

# Gender and Nation in Charles J. Kickham's *Knocknagow*<sup>1</sup>

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*This essay argues that Charles J. Kickham's Knocknagow, out of print in Ireland since before the period of the Celtic Tiger,<sup>2</sup> now calls for a new readership. It makes that claim through an analysis of gender in this novel, asserting that the representation of femininity and masculinity in Knocknagow is central to the text's resurgent political and social relevance in the early years of the new millennium.*

This 620-page novel,<sup>3</sup> written in 1869-70 for serial publication with a plot which has been described as 'so ramshackle as to be beyond summary',<sup>4</sup> seems at first ill-equipped to sustain such a claim. Although it is recognized as 'Perhaps the most influential novel in the Irish nationalist tradition'<sup>5</sup> in its position as probably the most popular novel in Catholic Ireland up to the mid-twentieth century,<sup>6</sup> *Knocknagow* has long fallen from favour in serious Irish literary criticism, and rarely features among the required reading, even on university courses devoted to nineteenth-century Irish fiction.<sup>7</sup> While the novel's sociological accuracy is generally praised,<sup>8</sup> its organization, its sentimentality, its use of stereotyped and idealized protagonists, and its didactic political purpose, together earn it censure to the extent that it has been categorized as 'inconsequential'<sup>9</sup> and 'debased'<sup>10</sup> fiction, 'deficient in the deeper, intangible meanings and tensions of great literature'.<sup>11</sup> Kickham himself seems to anticipate this reaction when, late in the novel, he speaks of 'those Tipperary homes [...] among which we have, perhaps, lingered too long and too lovingly for the reader's patience' (*Knocknagow*, p.525). An analysis of gender in this text and its critical reception, has the potential to unpick some impacted ideologies within the criteria for literary merit here applied to Kickham. In particular, such an approach can release the text from its clamped position between claims for its authenticity and its artificiality; between the earlier unadulterated admiration for this novel as 'the most representative of all that purport to deal with the real Ireland',<sup>12</sup> and the equally unadulterated later dismissal of it as a 'preposterously melodramatic and episodic novel of wicked landlordism, [that has become] almost a sacred text for militant nationalists up to and including Eamon de Valera'.<sup>13</sup>

The less declared of the two main reasons for the neglect of *Knocknagow* within Irish literary criticism, is that association of its author with radical politics to which the latter statement attests. For example, the 1992 edition of *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* qualifies its provisional approval of *Knocknagow* (offered in the statement that 'its appeal lies in its reconstruction of the detail of Irish country life') with the immediate rejoinder: 'Kickham's achievement as a novelist cannot be separated from his career as an Irish nationalist rebel'.<sup>14</sup> While Kickham's public profile as a just-released Fenian leader undoubtedly secured him the contract to write *Knocknagow* for the periodical press

(although he received very little payment for his efforts and had to complete around half of the novel after that contract for regular publication was rescinded),<sup>15</sup> and his nationalist politics can easily be traced in the narrative itself, nevertheless, the tendency to dismiss the significance of this text on the basis of extra-literary biographical political criteria should be challenged. Such dismissal is not confined to Kickham's detractors: the man who devoted a large part of his life to collected and recording material relating to Kickham, James Maher, comments upon his achievement in a way that suggests more general insecurity about the possibility of an independently valuable Kickham literary heritage, even during the novel's heyday of popularity: 'Kickham's ability is not to be measured by his writings although they give him a place'.<sup>16</sup>

The challenging of such a dismissal of his literary merit is a task both focused and complicated by the mythic personal status of Kickham within an older Catholic nationalist tradition in which qualities of gentlemanliness and respectability were canvassed as part of an unwavering commitment to the national cause. For example, Kickham is remembered by William O'Brien in the *United Irishman* after his death as 'possess[ing] the soul of a hero, free as virgin gold from fear or stain'.<sup>17</sup> This kind of commentary ensures that in the minds of most critics, there is but a short hop from author to his idealized protagonists, whether the resulting analysis be approving or hostile. Willie Nolan contextualizes the common critical perception of Kickham's programmatic characterizations: '*Knocknagow* is a redemption of the Irish peasant. The manly, honest and chivalrous peasantry of *Knocknagow* contrast sharply with the garrulous, servile and cunning peasantry of other novelists and the ape-like caricatures of the 'lower orders' found in contemporary London magazines. Any assessment of Kickham's objectivity must take into account the things which motivated him.'<sup>18</sup> Nolan here suggests that our *understanding* of Kickham's literary achievement, rather than that achievement itself, is that which is inevitably coloured by his political involvement. No less of an authority within Irish nationalism than John O'Leary confirms this superseding of Kickham's artistic achievement by his personal-cum-public political one. In a telling formulation, O'Leary states: 'there was another kind of knowledge, besides that of books, possessed by Kickham, and in this I have never met anyone who excelled him. He knew the Irish people thoroughly, but especially the middle and so-called lower classes, and from thoroughness of knowledge came thoroughness of sympathy.'<sup>19</sup> The implication here clearly is that Kickham's personal powers of communion with the people, surpass his literary powers. O'Leary gives hostages to fortune in the shape of Kickham's future literary detractors who would condemn his stereotyped characterizations. However, he also offers these detractors challenge on the basis of the model of re-balancing of extremes through local communal feeling, which O'Leary goes on to credit to Kickham (and which Willie Nolan also recognizes), upon which the present essay will develop: 'It was not that he [Kickham] at all ignored the shortcomings of the people, but he was convinced that these were far more than counterbalanced by their virtues, and anyway [...] they were *his* people, to whom he was bound to cling through life onto death, and this he did with a strength and force excelled by no man of his generation, if equalled by any'.<sup>20</sup> Note here how O'Leary combines approval of Kickham's power of sentimental attachment with praise of his 'strength and force', allowing qualities normally reserved for the feminine and the masculine domains respectively, to intermingle. This crossover is another important starting point for the present reading of *Knocknagow*.

As suggested in the above analysis, a more important reason for the relegation of this novel than its critics' habit of confusing biographical with literary criteria, has been its critique by literary and cultural commentators for its indulgence in stereotype and nostalgia.<sup>21</sup> 'Kichamesque' has even entered the critical lexicon as an adjective describing 'sentimental [...] novels written to an English literary formula'.<sup>22</sup> Seamus Deane draws upon both reasons when he concludes his *Field Day Anthology* introduction to *Knocknagow* with the statement that 'The combination of political anger and kitsch sentiment is typical of Kickham and the novel'.<sup>23</sup> Unease with the trespassing of the feminine-associated register of sentiment, upon the masculine-associated one of politics, is palpable in this remark. As such, it points towards the larger need to examine this text in relation to its representation of gender.<sup>24</sup> Current readers may be acculturated to resist gender crossovers that, as we will see, were more readily acceptable to Kickham's early audience. For example, when Kickham says of his book, 'I believe the work [...] may exercise a wholesome influence on many',<sup>25</sup> he is using both a masculine and a feminine-identified moral register. It is one against which later twentieth-century critics react as they more rigorously police the assumption that fiction is capable of the hybrid purpose of moral *and* political education. Terry Eagleton, for example, uses *Knocknagow* to illustrate his suggestion that much Irish fiction of the nineteenth century, in its female-associated, provincial-minded drive for hygienic and respectable representations of Irish life, can only inversely offer political illumination and effectiveness: 'If the British view of Ireland is of a squalid, fractious, brutalized nation, then there are Irish authors who will seek to redress that demeaning view by sanitizing their own social order, edifying their compatriots and impressing their metropolitan audience with a fiction which sweetens and sublimates.'<sup>26</sup>

Eagleton would be the first to recognize, however, that his diagnosis of Kickham as an author who uses one stereotype in order to offset another one, is not in itself grounds for despairing of the quality of this text. Readers today operate in a post-modern era where the requirement for the opposite of stereotyping – for truthfulness of representation – is generally understood itself to be suspect, as ideologies are discovered not so much to be defended against by the protective skirts of representational realism, but to be woven right into these same coverings. As the character Grace Kiely in the novel puts it in relation to the associated realm of morality (one which needs a similar level of alertness to collusiveness), 'When I am sure it is right to do anything, I try to do it, no matter how hard it is [...] But it is not always easy to know what is right' (*Knocknagow*, p.124). Readerly alertness for the hidden agendas that may motivate calls for truthful images, is needed particularly when the representation in question – as in Kickham's *Knocknagow* – relates to an Irish colonial situation where the truth commonly outdid fiction in its strangeness.<sup>27</sup> Therefore the questionable availability in this text of what current critical taste can feel to be authentic, credible versions of mid-nineteenth century Irish rural dwellers, qualifies more than disqualifies this novel for renewed and serious attention. As Joep Leerssen reminds us in relation to nineteenth century Irish cultural production: 'What makes a character Stage Irish is not the degree to which its characterization is stereotyped [...], but the variable degree to which a changeable audience chooses to accept the stereotype as sympathetic or obnoxious'.<sup>28</sup> W.B. Yeats's report from a Sligo shoemaker who 'confided in the young [poet] that for him the charms of Kickham's *Knocknagow* has begun to pall, illustrates this point. "I want", he said, "to see the people shown up in their naked hideousness"'.<sup>29</sup> The assumption that Irish

identity, once stripped of its protectively sentimental fictional garments, will necessarily be revealed as 'hideous', says at least as much about the preconceptions of the gazer as it does about the object of that gaze, and indicates that truth is as much subject to the distortions of realism as a chosen representational mode, as it is to those of anti-realism.

It may be worth noting here the reason for Kickham's admiration of the fiction of Charles Dickens: 'Dickens with his exaggeration is exactly what I would strive to be, the ideal at which I would aim but could never hope to get within leagues of'.<sup>30</sup> In Kickham as in his more famous forebear, exaggeration, with its obvious manipulation of the truth, allows the reader more power of independent judgement than does verisimilitude, with its claim to create a real world in art. Kickham, writing at a time of political crisis – like the German playwright Bertold Brecht after him – saw the need for this clear-headed engagement in the issues under representation in his text, and ensured it by challenging his audience to become aware of the terms of persuasion of truthfulness used in that same representation. This is effected in *Knocknagow's* opening scene, for example, when the author pokes his finger through the surface continuity of the story by informing his readers that he will only introduce them to one of his chief characters (Henry Lowe) when that individual chooses to get out of bed (*Knocknagow*, p.2). The notion that a novel's readers must wait upon a character's pleasure, draws this text close to the subversive territory of Flann O'Brien's *At Swim Two Birds*, where the line between fiction and real life – a line crucial to *Knocknagow's* larger politics, including those relating to gender - is deliberately confused so as to require the reader to take responsibility for their own ability to read – to be as much aware of the meaning they put into the text as of that which they take out of it.

In Kickham as in O'Brien, readers are prompted to account for their response to the material and their resulting co-creation of the story. Kickham allegorizes this principle in an amusing scene where the ethics of flirting is under discussion. Mat the Thrasher is called to arbitrate a dispute among the elegant company gathered at the Kearneys, the social centre of the novel, as to whether the flirting is an act of 'downright deceit' or reciprocal 'humbugging'. Mat answers by comparing flirting to the well-known farmer's habit of 'puttin' the small whate in the bags'. Instead of discarding the small grain that passes through the winnowing instrument, the farmer uses it as a filler to bulk out his produce, 'an' all is passed off on the merchant [...]. But the merchant knows 'tis there as well as the man that put id in id.' Mat points out here that although this practice is, in strict ethical terms, incorrect, both parties recognize the convention and adjust their negotiations accordingly. He concludes that the farmer, like the lover, should recognize that "'tis wrong to desave any man [...]. But – *do your best, and they'll be up to you*" (*Knocknagow*, pp.469-471). In other words, one's own measure of honesty and deceit is likely to be matched by that of one's opponent. By implication, to assume in either party, either total purity or impurity of purpose, absolute truth or falsity, is a failure both of imagination and practical vision: as Mat shows in the famous sledge-throwing scene in this novel, one needs to measure the other's throw in order to be able successfully to play the game. If this maxim truly applies to the relationship between men and women, farmer and merchant, it should also apply to that between text and reader. It relates here specifically to the expectation of authenticity in fiction, for the perceived failing of which Kickham has been held to harsh account.

