

THE IRISH ATTACK ON CHRISTIANITY - THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

*Dedicated to the women of Ireland who devoted
their lives to rectify the injustice of poverty*

THE IRISH ATTACK ON CHRISTIANITY: THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

EUGENE JORDAN

Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are incapable of forming such opinions. – Albert Einstein¹

Tafannóir Press

¹ Calaprice, *The New Quotable Einstein*.

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Introduction

What benefits would accrue to a small band of women to kill thousands of children through starvation and abuse? It is not a question that the Irish media nor any bloggers have asked. Yet, asking the question is essential to understand the causes of murderous behaviour and to assess the truthfulness of such allegations. The absence of fundamental and straightforward investigative questions has permitted all and sundry, especially the media, to write lurid headlines and stories. Practically all have stretched credulity to new heights, which the public accepted without even asking why. Why would women risk execution, ex-communication and eternal damnation? What was in it for them? The assumption is that they were motivated by a hatred of illegitimate children, but the saved lives of tens of thousands of unwanted children stand as testament that this is not true. Why did the Irish media, bloggers and a vocal minority launch a broadside attack on Christianity? What benefit is it for them? Those are some of the questions which I set out to answer in this book. You might think it would not take a whole book to provide simple answers to seemingly simple questions but lurking just below the surface is a set of causes that have not, until now, been thoroughly analysed or understood.

Suppose you imagine how a lawyer might prepare a case of the defence, assembling all the evidence which anticipates and contradicts the evidence put forward by the prosecution. This book's premise is to bring to the surface all the evidence needed to defend Christianity, common sense, and the Irish nation from the ill-informed, unknowledgeable and prejudiced elements within Irish society. It essentially tells how the Irish came to hate the Irish and thrashes out the causes at the court of reason.

Ireland has been in the grip of several scandals since 2014 when claims that the bodies of dead children were dumped in a septic tank at the Tuam Children's Home. It sent the world's media into overdrive with headlines telling of 'a baby holocaust', 'mass murder', 'babies starved to death' by killer women. The home ceased to exist 53 years earlier, just enough time to ensure that all the women running the home were dead and therefore unable to defend against the charges. In response, the Irish government set up a commission of investigation that produced several interim reports before publishing its final report, dated October 2020 but not released to the public until the 12th of January 2012. From the fifth interim report onwards, the Commission was becoming aware of an enormous amount of 'inaccurate commentaries' appearing both in the press and on blog sites about the Tuam site. In a forlorn effort to set the record straight, the report clarified, 'the Commission considers it necessary to emphasise what it has established and what it has not established. The human remains found by the Commission are not in a sewage tank'. The Tuam story triggered several other conspiracy theories, and soon the scramble to get on the bandwagon turned to a stampede. Among the heard was Irish parliamentarian Kate O'Connell TD who declared that 'we murdered them in their hundreds

through neglect and hate'. She relies entirely on the imagination that all the children in so-called Mother and Baby homes were illegitimate (bastards) and so religious women, both Catholic and Protestant, took to murdering them. Another politician and secondary school teacher labelled it 'our holocaust', and social media has been alight ever since with one more lurid claim begetting even more lurid claims.

Understanding the root causes would be a challenge while attempting to read through a chronicle of affairs. Accordingly, I have arranged the book into three sections giving you the option of reading from the beginning to end or dipping in and out of sections, which be of more interest to you. Occasionally, I found it necessary to use terminology that you might not find familiar. I provide explanations on first use, but if you are dipping in and out, you might find the glossary in Appendix 1 helpful.

Chapter 5 is the pivotal chapter that looks at the failure of quality control methods in Irish academic history. These scandals are historical, and the people long since dead. It is the historian's duty to tell the story honestly, set in the correct historical context so that present-day people are empowered with valid understandings, helping their audience avoid the misinterpretation that can occur through using current knowledge, which could not have possibly been in the possession of the people in the past.

The pursuit of financial compensation, you might think, is the primary driver of false claims, but there are several more powerful motivating factors at play too. Many people became involved in many campaigns, which it would appear, did not stand to benefit financially but might be in line for a slice of the compensation as a gratuity from the receiver. Selling newspapers in a declining market is a difficult task; therefore, even broadsheet or publications, which were previously regarded as high quality, are turning towards sensationalism to increase sales in a fight for survival.

Over recent years, the drop in journalistic standards has long been noted even in journalistic circles due to Irish publications' unique circumstances, especially direct competition from the British gutter press. The former editor of the Irish Times, newspaper Geraldine Kennedy once stated, '[journalism] it is in a pretty sorry state I think today [...] there has been a gross erosion of standards.' She went on to blame the arrival of British tabloids on the Irish market. The Irish Times is a broadsheet newspaper regarded by many as the best in Ireland, and it regards itself as the 'paper of record', but it too has proven not to be immune from sensationalism.²

In the beginning, and to its great credit, the Irish Times was one of the few publications to have carried articles, which have dissented from the hyperbole.

