals.

The theme of mobility and emigration was ever present in Nicol’s work in both Scotland and Ireland. The space occupied by the emigrant family was a popular subject for artists at the time; representations of emigrants travelling on boats and in carriages on trains appear more frequently towards the end of the nineteenth century. Mobility and its consequences are reflected in the visual response to a rapidly changing world as migration was causing new and unusual problems with people moving about from one country to another. Short-distance emigration to England, rather than the long journey to America or further still to Australia and New Zealand, appeared to be more appealing to those with some ‘future advancement at home’.

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653 David Fitzpatrick, ‘Irish emigration in the later nineteenth century’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxii (1980), p. 129. According to Fitzpatrick the pull factor to America rather than Britain was greater due to better living conditions and greater opportunities for employment.
Waiting for the Train (1864) (figure 6.12) represents a further continuation of the theme of migration and people on the move. In this popular image by Nicol, a man leans against a post while his young wife sits on the other side as they patiently wait for a train. At their feet lie the provisions for the journey. The setting is in a small train station in Ballinasloe, County Galway. The painting, completed ten years after An Ejected Family, was exhibited in 1864 at the Royal Academy.\textsuperscript{654} It was obviously deemed safe to exhibit in London at this time; perhaps the general population and the British government had come to a point of acceptance of the heavy influx into England of Irish immigrants. In An Ejected Family the family unit occupies physical space in a landscape setting; whereas Waiting for the Train depicts a young couple rather than a family of three generations, and the tradition of romanticism is broken by the tedious situation of waiting for the transport which will eventually take the young couple to a waiting emigration ship. The emotional pull is not as effective as with the family group in the landscape. In this case, it is mundane and less dramatic, and more about acceptance of a political situation in Ireland that appeared to have no solution apart from emigration.

Ford Madox Brown belonged to the pre-Raphaelite circle in England, and was exposed to northern Flemish art from a young age due to periods living in Calais and Belgium. During the years 1852 and 1855 Brown painted The Last of England (figure 6.13), a large piece about the ‘phenomenon of mass emigration’ which sits comfortably into the last part of this chapter.\textsuperscript{655} The painting, which is a portrait of a fellow artist and his wife, portrays a young couple on board a boat leaving England to seek a better future elsewhere. In his diary, Brown makes reference to using his second wife Emma as a model for the female figure in the painting.\textsuperscript{656} Brown painted The Last of England when he was penniless and unrecognised as an artist and considering a new life in India.\textsuperscript{657} Therefore Brown’s angle of this painting and later Work stems from a more personal point of view of emigration rather than Topham, Brownlow and Nicol.

\textsuperscript{654} Algernon Graves, The Royal Academy, iii, 367.
\textsuperscript{655} Newman and Watkinson, Ford Madox Brown, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{656} The diaries of the artist between the years 1847 to 1868 consist of six exercise books and are housed in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. All the diaries were transcribed into a book in 1981. Virginia Surtees (ed.), The diary of Ford Madox Brown (New Haven and London, 1981), p. 80. According to Surtees the idea behind this painting came from the forced emigration to Australia of Thomas Woolner (1825-92) a sculptor and poet who belonged to the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He later returned to Britain.
\textsuperscript{657} Newman and Watkinson, Ford Madox Brown, p. 3.
Also in 1852, Brown began to consider the concept of Work that developed in the later years of 1856 to 1863. While Work deals with the concept of the morality of work, it also considers the repercussions of forced migration, which is a counter reflection to The Last of England. In a letter to Brown, the lawyer Vernon Lushington (1832-1912) (who was a friend to the key painters of the Pre-Raphaelites including Edward Burne Jones (1833-1898) and Daniel Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)), commented on seeing the painting The Last of England. In his letter he expressed the wish that Brown would exhibit the painting more often, and expressed warm praise for the work.\textsuperscript{658} He was intrigued by the truthfulness of the painting and he commented on the ‘noble’ subject, how ‘brave this conception’ and that the painting was an achievement due to the subject being of ‘real life [and] of 19th century life’. It appears Lushington found the subject of emigration a far more worthy topic for painting and ended the letter by saying that ‘I wish all you Pre-Raphaelites would give yourselves up to the work of recording things memorable amongst us now’.\textsuperscript{659} What emerges from Lushington’s letter is how emigration affected the ordinary British public, and this was also written about in the contemporary press.

In the ILN in 1844, an article had been written on the government-assisted emigration of British families to Sydney. The author of the article focused on the wholesomeness of the family unit where ‘mothers were sitting giving nourishment to their infants but they had their husbands with them’ while ‘children were eating or playing, but they were not seperated from their parents’.\textsuperscript{660} These families were agricultural labourers and trades people, similar to the Irish families that were emigrating to England, yet in this article the cleaniness and orderly fashion of the British emigrant was highlighted. Included was a sketch of the Emigrants at dinner (figure 6.14) in ‘midships the place occupied by the married people’, where the family unit is advertised very strongly.\textsuperscript{661} The visual representations of the family unit in this illustration correlate with the positive image of the British emigrant that the government was advertising. In contrast, the negative imagery of Irish emigrants

\textsuperscript{658} Vernon Lushington to Ford Madox Brown, 1 Apr. n.d (NAL, Ford Madox Brown, MSL 1995/14/59/1).
\textsuperscript{659} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{660} ILN, 13 Apr. 1844.
\textsuperscript{661} Ibid.
emerging from filthy, disease ridden boats in major British cities had a very powerful effect on the shaping of racial thinking.

While Nicol gave consideration to the family unit on the move in Ireland, he appears not to have been particularly interested in their representation in England. Instead, he focused on the persona of the single male Irish migrant. Levels of destitution fluctuated at certain times of the year due to crop failures; but the landless labourer and his family were always vulnerable. According to Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, landless labourers were the ‘most unfortunate victims’ in pre-Famine Ireland, as they struggled with trying to rent out small plots for cash. However, within this ‘rural proletariat’ there existed degrees of poverty with a small section successfully requiring a plot in return for their labour. In the extreme cases and in the majority of this class, landless labourers travelled within Ireland to look for agricultural employment. Eventually, seasonal agricultural work necessitated and encouraged a healthy stream of migrant Irish workers to many parts of England. There were many contributing factors to this migration throughout the nineteenth century, including the establishment of the passenger steamship service between Ireland and England. However, the major factor was continuous depressions in Irish agriculture combined with a rapidly rising population.