Kickham draws attention to the lack of the alertly productive mutual testings and tolerance that he summarizes in the term, 'puttin' the small whate in the bags', by focusing

on the more usual opposite tendency towards readerly laziness. His work suggests that such laziness is often accompanied by a requirement for absolute truth that is itself attached to an inclination towards pre-determined interpretation: faults often ascribed to his own approach in *Knocknagow*. Tongue-in-cheek, he declares his accommodation of this double flaw, in the following parody within the text of his own literary style. In a sentence too easily interpretable as proving his inept control of plot, Kickham memorably interrupts his narrative to remind us of an earlier flashback used to explain one of the novel's chief love mysteries. He slyly justifies his manoeuvre: the extra information was given, he tells us, 'when, some chapters back, we thought it necessary to interrupt the regular course of this history, in order to guard against the possibility of disturbing the equanimity of our readers hereafter by anything that might bear even the faintest resemblance to a surprise' (*Knocknagow*, p.431). The notion that surprises will not be tolerated by this novel's audience, with its implication that readerly sensibility and prior expectations are to be safeguarded at all cost, suggests in turn the kind of protective relation towards womenfolk that we will see this novel demonstrate to be both redundant and stultifying, even as the text upholds the goodwill of the impulse to such guardianship. The cossetting of the gentler sex held to account in Kickham, reflects his simultaneous concern with the separation of audience from reality in the artwork.

At a number of moments in the novel, Kickham indicates his suspicion of the kind of self-contained imaginative art that resists the politically-aware audience consciousness required for reading as deconstruction, which he calls for in the principle of 'puttin' the small whate in the bags'. For example, Moore's *Melodies* – which Kickham calls 'poetry proper' – are described as the means by which the authoritative outsider Dr. Kiely exerts a spell over the local community, 'like some powerful necromancer' – a spell, the narrator indicates, that the people are glad to be able to break by their laughter (*Knocknagow*, p.465). Their response may not be unrelated to what we will see are the clear reservations expressed in this novel about the option of the landed gentry for high-level Irish cultural production to the exclusion of their practical engagement in the fulfilment of their everyday responsibilities as landowners. This in turn may suggest why Mat the Thrasher is allowed to sing 'the sentimentalest of sentimental lyrics' as more authentic to his own choice, than the 'more suitable song' that the narrator tells us he would have given him, 'if we were drawing upon our imagination'. This sentimental song is acknowledged by the narrator as being more appropriate, not because it confirms Mat in his classic role as the 'pleasant peasant', but because it brings a 'host of tender associations to the minds of the singers and listeners and singers' (*Knocknagow*, p.155). In other words, the sentimental song confirms the people's shared power of generating meaning and thus helps to regenerate their identity as a community. The more formally artistic and original song, Kickham implies, would be less likely to have facilitated this experience. More generally in this novel, as we will see, this author is at pains to show that elegance of expression is no guarantee of substance. Kickham's larger aim in such demonstrations of the fictionality of art (including that of this novel where he so artfully anticipates his critics), is to de-stabilize the given, immutable nature of the political and social order reflected in such art, without undermining that established order's positive elements. *Knocknagow* is to instigate in its readers a sense of the shock of the familiar, in order to bring about in the communal understanding a re-valuation of moral presence along with a de-naturalization of injustice.

# KNOCKNAGOW

OR

## THE HOMES OF TIPPERARY

BY

CHARLES J. KICKHAM

AUTHOR OF "SALLY CAVANAGH," "FOR THE OLD LAND," ETC.

"Yet meet him in his cabin rude,  
Or dancing with his dark-haired Mary,  
You'd swear they knew no other mood,  
But mirth and love in Tipperary."

—THOMAS DAVIS.

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This essay therefore argues that *Knocknagow* itself prompts the reconsideration of the terms of deep conflict through which it has been received. The criticism that *Knocknagow* is a hold-all for inaccurate and maudlin social and political romanticism in Irish fiction, may have suited in particular a late-twentieth century Ireland struggling to modernize and make its mark on the world stage. This Ireland needed to distance itself from the insular, mid-twentieth century, de Valeraean ethic of frugal homesteads and comely maidens – an ethic that seemed to have been cut straight from the moral cloth of *Knocknagow*. Ireland since the 1960s was embarrassed by this heritage; revelling in its new-found confidence in the first years of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s, it is not surprising that *Knocknagow* disappeared from view. But in the early years of the twenty-first century, our perspective on this novel can shift. This is a novel dealing with the damage done by rural depopulation in mid nineteenth-century Ireland. It resists that damage by upholding the ideals of local loyalty, honourable action, anti-materialism and a dynamic rural culture that is sure of its own value. As such, this novel may have much to say to a post-Celtic Tiger Ireland wearied by materialist consumer inflation – an Ireland in search of spiritual grounding in principles of right action as well as in a renewed popular spirit of nationalism that can celebrate the life-force of the people. This re-interpretation does not relieve the reader of *Knocknagow* of the responsibility to attend to the new agenda at its core and the distortions of reality of which such a more positive view is capable – indeed, it charges the reader directly with that necessary awareness, as we watch a text coming back to life. *Knocknagow* is a book that has been too long banished to, and immobilized within, the category of stereotype in the Irish literary canon. What the present essay attempts in re-reading it, is what poet Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin imagines happening to the statue of Galatea with which Pygmalion had fallen in love in the myth – the animation of this text with meaning so that ‘a green leaf of language comes twisting out of [its] mouth’.<sup>31</sup>

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The novel *Knocknagow* directs itself towards one main principle: ‘For the credit of the little village’ (*Knocknagow*, p.453). Far from promoting an embarrassing insularity and narrowness of vision, that idea affirms that the local is universal and the universal is always also local. In this, *Knocknagow* is extremely up to date: in the early years of the millennium, it is novel that opens out again to a new readership embroiled in the age of globalisation, where international markets, international cultural styles, international politics, and the international movements of people seems to be shifting state nationalism and ever more clearly onto the sidelines. (Perhaps appropriately for this ‘global’ *Knocknagow*, the easiest way to get access to the full text of the novel now, is on the internet, through Google Book Search)<sup>32</sup>. National governments today are facing a fundamental challenge to reassert their relevance. To do so, they will have to re-direct their energies towards the needs of the people through a responsive and accountable ‘bottom-up’ political ethic, rather than through a controlling ‘top-down’ one. Just such an ethic is called for in the joint principle of pride and responsibility, emotional prejudice and hospitality, service to one’s own and to those beyond one’s clan, to which Charles Kickham’s *Knocknagow* attests. The shorthand for this principle is that catch-phrase, ‘For the credit of the little village’. *Knocknagow* famously focuses on the local place – a location closely resembling the Mullinahone from which its author came and

where he found his literary and political inspiration, but which doesn't need to be that place. By exploring the political, economic social and moral conditions for the survival of such locales, this novel offers nothing less than a renewal of the ideal of nationalism. This is a renewal to which Irish people may be more ready to attend now, than at any other time in the last forty years. As a reading *Knocknagow* in the twenty-first century implies, it is possible for the 'little village' of the Irish nation to transfer its meaning to the 'global village' of a renewable world order, without losing its meaning.

It has been claimed that *Knocknagow* is not a place, so much as it is a way of life.<sup>33</sup> If this is true, that way of life is centred on judging people, not by the power of their individual stations in life, but by a combination of their actions towards others and their self-awareness. In this novel, inner worth rather than outer show is proclaimed as the basis of the stature both of individuals and of social groupings. Kickham's agenda here requires that his text downplays recognition of certain inevitable tensions within the community. Willie Nolan has pointed out that Kickham ensures that the class structure among the native Irish in Knocknagow remains stable: although (as Nolan notes) members of the shopkeeping and artisan class are allowed more flexibility of class movement along with their greater independence of political attitude, this is a novel concerned first and foremost with land politics, and those most directly involved here – the Irish agricultural labourers and big farmers – do not marry each other. Nolan further points out that strict differences of pronunciation, whereby the 'lower' class use dialect and the middle class do not, are used in the novel to maintain separate spheres.<sup>34</sup> Thus, economics-based political disunity within the community is suppressed on behalf of the co-joined expression of all of the native classes against the evils of colonialism, as these are embodied in Irish land policy: all the farming classes in the novel are subject to the threat of eviction. Kickham's benevolent conservatism with regard to class relations is signalled early in the text in the narrator's praise of the Christmas morning church sermon that was attended by the Kearney household: 'The sermon was short and withal practical; for while it comforted the poor, it impressed upon the rich the duty of alleviating their sufferings' (*Knocknagow*, p.7). Such strategic alignment of different economic interest groups allows Kickham to orientate his novel towards an investigation of the distinction between style and substance in the individual, which will become the measure of the claim of the larger community and nation for the right to self-determination.

The ability to tell the difference between 'the cursed attitudinizing' of which the character Richard Kearney in the text rightly accuses himself (*Knocknagow*, p.28), and real moral presence, becomes central to the progress of two main linked themes in the novel: love and land management. False promises are opposed to the genuine act of sustaining human values and delivering enabling change, in order to mark out the idealist boundaries of nationalism. This is a Thomas Davis-influenced, Kickhamite nationalism that is uncompromising in its faith in the power of a truly independent Irish nation – 'the little village' – to direct its affairs to the fullest benefit of all the people equally, and to call upon the allegiance of all the people equally to the aims of justice, inclusiveness, respect and the creative development of individual, community and nation. But a thorough-going class analysis of how this equality is to be sustained in the context of differential access to the means of production, is not Kickham's concern. Appropriately, it is the big-farmer Kearney household around which the story of *Knocknagow* is centred, that operates in the novel as



the main symbol of this vision of diversity in the nation – it is ‘a promiscuous collection of odds and ends of houses’ (*Knocknagow*, p.22), and its survival is figured as crucial, no matter how many other lesser dwellings are razed to the ground. However, in the scene where Kickham uses the morally-authoritative voice of the well-to-do Dr. Kiely to castigate the Kearneys for the poor living conditions in which their servants live, Kickham alerts his readers to the need for economic reform involving investment in the life-style improvements of the lower class, in order for the middle class to maintain its claim to lead and represent the community (*Knocknagow*, pp.475-6). Thus cracks appear in the vision of the nation as constituted by unified diversity which *Knocknagow* propounds, a vision in which established class differences are to be maintained as a foundational structure.

Crucial to the development of Kickham’s vision of unified diversity as above described, is his examination in this novel of gender relationships as these are intertwined with the image of the nation – the topic which forms the main focus of this essay. While traditional male-female divisions of identity and powers of agency are upheld in the conclusion of *Knocknagow*, with manly men and womanly women occupying the separate spheres of public and private life respectively, this text nevertheless allows that arrangement to come under considerable pressure in the course of the narrative. Traditional gender role divisions are reasserted, often only through their radical inversion and mix-up. Thus, propounded in *Knocknagow* is a nationalism that is grounded in a realization of the challenge of male-female relationships, particularly in a new understanding of the largely discounted or distorted importance to the health of the nation, of women and the feminine zone more generally. Kickham as both cultural and political activist-leader – much like Mary Robinson in her presidency more than a century later – re-focuses attention on women and on female values as a means to achieving the right balance of elements that will create and sustain true Irish independence.

This essay argues that Kickham’s work in *Knocknagow* can be seen as transformational in exposing for the broadest popular audience of any novel in the nationalist tradition, the dangerously static and silent position of gender relationships in their two linked political functions. Gender (rather than class) relationships are shown here to be the required stable foundational structure which upholds, not only the corrupt imperial order of British-Irish race relations, but *also* the radical shift in those relations for which Irish nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century hungers. Kickham’s work does not offer such a deconstruction of this traditional double-fronted interaction between gender and race in order to eliminate it. Irish writers before and after him, from Maria Edgeworth to James Joyce to Eavan Boland, acknowledge this task to be impossible, realizing as they do that the dangerous element of myth which sustains this interaction, is far more likely to be renewed than to be vanquished through being rejected out of hand by an exclusive perspective of historical enlightenment. Rather, Kickham suggests the reconstruction of this gender-race relationship on more subversive and liberating terms.