² 'Marian Finucane Show - Charlie Bird Presenting'

However, in the aftermath of the publication of the commission of investigation report in early 2020, its coverage was utterly biased, publishing one article after another where it was evident that the author had not read the report and continued to make allegations the commission had found were untrue. It could be validly argued that the Irish Times and other media outlets have adopted into their business practice the maxim ‘if you can’t beat them join them’. However, an educated populace should be able to row back against the tide of gutterism, but again, that was made impossible by a simultaneous drop in educational standards, which has also occurred and has been the subject of much commentary and debate.

‘Tumulus Hystericus’ was the book’s working title before settling on *The Irish Attack on Christianity*. I retain its use in the title of the first chapter as it is a triple entendre. First, it hints at the name of the town of Tuam is derived from the Irish language word *Tuaim*, which is itself, derived from the Latin word *tumulus* meaning a hill or heap but often used as a term for an ancient burial mound. The root of *tumulus* ‘*teue*’- is also the source of the word *tumour*, a reference to the cultural malignancy at the heart of the scandal. *Hystericus* is a valid Latinisation of the Greek word *hystera*, commonly found in the medical term *hysterectomy*. –‘*ectomy*’ means to cut out while ‘*hystera*’ is an ancient Greek word for womb. The Terms is also the root of the word *hysterical*. (*Globus hystericus* is the medical term for the feeling of a lump in the throat.) The working subtitle came from a hysterical Irish-American online magazine article where the author claimed that the women running the Tuam Children’s Home were ‘Gods Little Executioners’. One of the many authors using whale fat to lubricate Ireland’s slithering descent into the abyss of ignorance, a real-life horror story... ‘tis a tale of woe like no other.

I hope that you take the evidence I present here and use it to defend the truth against the onslaught of ignorance. If you are not religious, you should be troubled by the abuse of Irish history and how your family, relations and ancestors continue to be denigrated. If you are a Christian, you make take solace from factual history and be proud of the women who saved the lives of thousands of unwanted children over the centuries.

SECTION I
A TUMULUS OF FALSEHOODS

1. THE CONSTRUCTION OF TUMULUS HYSTERICUS

The ‘Catholic Cure for Poverty’ was the title of an invective article written by an Irish university lecturer published in America in 2016. It alleged that the Catholic Church and successive Irish governments had abused people, particularly women, since the Irish state’s foundation in 1922. Some years earlier, another academic author claimed to have found historical evidence of children starved to death at a Protestant mother and baby home in Dublin. In the aftermath, many Irish politicians, from both the left and right wings of politics, seized the opportunity and attacked the Christian religions for their role in the mass murder of infants and abuse of women. Their political forbearers were accused of standing-by or facilitating such crimes through paying undue deference to the religions and religious leaders. The attacks deeply hurt religious people from across the spectrum of Irish society. In the febrile atmosphere, opposing views were drowned out by the noisy clamour and an ensuing torrent of abuse. Even two Taoisigh (p. tee-she, plural of the title given to the Irish prime mister), Enda Kenny and Micheál Martin, launched what can only be described as an unprecedented, scathing and venomous attacks, not only on the Christian religions but on the entire Irish nation. Of course, it is a common practice for politicians to disparage sections of the population for political advantage, but no national leader in history has spoken to denigrate and ridicule their own nation in its entirety. In any other country, such an attack would be an act of political suicide but not in Ireland. It points to a set of cultural prejudices that are somewhat unique to the nation but can also be found in most other post-colonial societies. I believe that these Prime Ministerial attacks will stand in history as the two most embarrassing moments in the nation’s history, not because they were venomous sneers, but because they gullibly believed claims which were dubious in appearance, even to the ‘dogs in the street’, to

use a common Irish expression. The Taoisigh, like many people in Ireland, were expressing opinions based on easily provable falsehoods due to a lack of relevant knowledge and blinding cultural biases.