The landless labourer, prior to the Famine, was mobile in order to travel to where the work was available but often had a family that were left behind to fend for themselves. Before the 1850s, the landless labourer made up a considerable percentage of the population and according to John W. Boyle, the harvest season provided enough earnings that could stretch over leaner months. In the 1835 report the landless labourer was categorised as ‘able-bodied out of work’. During a peak period of deprivation, it was noted by one interviewee in the report that:

the men are ashamed to beg, and they go about with a hook in their hand, or a spade on their shoulder asking for work. When they stop at a man’s house,

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664 Ibid.
665 Agricultural migration to Great Britain did not exclusively occur in the nineteenth century. It has been recorded as early as the medieval period. See Anne O’ Dowd, Spalpeens and tattie hookers (Dublin, 1991).
666 Ibid., p. 5.
they get a meal; sometimes they continue in this way for 14 or 15 days, and sometimes three weeks; their wives and children beg; they generally forage about the place where he is, but do not travel together.\textsuperscript{668}

The negative association to travelling on their own meant that landless labourers were seen as deserters of their families who would eventually become dependant on the rates of their parish.\textsuperscript{669} The family that the labourer left behind were noted to have left their cabins to wander and beg. In her account of Wexford, Mrs S.C. Hall transcribes an account of the life of the family of a landless labourer where:

\begin{quote}
The man sets off to make English hay and gather in the English harvest, and the woman shuts the door of her cabin, rolls her infant in her blanket, secures the blanket on her back by turning the tail of her gown over it: the eldest girl carries the kettle, the eldest boy the begging bag... and so they travel from place to place ... they are much happier than they look, and by the time the winter closes in, why, the husband comes home, and then they live maybe comfortable enough till the next Spring.\textsuperscript{670}
\end{quote}

The primitive living conditions and general ragged appearance of the landless labourer in Britain was visible. The following description from an article in the *Scottish Farmer*, reprinted in the *Freeman's Journal*, gives an account of the Irish reaper who migrated to Scotland to find work. The writer commented on the vagrancy of the Irish migrant worker, and he noted that in their attempt to bring home as much money as they could, they spent little on food and board.\textsuperscript{671} He also gave a detailed description of their clothing and general physical appearance by writing about the men who ‘wore a scarecrow hat or bonnet and, over a short tattered shirt, a blue dress coat with the armpits and elbows of moleskin and a patch of the same material down the front’. The writer’s observation of the workers state of clothing and general appearance reflects the contemporary attitude towards work and respectability that was seeping down from the higher to the lower classes. The seasonal workers living habits closely resembled vagrancy, which was illegal. The landless labourers were aware of their marginal status where some felt that they were pushed ‘ to regard themselves as being treated in some measure as a persecuted race’.\textsuperscript{672}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[668] First Report of his Majesty’s Commissioners for Inquiring into the Conditions of the Poorer Classes in Ireland [H. C. 1835], p. 355.
\end{footnotes}
In Nicol’s *Irish Emigrant Landing at Liverpool* (1871) (figure 6.15) an Irish immigrant lands on the docks in Liverpool dressed in respectable attire, his appearance suggesting health and strength. He is greeted by children who appear to be playing around the docks. Placed directly behind the immigrant is a young woman in a blue check shawl standing beside a black man who is pointing to a printed poster that is out of the viewer’s range. The black man could also be a migrant himself, and Nicol’s work offers a visual counterpoint to the mass immigration to Liverpool of many different races. If Nicol diverged from painting the Irish family unit in England and focused on the male migrant instead, perhaps it was a reflection of market forces in Britain on his change of subject.

Subject content was dictated to a certain extent by the middle classes in both Ireland and England, where ‘subjects... should be treated with the supposed dignity and empathy befitting the noble art of painting and social themes kept within the bounds of propriety’. There existed a class system amongst nineteenth-century artists that appeared to be measured by the type of subjects painted. Sydney Colvin (1845-1927), a Victorian writer and critic considered the role of genre painting and he came to the conclusion that it failed in its duty to fulfill the ‘beautiful’ in aesthetic terms as artists devoted their time to the close mishaps and minutae of life. Colvin considered Nicol as a painter whose ‘aesthetic considerations came a poor second’ due to the fact that he simply captured ‘country bumpkins’. Irish vagrant families living on the streets of major British cities were not a popular subject choice for artists.

The variety of nomadic people in the Victorian period in London has been termed as ‘savage mobility’, which defined the difference between rogues, vagabonds and vagrants to their ‘polar opposition to sedentary, decent and civilised society’. When the 1824 Vagrancy Act was passed it was described as ‘one of the more important statutes of the nineteenth century ... enforcing ideals of independence, work and family responsibility’. By the 1850s in London,
contemporary observers noticed a considerable increase in paupers and itinerant beggars on its city’s streets. In his research on ‘savage mobility’, Adam Hansen uses the definitive year 1851, in which the Crystal Palace Exhibition took place and the seminal work of Henry Mayhew’s (1812-87) *London Labour and London Poor* (1851-52) was published. Building his argument on these two examples, Hansen examines how the ‘discursive construction of itinerants, vagrants and vagabonds materialised in the mid to late nineteenth century’. 678 Mayhew was a social researcher and journalist. In cultural terms the 1851 Exhibition signified ‘a changing political, social, economic, and cultural character of modern life’ that took place in London. 679 Henry Mayhew’s work was the first social survey on the trades of costermongers in London.