For the author of *Knocknagow*, this work of transformation could not be conducted unless the third basic element of identity already suggested – class structure – remained more or less unchanged. For the Celtic Tiger era and after, the work of creating the nation will demand that we incorporate awareness of class along with awareness of gender and race, as we become alert to how, in the process of envisioning political, social and cultural development, each corner of this identity triangle supports the others and may be

dangerously submerged to invisibility by the others. Only when such consciousness of interconnections between class, gender and race is achieved, can Ireland arrive 'home' at its destiny as a nation. Mary Robinson's famous welcoming light in *Áras an Úachtarán* was lit from this beacon of home, so centrally placed in *Knocknagow*. In the early 1990s, she reflected on behalf of the nation at large, at home and abroad, 'the light in the little window' of Mat the Thrasher's cottage that had guided the community in the post-famine era (see *Knocknagow*, p.150; pp.374-376). Its expanded illumination is needed now, as the country enters upon the task of claiming the responsibilities as well as the advantages of the materialist modernity upon which we have come to base our sense of ourselves.

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The domestic world of the home, associated with the female sphere of life, is central to *Knocknagow*. House pride in men and women in the novel is emphasized as a worthy value, and the neat unpretentious home is eulogized as symbolizing the best in Irish nationhood: note the extended space given to describing the preparing and eating of the ordinary evening meal in Mat Donovan's home (*Knocknagow*, pp.141-146). This humble but well-kept dwelling implies that the head of the household is a right ruler for the nation. We can contrast this well-run Donovan household with the homes of the villainous land agents in the novel, Isaac and Beresford Pender, whose main role in *Knocknagow* is to destroy other people's homes through unjust eviction. Their own homes and farms, stolen from their rightful owners, are marked by neglect, desolation, dirt and decay (*Knocknagow*, p.300). The terrible state of the houses the Penders live in, symbolizes strongly that these land agents – supposed caretakers of Irish home ground – are totally unfit to run the nation.

From the mind of Mat the Thrasher come the words that are the greatest confirmation of the importance of domestic home life in all of Irish fiction. Just before he throws the winning sledge in the famous competition against the British army Captain, Captain French, Mat is tempted to let the other competitor win, so that the Captain can save face as a 'real' man. But then Mat catches sight of the homes of Knocknagow – at that moment under direct threat of destruction from forces associated with Captain French's world of privilege and power, the evictions that will follow soon after this scene. Mat unforgettably changes his mind:

[T]hose old mud walls and thatched roofs roused him as nothing else could. His breast heaved, as, with glistening eyes, and that soft plaintive smile of his, he uttered the words, 'For the credit of the little villagel' in a tone of the deepest tenderness. Then, grasping the sledge in his right hand, and drawing himself up to his full height, he measured the captain's cast with his eye. The muscles of his arms seemed to start out like cords of steel as he wheeled slowly round and shot the ponderous hammer through the air. His eyes dilated, as, with quivering nostrils, he watched its flight, till it fell so far beyond the best mark that even he himself started with astonishment. Then a shout of exultation burst from the excited throng; [...]  
'Donovan', said Captain French, 'your match is not in Europe. I was never beaten before.'  
(*Knocknagow*, p.453-4).

Crucial to this scene is the fact that it is the domestic world of the home, family and local community, that inspires Mat to the heights of his achievement as a strong man, top-class international athlete and hero. Kickham continually emphasizes in this novel, that it is these domestic and 'feminine' worlds of the private home and marriage, rather than the public 'masculine' worlds of the battlefield or the Houses of Parliament, wherein politics is really active. The private world of the home is in the first line of fire in this novel, through the ever-present threat of eviction that hangs over the whole community. This is emphasized from the outset. In the opening Christmas Day sermon scene, the people of Knocknagow identify themselves with the plight of the homeless virgin and child, in which they accurately read their own upcoming plight (*Knocknagow*, p.7).

Politics is realized in this novel through the practicalities of marriage dowries and leases for security of tenure on the land. In the world of *Knocknagow*, the choice of marriage partner depends not on love but on attaching oneself either to wealth or to a lease or to both, in order to be protected from the horrors of eviction (see *Knocknagow*, pp.73-4; 220).<sup>35</sup> The major wedding scene in the novel involves an unhappy 'made match' where Ned Brophy opts for a sauceman of gold coins instead of for his true love, and the girl's father gives her to him because he has a secure lease. Kickham uses the novel to tell us that Catholics are more prone than Protestants to such fortune hunting on the marriage market. He contextualizes: this is not because Catholics are more greedy, but because they lack access to the professions and to secure leases for land, therefore are sorely tempted to make up this security in hard cash (*Knocknagow*, pp.73/4). Kickham thus carefully shows how the personal is political – an understanding which will become a key slogan of international feminism a century later. The private emotional life is shown in this novel, not to be in competition with rational public life, rather, to be in intimate connection with it. The separation of male and female spheres, by association, will be revealed to be more illusory than real.

Apart from marriage, Kickham emphasizes another kind of family love relationship between men and women as central to the life of the home and the nation: that between adult brothers and sisters. The close bonds between Mary and Hugh Kearney (*Knocknagow*, p.422) and between Mat and Nelly Donovan (*Knocknagow*, p.242) indicate that siblings are often as significant as lovers in Kickham's thought. Kickham stresses here that in brother-sister relationships – unlike in many of the husband-wife relationships – there is equality as well as true affection. This is highlighted in the wonderful scene of the expert dancing of Mat and Nelly Donovan at Ned Brophy's wedding night celebrations: Kickham tells us that 'the [brother and sister] relationship between the great dancer, Mat Donovan, and his equally famous partner added greatly to the interest with which their performance was regarded. The excitement rose higher and higher as the dance went on, and a loud shout followed every brilliantly executed step' (*Knocknagow*, p.242). It may be no accident then, that on the first page of the novel, England is called the 'sister' country – although the narrator qualifies this by adding the remark that this is an 'odd' name. Why? Kickham, the revolutionary nationalist, is suggesting that the proper relationship between the two nations is as siblings rather than as the forced made match of inappropriate unequal lovers, which defines the Act of Union that has confirmed British colonial control of Ireland. The name 'sister' is odd in this case because England has acted towards Ireland as anything but such a caring sibling.

Family relationships beyond the tight nuclear family bonds of husband-wife and parent-child, are important to Kickham as a font of creativity and life. The novel *Knocknagow* is dedicated to two 'little women' – his nieces Annie and Josie Cleary, aged around seven or eight, with whom Kickham was living in the family home in Mullinahone while he was writing this novel for serial publication. These young girls eagerly read and commented on what he wrote as he produced it: his biographer Vincent Comerford records the two children as having 'entered intimately into the making of *Knocknagow*'.<sup>36</sup> This is certainly suggested by the title page, where Kickham apologizes to them for having had to kill off poor Norah Lahy (the bathetic consumptive girl in the story). Kickham's willingness to include girl children in the creative act of producing what would become one of the most influential examples of Irish national literature, makes his achievement stand out from the much more usual model of the solitary male act of creation. The resulting text reflects this emphasis on co-creation across gender lines, in its eschewal of the more conventional focus in fiction on a few solitary heroes or heroines – lone rangers in a lonely struggle against the world – in favour of a spread of creativity and life-force across a broad range of characters.

Kickham's love for his nieces is recorded through his grief upon their emigration to America to join their parents – 'the most crushing of [his] trials',<sup>37</sup> for, 'their departure [...] marked a final break for him between treasured domestic comforts and life as a guest in other people's homes'.<sup>38</sup> When asked once what he had missed most while in jail, Kickham replied, 'Children, and women and fires'.<sup>39</sup> This devotion to the domestic life associated with females is proclaimed most directly in the subtitle to *Knocknagow*: 'The Homes of Tipperary'. These details help us understand how extensively Kickham is associated in popular memory with women, the female zone and feminine virtues, as we note that he was known as 'gentle Charles' as well as 'master Charles'.<sup>40</sup> The achievements of Kickham's character were described by Archbishop Croke of Cashel in terms more usually associated with women: 'I take him to be of all the men that I have ever met about the gentlest, the most amiable, the most truthful and the most sorely and searchingly tried'.<sup>41</sup> In the introduction to the 1887 imprint of the novel, Fr. Matthew Russell SJ directly tells us that 'there was much of what is best in woman and in child in [Kickham's] nature [...] he was trustful, and kindly and sympathetic as a woman. His slender hand was fashioned like a woman's, too. There was a great deal of silky grey hair in curls about his head, which was finely shaped' and his 'nature' was 'affectionate and home-loving'.<sup>42</sup>

These descriptions are sentimentally one-sided, ignoring as they do both Kickham's famed intransigence in his political dealings,<sup>43</sup> and his public stature as a revolutionary leader. (As president of the supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, he was *de facto* president of the undeclared Irish republic,<sup>44</sup> which links him in an interesting way forward to contemporary holders of this office.) But however one-sided is this praise, it is in itself significant that these descriptions of Kickham as a womanly man, are being made as an appeal to audiences to appreciate how important, indeed, how truly manly, a figure he is. We are much more used to thinking of female characteristics in a man – particularly in the 'dark ages' before late twentieth-century feminism – as a mark of a man's inadequacy. This was certainly the working assumption within a generation of Kickham's death, when, in the late nineteen-tens, James Joyce was writing his hero Leopold Bloom into worldwide literary fame as the classic representation of the womanly man. In *Ulysses*, as many critics have argued, Bloom is set against the grain of powerful gender prejudices about the superiority

of hard virile 'real men' – men who ignored home life in search of public power, especially in the hyper-masculine role of nationalist hero. Indeed, Joyce, who owned a copy of a 1917 edition of *Knocknagow* and is likely to have known it earlier,<sup>45</sup> may have borrowed from Kickham for the famous scene in his short story 'The Dead'. There, an early prototype of Bloom – the consumptive Michael Furey – stands for hours beneath his beloved's window in the snow, only to die of the cold he then catches. Michael Furey may well be an amalgam of one of the womanly men in *Knocknagow* – the rather ineffectual seminarian Arthur O'Connor, who stands beneath Mary Kearney's window for hours in the snow (*Knocknagow*, pp.22-25) – and one of his manly women, Nora Lahy, who we will see is marked by an masculine-associated unworldly sense of honour and compassion for the weak, and who is also passionately devoted to Mary, only to later die of consumption.

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Joseph Valente's recent analysis of manliness in the figure of Charles Stewart Parnell is illuminating for an understanding of the womanly man in *Knocknagow*. Valente describes Victorian masculinity as constituted both by the possession of animal spirits *and* the capacity to control and convert them into moral forms. On the one hand, masculinity is an identity 'staked on such conventional phallic attributes as virility, aggression, power, physical courage, resolution, etc.' On the other, it is 'an ethical norm [...] designed to transcend the uses and pleasures of physical hardiness in pursuit of the higher virtues of patience, obedience, forbearance, modesty and respect for others', having 'these traditionally feminine attainments as its ultimate goal'.<sup>46</sup> Valente continues, 'The ethos of manliness or manhood involved turning those [...] lower-order or 'animal' virtues into the higher order spiritual attainments of integrity, self-possession, and self-control'.<sup>47</sup> *Knocknagow* demonstrates its two main male hero figures, Mat the Thrasher and Hugh Kearney, as engaged in just this manly sublimation of their masculine animal powers into moral attainment – 'manly' being one of Kickham's favourite terms of approval (see *Knocknagow*, pp.221, 315, 352). Valente notes that mid-nineteenth century forms of masculinity are more 'moralized' than 'the rugged forms geared to a more belligerently imperialist *fin de siècle*', where 'the balance tipped "from serious earnestness to robust virility"'.<sup>48</sup> This may explain the difference in the representations of gender found in a piece of fiction written in the late 1860s and early 1870s, by comparison with one composed in the late nineteen-tens. The appropriation of feminine-associated virtues of sublimation was more central to the Victorian ideas of manliness that prevailed in Kickham's time, than in Joyce's. Yet we will see that Mat's and Hugh's embodiments of manliness involve an admittance of feminine traits which exceeds that allowed even by the mid-Victorian ideology of masculinity, favouring moral over physical force, which is described by Valente.

In the imperialist ideology of manliness, the feminisation of masculinity served not to align men with real women, rather to distance them further from 'the weaker sex', to whom could be relegated the unwanted qualities of dependency, nervousness, passivity, emotionalism, gullibility and guile which are the remainders of the moral uprightness now claimed by men. These characteristics were attributed to women so that men could stand out in contrast as being more moral, rational, and self-possessed, as well as being stronger and hardier, more courageous, active, and pragmatic. Therefore men were affirmed as those who

could become committed to larger public life and to abstract ideals, rather than being, as women were, naturally and narrowly bound by the concerns of their immediate family and home. As many critics have recognized, this same economy of gender difference was used both to justify British control of Ireland (where Ireland is symbolically positioned as the weaker sex), and to re-affirm Irish nationalists in their power to prove themselves man enough to become the native rather than foreign ruler-consort of Cathleen Ni Houlihan.<sup>49</sup> Kickham, as an anti-imperialist activist – but unusually within that Irish political tradition – resists the dissociation from women required by this economy.