The Irish universities have a similar problem, the ‘Catholic Cure for Poverty’ article, as we will see later, is riddled with errors, some of which are elementary and below the standard that would be expected even of a first-year college history student, but the author also pedals a raft of historical falsehoods, which combine into a false history or pseudo-history. Anyone can make a mistake, and academia has several quality control mechanisms to catch errors before they have a chance to get it into the public arena but here, they failed. The allegations against women who managed the Protestant Bethany Home in Dublin of having starved children to death relies entirely on an interpretation of a medical term found on a small number of death certificates of children who died at the home in the early part of the 20th century. The same medical term can be found on infant death certificates for practically every maternity hospital in the country of that time. Yet, there was no queue of politicians and journalists accusing the doctors and nurses of murder or perpetrating a holocaust, a term applied to the scandal by alarmist politicians, journalists and bloggers. More importantly, there was an absence of dissenting academic historians, those charged with checking on the quality of their colleagues’ output. Academia are the self-appointed guardians of quality history. As we will see in Chapter 5, not only have they been asleep on the job, but they have been positively comatose. First, however, it is imperative to our understanding of what brought the nation to this, the darkest chapter in its intellectual tradition, that the historical events in question are set against their correct historical context. Only then can we begin to appreciate the gravity of this embarrassment to Ireland fully.

At Galway University College in early 2019, Catherine Corless opened her speech by stating that she was not a historian. She was an ordinary woman who had taken a course in how to look up the state birth, death and marriage records. At this time, Galway and Trinity Universities had recently awarded her honorary doctorates and sometime earlier, she received a human rights award from the Council of the Bar of Ireland, a barrister’s organisation. In practically every publication where Corless’ name is mentioned, she is granted the title of ‘historian’ and sometimes, although used more rarely, the title of ‘amateur historian’. Yet, as she freely admits, she has no barley any history training and has no expertise within the discipline. Accordingly, her claims regarding the Tuam Children’s Home have to stand as a significant humiliation to Irish academic history due to its entire legions of highly qualified historians who missed the holocaust, which was perpetrated right under their university parchments. Unlike the Nazi holocaust, the Irish version went on for decades, ample time one would have reasonably thought for it to have been discovered.

In 2012, Catherine Corless published an article entitled ‘The Home’ in a local historical society journal after finding 796 death certificates for infants/children

who had died at the Tuam Children's Home over the course of its 36 years of operation. There was no reaction; the story was not considered newsworthy by the media, nor did anyone notice or suspect anything unusual about that number of deaths. Corless had set out on a noble quest to erect a memorial with all the names of the children buried at the memorial garden at the site of the former children's home. The town of Tuam is located in North County Galway, and the children's home buildings were in their first incarnation, the town's Workhouse. To help her find the children's names, she enlisted a public servant's assistance working at the records office in Galway. Despite finding the names of 796 children, and a presumed fundraising campaign of nine years duration, no permanent memorial, in addition to the existing memorials in situ before 2012, has been erected. A temporary board with the list of names printed on sheets of A4 paper is encased in clear plastic sleeves, lies against the burial ground wall, with names only barely decipherable through the condensate. Accordingly, her original objective has so far been a failure. The 2012 story remained in obscurity until April 2104, when it emerged in the British gutter press that 796 children's bodies were 'dumped' in a septic tank at the site of the former children's home. The mention of 'septic tank' sent the media into a frenzy, and it was soon seized upon by other media publications. The result was that it made headlines in a very short time not just in Ireland but all around the globe. With each telling, the story became embellished more and more, and it grew into some spectacular sensationalist headlines that included claims of Ireland's 'slaughtered babies', 'Ireland's holocaust', 'babies starved to death', 'God's little executioners' and much worse. It was not just the newspapers, Irish politicians, quangos, government departments, social organisations, university academics, bloggers, feminists, pro-abortion groups, atheists groups and more were all clamouring to get in on the act. At the very height of the media frenzy, Catherine Corless denied that she ever said that the children had been 'dumped' in a 'septic tank'. Her statement looked like she was only disavowing the word 'dumped', and she did not attempt to deny that she had been the source of the septic tank story.

Yet something in the whole saga was wrong and should have raised suspicions. Debates that surround all historical scandals involve historians on both sides. Accordingly, what was chiefly remarkable, at that time, was the silence of all Irish academic historians except for one, especially during the breaking phase of the scandal. Perhaps because of this difficulty and to get it straight from the horse's mouth, one TV crew working for a Dutch broadcaster flew to Ireland to interview Ireland's most prominent media and attention-seeking historian, University College Dublin's (UCD) Prof Diarmaid Ferriter. The interview was uploaded on YouTube dated 27th June 2014, when the scandal was still in its breaking phase. What is most remarkable about the whole interview was Ferriter skill in avoiding making direct claims about the Tuam Children's Home, but as a master of the big hint, he just gave the interviewer a string of big hints. He did nothing to quell the growing mass hysteria and did much to

egg it on, using phrases like:

I think anyone who hears about what is described as a mass children's grave is going to be shocked at that. [...] [One has] to ask why there would have been so many babies dying and particularly in institutions where infectious diseases could spread quite quickly, where children, it appears were often malnourished and were quite delicate to start with its, ah not surprising when you begin to look at the accumulation of deaths.'³