Mayhew commented on Irish immigrants who arrived in London focusing on their physical appearance and the type of neighbourhoods in which they lived. Irish immigrants earned an income from itinerant trades and begging in London and other cities throughout England. As Mayhew points out in the beginning of his study; ‘street people’ are classified under ‘street sellers, buyers, finders, performers, pedlars and labourers’. The Irish immigrant made his living by means of costermongering or selling fruit, vegetables and fish. As Mayhew observed, costermongering was productive as it was a way of making a living but the type of goods being sold and how they were sold determined the degree of respectability. 680 Mayhew travelled into pockets of areas that were considered ‘nests of Irish’, and which were concentrated in East London. The Victorian author Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was also known to have wandered into these communities. In the notorious area of St.Giles, Dickens visited a tramps’ lodging house accompanied by the local police 681:

... men, women, children, for the most part naked, heaped upon the floor like maggots in cheese ... does anybody lie there? Me sir, Irish me ... why is there no one on that little mat before the sullen fire? Because O’ Donovan, with his wife and daughter, is not come in from selling Lucifers! Nor on the bit of sacking in the nearest corner? Bad luck! Because that Irish family is late to-night, a-cadging in the streets! 682

Leon Litvack claims that through his writings on this lodging house, Dickens was ‘describing the social reality for the tramping class, which was not the realm of the social outcast, but rather of the working people who followed the itinerant callings and trades’. Mayhew’s own reflections on these Irish communities in the East End commented on how they kept their appearance and socialised on the street:

> The men smoked, with their hands in their pockets, listening to the old crones talking, and only now and then grunting out a reply when a question was directly put to them. And yet it is curious that these people, who here seemed as inactive as negroes, will perform the severest bodily labour, undertaking tasks that the English are unfitted for.

Similar to Dickens writings, Mayhew chose to describe the Irish community in view of work, which became a method of quantifying the worth of a particular race of people. Even though costermongering was low on the scale of respectable jobs and was highly dependant on mobility, it was still an income and was considered a step up from vagrancy and begging. There were major contrasts in how the Irish poor were represented in paintings in Ireland, compared to the Irish immigrant poor in Britain. The paintings reflected public opinion. As suggested by Robert Humphreys, vagrants became ‘overwhelmingly Irish’ and were mainly men between the ages of 16 and 59 years ... there were allegations that whereas some might have arrived in England to find work, others came with the avowed intention of begging’. The lines that existed between the mobile and sedentary were often blurred. As Hansen considers, ‘the poor shared lives of intermittent mobility and stasis, shared casual labour, shared economic misfortunes, and shared risks of illegality’.

In Brown’s painting *Work* (figure 6.16) an array of class divisions unfolds in a tapestry effect. Irish stertotypes are the focus in this piece, with the red-haired, hard-working navvies taking centre stage, bathed in a wash of natural light. The innocent casualties of forced emigration are the young couple sheltering under a tree to the right of the painting, their baby in the arms of its young mother. In the background, under the shade of a tree, is the ‘Paddy’ Irish man with his simian facial features,

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683 Ibid., p. 43.
685 Humphreys, *No fixed abode*, p. 88.
commonly portrayed and heavily associated with intemperance in popular publications during the Victorian period. This is the corrupt Irishman whom Brown considers as lazy and unwilling to work. However, the hectic nature of the composition comes to a halt when the eye finally settles on a group of red-haired children who are placed in the foreground of the painting. Their small frames are in contrast with the bulk of the male navvies. In January 1855, Brown expresses in his diary his delight that *Work* was constantly evolving:

... this evening worked at the design of the Hampstead picture called “Work”. Whenever I set to at designing I feel in the most ethereal & extatic state possible ... I worked at the navvies-the pot boy a trium, the mortarmen perfection & the ragged child upsetting the barrow & getting cuffed, all creations- & the whole becoming more & more exciting.  

There are four children in a group; the eldest, a girl, is trying her utmost to discipline her unruly brother while holding a baby and comforting her younger sister who rigidly stands by her side (figure 6.17). These children have experienced the death of their mother, symbolised by a black armband that is tied onto the baby’s arm. The most intriguing element is the way the young girl is portrayed, which is heavy with social and gender symbols. The importance of how childhood and adolescence was interpreted and visually portrayed in the nineteenth century fundamentally shifted to accommodate new views of childhood and its place in the family unit. In Tim Barringer’s synopsis of the painting he claims that ‘the urchin girl’s ill fitting and tattered velvet dress, her bared shoulders, and her shameless proximity to the exposed flesh of the navvies and beer seller indicate a future life history of poverty leading to prostitution’.  

Brown described the painting as a ‘species of intoxication. When I drew in the poor little vixen girl pulling her brother’s hair, I quite growled with delight. A Bon mot of [Thomas]Woolners was “that it should be a point honour with women to stand smoke as with men to stand fire”‘. In his entry for a catalogue for a one-man show which incuded *Work* in 1865, Brown laid the blame on the imminent downfall of this girl on the industrialised environment, where children were left in vulnerable

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688 Barringer, *Men at work*, p. 54.
689 Green, *French painting of childhood and adolescence*, p. 19.
690 Barringer, *Men at work*, p. 54.
situations by neglectful alcoholic fathers. Mayhew and John Binny noted that Irish children were left as orphans to fend for themselves during the day as their parents were wandering the streets vending their trade. The cause of this daytime abandonment was the lack of morality when it came to the ethics of work where the child ‘grows up not only unacquainted with any industrial occupation, but untrained to habits of daily work’. Brown communicated a keen social awareness of what was happening around him in London by the mid-nineteenth century, and his images of these children are a large component in his story in Work. In his diary he wrote about his friend Edward Jones who came across a destitute girl of 17 on the streets in the early hours of the morning. Brown states the girl was found on one of the coldest nights during the winter ‘scarce any clothes & starvin, in spite of prostitution, after only 5 weeks of London life Jones gave her money & told her to call next morning which she did & telling her story that she had parents willing to recieve her back again in the country ... has I believe sent her home this morning’. The morality of the young girl was open to interpretation by Brown and he felt it necessary to express his ideas in paint. Brown appeared more comfortable communicating his ideas to a moral Victorian audience through the use of a migrant Irish child, a person who would have been considered within the realms of the marginal, rather than a poor native English girl. In many cases orphan children were sent to reforming or industrial schools rather than prison for offences including ‘wandering’ and ‘destitution’. The contemporary reports on slums in London such as St. Giles according to J. M Feheney, leaned more towards caricature rather than a balanced description. In another diary entry of 17 of January 1858, Brown enters in his progression on Work and his studio endeavours after he took a break when his baby son Arthur became ill and died in the previous July of 1857. He writes, ‘painted the body of, arm & leg of man mixing mortar in the work picture, also the dog, loose earth, lantern & the