The maintenance of strict lines of division between men and women, male and female spheres, is predicated upon an essentialist logic that effected colonizer and colonized alike. Valente describes this logic:

Women had long been defined on a disjunctive basis, as either Madonna or whore, maternal nurturer or dangerous virago, the fetishized sum or fearful subversion of cultural values. By contrast, just as manliness defined the normative male as predisposed to spiritual nobility on account of his closer commerce with the bestial element, so it defined him on a highly conjunctive or integrated basis despite, or rather because of, his internal antagonisms. The proper or manly man could attain to a fully self-referring tension among his own component stirrings, with his more urgent and brutish energies not only contesting but actually feeding the effort required to restrain and direct them. As a result, the manly ideal could pretend to a self-sufficiency that the feminine ideal could not compass by definition, and it was to the precarious feat of maintaining this dynamic equipoise of forces, rather than the value of the forces themselves, that the enormous socio-symbolic capital of manliness ultimately pertained.<sup>50</sup>

In short, women can only *be* Madonna or whore; men can *become* their better selves. Woman does not herself control her presence in the world as either pure or sullied, and there is little or no space for transition between the two conditions: if she is not clearly one, she must be the other. The negative qualities of dependency and passivity earlier mentioned as ascribed to women (within the ideology of manliness) as women's natural state, accurately name instead her enforced structural position within this ideology. Similarly, those of nervousness, emotionalism, gullibility, and guile well describe what might be expected as normal human responses to such a constrained position. This is in a situation where an individual is trained to always measure herself from the outside in rather than from the inside out, confirming 'rational self-containment' as the natural prerogative of men rather than women, even if its achievement must be earned rather than merely assumed by these same men.

Kickham in *Knocknagow* offers us four main female characters that together challenge this essentialist logic. This multiple presence of strong women – in itself unusual for romantic fiction of the time – consists of, first, the physically weak but spiritually authoritative consumptive girl, Norah Lahy; second, the queenly and ideally beautiful Mary Kearney, daughter of the house of strong tenant farmers around which much of the action is set; third, her friend Grace Kiely, the precociously intelligent 'half-child, half-woman', who many of the men along with Mary come to fear for her powers of sharp insight and judgment into hidden motives; and fourth, the 'fascinating' Bessy Morris who Mat the Thrasher loves but who would 'court "a haggard o' sparrows"' as she flirted with other men (*Knocknagow*, p.443).

These four women taken together can be placed on a line from ideal to real, airy to earthly, with Norah as the most spiritual and idealized, and Bessy as the most worldly and 'real'. In between come Mary Kearney and Grace Kiely – with Mary idealized, both by her male admirers and by Kickham as narrator, and rather too passionless, but also alert to how she is constructed as such, and Grace as more direct, down to earth and engaging. In terms of the gender essentialism earlier discussed, Norah occupies a place at one extreme of the Madonna option, while Bessy skirts the category of whore; Mary and Grace explore the gradations between. By thus suggesting a spectrum of positions between the two extremes, Kickham's novel challenges even as it affirms the virgin-whore dialectic, as it dramatizes the possibility of, and reasons for, transition back and forth between one of these absolute states and the other. We will later see how this deconstruction bears upon the cumulative symbolic role of these women as representatives of the Irish sovereignty goddess, but we will first attend to its effect upon his portraits of Irish manhood.

Kickham upholds the pejorative nature of the feminine-associated traits of dependency, emotionalism, guile, etc, discussed earlier, but he shifts their provenance by linking these characteristics as displayed through their damaging effects, far more often to weak men than to weak women.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, this author connects the *positive* feminine-associated traits of nobility, sympathy and self-control with both his strong men and his strong women characters. Henry Lowe, the landlord's nephew who is on an extended visit to the Kearneys, his uncle's chief tenants, displays the former negative type of feminine-identified character trait. Henry is in Knocknagow in order to consider taking on the work of land agent on the estate: a decision that he ultimately fails to make, but one which, by removing the evil Penders from this job, could have been the salvation of the community. Henry from the outset is described in unflatteringly feminine terms: early on his first morning at the Kearneys, he takes fright at the banging of the Knocknagow drum. With his over-active imagination in full flow, Henry thinks he is under rebel attack, and, suffused with feminine fears, tries to run away. But he gets tangled in the bedclothes and cannot rise even to a single jump; his host comes in at this moment and thinks Henry is performing an 'African dance' in the bed (*Knocknagow*, pp.1-3). Kickham is using a recognizably gendered code here: under colonization, the Irish were equated with 'primitive' native peoples as a feminine race. Henry himself is a mouthpiece for these prejudices, when we later see him distancing himself from the 'barbaric eloquence' of the priest at the Christmas morning mass and categorizing Mat Donovan as an object rather than a subject of interest, 'a magnificent specimen of the Irish peasant' (*Knocknagow*, p.18). But here in our first meeting with Henry, Kickham turns the tables on these assessments, as he links the colonizing rather than the native class to the limitations of primitivism. Such an inversion of positions between judge and target of judgement deconstructs even as it seems to uphold the terms of this pejorative categorization; Kickham does the same with primitivism's attendant constructs of femininity and masculinity.

Kickham later in the novel uses this inversion of who is called primitive to specific political effect. In the sledge-throwing competition, the aristocratic Captain French turns into a near animal by comparison with the cool and humane Mat the Thrasher. In his final unsuccessful throw, the Captain 'clench[es] his teeth [...] looking so fierce and tiger-like [...] that the women at the front of the crowd involuntarily pressed back appalled'. Upon throwing the sledge, the Captain 'fall[s] forward upon his hands' like an animal on all fours (*Knocknagow*, p.452). This image of animalism, of course, only highlights the superiority of

Mat, the landless labouring man, the 'Irish peasant [who] is a being of sentiment' (*Knocknagow*, p.478), whose muscles as he throws the sledge, are described as purely masculine and in terms which specifically align him to developed modern life: they 'start out like cords of steel' in his arms (*Knocknagow*, p.453). Captain French's and Henry Lowe's failures of physical powers, along with their revealed primitiveness, is a sign of what will later become apparent as the more total failure of their manhoods. This is symbolized in the case of Captain French by his losing of his arm in battle, but Henry Lowe invites more serious criticism. Grace Kiely astutely senses that 'There is something milk-and-waterish' about Henry, for all that she nicknames him 'Apollo' (*Knocknagow*, p.199), and so it is proved when he emerges eventually as an unworthy lover of Mary Kearney.

Throughout his relationship with Mary, Henry Lowe is all emotion and no action or principle: he swoons and fawns over her, instead of attending to his proper duty of stopping the rampant injustice of the current highly dangerous land agents, the Penders. His willed ignorance of his uncle's business affairs is a result of his romantic infatuation with Mary, and she senses that he is not to be trusted for it.<sup>52</sup> If those who marry for the sake of a good lease on a farm are wrong in their subsuming of love to the needs of the land, Henry Lowe is at fault for the opposite reason: he relegates the needs of the land as inferior to those of love. Both strategies are dangerously imbalanced – in *Knocknagow*, love and land themselves form a marriage partnership that only works if both parties to it are accorded equal status. Unlike the Penders in their engagement with the land, Henry has conscience, but not the will to act on it: 'It flashed upon him that he had already spent – he could not, at the moment, remember how many days – on his uncle's Tipperary estate, and knew as much about it as the man in the moon' (*Knocknagow*, p.113). Because he is not sufficiently motivated to intervene, the Penders can have their evil way. Thus Henry Lowe with his imbalanced attention to romantic love as something that is separate from land politics, is indirectly responsible for the collapse of the community of Knocknagow. Kickham, while approving of male devotion, is very critical indeed of fawning men who relinquish their proper male power of independence and action in the world, as we see in his harsh portrait of the pathetic tenant farmer Tom Hogan, who is 'unmanned' (*Knocknagow*, p.274) as he grovels before the power of the landlord and his agents, believing in their good will against all evidence to the contrary.

Henry Lowe is a self-deceiving romantic who ends up in India the British army – an institution which, Kickham suggests, functions to shore up the missing integral manhood of the imperial master by its licence for aggression against the weak.<sup>53</sup> Although Kickham was a believer in armed revolution and in the use of weapons for self-defence, this novel indicates he was highly critical of men's use of guns to substitute for strength of character and moral fibre. In 1860, a senior Fenian in America, Michael Doheny, wrote to the men of Mullinahone (then organizing for the papal brigade), in the following words: 'Every man has a natural right to be a man in the highest acceptation of the term; and no one is such unless he knows the use of arms.'<sup>54</sup> But *Knocknagow* suggests that the Mullinahone man himself, Kickham, would have qualified this naively unconditional embracing of the gun as the means to true manhood. Although he maintained that violence could become necessary for the right husbandry of the land (as we see in his portrait of the culpably innocent Tom Hogan who cannot defend his farm [*Knocknagow*, p.336]), he highlights as more urgent for criticism, the case of the arrogant and cruel Beresford Pender, villainous son of the corrupt land agent in



*Knocknagow*, who relies on violence as a substitute form of male authority. This false authority takes the shape of the many guns hung around Pender's body and without which he is terrified to leave his house (*Knocknagow*, p.96). It takes a woman – Grace Kiely – to show Henry Lowe that Pender is not the 'big' man he seems (*Knocknagow*, p.121). Similarly, Wat Corcoran, the bailiff, is criticized as making himself 'a great man on the strength of his pistols' (*Knocknagow*, p.336).

Richard Kearney, Mary's other brother, the foppish doctor, is given the role of male clown in the novel, as he shows how easily the propped-up and overdeveloped male ego can disintegrate in this regard. Talking about his lack of success with the guns he is so fond of, he says of his attempts at hunting: 'Though I blaze away, the birds don't fall. I generally forget that there is anything required but to pull the trigger' (*Knocknagow*, p.28). *Knocknagow* offers several amusing scenes in which the vain Richard forfeits his manhood the more he tries to proclaim it, such as when he loses his trousers in the bog just when the girl he wants to impress is passing by (*Knocknagow*, p.29). Richard is obviously set up by Kickham as a fool in order to show off the virtues of his unromantic silent brother Hugh, the pragmatist farmer, who describes himself as a 'manufacturer of arable land' (*Knocknagow*, p.32): it is Hugh – who carries a gun only for hunting - that gets the reward of true love in the end. Similarly, for Mat the Thrasher, the loss of visible phallic power is no threat to his true masculinity. This is symbolized when he stands up unharmed after the enormous hay-rick upon which he is standing in the Kearney's yard collapses, and he emerges re-born from the newly redistributed, and now feminine-associated, substance of nurturance: 'the tall form of the Thrasher rose out of it as from a heaving sea' (*Knocknagow*, p.349).

Henry Lowe's uncle, the landlord, Sir Garrett Butler, is like his nephew in offering the false appearance of a true womanly man. Like Henry, he also is painted in what seems at first, positive terms – he is a romantic artist with a great love of Irish music, who has suffered for true love by eloping years before with someone not in his social class. But these signs of authenticity are not borne out in the end: Sir Garrett remains an absentee landlord and a failed man, leaving all of his proper business to the wicked agents, and fails almost entirely his tenants' desperate hopes that he will take on his responsibility and attend to them with justice and care. Kickham's representations of irredeemably weak men tend to be focused on the landlord, agent, and military class. The native Irish – though they succumb to the temptations of drink (like Phil Lahy), conceited romanticism (like Richard Kearney), or illusions of security and grandeur (like Tom Hogan and Maurice Kearney), are shown to be capable of acknowledging the errors of their ways, and are thereby redeemed, even if often too late to turn their lives around to their own benefit.

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In *Knocknagow*, the false womanly man succumbs to excess of feeling at the cost of his power to effect any real change in the public world. The false manly man succumbs either to excess of force or to its hidden counterpart, excess of pragmatic cunning, at the cost of his power to sustain and normalize the change he violently brings about. (Examples of the latter are Attorney Hanly and Old Pender, who manipulate others' misfortune to their own material advantage as they plot to take over the land of their dispossessed neighbours.) Excess

of feeling and of force are the two sides of the false coin of romantic nationalism – a coin that this text suggests to be too long in circulation in Ireland. *Knocknagow* attempts to expunge and replace this devalued coin with the genuine currency of freedom, largely through its portraits of the difference between negative and positive intersections between the separate domains of masculinity and femininity.