I can only surmise that the Dutch chose Ferriter above other historians, as he was the only academic historian who seemed to support the unsubstantiated holocaust claims. However, the assertions he made in the above extract, combined with many others made during the interview, were sufficiently nebulous that we cannot be sure that the professor was supporting such claims. Similar ambiguity can be found in another of his earlier claims made in the same month on the 6th of June 2014 while writing in a national newspaper. Ferriter seemed to imagine that a Wannsee Conference type of event took place, to propose 'a final solution', writing that 'the State and Church colluded to get rid of an embarrassment to Catholic Ireland'⁴ Ferriter is an outspoken critic of the Catholic church and in particular, the Irish Catholic Church and so, keen to heap further embarrassment on their shoulders, he forgot, perhaps conveniently, that the Protestants stood equally accused of 'slaughtering' babies at the Bethany Home in Dublin. The accusations against the Protestants pre-dates the Tuam Children's Home scandal. Still, there is no doubt that it laid the foundations for many of the allegations and attacks on the reputation of the long since deceased women who managed and operated the Tuam Children's Home. If Ferriter's headline is to be believed, then the Protestants were also conspiring to get rid of an embarrassment to Protestant Ireland.

There were, however, a few dissenting voices, which went unheard over the cacophony of wild claims or were ignored and silenced. One example is that of Brendan O'Neill, the editor of online current affairs magazine 'Spiked', who in 2014 was quoted as saying that journalists worldwide 'got a whiff of Corless' findings and turned them into the stuff of nightmares.' Moreover, he states that these commentators were fuelled by a 'Twitter mob mentality', which compared the deaths to Nazi-era genocide. On another occasion in 2017, O'Neill wrote in an article published in the Irish Times, 'as an atheist, I have no interest in defending the Catholic Church. I want to defend science, rationalism and approach history in a measured way'.

Even at this early stage, there was evidence to suggest that the scandal had ascended to a full-blown mass hysteria. The Associated Press agency, which describes itself as the 'definitive source for news', was taken for a ride in

³ van der Horst, *Tuam and Ireland's Shame: Unedited Interview with Historian Diarmaid Ferriter*.

⁴ Ferriter, 'Families Saw These Homes as a Solution to Their Shame and Stigma: The State and Church Colluded to Get Rid of an Embarrassment to Catholic Ireland'.

June 2014 when it repeated the false reports in the Irish media, that children at the Tuam Home were refused baptism. In response, the Tuam Archdiocese produced records to show that it had baptised more than 2,000 children from the home. Consequently, the Associated Press quickly issued a corrective story. However, it should be noted that the Irish media did not bother with any corrections and carried on regardless. Although the Irish Times pointed out in an editorial that ‘Ireland was suffering ‘self-induced amnesia’ given that historians already had documented ‘staggeringly high mortality rates in some mother and child homes.’ It noted that Tuam’s mortality rate appeared lower than others and predicted the upcoming inquiry into the entire system would be painful’.⁵

Jacky Jones, a former HSE [Health Service Executive (the Irish state healthcare agency)] regional manager of health promotion, wrote in June 2014: ‘Nowadays, few Irish babies die before their first birthday. Infant mortality rates have reduced from 66 per 1,000 live births in the 1940s to four in 2012 because, according to the HSE, ‘92 per cent of children are appropriately vaccinated’.⁶ John Waters, a journalist, and public provocateur was invited to give a lecture on his views to the University of Notre Dame in America in 2017 where he claimed the whole story was a ‘media hoax’. He was immediately set upon, attracting comment from the likes of Ciaran Cannon, the then Irish diaspora minister, who accused Waters of ‘shameful rewriting of the Tuam babies tragedy’.⁷ Yet, a few weeks later at a fundraising event for the developing world in Galway, which I was in attendance, he gave a speech in which he highlighted the high maternal and infant mortality rates in such countries and concluded that they were a feature of poverty. His argument was to show that high rates of high infant mortality could be reduced with money, and so claim the credit for attempting a cure using the Irish taxpayer’s money. Cannon evinces for us, the failings of the Irish education system which leaves the Irish people without the knowledge of the third world conditions which prevailed in Ireland until relatively recently. Joined up thinking is not the forte of many Irish politicians and so the story of the ‘murdered babies’ and the hysteria surrounding the Tuam Children’s Home is by any definition a ‘shameful rewriting’ of history.