694 Mayhew and Binny, The criminal prisons of London, p. 91.
697 Ibid., p. 327.
poney of the girl, & drew in poor little Arthur’s head for the baby & began painting it
the day he was taken ill & had to rub out what I had done (300 hours). There is no
doubt of Brown’s feelings towards the navvies as he stated that I ‘painted in the
young workman shovelling, the hero of the picture’. Brown chooses three forms of communication in this piece to differentiate the
Irish community from the British. The first is through the use of red hair to denote
race difference, the second the concept of work in relation to social status and the
third the function or non-functionality of the family unit. In essence, in nineteenth-
century Britain, colour was not the only ‘marker of exclusion/inclusion’ of different
nationalities into the British community. As both the Irish and British communities
were white, other forms of differentiation were used. The family was strongly
associated with the Catholic religion and this in effect was seen as a badge of
difference. In the visual sphere this meant that artists used other techniques to
differentiate race and how the family was portrayed was one example.

In Work the family group is represented two-fold, firstly the young couple
with their newborn to the right, away from the centre commotion of the painting, and
the second the parentless children in the foreground of the painting. The couple have
been associated with piety; a reference to the Holy Family’s rest on the Flight into
Egypt, and as Joel A. Hollander asserts, a visual connection with the Irish
population. Hollander briefly comments on this small and visually insignificant
part of the painting, while he completely overlooks the parentless family group in the
front of the composition. Without parents these orphans would have been subjected
to crime; the downfall of British society. The family working as a unit and staying
together in Britain was vital for the steadfast avoidance of moral degradation. The
strong links to religion in this painting and the ethics of work are strongly
interconnected with the notion of Victorian family values. If, as Hollander suggests,
the navvies in Work can be viewed as a ‘metaphor for the ability of democracy to
serve the needs of the masses’ then the family unit can be considered its backbone.

Brown eventually incorporated the religious and philanthropic angle into
Work due to the inclusion of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) and Frederick Denison

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699 Ibid. Emma, Brown’s second wife, was initially his model and they had child out of wedlock at the end of 1850, they married three years later and Arthur was their second child.
703 Ibid., p. 113.
Maurice (1805-1872)\textsuperscript{704} (figure 6.18) into the composition which was requested by Plint.\textsuperscript{705} In a letter to Brown in 1856, Plint asked the painter to ‘interview’ both Carlyle and Maurice.\textsuperscript{706} This religious element is crucial in the symbolism of this painting, as it appears to go hand in hand with the moral story. Brown was often informed of the plight of the Irish population from his friend Richard Bromley- who helped organise relief for the Famine victims- when he visited the artist’s studio in Clipstone street.\textsuperscript{707}

Karl Marx divided the poor into two sections, the ‘purified subject of the working class’ and the lumpenproletariat that consisted of the “rotting mass” of criminals and paupers.\textsuperscript{708} Marx considered the lumpenproletariat as a ‘distinct race’ who greatly differed from the industrial proletariat and they inhabited large urban areas creating a ‘recruiting ground for thieves and criminals of all kinds, living on crumbs of society, people without a definite trade, vagabonds …varying according to the degree of civilisation of the nation to which they belong’.\textsuperscript{709} Peter Stallybrass suggests that both Marx and Friedrich Engels coined the word \textit{lumpenproletariat} as a ‘racial category’, which in effect declared that the section of society which included beggars became a ‘depiction of the poor as a nomadic tribe, innately depraved’.\textsuperscript{710} Stallybrass considers how nineteenth-century commentators, novelists and painters ‘invented and portrayed’ nomads ‘as a spectacle of heterogeneity’.\textsuperscript{711}

Mayhew’s observations were inspired by the writings of Dr. Andrew Smith and his work \textit{Origin and history of the Bushmen}, 1831.\textsuperscript{712} Smith reasoned from his findings on the South African bushmen that ‘civilised people were always surrounded by a peripheral nomadic group of wanderers … the epitome of social

\textsuperscript{704} Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was a Scottish satirical writer, essayist and historian who lived in London during the Victorian era and examples of his work include \textit{Sign of the times} and \textit{Characteristics}. Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872) was a Christian Socialist.


\textsuperscript{706} Letter from Thomas Plint to Ford Madox Brown, 24 November 1856 (NAL, Ford Madox Brown, MSL/1995/14/82/2).

\textsuperscript{707} Newman and Watkinson, \textit{Ford Madox Brown and the pre-Raphaelite circle}, p. 31. Richard Bromley was Elizabeth’s brother and a civil servant at the Admiralty and contributed to the organisation of famine relief to Ireland in 1847.

\textsuperscript{708} Peter Stallybrass, ‘Marx and heterogeneity: thinking the lumpenproletariat’ in \textit{Representations}, no. 31 (1990), p. 83.

\textsuperscript{709} Karl Marx cited in Stallybrass, ‘Marx and heterogeneity’, p. 83.

\textsuperscript{710} Ibid., p. 70. Marx and Engels first referred to \textit{lumpenproletariat} in \textit{The German ideology} (1845).

\textsuperscript{711} Stallybrass, ‘Marx and heterogeneity’, p. 70.

The key word ‘peripheral’ is paramount when looking at the representations, both written and visual, of the nomad within the urban scene in the nineteenth century. They were regarded as a social nuisance and every effort was made to house, categorise and eradicate the nomad. By the 1850s the consensus was that vagrancy was a threat to capitalism. The influx of Irish migrants only added to the teeming masses of beggars on London’s streets and this was of huge concern to government officials.