His awareness of women grants Kickham a strategic overview of the pressures effecting the larger political project of Irish freedom. This activist-cum-artist is alert to, rather than entrapped by, what Valente analyses as the double-bind of Irish nationalism. That nationalism is driven by an effort to prove its adherents' masculinity, and through this, their claim to the nation's self-determination. But, 'by enacting the manly ethos [of sublimation of animal energies into self-discipline], the Irish subaltern would testify to his potential (gentle) manliness at the price of abiding the order of his oppression and so lending support to its legitimacy and the correlative legitimacy of his own exclusion from the rights and liberties of manhood. [...] For the Irish, the manly norm of aggressive self-restraint was in itself the acknowledged "feminine" norm of submission to others'.<sup>55</sup> In other words, enacting self-discipline as a nationalist would only affirm the Celt's feminine nature and with it, the Irishman's subservient colonial status. The representative figure for this position in *Knocknagow* is the unfortunate Tom Hogan, who loses his farm through his passive accommodation to the terms of his control as a tenant-at-will: he becomes an object of both pity and rejection in the community because he 'tried so hard to persuade himself and others that he was not only satisfied with his serfdom, but proud of it' (*Knocknagow*, p.268). Resistance to this position tended to 'trigger[] the other side of the double bind: by violently transgressing established authority, the Irish subaltern testifies to an inability to keep passions under control and a corresponding unfitness for freedom'.<sup>56</sup> Enacting the opposite of self-restraint, in the form of direct aggression against colonial power, would only prove the Irishman to be the animalistic Celt favoured by *Punch* magazine illustrations, a creature who was incapable of self-rule, thus legitimating the colonizer's power over him. Bessy Morris's rebel father, exiled and lost in America, represents this response. Kickham thus illustrates Valente's contention that the nationalist was trapped within the terms of manliness to which he nevertheless aspired as the basis of his claim for freedom. However, he also challenges this contention.

Kickham in *Knocknagow* slips Valent's double bind in two ways. First, he diverts the energy of self-sublimation in men away from race and towards class. For example, the self-restraint needed by Mat Donovan or Billy Heffernan in order to claim their rights of manly independence, is demonstrated in their adherence, not to any publicly contentious lower racial status, but to their publicly acceptable lower-class status – an adherence enacted through the 'natural' respect that these classic 'pleasant peasants' sustain for their sociological betters. Their reward is the gradual upward mobility that they are each afforded by the end of the story, which is linked to their physical prowess in land husbandry and to their mental prowess in trade. Hugh Kearney similarly subsumes his animal energy by directing it towards the acceptance of his externally-created class position, in the shape of his acceptance for most of the narrative, of the law of his impulsive, inefficient, downwardly-mobile father. This class subalternity is subsequently thrown off in the different, far-distant colony of Australia, where Hugh, through the sweat of his brow, earns the money to repay his uncle the loan that saved the Kearney household from certain ruin.

The second way in which Kickham slips the double-bind of manliness as experienced by the colonial native, is by refusing its base-line association of femininity and subservience. This is enacted in the text by exaggerating the feminine dimension of the terms of manliness, and vice versa. Kickham integrates womanliness into his male characters, and manliness into his female characters, in a much more direct and comprehensive way than that allowed by the imperial ideology of masculinity outlined by Valente. The true womanly man in *Knocknagow* complements the true manly woman: these are people in whom emotion, action and moral principle work together, so that emotional attachment inspires right action and the aim of right action inspires correct emotional attachment. Thus feminine values generate true male power, and masculine values generate true female power. Kickham's work implies a need for a balanced connection between the positively-inflected male *and* female sides of identity, that is continuous with the actual playing out of these gender roles in the form of a reciprocal nurturance between the energies and insights of domestic and of public political life. That nurturance is prepared for in the novel *Knocknagow*, by its author's inscribing of the best of the 'manly' men characters, Hugh Kearney and Mat Donovan, with stronger than normal feminine and domestic traits, and, as we'll later see, the main female characters – Grace Kiely and Nora Lahy most obviously, but also Mary Kearney and Bessy Morris – with strong masculine traits and an associated high level of political awareness (though, notably, not with power of direct political intervention).

The specific femininity of the male characters in *Knocknagow* is signalled in many different ways. One such, is in feminine-inflected language: for example, that used when Hugh's company is favoured by his sister Mary over that of Henry Lowe: 'Hugh's docility was a great relief to her' (*Knocknagow*, p.317). Another, is men's love of fashion: it is not only the foppish strong farmer's son, Richard Kearney, but also our hero peasant Mat the Thrasher, who shows an intense interest in personal appearance, as proved in Mat's close attention to the new blue body coat the tailor Phil Lahy is making for him, for his role as best man at the wedding of his friend Ned Brophy (*Knocknagow*, p.135). More seriously, femininity is indicated in male characters' wish to avoid the limelight of public fame – Hugh stays in the background, refusing to assert himself for the sake of status, and Mat 'can't be got to see that he's a public character' (*Knocknagow*, p.365). Both remain heartily suspicious of the egotism linked to the public accolade normally accorded to the masculine hero. This correlates to Kickham's own character: as Vincent Comerford has recorded, after his release from prison, the IRB leader refused to make public capital of his sacrifice by going on the lecture circuit, as other released Fenians were doing.<sup>57</sup> This avoidance of the limelight was of a piece with Kickham's already unusual public leadership role, in which his physical disability – the deafness and near blindness he suffered – made it difficult for him to communicate or be communicated with freely or directly, especially while he was president of the supreme council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.<sup>58</sup> This disability may have attuned him to the position of women who were similarly excluded from easy participation in the public political world on the basis of presumptions of their unfitness for its rough and tumble demands. However, disability for Kickham was no bar in itself to involvement in public political life, and could be a positive advantage in this arena, as when he used strategically the excuse of his inability to hear and see, in order to string out IRB council meetings until his own point of view prevailed.<sup>59</sup>

Presumptions of feminine-associated disability with regard to public political capacity, extends from the physiological to the emotional sphere of ability, and Kickham is even more concerned to show that the traditionally female-gendered realm of feeling is no bar to manly achievement. Several male characters in *Knocknagow* are feminine in their willingness to admit emotion and weakness. For example, in the long-delayed proposal scene between Mat and Bessy Morris, we are told that our hero 'feel[s] faint and dizzy' when she at last agrees to be his wife, this following hard on the heels of the sight of him 'crying like a child' when he thought he had lost her (*Knocknagow*, pp.588, 589). This is the same Mat who never for a moment doubted his strength to beat Captain French in the sledge-throwing competition. Like Mat, Hugh Kearney – the rational thinker and dark horse of the family, but whom his sister often notices sighing with hidden emotion – is 'man enough' to admit weakness. We see this when he begs his uncle for the money that will save his family from eviction (*Knocknagow*, p.546). This can be contrasted with the attitude of his future brother in law, Arthur O'Connor, the 'failed priest': after leaving the seminary, O'Connor is at first too proud to accept money in order to kick-start his new career as a doctor, and has to be sharply reminded that 'over-sensitiveness of that sort has prevented much good from being done in the world' (*Knocknagow*, p.511). Kickham here implies that the need to appear independent at all costs, is a male failing that prevents true freedom. Kickham's aim here is to show that there is no contradiction between true masculinity and the emotional life. Mat's and Hugh's respective manliness derives from their 'feminine' emotionalism as much as from their 'masculine' physical and moral superiority and confidence. A key lesson of this novel is that it is reasonable to be emotional: that reason is a dead force without emotion, just as emotion is a dangerous force without reason.

Kickham in general suggests that men, in order to *be* true men, need to come closer to the female state. The male characters in this novel are divided into those who need to learn this lesson (but mostly do not), and those others (like Mat, Hugh and the faithful lover of Norah Lahy, Billy Heffernan), who already know it. The injunction to learn how to be womanly men, may be behind Kickham's sly dig at marriage and the challenges men face in it. One of the children of Knocknagow is taking his religion examination prior to the sacrament of confirmation, and is asked by the priest: 'What is Matrimony?' The child replies: 'A place or state of punishment where some souls suffer for a time before they can go to heaven'. The narrative continues: 'Fr. Hannigan said the boy was right, that he see no difference between Matrimony and Purgatory, and 'tis many a sinsible man would agree wud him' (*Knocknagow*, p.502-503). Rather than interpreting this as the author's succumbing to a form of puerile misogynistic humour, the priest's remark can be taken seriously at its theological face value, to mean that marriage, for Kickham, is a place of reparation and reconciliation where men are sent to learn feminine values, in order to achieve their true human destiny in which sense and sensibility are combined. The women of Knocknagow, in contrast, are put through the equivalent test – where they must learn masculine values – before marriage.

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In *Knocknagow*, just as the terms 'male' and 'powerful' do not sit easily or automatically together, neither do the terms 'female' and 'powerless'. Kickham, in his four main female

characters, Norah, Mary, Grace and Bessy, has given us four versions – or rather, a four-part composite form – of the Irish sovereignty goddess. In Irish mythology, the sovereignty goddess is the spirit of Ireland herself, who takes concrete female shape and with whom the male leader of the country must enter into sexual relation, before his right to rule can be recognized. The would-be-ruler's power depends on him being chosen by the goddess, and it also depends on his ability to recognize the sovereignty goddess when he sees her – for she is often disguised as a hag, who only turns into a beautiful maiden when the right ruler sleeps with her.<sup>60</sup> A snapshot of this myth involving a minor female character, is offered in the scene where Judy Laughlan – who is 'to be married to one of the richest men at the mountain-foot' – meets by accident with her first true love, Tom Cuddehy, a man who has no material wealth to speak of. Through the eyes of an observer, we are informed of Judy's ugly appearance just before she meets Tom: 'there is something awfully sullen about her'. But as soon as this woman meets her true man, her face lights up and she transforms. 'Did ever any one see such a metamorphosis? She is positively beautiful now'. The narrator confirms: 'The face that seemed a minute before so dull and sullen was now radiant' (*Knocknagow*, pp.344-346). W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory would apply the same trope of transformed female appearance to indicate the satisfaction of the sovereignty goddess upon achieving union with her chosen lover, in their propagandistic and powerful 1903 play epitomizing this theme, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. In *Knocknagow*, Judy will later elope with Tom, escaping the trap of the false male ruler whose power inheres in the surface element of money alone. In her transformation, she is the Irish sovereignty goddess in miniature.

The sovereignty goddess must both chose and be chosen by the right ruler; one of these actions on their own is not enough – love between land and ruler must be mutual. Kickham picks up on this vital aspect of the sovereignty goddess myth when he emphasizes strongly in the novel's various love stories, that only reciprocal love is true love. Hugh, Mary and Grace each declare this principle at different points of the novel (*Knocknagow*, pp.30, 31, 445, 577). It is a principle voiced by Hugh in relation to the question of whether second relationships can work, after the lover finds that his or her first true love cannot be realized. Hugh argues that men and women can love more than once, but that if, instead, 'it [...] happen[s], that a man or woman can love only once', then this only occurs 'when two spirits rush together [...] and are then parted by death, or some other cause that does not involve weakness of any kind on the part of either' (*Knocknagow*, p.31). In other words, the reality of a grand single love-of-one's-life relationship, depends on reciprocity of love between the two partners concerned, and where this is unavailable – where one party loves more than the other – both are released to try again. True love is never self-sufficient, because one partner cannot, on his or her own, love enough for both; true love is always returned. For Kickham, an absence of understanding of this principle leads to one-sided enthrallment and sorrow, which is self-indulgent as well as destructive. The health of the lover and, by implication, of the nation, is maintained by pragmatically dismissing from the heart anyone to whom true love is offered but who does not respond in kind. The sovereignty goddess myth gives a strong political edge to this reciprocal aspect of love as it is dramatized in the several romances traced in the narrative of *Knocknagow*.