When it comes to a ‘shameful rewriting of the Tuam babies tragedy’ we can compare Corless’ full quote with the international headlines:

‘I never used that word ‘dumped’,’ Catherine Corless, a local historian in Co Galway, tells *The Irish Times*. ‘I never said to anyone that 800 bodies were dumped in a septic tank. That did not come from me at any point. They are not my words.’⁸

5 ‘Discovering Home Truths in a Society That Failed Mothers and Their Babies’.

6 Jones, ‘Second Opinion’.

7 Staff Reporter, ‘Irish Minister Slams “Rewriting of Tuam Babies Tragedy”’.

8 Boland, ‘Tuam Mother and Baby Home: The Trouble with the Septic Tank Story’.

In contrast, here is a selection of the press headlines arising from her comments in 2014:

‘Tell us the truth about the children dumped in Galway’s mass graves’ – The Guardian. (British daily newspaper)

‘Bodies of 800 babies, long-dead, found in septic tank at former Irish home for unwed mothers’ – *The Washington Post*. (American daily newspaper)

‘Nearly 800 dead babies found in septic tank in Ireland’ – *Al Jazeera*. (Broadcaster to the Arab world)

‘800 skeletons of babies found inside tank at former Irish home for unwed mothers’ – *New York Daily News*. (American daily newspaper)

‘Almost 800 ‘forgotten’ Irish children dumped in septic tank mass grave at Catholic home’ – *ABC News, Australia* (Australian Nationwide Broadcaster) ’

The government commission of investigation, which resulted from Corless’ claims, published a number of interim reports and has proven itself not to be immune from the wave of hysteria. Commenting on its excavations at the Tuam grave site, it revealed:

The second structure is a long structure which is divided into 20 chambers. The Commission has not yet determined what the purpose of this structure was but it appears to be related to the treatment/containment of sewage, and/or waste water. The Commission has also not yet determined if it was ever used for this purpose.

In the next paragraph someone who had obviously not read the previous paragraph went on to completely contradict it stating that, ‘the Commission is shocked by this discovery and is continuing its investigation into who was responsible for the disposal of human remains in this way.’

In the fifth interim report (15th March 2019) the commission backtracked a little.

In the light of a great deal of inaccurate commentary about the Tuam site, the Commission considers it important to emphasise what it has established and what it has not established.

The human remains found by the Commission are not in a sewage tank but in a second structure with 20 chambers which was built within the

9 Ibid.

decommissioned large sewage tank.

Well, surprise, surprise, the commission's comments were ignored by the Irish media and certainly did not make headlines around the world. The commission's final report was made public in January 2021, it made no further mention of the septic tank issue, despite it causing the scandal in the first place.

The unmarked mass grave is yet another falsehood. To be defined as a mass grave, burials have to take place over a short period. Places, where burials take place over a number of years and decades, are called cemeteries, and this cemetery was not unmarked. In every picture of Catherine Corless taken at the burial site and in photos of the site itself, the main graveyard entrance has a gate containing a Christian cross. A second gate also has a cross and in the corner of the site is a Catholic Marian shrine. The gates would appear to date from the 1970s when the old children's home was demolished, and a housing estate built in its place. Local authority maps clearly mark out the area labelling it as a burial ground and show it extending past the current boundary wall which appears to have been constructed in the 1970s. (Chapter 3 discusses the issue in more detail.)

Not surprisingly, due to the claims of a holocaust, some people were calling for a Garda (police) investigation, but the police have declined, as no evidence of a crime has so far come to light. Kevin Higgins, a solicitor who has involved himself heavily in the scandal, tried to rouse his audience at an event at Galway University in 2014 with the opening lines 'Drag the sisters and the Attorney General kicking and screaming into the high court. [...] Sisters you have to do it yourselves [dig] even if it is in Tuam with your bare hands.'¹⁰ Since then, he has been going through the surviving records of the home but can only try to achieve his objective by casting a slur on the reputation of Dr Thomas Bodkin Costello,¹¹ the medic who was in charge of the children's home for many decades.¹² Similarly, the reputation of Dr Winslow Sterling Berry, a former deputy chief medical advisor to the government, has also been subjected to a slur. Their primary objective intends to demonstrate that state officials, who had oversight of the homes, were negligent and so claim financial compensation from the state on behalf of former residents of all the country's mother and baby homes.

Even the United Nations have got in on the act with the British lawyer and Knight of the British Empire, Nigel Rodley claiming:

The Magdalene Laundries, the mother and baby homes, the child abuse, the symphysiotomy – it is quite a collection and it is a collection that has carried on [for a] period that it is hard to imagine any state party tolerating

¹⁰ Author's own notes

¹¹ Dr Bodkin Costello was my predecessor as President of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society holding the position from 1923 to 1956.

¹² Bodger, 'Tuam'.

and I guess I can't prevent myself from observing that [they] are not disconnected from the institutional belief system that has predominated in the state party.'