While Dickens and Mayhew provided the textual observations of slum areas Luke Fildes’s painting *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* (figure 6.19) was a visual equivalent. In his painting, he focused purely on the ‘peripheral’ vagrant and brought a heavily controversial topic into the gallery space. The ‘casual ward’ was a form of the workhouse in England, which catered for the vagrant or ‘casual’. On entering the casual ward the person had to perform a task of work on the morning after his admission. Fildes’s depiction of the casual ward shows a specific space within London where the uncontrollable could be contained. Fildes, in effect, chose a subject that was a visible attempt at categorising and labelling an undesirable element of society. According to Robert Humphreys, because of the nomadic nature of poor travellers they were considered a threat to social stability by the government and this did not help the general public’s attitude towards them which was often one of disdain.

Fildes painting was based on an illustration he completed in 1869 entitled *Houseless and Hungry* for the Graphic. In visual production, the Graphic went a

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713 Ibid.
718 Humphreys, *No fixed abode*, p. 79.
719 Fildes was commissioned to execute a drawing based on a subject of his choice for the wood engraver and publisher William Luson Thomas. Fildes choose the topic of a group of people queuing for tickets for a night shelter on his first visit to London. It was published in the first issue of the paper on the 4 Dec. 1869 see Julian Treuherz, *Hard times: social realism in Victorian art* (Manchester, 1987), p. 53.
step further from the *ILN* as it proved more ‘explicit textually and visually’. As a periodical, it attempted to create a more hard hitting truth about poverty. In *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* a row of people stand against the wall of the casual ward awaiting entry. The characters in the painting vary, with the single male tramp standing alongside the destitute family. Amongst his chosen models was an alcoholic referred to as ‘the big old Boozer’, and also a labourer with his child. The *Graphic* illustration was purportedly the result of on-the-spot reporting where Fildes witnessed first hand the destitution of the homeless poor. However, while Fildes’s observations were conducted on nightly wanders he made drawings from memory and never worked in a sketchbook.

According to his son and biographer L.V Fildes, none of the figures in the painting of 1874 were professional models but real people hired from the streets where Fildes met them as he went on nightly wanders. This scenario was similar to Dickens’s journey into St. Giles. Fildes referenced Dickens when the painting was exhibited in the Royal Academy with the following: ‘Dumb, wet, silent horrors! Sphinxes set up against that dead wall and none likely to be at the pains of sloving them until the general overthrow’. Fildes’s curiosity and seeking to find an alternative source for his art in London’s slums hints at the life of the flaneur. Although essentially associated with the cafe culture of Paris, the flaneur was also an ‘observer whose eyes and feet were mobilized in the delineated spaces of the city to take in the expressions of contemporaneity around him’.

While the flaneur was a powerful connotation with Parisian life and the art world, in London, the artist who also worked as an illustrator did not have such a pool of contemporaries for support. The difference in Fildes’s case is that he wandered around dangerous parts of London that were not necessarily part of the everyday life of the white male, middle class English artist. The communities

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between the wealthy and the poor were severely divided in London and even though artists such as Fildes drew attention to the ‘strange and out of way places’ his work is plagued by ‘oversimplification’ and ‘overly dramatizing’ the poor.\textsuperscript{725} In effect, Fildes’s role became similar to the philanthropist; both were the ‘observers’ of contemporary urban life and his role as an artist for a periodical made him a surveyor of the poor.

The successful exhibition of \textit{Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward} in the Royal Academy received positive attention, with one critic referring to Fildes as on a par with Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and his \textit{Stone Breakers} of 1851.\textsuperscript{726} In France, Courbet focused on the rural labourer conducting backbreaking work in contrast, in England, Fildes found the subject of the nomadic and homeless people of London’s inner city more suitable for his own work. This was groundbreaking as the homeless and rootless were brought into the gallery space as a subject in their own right and worthy of consideration. As Peter Keating states the poor were everywhere in London yet ‘their way of life was described as hidden, distant, alien, unknown’ and they inhabited a part of the city into ‘which intrepid adventurers occasionally descended’.\textsuperscript{727}

This chapter focused on the visiting British artist to Ireland within a timeframe that included the introduction of the poor law into Ireland in 1838 and also the fallout of the Famine. Topham, Brownlow and Nicol represented the Irish poor in a variety of ways. Topham discovered his Irish peasant just prior to the Famine, while Brownlow created paintings a considerable time after. Nicol represented contemporary themes that hinted at social problems connecting both Ireland and Britain in a significant way, but made them marketable for his London audience. This chapter also examined how the role of journalistic illustrations, though vastly different in style, audience and function, had a considerable impact on the British painter including Brownlow and Watts. The \textit{ILN} and \textit{Graphic} not only afforded a steady income for artists, and a testing ground for potential paintings but also provided a wider audience outside of the gallery space.\textsuperscript{728}

\textsuperscript{725} Wolff and Fox, ‘Pictures from the magazines’, p. 569.
\textsuperscript{726} Fildes, \textit{Luke Fildes}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{727} Peter Keating, ‘Words and pictures: changing images of the poor in Victorian Britain’ in Treuherz, \textit{Hard times}, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{728} McEvansoneya, “\textit{Dismal Art}” or “\textit{Strong realistic pictures}”? i, 37.
In both Brown and Fildes’s paintings, both the Irish poor and vagrants are caught between the categories of decent hardworking navvies or an ominous threat. The invisible thread that binds is built on the morality of the family. Once this was severed, the Irish reputation was often tarnished. In the case of Fildes, his point of view is one of privilege but also of power. He builds on what Brown created in *Work* with the urban scene as a source, however in contrast Fildes’s audience were both the gallery elite and the wider public who read the weekly journals. Where Brown produced a painting on commission, Fildes bowed to the growing ‘sensationalist’ topics of realistic illustration. The growing appetite for the truth in paintings and illustration was associated with the desire for ‘exotic spectacle’, which was appearing as ‘visual manifestations of colonialist/imperialism dreams of control and conquest’.  