The four main female figures of the novel enact the role of sovereignty goddess, inflecting it differently in each case, each version being necessary to a full realization of the figure. Let us start with Norah Lahy. Norah – dying of consumption and preoccupied only,

it seems, with the next world – may seem at first disqualified for the role of sovereignty goddess, a figure through whom vital engagement in the affairs of this world are made possible. Yet Nora is indeed that symbol of national fulfillment. She represents Ireland as physically degenerate but spiritually strong: she is the hag who will be transformed – in this case, through her death. The first time we meet her, Norah is pictured with her wasted hand resting upon a terrier dog – a downbeat form of Hibernia with her hand on the wolfhound (*Knocknagow*, p.43). Despite her appearance of weakness, Norah is powerfully tuned in to the world around her in *Knocknagow*. She has huge influence in bringing to fruition the spiritual and moral life of others around her: she draws men away from drink, vice and murder, and she strengthens the fortitude of women. Kickham remarked that ‘I think I felt some of the desire to do good of a Missioner or Sister of Charity while describing Norah’.<sup>41</sup> *Knocknagow* and its community is Norah’s ark, bound for salvation as it stays somehow afloat above what Fr. Hannigan calls the ‘flood’ of injustice and misery waiting to sweep the community away (*Knocknagow*, p.69). Norah’s symbolic significance is in inverse proportion to her physical strength: she is most clearly a sovereignty goddess – a queen to her people – on the day in late summer soon before she dies, when she finally comes out of her house to sit in the harvest sunshine. Everyone in the whole village and surrounding area stop what they are doing to mark this ‘great event’: even the row of men harvesting Kearney’s field ‘turn[] quickly around [to salute her], like so many tall pikemen at drill’: they are saluting her as their queen (*Knocknagow*, p.498). The military image with its suggestion of 1798 is not accidental: these men are being called to arms in the cause of the ‘loving heart’ of *Knocknagow* and the nation. However, because Norah as sovereignty goddess can only marry Christ in death rather than a flesh-and-blood ruler, she will not do on her own in this role, for the function of the sovereignty goddess is to choose and be chosen by the right earthly ruler for Ireland.

Next in the combined blended line of sovereignty goddesses is Mary Kearney, who is consistently presented as an embodiment of the land of Éireann. The first time we meet Mary is through Henry Lowe’s eyes. In the early morning light he is first ‘struck with the fine outline’ of Slievnamon – the mountain of the women – guarding the Tipperary countryside in front of him, and then immediately sees another female outline closer by – the veiled figure of ‘his host’s eldest daughter’ (*Knocknagow*, p.5). In this way, the land and the woman are associated in the reader’s mind. Mary is a figure of true authentic Irishness – her room faces west in the oldest part of the house (*Knocknagow*, p.21); she plays ‘The Coolun’ in a way that might rival the blind harper O’Flaherty (*Knocknagow*, p.418); and alone among the middle classes in the novel, she is described as being very anxious for the victory of the native place in the hurling (*Knocknagow*, pp.441, 442). In Mat the Thrasher’s test of strength, she is the first person to whom our hero looks after his victory over Captain French (*Knocknagow*, p.453). When we first meet her, Mary Kearney is described in the classical terms of the dream-vision woman of Irish *aisling* poetry, where Ireland comes in female form to the poet in his dreams, urging him to rescue her from the foreign oppressor:

The driven snow was not whiter than her neck and brow. A faint blush at that moment tinged her usually pale cheek, which, together with a pair of ripe, rosy lips, and eyes of heavenly blue, imparted a warmth to what might otherwise be considered the marble coldness of her almost too ideal beauty. (*Knocknagow*, p.9)

If her beauty is 'almost too ideal', it is Kickham himself, of course, who has created her in this passionless form as a touchstone for goodness, and she is worshipped as such by no less an authority on moral virtue in the novel than Norah Lahy (*Knocknagow*, p.63). This idealization may be necessary for Mary's function in the text as the outstanding symbol of Ireland, but it is also represented there as being a disadvantage for her as a human being. Mary Kearney is well aware that she often is assumed to be frigid and even 'a fool', by those who are drawn to her beauty: 'People were setting me down as stupid' (*Knocknagow*, p.505). Her friend Grace recognizes the fallacy of this assumption: "it strikes me you innocent looking people have just as much mischief in you as your neighbours", to which Mary responds, 'You are quite right' (*Knocknagow*, p.284). Mary is allowed little direct agency on her own behalf. Like Penelope waiting for Ulysses in Homer's *Odyssey*, her role is to wait to be chosen by the right man among all those competing to be her sexual partner – the romantic Henry Lowe, the repulsive Beresford Pender, and the conservative, honour-bound 'proud and cold' Arthur O'Connor. She marries Arthur in the end, even though their relationship never seems to involve real passion. This may be acceptable in terms of a Victorian romantic love story, since her chief concern is with duty. But because of this absence of passion, Mary cannot suffice on her own as a true representative of the Irish sovereignty goddess. Sexual passion is central to this mythological figure. We need another woman to represent more directly the earthly and intelligent qualities of the sovereignty goddess, which remain hidden in Mary – hence the need, as we will shortly see, for Grace Kiely.

Kickham faces a real dilemma in painting the figure of Mary Kearney. As a symbol, she needs to be silent and static, 'a being too ethereally beautiful for a mere mortal' (*Knocknagow*, p.343); as he directly states of her, she needs to be 'more like a queen than a woman' (*Knocknagow*, p.472). But as the symbol of *Ireland*, she needs to be actively politically aware and grounded. So we find Kickham suggesting that Mary Kearney *has* real independence of mind, even though he curtails its expression quite severely. This may be why she comes across as so secretive a character. As one character remarks about her, 'How mild an' innocent she looks. An' she's always quiet and studdy, an' stays at home, an' keeps her mind to herself. But them's the dangerous wans' (*Knocknagow*, p.461). We are afforded only glimpses of just how politically astute Mary is: for example, when she probes Henry Lowe about what he thinks of the highly political Christmas Day sermon (*Knocknagow*, p.10); or when she teaches Grace Kiely about the reality of Irish slavery through reminding her of the fact that she, Mary, would never be recognized as a lady under colonialism (*Knocknagow*, p.199). Her political function is reinforced when Mary recalls Grace and Bessy to the realization that to marry a soldier involves linking themselves with the forces that terrorize their own people (*Knocknagow*, p.315). To Mary also is given the last word of the novel, as it is she who understands most clearly that 'Knocknagow is gone' (*Knocknagow*, p.620). But this character, for all her political awareness, is never allowed, nor ever expects, to participate in the main political discussions played out in the text. None of the women here so participate. Women's energies are officially confined to the private sphere, even though the novel itself also clearly pushes at this boundary, by connecting women both practically and symbolically with public political life.

For, in the world of *Knocknagow*, it is *women* who carry the weight of politics directly on their backs. For example, to Mat Donovan's mother is given the psychic burden of the

two most horrific experiences related in the book: the sanctioned terrorism of the armed forces which she directly witnessed in the brutal murder and botched beheading of her brother back in 1798, and the repetition of this trauma in the later eviction of her family. Through these stories, Mrs Donovan carries all of Irish history in her sad eyes (*Knocknagow*, p.368). In a related way, however much Hugh Kearney may try to protect his sister from harsh reality, especially from the knowledge of the threat that the family will be evicted (*Knocknagow*, p.478), it is she and her mother who are finally left alone to face the actual catastrophe when it happens (*Knocknagow*, p.506). It is through its effect on women that Kickham first represents the destruction that befalls Knocknagow through evictions – the absence of Nelly Donovan's ringing laugh and her mother's more deeply sad face, the muteness of the shrewish neighbour Kit Cummins, and Honor Lahy's lack of comfort (*Knocknagow*, p.525). Women become the primary sign of the loss of life-force in Knocknagow.

The main troubles of both women and men in this novel, arguably, are caused by the lack of recognition of women's and the domestic world's intimate engagement with politics. The separation of women from politics – particularly from the politics of land, on which women have a special claim by right of their role as symbols of the national territory – brings destructive effect in its wake. Two households in the novel face collapse because a father has invested too much money and love in the land, and not enough in his daughter: both Mary Kearney and Nancy Hogan have been neglected as real women who need dowries to make good marriage matches, because their fathers have poured money into improving the land, although these men had no proper security of tenure and eventually are made to face eviction. (Nancy Hogan was the young girl that, because she had no dowry, Ned Brophy jilted for the saucy full of gold and an unhappy marriage). Here, trouble arises when the land as symbolic woman is served by these fathers, *instead of* – rather than alongside – the service of these men towards real woman. Kickham indicates in *Knocknagow*, that the land as symbolic woman will itself become destitute if the needs of the real living human woman are not met - a fate we see played out when old Mr. Kearney and Tom Hogan face eviction and the degradation of their land and entire life efforts. By contrast, the men whose households are the ones which eventually survive and flourish in the novel – Hugh Kearney, Mat Donovan and Billy Heffernan who was devoted to Norah Lahy but on her wishes marries Mat's sister Nelly after Norah's death – are men characterized very specifically by Kickham, as being committed to the needs of a real woman, in the face of trials and difficulties in this project of care. In their treatments of Grace, Bessy and Norah/Nelly respectively, Hugh, Mat and Billy honour the woman as a human being instead of neglecting her, whether such neglect occurs directly or by idealizing her into the ether-space of her isolated mythological function.

The need for complementarity between real woman and symbolic woman that Kickham is suggesting here, is a radical idea. It works directly against later and now far better known representations or the relationship between Ireland as a woman and real women, such as the Yeats / Lady Gregory's play already mentioned, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. In that play, Ireland in the figure of a poor old woman entices a bridegroom away from his wife-to-be on the night before their marriage, in order to serve her in the battle to free Ireland from the oppressor. As soon as he goes with her, the old hag becomes a beautiful maiden. In this play, the woman as symbol – Cathleen Ni Houlihan – is in direct competition with the real woman



– the young man’s fiancé. The man must chose between them, and he opts for the symbolic woman – the land – rather than the real woman to whom he is supposed to be committed. This is exactly the choice Maurice Kearney and Tom Hogan make in *Knocknagow* – they chose the land instead of their flesh and blood daughters. But Kickham shows us that, far from gaining the land through this stark choice, they lose the land in the end because of it (Kearney and Hogan have no money resources to meet the demands for rent, because it has all been sunken into projects of reclaiming and improving their farms). When Yeats said of *Knocknagow* that it was ‘the most honest of Irish novels’,<sup>62</sup> he probably did not anticipate a reading that would agree with him by placing this novel ahead of his own work in terms of its clear-sightedness with regard to the role gender plays in national identity. Such a favourable comparison can be made between the work of the two writers, in spite of the contradictions in Kickham’s representation of Mary Kearney as sovereignty goddess – the manner in which she is rendered at once static and politically aware. Maybe *Knocknagow* can be so elevated because in it, those ambiguities are allowed to surface as unresolved and troubling to its readers. We know Kickham is aware of these contradictions in his portrait of Mary, not only because she embodies and articulates them, but because he tries to offset them with the third version of the Irish sovereignty goddess under endorsement in this novel, in the shape of her friend, Grace Kiely.

Grace is the most interesting female in the novel *Knocknagow*. Daughter of a well-known doctor and friend of the Kearneys, she is a precocious child-woman, a girl full of gaiety, light, and wit (see *Knocknagow*, p.10). There is real need for the presence of a Grace Kiely in this novel, in order to counterbalance the effect of Mary’s pure truth. Grace is also necessary, though, because she represents similar contradictions to those we have seen operating in Mary Kearney, between silence and symbolic weight. On the one hand, Grace is entirely unlike Mary in that she remains silent about nothing: as a not-yet fully formed woman, she has special permission to speak her mind at will. Most of the characters – especially the men – become nervous of Grace’s quick wit, intellect, and sharply insightful tongue, as she shows that she ‘is able for them all – to give them tit for tat’ (*Knocknagow*, pp.117, 177), seeing as she does through their appearance of uprightness to the vanity and egotism that lies beneath. Mary Kearney is often astounded at what her friend can see - and more so, what she can get away with showing she has seen: ‘you really must be a witch of some kind’, she says to her, as Grace probes close to the romantic heart of the mystery of the tracks in the snow beneath Mary’s window (*Knocknagow*, p.23). Grace ‘really astonishes’ Mary with her unconventional behaviour as a woman (*Knocknagow*, p.14), but more so, with her open pointing towards the constructed artificial nature of the societal conventions she delights in transgressing. The subversiveness of her presence is indicated, for example, when she inverts the example of Alexander Pope’s famous poem in clipping off a lock of Hugh’s hair, before he can do the same to her (*Knocknagow*, p.176). On the other hand, however, it is only as a half-child, that Grace has licence for her boldness of insight and action. Once she grows up and into her full identity as woman, her voice along with her independent agency is curtailed. Fr. Carroll, late in the novel, reports that he had met her ““and was surprised to see her so changed. She was a little woman when I saw her before; but now she is quite girlish. She blushed and seemed quite timid and confused when I reminded her of some of her sayings”” (*Knocknagow*, p.506).