British attacks on Catholicism are nothing new but could Catholicism be responsible for this 'holocaust', abuse, and the alleged claims of misogyny against the Irish state? Rodley died in 2017, so it is unknown if he ever found out how mistaken he was. Slowly but surely the commissions of investigation found that many claims surrounding the aforementioned scandals are in-congruent with the truth. Judge Maureen Harding-Clark for example, reporting on the compensation payments scheme for women who underwent the surgical procedure known as symphysiotomy, wrote about the many false claims made by claimants. She used terms like confabulation, false memories, and conspiracy theories. Harding-Clark had one significant advantage over all other tribunals in that she did not have to rely solely on the claims made by claimants and could corroborate statements using X-rays: in other words, medically objective evidence. It turned out that nearly a third of women could recall painful memories of having their pelvis bone broken during the symphysiotomy procedure. This bone-breaking procedure had been widely reported previously in the Irish media. Unfortunately, for the women making a claim, these stories, like many others, were entirely false, proving the veracity of the old aphorism about not believing everything one reads in the newspapers. However, had they looked up Wikipedia instead, they might have discovered that a symphysiotomy involves cutting the cartilage of the pubic symphysis, a once common procedure for women suffering from obstructed labour. The surgical procedure allowed the pelvis to widen and so ease obstructions in the birth canal. The procedure has been performed on men too, to allow for reconstructive surgery following physical trauma and to remove tumours. Symphysiotomy continues to be performed on children of today for similar reasons and to treat urethral injuries.

Judge Harding-Clark's findings are highly significant, demonstrating that people in large numbers are willing to make false claims, and many fraudsters have been discovered in other governmental enquires as well. Such fraud is to be expected and is perfectly understandable and perhaps proportional to the amount of money available in financial compensation. In other words, the larger the sum available, the more considerable the number of fraudsters is likely to be. People will chance their arm, especially if the chances of being caught are slim and or the consequences are light or non-existent. However, we seem less inclined to countenance the fact that people will take enormous risks for nothing more than achieving notoriety.

In one example from England, Carl Beech caused a £2million police investigation to be launched in 2014. It ran for two years after he made what turned out to be false allegations of 'three child murders, multiple rapes, kidnapping, false imprisonment and widespread sexual abuse'. Among those he accused was

former Conservative prime minister Sir Edward Heath, former Conservative home secretary Lord Brittan, former head of the armed forces Lord Bramall and former Conservative MP Harvey Proctor.¹³ At his trial in 2019, the court was told that Beech craved attention, had written 150 pages of a memoir and planned to become an international speaker on ‘survivors’ and had received £22,000 in compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority for the abuse he allegedly suffered.¹⁴ Demonstrating beyond any doubt, how easy it is to get paid even with a made-up story. There was no examination of the evidence to support such stories, with the result that no matter how incredulous a story happens to be, the authorities will pay up easily. Thus, encouraging more fraudsters but also bolster a public belief that false allegations are valid.

In a supreme irony, the twist at the end of the story was that Beech himself turned out to be a paedophile! A significant feature of Beech’s deception was feigned victimhood. He pretended to be a victim in order to gain sympathy, care, and attention, and to be excused from his responsibilities for any unbecoming behaviour and or crimes he may have committed. There have been many cases like the Beech Trial, and if they teach us anything, it is that financial compensation aside, there are other powerful psychological forces driving fantasy claims.

Above all other similar Irish government investigations, the significant advantage afforded to the Harding-Clark inquiry was that it had access to objective corroborating evidence which no other ‘abuse’ tribunal or investigation had access to similar impartial evidence. If all claims made at these tribunals of investigation were subjected to similar standards, there is no doubt that many would fail even a simple burden of proof test. No burden of proof whatsoever is required of politicians who can make all sorts of lurid claims while enjoying parliamentary protection. When we examine their motivations, it is almost entirely for reasons of notoriety. Uttering the truth hardly ever brings notoriety and notoriety is the oxygen that keeps the political beast alive.

For centuries and as a result of anti-Catholic discrimination by the state, and due to economic theft by the colonial power, the vast majority of poor people in Ireland were Catholic. However, despite being the wealthiest cohort and a minority, poor Protestant people also existed in Ireland. They too were catered for in Protestant institutions, and these too have been the subject of claims abuse and starvation.

The starvation myth, before it was applied to all mother and baby homes, was first instigated against the women in charge of the Bethany Home. A pressure group petitioned the politicians with allegations of abuse and presented information which they claimed was evidence of children starved to death at the home. They took the term ‘marasmus’ recorded as the cause of death on

¹³ ‘Man “Invented Paedophile Ring Claims”’.