In Fildes’ painting, the poor who queue for entry into the casual ward are an example of ‘spectacle’ during a time when the subject of the poor in art was often discouraged and devalued. These were the homeless who lived on park benches, under monuments or bridges; they occupied the space of the city but were never a definitive part of it. The acclaim that *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* received in the press contrasts with the perceived notions of the nomadic poor as being a threat to Victorian society. Paintings that offered topics of contemporary social concerns, in some cases, attracted the attention of wealthy businessmen, for example the Northern industrialist.  

The buyer of *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* was Thomas Taylor, a Wigan cotton-spinner, who was an art collector with a gallery at Aston Rowant in Oxfordshire. Despite the success of the exhibition of *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward*, Fildes discontinued painting subjects from the streets, as he claimed people asked him why his ‘pictures were so gloomy? How could I expect such pictures to go with the curtains in the drawing room’?

In contrast, *Work* deals with the end journey, the destination that is reached and what is on offer to the immigrants once they land on a different shore. As a painting, *Work* was well received and appears to have been exhibited extensively in the following years, as was evidenced in a letter to Brown, when a friend scheduled a

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729 Smalls, ‘Race as spectacle’, p. 357.
730 Ibid.
731 Treuherz, *Hard times*, p. 11.
visit to see its exhibition in York in 1879.733 Its further recognition also came in repeat duplicates which Brown was commissioned to do during and after the completion of Work.734

733 Letter from Maclean Coban to Ford Madox Brown, 21 July 1879 (NAL, Ford Madox Brown, MSL/1995/14/63/1).
734 Letter from James Leathart to Ford Madox Brown, 13 August 1863 (NAL, Ford Madox Brown, MSL/1995/14/55/40). There is also reference to a finished small duplicate of Work in his notebook book for October 1863 (NAL, Ford Madox Brown, Notebook, ii, 1858-64, Box 33). James Leathart (1820-1895) was a lead manufacturer in Newcastle and a patron of the Pre-Raphaelite painters.
Conclusion

Irish poverty and nomadism in art history has been an under-explored topic. The images collated for this research show that a substantial body of work exists that allows for an analysis and evaluation of the visual language used by artists to depict the poor. This thesis explores how the changing perceptions of the Irish and nomadic poor filtered through into fine art throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in both Ireland and Britain. It highlights the differences between those considered ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor and how this was represented visually. What emerges from the images is a strong sense of the issues of social class and race, which progressively changed throughout the nineteenth century into what David Carrier terms as ‘a role of binary opposites, constituting another category of ‘high’ and ‘low’ “us” and “them”’. Artists routinely attempted to sanitize, prettify, condone or absolve the poor within the visual context by placing cultural codes or signifiers on the figures of the poor within an artwork. The artist as agent, a running thread throughout the chapters, determined what was placed into a painting and, sometimes more importantly, as argued by Gillian Rose, what was omitted. Each image demonstrates the agenda of the painter, not only in the representation of the type of poor but in the broader sense of poverty in society. This involved the personal motives of the painter including their own morals, private concerns, background and what they considered creatively inspiring. Essentially, artists depicted the Irish poor and nomads as objects and turned them into a consumable product by using them as a device within an image.

This thesis identifies a range of class divisions within the poor including representations of professional beggars, Irish tinkers and Gypsies, itinerant musicians, fortune-tellers, landless labourers and varying types of poor within the sedentary community, from very poor cottiers to tenants that had better types of housing. Another main finding of this study is that Irish and British artists’ interpretations of the Irish poor and nomads diversified as time progressed and this reflected wider socio-economic trends but also regional variations. In effect, there were marked differences in how the poor were portrayed, with clear visual

demarcations in relation to class, gender, or, in some cases, trades between the ordinary and nomadic poor. The thesis investigates how depictions of the poor were fundamentally shaped by social tastes, in both Ireland and Britain, where perceptions of homelessness greatly differed. For example, in relation to the social attitudes towards beggars, in early nineteenth-century Britain they were considered outcasts but in rural Ireland they belonged to the ‘society of the family’.²³³⁷

In the visual context, Ireland had less of an artistic response to poverty considering the volume of poor and vagrancy within its population. A small art market and few patronage opportunities had considerable impact but unlike the subjects of portraits or landscapes, painting the poor directly acknowledged society’s vulnerable. Therefore images were often contrived and controlled. In Ireland’s case, prior to the introduction of the Poor Law, travel writers such as Mrs S.C. Hall wrote about the annoyance that beggars and mendicants caused on their journeys throughout Ireland, a constant reminder to the contemporary reader that the country was awash with destitution and poverty. George Nicholls, in his quick assessment tour of the country, wrote how the Irish poor ‘had no pride, no emulation, were heedless of the present and careless of the future’ and were reluctant to improve their own appearance and cabins.²³³⁸ From his report he did not consider how diverse the poor as a class were in Ireland. There were considerably fewer images produced about the poor from 1820 to 1835 and the reason for this was due to both the lack of Irish artists living in the country and sporadic visits by artists from abroad.

In this context, Maria Spilsbury Taylor’s work is unique as she enjoyed the patronage of a wealthy landed Irish woman. As an artist, she was essentially an employee of Sarah Tighe, which granted her particular access to tenants and a unique opportunity to freely enter into their homes. Clear definitive lines exist within her sketchbooks, and she depicted the markers that represented the tenants through work, education or charity. Yet in paintings of the pattern at Glendalough, rich and poor mingle freely with each other. Her relationship with Tighe resulted in an important body of work that is not only evidence of a competent and well-respected female

²³³⁷ Laurence M. Geary, ‘“The whole country was in motion”: mendicancy and vagrancy in pre-famine Ireland’ in Jacqueline Hill and Colm Lennon (eds), Luxury and austerity: historical studies, xxi (Dublin, 1999), p. 122.

painter but also a record of early nineteenth-century customs and daily life on an estate.