After publication, Kickham said about his characters, Mary and Grace: 'Of course I knew Mary would prove insipid to most people, but I think her quiet bravery under suffering redeems her. I wanted Grace for a contrast, and intended making her a little vicious, but she got good in spite of me'.<sup>63</sup> Kickham's contrasting characterization of Mary and Grace along with the shift towards the conventional in his representation of the latter, indicates this writer's understanding of the constrictions faced by women in culture, if also his lack of expectation that these constrictions can, or even should, be overcome. Conventional patriarchal protectionism towards women is questioned in the novel. When Arthur O'Connor, the man Mary loves, offers the platitude that 'The woman that can be happy in her own home is the best woman', he is contradicted by his interlocutor, Fr. Carroll, even if not directly. The priest replies to him: "'That is quite true. But it might be carried too far. I'm inclined to think a discontented spirit may keep young people too much at home, as well as drive them too much from it.'" (*Knocknagow*, p.509-10). Kickham's protest here against inactivity that derives from dissatisfied resignation to a sense of powerlessness, has a strong gender dimension. This is suggested in the manner in which he frequently juxtaposes the image of a caged bird with his descriptions of his female characters (see *Knocknagow*, pp.12-13, 20-21, 48, 179, 444). He does this in order to suggest that women are similarly entrapped by socially accepted ideas of female nature: Grace unknowingly articulates this awareness when she prescribes that 'Bessy ought to have a nicely furnished little parlour, with white curtains to the window, and some books, and a bird in a cage to sing for her all day long' (*Knocknagow*, p.444). But he also suggests that all four main female characters – and none more so than Grace – are aware of how they are so controlled as women by society's ideas of what it is to be a 'natural' woman. We find Mary Kearney getting up to release the first indoor bird we meet in the novel – a swallow dashing itself against the glass of the Kearney living room (*Knocknagow*, p.12-13). The swallow symbolizes her own need for freedom from the gender conventions that pertain there – a need that is never fully met. Kickham surely means it as a revealing irony that so many men in the novel give women caged birds as a sign of their approval, and we note that he emphasizes how the women in *Knocknagow* delight in the tiny wren's escape from his hunters on St. Stephen's Day (p.20-21). Similarly, Nora declares that her brother Tommy's only true sin was his punishment of the robins for ruining the traps he had set for other birds, when he cruelly pulled out the robins' tail feathers (*Knocknagow*, p.46-47).

One of the greatest temptations faced by women as a result of society's false expectations of them, is that of living up to the idea that females are not intelligent. Grace describes what male poets and editors think of women: 'they adore fools. No girl but a fool has the ghost of a chance of making any impression upon them' (*Knocknagow*, p.24). In other words, in order to have any influence in the world, women must live up to men's expectations of their brainlessness and emotionalism. Some minor women characters in the novel act out this mental emptiness to the full, none more so than the caricatured figure of Miss Lloyd. Desperate to get a husband at all costs, this man-eater actually breaks all the taboos of female behaviour by enacting to an extreme degree, the stereotypes of femininity: vanity, hypocrisy, curiosity and stupidity. She is oblivious to the normal codes of criticism of such behaviour. Miss Lloyd is a ridiculous parody of feminine wiles – but she is also such a law unto herself that she shows up the normal conventions of female behaviour as unnatural and constructed (see *Knocknagow*, pp.103-105; 439; 561-564). Kickham uses Miss Lloyd as his female clown in

order to explore the clichés of womanhood. But all his more serious female characters must, for their own future safety, similarly recognize these constructions for what they are. So, for example, we see the main women in the novel questioning the common assumption in polite society, that women are bound to accept as the truth, all and every form of flattery directed at them. This happens in an amusing scene where Bessy Morris shows a love letter written by her soldier-admirer to Grace and Mary. The letter is exaggerated and flowery in its declarations of love. Far from being taken in by it, the three women are delighted to see this as a typical specimen of the conventional love letter, and not for a moment do they consider that its content is truly private or that what it says must by any necessity be true (*Knocknagow*, pp.306-309). The women well recognize how such fulsome praise is a rhetorical device used to claim their sexual favour. This accords with Dr. Kiely's critique of women as unfit to sing Moore's *Melodies*, for, he declares, women are not sentimental enough to give the songs the feeling they demand (*Knocknagow*, p.466).

Grace Kiely in particular loves solving the puzzle of what makes people tick – she is a very astute observer of human motives. But Grace herself, of course, is the greatest puzzle she must solve – the puzzle of how she is to find her way to her true home, which will in the end be in Knocknagow and the embrace of Hugh Kearney. Kickham paints Grace as having more than her fair share of vanity and pride. She tends towards showy romanticism, is afraid of the harsh reality of Norah's physical suffering, and longs to enter the big wide world to compete for entry to the 'magic circle' of the highest classes of society by using her beauty and wit – three expressions of identity that, Mary reminds her, point directly to her superficiality (*Knocknagow*, pp.61, 282). Grace is very tempted by the pleasures of artificiality, and her task in the novel is to locate her true natural self through opting for the principles of honour and honesty. Yet, Kickham shows us that her delight in the artificial *is* part of Grace's true self – it is what helps her to read between the lines of other people's characters. As sovereignty goddess, therefore, Grace may be tempted towards the wrong rulers, whose values are showy heroism and ostentatious wealth, just as the last of our female representatives of this figure, Bessy Morris, is tempted. But if Grace and Bessy need to come back to Knocknagow's values in the shape of their chosen husbands (Hugh Kearney and Mat Donovan), then, those husbands and nationalist Ireland more generally, also need Grace's and Bessy's adaptability and life force. Knocknagow requires these women's independence of spirit and practical action, their worldliness along with their truthfulness, in order to survive as a community and continue the line of inheritance into the future. Where Mary says 'nothing is more odious than duplicity and deceit', we need a Grace to respond, 'But a little diplomacy is necessary to get on smoothly through the world' (*Knocknagow*, p.309). It may be telling that Kickham allows Grace and Bessy to bear sons who can carry on the family name whereas the more idealized Mary Kearney mothers girls who can only mediate that identity.

The 'fascinating', 'coquettish', 'keen-witted and ambitious' Bessy Morris (*Knocknagow*, pp.450, 227, 352), beloved of Mat the Thrasher – a woman who also 'gets good' in spite of herself – is the fourth and final component of the joint sovereignty goddess here argued for as the meaning of the partnership between the major female characters in *Knocknagow*. Bessy is a seamstress recently returned from Dublin, granddaughter of the old 1798 rebel Phil Morris who the agents are afraid to evict. Her symbolic position is reinforced in her status as daughter of a mother who was murdered during the act of eviction, and of a father driven

into exile, no-one knows where, for taking revenge for this evil act (*Knocknagow*, pp.310-312). Like Mary Kearney, Bessy has a secret lover – the soldier dragoon who, by attracting her with his promise of glamour, excitement, and triumph, ends up as a cause of shame to her. He threatens her good reputation among the Knocknagow folk who hold her in high regard as a ‘universal favourite’ – we are told that the men are ‘all ready [...] to put their hands undher Bessy’s feet’ (*Knocknagow*, pp.236, 230). Bessy is scared of being discovered to not represent their ideal of her as an unconscious embodiment of both purity and sexual attractiveness (*Knocknagow*, p.249, 272-3). If she reveals her awareness of her sexual power, and worse, acts upon the advantage of the regard in which she is held, she can be accused of ‘hav[ing] the two ways in her’ (*Knocknagow*, p.308).<sup>64</sup> But the text plays out Bessy’s dilemma as that of a woman who cannot become pure, without enacting and confronting the reasons for her own wish to deceive men. Thus she is made to travel the hardest and longest road of all in the novel in her quest to find her true home in Knocknagow with Mat Donovan: she enters a kind of purgatory as she is boycotted within her community and takes service in Dublin caring for her dying aunt.

A key part of her quest is Bessy’s decision to search for her lost father. Indeed, the reason for her socially-unacceptable interest in the soldier-dragoon, may have been her wish to replace that hero-father. But Bessy will discover that her true impulse as sovereignty goddess is to rescue the lost male, rather than to be herself rescued by him. Hence, we are treated to an inversion of expectations in the scene where Mat goes to America to recover Bessy from a fallen life. There, he is surprised to find Bessy safe and well under her re-discovered father’s care – but even more surprised to find that she is not yet satisfied in her quest. Her father has become settled, well-to-do, and (the text leads us to surmise), rather complacent in his exile, coming across as not nearly guilty enough for having abandoned her as a child. Thus Bessy is still in need of a needy male to rescue in order to find her true self. Mat conveniently presents himself to fit the bill, as he finally reveals his devotion to her, and indicates how much the loss of her would blight his life (*Knocknagow*, pp.586-589). Her rightful king is the male who shows his emotional need of her in terms of plain actions, not fancy words such as those offered in the soldier’s letter. The happy ending here of Bessy and Mat, sentimentally artificial though it is, is interesting in that it shows how a woman can be empowered by actively choosing her mate at the moment when she is openly being chosen by him: the true sign of a right fit between a woman and a man, and between the land of Ireland and its right ruler.

Three of the four women examined here – Mary, Grace and Bessy – have attached to their characters, to an increasing extent in each, an imputation of sexual flightiness and looseness. In normative patriarchal gender relationships, the disciplining of this trait should define the right to rule of their proper mates. If this norm were upheld in the novel, Henry Lowe, who harbours the suspicion that the tracks in the snow beneath Mary’s window might indicate her sexual impurity (*Knocknagow*, p.421), should have been the one to win her. But he fails outright in this quest. Those men who do win these women – Arthur, Hugh and Mat – achieve this success by applying the opposite of such moral righteousness – by offering their hearts freely, and by being freely chosen in turn.

In Charles Kickham's *Knocknagow*, it is women rather than men characters who must struggle and grow as individuals in order to fulfil their destinies. Men in the novel tend to be either good or bad from the outset, and are rarely shown to change, the reader's challenge being to discover – with more or less difficulty – into which of these two categories they fall. Henry Lowe's status as hero-in-the-making or worthless romantic egoist, for example, may remain in question for much of the book, but he doesn't actually develop as an individual. The same is true, in their individual circumstances, for Mat, Hugh, and Billy Heffernan. In contrast, all the main women in the story grow and change as characters, with the possible exception of Norah Lahy, who instead stimulates development in others. While men's fortunes tend to fix their place and happiness in the world, women's fortunes in the novel – whether constituted in terms of money or beauty – are no guarantee of value in themselves, for their usefulness to their owner's happiness tends to depend on circumstances over which these women have little control. Therefore inner resources are more important for women than for men. Women, Kickham indicates, cannot afford to measure themselves against the world's opinion of them, yet neither can they afford to ignore that opinion. Men, on the other hand, can ignore their public profile with impunity, for they have the power to enter into open struggle for economic and cultural capital. (The difference between Bessy's compromised position, and Mat's enhanced position in the role of each as a sexual 'rag on every bush' [*Knocknagow*, p.133] is a case in point – in other words, different meanings are attributed to their similar powers of attracting multiple sexual partners and indulging in light romance.) Men are more likely than women to have inner resources on foot of their capital (as do Mat and Hugh), than women, who often must develop those resources *despite* that capital.

The main way in which women so develop in *Knocknagow*, is by learning to value and enact Kickham's chief lesson in the novel – the need to balance instinct and honour, emotion and reason, self-interest and selflessness. In Freud's terms, this is the task of integrating the *id* with the *superego* – the drive towards uncontrolled personal freedom and ambition, with the rules of the larger good of society. If one side or the other of these predominates, Kickham indicates, the results are always dangerous. *Knocknagow* shows that only by balancing instinct and honour, can women and men achieve true selfhood and a mature ego. Thus, for true self-determination to take effect in either men or women, a balance is needed between the energies of feeling-cum-force and that of self-restraint. In *Knocknagow*, although this balance is embodied in both the novel's heroes and its heroines, it develops more visibly and actively in the main female than in the main male hero characters, for whom that balance is a given state of being. This reverses the association of 'being' with women and 'becoming' with men, which we saw Valente diagnose as a typical and important element of Victorian culture. That anomaly can be traced to Kickham's unusual attunement to the benefits of direct engagement with womanliness and the female realm more generally.