¹⁴ ‘Child Abuse Accuser a Paedophile, Court Told’.

death certificates, to be a synonym of starvation. Marasmus is not evidence of starvation, as we will see in the next chapter, but no politician nor academic historian stood up and pointed this out. Thus, certain politicians took to the Oireachtas floor (the Irish houses of parliament) declaring with a gay abandon that starvation had taken place at this Protestant institution. Here is just a representative sample.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald of Sinn Féin: ‘In 1939, the Government’s Deputy Chief Medical Officer refuted damning public and health inspectorate concerns in regard to the standards of care at Bethany Home on the basis of a **barbaric belief that it was normal for children of unmarried mothers to suffer from starvation**.’¹⁵

The death certificates record ‘marasmus’ not starvation, and the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Winslow Sterling Berry was commenting on the social conditions prevailing at the time.

Deputy Robert Dowds of the Irish Labour Party: ‘Sterling Berry, in 1939. In his report, Berry reported that it was well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children were delicate and marasmic, which means they were suffering the effects of **starvation**.’¹⁶

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Sinn Féin: ‘Cemetery records indicate that the causes of death included 54 from convulsions, 41 from heart failure, 26 from **starvation** and seven from pneumonia’.¹⁷

He uses ‘starvation’ in place of ‘marasmus’, which is written on the death certificates.

Deputy Seamus Healy, an independent TD told the house that the ‘state inspection reports described children as being fragile, pot-bellied and emaciated. Cause of death was regularly recorded as **starvation**.’¹⁸

No Seamus, it was recorded as ‘marasmus’.

Deputy Lisa Chambers of the Fianna Fáil party, over on the right wing of Irish politics told the house ‘it seems likely they were left to **starve** or die in the cold, as the mortality rate is too high to suggest otherwise.’¹⁹

She is drawing inferences from statistics equating high mortality rates with a lack of care and thus evidence of abuse. An easy mistake to make, but when normal scepticism and erudite analysis is absent, it points to a much more

15 Dáil Éireann debate - Wednesday, 27 Jun 2012 Vol. 770 No. 2

16 Dáil Éireann debate - Tuesday, 26 Feb 2013 Vol. 794 No. 1

17 Dáil Éireann debate - Tuesday, 10 Jun 2014 Vol. 843 No. 4

18 Dáil Éireann debate - Wednesday, 11 Jun 2014 Vol. 843 No. 5

19 Dáil Éireann debate - Thursday, 9 Mar 2017 Vol. 942 No. 2

significant problem at the heart of the Irish parliamentary system.

The Bethany Home pressure group has a clear and unambiguous agenda, to claim financial compensation from the state for the abuse they allegedly suffered because they allege that the state was negligent in protecting them.

Bucking the trend of placing falsehoods above the truth, one of these high-profile inquiries, the Magdalene Laundries commission of investigation reported that it found no evidence to support the alleged claims of abuse and torture. It was alleged that Ireland's 'fallen women', prostitutes, and unmarried mothers were supposedly imprisoned, tortured and starved in these refuges. The public impression is that women were treated worse than inmates of a Soviet Gulag and that impression persists despite the commission's findings. However, as one witness to the commission stated, the day-to-day life was a routine of work, prayer, work, prayer.

Contradictory evidence has been kept from public view like that of the account of the late former editor of the *Connacht Tribune*, (a local Galway newspaper) and former resident of the Tuam Children's Home, John Cunningham. His account has been well documented and reported years before the current scandal, but his evidence has been completely ignored by the media. Cunningham wrote affectionately about his time in the Tuam Home and the care afforded to him as a sickly child by a woman called Mary. John's mother died, and his father had other children to look after, and little John was sent to live at the children's home. He wrote of his experience at the home saying, that when his time came to return to his family 'he stopped eating [and] mitched school'. 'In retrospect, [Cunningham wrote] it is easy now to see that there was a second loss for me'.²⁰ Cunningham's story dismisses a major canard of the scandal propagators. Cunningham was not illegitimate, and yet he was supposedly 'imprisoned' in a mother and baby home.

The commission of investigation into mother and baby homes quoted a few lines from his entirely positive account. However, the commission decided to ignore all the positives and decided to turn it into a negative impression, by only quoting his comment where he imagined that it was heart-breaking for mothers to give up their babies, having nursed them for a year.

The correct name of the institution is St. Mary's Children's Home, and in all the historical sources, it is referred to mostly as the 'children's home'. It was a refuge for poor, sick, abandoned, abused, and disabled young children and sometimes their mothers, whether their children were legitimate or illegitimate. Another critical fact completely lost through its deliberate misnaming of the refuge as the 'Tuam Mother and Baby Home'. The intention is quite clear; the false name is a barefaced attempt to mislead the public into thinking that unmarried mothers and their children were victims of a cruel, murderous

²⁰ Siggins, 'Galway Insights'.

regime. Moreover, when the institution's purpose and real name are used, it takes a lot of the bite out of the allegations and so is far less useful to their intended purpose.