Spilsbury Taylor’s sketchbooks are a valuable source for the art and social historian, but until this study have been relatively ignored. The sketchbook pages reveal stark juxtapositions of drawings of the rich and poor together, even though, in reality, the rich were very much protected and detached from the poor. In many cases, images about the poor were used to highlight the wealthy classes’ Christian charity, which meant that portrayals of the poor were further complicated with religious overtones. Spilsbury Taylor represented Evangelical charity, but in early nineteenth-century Ireland it was often the settled poor who looked after the destitute as there was no government-led initiatives to cater for the impoverished. Spilsbury Taylor’s work in Ireland represented a cleaner and more ‘sanitised’ Irish character than that depicted by her Irish contemporaries; this she achieved by representing benevolence and philanthropy in her drawings and paintings.

On rare occasions, the destitute poor were represented seeking alms at the front door of the house of the landed gentry, such as in Francis Wheatley’s *Mother and Child* (figure 1.6), probably painted in Ireland, or George Morland’s *The Squire Door* (figure 1.4) in England. In reality, however, this would not have happened, as the vagrant poor would not have been allowed within the grounds of the house and if they were they would have begged at the servants’ entrance. Most such images, therefore, in both Ireland and England, display the interaction of alms giving to the destitute at the doorstep of the settled poor rather than the wealthy. The importance of the domestic space and the contact between the wandering and settled poor was not specifically an Irish angle. The rustic cottage scenes of early nineteenth-century English art, in a very controlled manner, display class interactions between the marginal poor and other members of society, highlighting social consciousness and the moral duty to provide for the poor.

This research shows that there were progressive changes in stylistic trends in representation within the specified timeframe. A number of landscapes displayed the marginal figure within a larger narrative of a painting, and though small in representation, their inclusion is significant. The poor were essentially objects of ‘quaintness’ and they became the prescribed elements to symbolise ‘wildness’ and ‘quasi-savagery’ within a painting evident in Thomas Roberts’s *A Frost Piece* (figure
In England, Wheatley and Morland depicted the poor within the rural setting of the ‘rustic’, which developed into a trend of using the poor as the main subject and theme within a painting. In Ireland, George Grattan and Spilsbury Taylor’s paintings and drawings of the rural poor suggested a certain nobility and dignity, with the subjects being portrayed in a kinder light. This was achieved by using the spectacle of the ‘outsider’ within the visual, symbolised by certain cultural codes, whose display of difference hinged on their dress. For instance, both artists paid a considerable amount of attention to the garments their beggars and tramps wore; the clothes are in rags but the detail lavished on them suggests an obsession to the markers of difference showing the homeless and wandering poor as unique to Ireland.

The wandering figure within the rural setting correlated with changes of symbolism within landscape painting in nineteenth-century Britain. Solkin states that this transformation of the rural backdrop in English painting in the mid-century into the ‘endangered repository of nostalgic longings for a simple life’ encouraged artists such as Ford Madox Brown to turn their attention to the squalor and narrative of the urban city street. The rural enclave became part of an imaginative contribution to the pictorial narrative, as seen in Mulready’s *Toy Seller* (figure 5.15), where the pedlar inhabits a landscape mirroring a fictive Mediterranean scene rather than depicting rural England. While representing a certain form of the rural became unfashionable in England, in Ireland it remained the prescribed backdrop for paintings. In fact, the Irish landscape itself became symbolic of Irish identity on a conscious level, as evidenced by Erskine Nicol’s *An Ejected Family* (figure 6.10). It was specifically used to poignant effect for the vagrant family as they were forcibly moved from the domestic sphere into the uncertain boundaries of the rural landscape. This scenery became romantically connected to the Irish poor.

This thesis also draws attention to the contrasting pictorial devices that late eighteenth and nineteenth-century painters depended on between the outside and inside, the rural and urban but also between the sedentary and nomadic poor. The female and male hawkers, pedlars, fortune-tellers and itinerant musicians represented

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within the domestic space or communicating at the front door are varied and treated differently within divisions of class but also gender. Francis Wheatley, David Wilkie and William Mulready used the trope of the nomadic caller in their work where he/she symbolised a visual link between the ‘outside’ with the sedentary domestic home. The emergence of the visiting female Gypsy fortune-teller, who perceivably posed the biggest threat to the peace of the domestic sphere, coincided with a discourse that began to highlight the diversity of Gypsy culture at the end of the eighteenth century. Gypsies appeared in literature and other forms of creative mediums including opera. The arrival of scholarship around the subject of Gypsies and their origins corresponded with the popularity of Orientalism and the construction of non-Western cultures into the category of ‘other’. The variety of perspectives that portrayed the Gypsy female in the visual culture of the early nineteenth century constructed a keen sense of the ‘exotic’ and marginal but at times bordered on the menacing.

While the female Gypsy posed a threat to the domestic space, in contrast, the Gypsy group symbolised the romanticism of being rootless, which, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, represented a point of departure for painters who chose nomads as a subject within the landscape. This thesis reveals how visual representations of Irish tinkers were extremely rare, and if a title containing the word ‘tinker’ was used prior to the nineteenth century, it generally referred to the trade of working in tin and was a representation of a single tradesman. As evidenced, in both Ireland and England, images of the wandering and homeless family group, according to the titles of the paintings, were in fact representations of Gypsies. Yet Sinéad Ni Shuinéar suggests that the term ‘Gipsies’ in Irish literature in the nineteenth century could in fact be reference to Irish tinkers, which may also be the case in relation to paintings.741

The west of Ireland, along with other peripheral locations in Europe, became a popular destination for painters who wanted to seek out an alternative to traditional English topics. For instance, Spain as a destination for British painters grew in popularity in the 1840s, as did the west of Ireland, in the search for an ‘authentic and new experience’ that was different to the ‘superficiality’ of Orientalism.742 Further

research on this area would show how much influence these painters had on each other, whether they travelled in groups and how popular the paintings were within the art market. In the case of Francis Topham, George Washington Brownlow and Erskine Nicol, these painters lived during a period in England typified by the mass consumption not just of the ‘living artist’ but also of the artist biography. As Julie F. Codell states ‘biographers negotiated the artist’s subjectivity between tradition and innovation and created artists who mirrored consumers’ identities of nation, race and the social order’. The fame and reputation of an artist radically dictated the subject type desired by the middle-class consumer and the market for the quaint ‘peasant’ was particularly strong.