As it is for women's and men's developments, so it is for the nation's development. Kickham uses women to explore the conditions of true independence in Ireland, suggesting through his exploration of femininity and masculinity that the country needs to learn how to combine the right to instinct – to pure freedom of action and expression – with the call to honour, which can only be heard by recognizing the rights and needs of other nations and of all Ireland's citizens equally. This combination, this active engagement between the two basic human urges of instinct and honour – a compromise that raises each to greater

strength - is a high aim indeed, and so important a one that Kickham would brook no half measures in the effort towards its realization. His defence of compromise in the best sense of the word, is the basis of Kickham's famous intransigence in political affairs. As a revolutionary nationalist, he saw in both constitutional nationalism and extremist forms of physical force nationalism, the serious potential for hypocrisy, authoritarianism and naked personal ambition to undermine that ideal of the integration of instinct and honour, romance and reason, individual liberty and communal responsibility, to which he had devoted his life. *Knocknagow* is his literary expression of the territory of that crucial balance, a reliable guide to which is the exploration of gender identity in this text. Kickham's concern is to break down useless and divisive barriers between two main approaches towards Ireland's independence: romantic self-expression and reasoned self-criticism; in proposing the joint ideal of the manly woman and womanly man to do this, he approaches an ideal of feminist as well as nationalist liberation. It is for this reason that *Knocknagow* deserves a new readership in Ireland.

### References

- <sup>1</sup>This essay is a revised and expanded version of a lecture delivered at the Kickham Country Weekend in Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary, on August 12th 2006. The author wishes to thank the organizers and participants of this event, especially Sheila Foley, for the opportunity to develop and present this work. She also wishes to express her gratitude to Willie Nolan, Sheila Foley, Ann Foley, Vincent Comerford, Liam Ó Duibhir and Breandán Ó Cathaoir for conversations and materials made available to her before and after that event which have greatly helped in the writing of this essay, and to Proinsias and Mary Ó Drisceoil for their support and patience as editors of the journal in which it appears.
- <sup>2</sup>The edition of the text referred to here and used as primary source in this essay, is the 1988 imprint of *Knocknagow* by Anna Livia Press in Dublin. An American-based company, Kessinger Publishing, which produces order-based reprints of rare books, has recently made a version available.
- <sup>3</sup>This is the total page number of the text in the edition used here: Charles J. Kickham, *Knocknagow, or The Homes of Tipperary*, Dublin: Anna Livia Press, 1988, ISBN 1 871311 004. All subsequent references to this edition will be incorporated into the main text of this essay using the abbreviation *Knocknagow*.
- <sup>4</sup>Seamus Deane, editor's note to the section from *Knocknagow* reprinted in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, Volume II (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991), p.248.
- <sup>5</sup>*The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*, edited by Robert Welch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.289
- <sup>6</sup>This assessment is supported by a statement made by Kickham's chronicler, James Maher, who, in the early nineteen fifties, confidently asserted *Knocknagow* to be 'the most famous Irish novel of all times, a novel which after eighty years stubbornly refuses to go out of print', and one that 'has been read by millions of people in every part of the world'. James Maher, 'Knocknagow Revisited: Origins of Ireland's National Novel', in *Romantic Slievenamon in History, Folklore and Song: A Tipperary Anthology*, edited by James Maher (Mullinahone: published privately, 1955), p.217. Fifty years on, almost the reverse claim could be made.
- <sup>7</sup>Brian Donnelly's 1988-89 'Nineteenth-Century Irish Fiction' course for the MA in Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin, was an exception to this rule, and was the context in which the present author - although she was raised within a few miles of Kickham's home village of Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary, in the environs of which the novel is set - first read this text. The novel's unavailability, of course, has also since lead to its neglect within academia, but the reverse is also true - a classic chicken-and-egg situation.
- <sup>8</sup>Kickham's biographer, R.V. Comerford, argues that 'Many of the pictures of country life and people in *Knocknagow* have an immediacy, an accuracy and a sureness of touch that compel recognition and sympathy from anyone familiar with the ways of rural Ireland'. R.V. Comerford, *A Study in Irish Nationalism and Literature* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1979), p.198.
- <sup>9</sup>Robert Goode Hogan, *Dictionary of Irish Literature* (Greenwood Publishing Group), p.354
- <sup>10</sup>Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.164.

- <sup>11</sup>Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.203.
- <sup>12</sup>James Maher, 'Return to Knocknagow: The Original Characters and Places', in *Romantic Slievenamon*, p.227.
- <sup>13</sup>Norman Vance, *Irish literature Since 1800* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), p.85.
- <sup>14</sup>*The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* (revised edition), edited by Ian Ousby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.538. This assessment is supported in *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*: 'his literary renown was inextricably bound up with respect and affection for him as a veteran revolutionary' (p.289).
- <sup>15</sup>See Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, pp.101-103.
- <sup>16</sup>James Maher, in *The Valley Near Slievenamon: A Kickham Anthology*, edited by James Maher, 1941, quoted in *Tipperary's GAA Ballads*, edited by Seamus J. King, Liam Ó Donnchu and Jimmy Smyth (Thurles: Tipperary Board GAA, 2000), p.88.
- <sup>17</sup>William O'Brien, quoted in *The Valley Near Slievenamon: A Kickham Anthology*, edited by James Maher, this quoted in King et al, *Tipperary's GAA Ballads*, p.88.
- <sup>18</sup>Willie Nolan, 'The Geography of Knocknagow', script of an unpublished lecture delivered at the inaugural Kickham Country Weekend in Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary, August 1982.
- <sup>19</sup>John O'Leary, quoted in *The Valley Near Slievenamon: A Kickham Anthology*, edited by James Maher, this quoted in King et al, *Tipperary's GAA Ballads*, p.88.
- <sup>20</sup>John O'Leary, quoted in *The Valley Near Slievenamon: A Kickham Anthology*, edited by James Maher, this quoted in King et al, *Tipperary's GAA Ballads*, p.88.
- <sup>21</sup>See, for example, the entry on Kickham in *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*, or, Margaret Kelleher, 'Prose writing and drama in English, 1830-1890: from Catholic Emancipation to the fall of Parnell', in *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*, Volume I, edited by Margaret Kelleher and Philip O' Leary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 449-499 (p.478).
- <sup>22</sup>Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1995), p.174.
- <sup>23</sup>Deane, editor's note to *Knocknagow* in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, Vol. II, p.248.
- <sup>24</sup>In a local Mullinahone publication marking the centenary of Kickham's death in 1982, the then archbishop of Cashel and Emlly, Reverend Thomas Morris, comments on the words of Kickham's best-known cultural production, the song 'Slievenamon', in terms which suggest the need to come to more mature terms with the joint occupancy of sentiment and political intent in his work. What, Archbishop Morris asks, are people to make of 'the "melting ruth" which rhymes so conveniently with "soul of truth"? The Archbishop goes on: 'Somewhere in his literary realm Kickham found the archaic word, "ruth", meaning compassion, pity, tenderness.' He then adds: '[Maybe it is significant that "ruth-less" is still in common usage, alive and well and half-admired.] Reverend Thomas Morris, 'Not All Melting Ruth', *Knocknagow Remembers* (Mullinahone: The Kickham Centenary Committee, 1982), pp.68-70 (p.68).
- <sup>25</sup>Charles J. Kickham, from an unidentified letter quoted in 'A few More Relics of Charles Kickham', by 'M.R.', *The Irish Monthly: A Magazine of General Literature*, edited by the Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J. (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1888), pp.131-137 (p.132-133).
- <sup>26</sup>Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), p.153.
- <sup>27</sup>See Eagleton's chapter on 'Form and Ideology in the Anglo-Irish Novel' in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, pp.145-225.
- <sup>28</sup>Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p.173.
- <sup>29</sup>W. B. Yeats, *Explorations*, as quoted in Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p.481.
- <sup>30</sup>Quoted in Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.200.
- <sup>31</sup>Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, 'Pygmalion's Image', *The Magdalen Sermon* (Loughcrew: Gallery press, 1989), p.9.
- <sup>32</sup>See the website [www.exclassics.com](http://www.exclassics.com)
- <sup>33</sup>Nolan, 'The Geography of Knocknagow' (unpublished lecture).
- <sup>34</sup>Willie Nolan, 'Knocknagow: A Geographer's View', in *Knocknagow Remembers* (Mullinahone: Kickham Centenary Committee, 1982), pp.80-87 (pp.81, 83, 85).
- <sup>35</sup>See Nolan, 'Knocknagow: A Geographer's View', p.83.
- <sup>36</sup>Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.118.
- <sup>37</sup>Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.136.
- <sup>38</sup>Willie Nolan, 'John Devoy's correspondence with Mrs. Florence D. White (Annie Kickham Cleary) concerning his biography of C.J. Kickham in 1927', *The Tipperary Historical Journal*, 2006, pp.135-43 (p.135).

- <sup>39</sup>Cited by Matthew Russell S.J. in his 1887 'Introduction' to *Knocknagow*, and reprinted in the 1988 Anna Livia Press edition of the text in use in this essay, p.ix.
- <sup>40</sup>Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.29.
- <sup>41</sup>Quoted in Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.158.
- <sup>42</sup>Russell, 'Introduction', pp.x, xii.
- <sup>43</sup>See Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, Chapter VIII, 'The intransigent'.
- <sup>44</sup>Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.121.
- <sup>45</sup>Michael Patrick Gillespie, *Inverted Volumes Properly Arranged: James Joyce and his Trieste Library* (UMI [University of Michigan] Research Press, 1983), p.96.
- <sup>46</sup>Joseph Valente, 'The Manliness of Parnell', *Eire-Ireland*, Vol.41: 1 & 2 (Spring / Summer 2006), pp.64-121 (pp.66-67).
- <sup>47</sup>Valente, 'The Manliness of Parnell', p.68.
- <sup>48</sup>Valente, 'The Manliness of Parnell', p.69-70.
- <sup>49</sup>See, for example, C.L.Innes, *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society, 1880-1935* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp.9-25.
- <sup>50</sup>Valente, 'The Manliness of Parnell', p.70.
- <sup>51</sup>There are few of the latter in this novel, and these – like Isabella Lloyd and Kathleen Hanly, are positioned decidedly as minor characters.
- <sup>52</sup>Mary registers the 'disagreeable' nature of Henry's insistent complements (*Knocknagow*, p.13).
- <sup>53</sup>Henry Lowe's oppositional counterpart in contemporary Irish writing is the character of Yolland in Brian Friel's 1979 play, *Translations*, who escaped service with the British army in India in order to come to Ireland to map the land, and who, like Henry, falls helplessly in love with a local Irish girl, but who uses that love to challenge rather than uphold the imperial project of destroying local culture.
- <sup>54</sup>Quoted in Toby Joyce, "'Ireland's trained and marshalled manhood": the Fenians in the mid-1860s', in *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth Century Ireland: Public and Private Spheres*, edited by Margaret Kelleher and James H. Murphy (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1997), pp.70-80 (p.73).
- <sup>55</sup>Valente, 'The Manliness of Parnell', pp.78, 80.
- <sup>56</sup>Valente, 'The Manliness of Parnell', p.81.
- <sup>57</sup>Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.101.
- <sup>58</sup>Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.122.
- <sup>59</sup>See Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.144.
- <sup>60</sup>See Máire Herbert, 'Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland', in Louise Olga Fradenburg ed. *Women and Sovereignty* (Cosmos 7), (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992 pp.264-275), and Joseph Valente, 'The Myth of Sovereignty: Gender in the Literature of Irish Nationalism', *English Literary History* Vol.61:1 (Spring 1994), pp.189-210.
- <sup>61</sup>Kickham, unidentified letter, quoted in 'A Few More Relics of Charles Kickham', p.132.
- <sup>62</sup>Reported on <http://www.exclassics.com/knocknagowknintro.htm>, accessed on 22nd March 2007.
- <sup>63</sup>Kickham, unidentified letter, quoted in 'A Few More Relics of Charles Kickham', p.133.
- <sup>64</sup>Worth noting here, is James Stephens's comparable terms of approbation of Kickham as a force to be reckoned with within the IRB: Stephens calls him, 'the double dealer, ... my most effective enemy'. Quoted in Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham*, p.120.