During the Victorian period, in England, the focus moved onto the classification, observation and judgment of the poor, in particular the wandering poor. By the 1840s and 1850s the visibility of the poor in London, and especially the nomadic poor, began to excite an artistic response, in particular the crisis of slum areas, poor living conditions and the homeless and vagrant. The contemporary illustrations in newspapers and journals were sensationalist, but heavily influenced the artists of the period. The vagrant Irish poor sat uncomfortably within this space, and although the visual response to those Irish who were on the move was both sentimental and tragic, the images conveyed an uncomfortable threat that epitomised the feeling within Victorian English society. The visibility of poverty in London encouraged discriminatory attitudes towards the poor, particularly the wandering poor. The influx of Irish paupers into England, which had begun as early as the seventeenth century (a situation the authorities believed needed to be curtailed) was met with suspicion and derision. The reputation of Irish beggars on the streets of London had steadily evolved by the early nineteenth century into one in which they were considered deceitful and carried out malicious begging. For example C. J. Ribton-Turner writes that an Irishman who begged near the slum of St. Giles pretended to be a sailor and self-inflicted wounds on his legs in an effort to incite compassion.

745 Ibid., p. 220.
During the Famine years, the high increase of diseased, debilitated and distressed Irish emigrants migrating to England led to panic and fear among the locals. In the visual domain, these figures were not portrayed as starving or emaciated, and in fact throughout this period those in states of severe malnourishment were rarely depicted. A writer travelling around County Clare in 1849 wrote that the people of Kilrush Union were ‘prostrate and helpless … the once frolicsome people- even the saucy beggars- have disappeared and given place to wan and haggard objects, who are so resigned to their doom, that they no longer expect relief’. Images of the Famine were few; there are no paintings showing the physical effects of starvation, but this would never have been a subject for artistic merit in the first place due to conventions in art education and practice. This study has found that the subject of poverty was more appealing to visiting British painters than it was to resident Irish artists.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the wandering poor were vetted as a ‘tribe’ who defied the ‘discipline of work’ of the industrial age by having a lifestyle that was fundamentally free from the constraints of paying tax. Their visibility struck a chord within London, as they were not averse to using the casual wards, and officials were reluctant to mix vagrants with the ‘honest’ poor for fear of spreading the ‘wandering impulse’. Just before the Famine the Irish poor, who reached cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and London, ended up in the many lodging houses and casual wards for periods of time and highlighted the system for housing wanderers as inefficient and open to abuse. Extreme poverty during the Famine did spark a wave of sympathetic images by British painters, but the negative characterisation of the Irish race re-emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This characterisation became a recognised cultural difference, reinstating the fact that throughout the nineteenth century the British government viewed the Irish poor at a lower level than the ‘undeserving poor’ in England. Categorising an

746 With the exception of illustrations including the infamous *Briget O’ Donnel and Children* in *The Illustrated London News* (22 Dec.1849), p. 404.
747 Ibid.
750 Ibid.
751 For example an illustration entitled ‘Starving Peasants at a Workhouse Gate’ illustrated in Robert Wilson, *The life and times of Queen Victoria* (2 vols, London, 1891), i, 208. The drawing shows an unruly mass of poor and the male peasants display simian features.
entire nation as vagrants and mendicants suggests a deliberate policy of racial discrimination for a culture that was geographically very close and ‘overwhelmingly’ white. The ape-like features of the Irishman in *Punch*, while denoting racial inferiority are perhaps less damaging overall than the constant reinforcement of the British government and press of the perception of the Irish race as vagrants, wanderers and thieves who fought when drunk and were habitually lazy. Overall, the images and representations of the poor used in this dissertation convey a sense of surveillance of the Irish lower classes. They were presented to the contemporary viewer in a specific manner, translating the fears of society yet also of the artists’ own perceptions of poverty. As Nicholl, the Poor Law Commissioner claimed, ‘poverty is not the cause, or at least not the sole cause, of this condition of the Irish peasantry’.752

Visually, the single Irish person, whether it was a male beggar, a female costermonger or child urchin, was a constant reminder of the dysfunction of the family unit and the lack of work skills, a precursor to vagrant habits, which was the predominate representation. Displaced Irish families on the move were a significant theme that was deployed by Victorian painters, with specific connotations about race and the Irish problem. As Miriam Rainbird claims that even though the Act of Union brought about a limited illusion of ‘cohesion’, Ireland was seen as racially different and inferior and was maintained as such throughout the mid-nineteenth century.753 Therefore, Irish emigrants, in visual culture, were consistently portrayed as vagrant, which ultimately showcased the break down of the Irish family unit on English soil. The institution of the nuclear family contradicted the wandering life of the single male beggar, yet when whole families were left in vagrant conditions due to migration and famine, it became more problematic. Ford Madox Brown’s iconic painting *Work* (figure 6.16) reveals the diverse attitude that evolved throughout the nineteenth century towards the Irish poor. Religion still had a major part to play within the composition of the painting, but the artist believed that a genuine antidote to the ‘evils’ of a wandering, lazy and vagrant lifestyle was through the virtues of work.

As documented in this thesis little attention was paid to the visual representations of the wandering poor and more research is needed on other marginal groups such as the insane, prostitutes and prisoners. The highly sexualised images that include both the sedentary young female and the female Gypsy fortune-teller within the domestic space could have potential research possibilities in the area of morality and loss of virtue. A corresponding source could be contemporary writings on the vulnerability of young women at the hands of marginal people such as fortune-tellers. What has been seen in relation to Topham, Brownlow and Nicol suggests the potential for further research into the journeys taken by British artists throughout the west of Ireland, while also of interest are similar journeys to Spain, and in some cases North Africa. A comparative study on their journeys could include the routes that they took and whether they travelled together in groups or individually. Also of interest is the impact of the market response to their work in Britain.
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