*The involuntary committal of tens of
thousands of innocent children to godless
institutions run by religious congregations
was **a crime against humanity.***
Joe Costello TD 12 June 2009

Like previous scandals, some of the stories surrounding the Tuam Children's Home and others, have stretched credulity to heights that only certain sections of Irish society can reach. There is no doubt that the prospect of massive sums of money in financial compensation, combined with notoriety, is behind many of the claims.

In all of the scandals, allegations range from plausible to entirely outlandish. When children are mentioned, the discipline and corporal punishment imposed on children of the past, has now been anachronistically reinterpreted as abuse. I have no desire to get into an argument with former residents, so I do not attempt to assess anyone's claims for veracity. There are no doubt genuine cases in the mix, and this book is not about deciding their entitlement to compensation. That is for other authorities. However, I take serious issue with Irish academic history, which has allowed one or two individuals within it to propagate myths, using the full gamut of tools available to the mythmaker, ranging from paltering to the use of barefaced falsehoods. As we will see in Chapter 5 when the evidence is examined, the academic claim to be the gatekeepers of the Irish intellectual tradition has been rendered bogus, not because I claim it has, but by the very evidence itself.

The mother and baby homes scandal is only the latest in a long line of scandals involving the history of the Catholic Church in Ireland and to a smaller extent the Anglican Church. This series of events combined with a measure of hysteria, which is the very oxygen giving life to the mother and baby homes scandal and for some sections of Irish society has lent credibility to the incredulous. There is no doubt that abuse took place at other institutions, including sexual abuse, and that the Catholic Church covered it up for decades. I am not defending the Catholic Church; it can defend itself. I am a qualified historian who has first-hand knowledge and experience of living and going to school in Ireland at a time when corporal punishment was not only allowed but practised with alacrity, both in the schools and at home. As we will see, what was once considered 'discipline' has now been redefined as child abuse.

In the early noughties and with the full knowledge that many of the allegations

would not succeed in a court of law, the Irish government set up Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA), which is now commonly referred to as 'The Ryan Commission', named after its final Chairman Justice Seán Ryan.²¹ Contrary to its title, the commission was not set up to inquire into child abuse in general, it was confined to inquire into child abuse which was alleged to have happened exclusively in industrial schools and reformatories. Strangely enough, most of the children who found themselves in industrial schools were there as a result of abuse by their own parents or parental incompetence.

These schools originated back in the 19th century in Switzerland and were aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty by providing children from disadvantaged backgrounds with an education and sufficient skills to gain employment upon reaching the end of their time in school. In Ireland, a small number were protestant run, but a far greater number of industrial schools were run by Catholic religious orders. Industrial schools were viewed by the political and social establishment as far superior to the abusive workhouse system which they replaced. The workhouse system main aim was to keep children barely alive; in contrast, the industrial schools aimed to give children the skills to improve their future lives.

There is no doubt that abuse occurred at these institutions and some of it very serious, but at the same time, it was massively overstated due to the commission redefining corporal punishment as abuse. Corporal punishment was allowed in all schools and boys, in particular, were always singled out for particularly harsh punishments. In the 1970s, the rock band Pink Floyd's published songs regaling against corporal punishments in English schools. 'Hey teacher leave those kids alone' is the famous refrain from one song, 'The Wall'. Written by Roger Water, the song was autobiographical, and each brick in the wall was a metaphorical representation of his many memories of the torment he suffered at school from tyrannical, abusive teachers. Like Waters, all of us of a certain generation can testify to teacher violence, and later in Chapter 7, I delve deeper into my first-hand experiences of corporal punishment and emotional abuse in school. Having been subjected to humiliation and living in constant fear of beatings which were daily occurrences in my schools, and perpetrated by both lay and religious teachers, I can appreciate more than most people, the long-term harm and adverse psychological effects that were caused to victims of teachers. However, had the commission been empowered to 'inquire into child abuse', it would have found that exact same 'abuse' in all schools, both in Ireland and across the world where corporal punishment was permitted in schools and residential institutions. Accordingly, the commission was prejudiced from the outset and its findings, can be justifiably argued to represent an attack on Christianity through their pointing of a narrow view periscope exclusively at Christian run institutions, thus blinkering from view the substantive issue of similarly defined child abuse, perpetrated in the nation's school by teachers

²¹ 'Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse'. §1.66

and staff. The blind eye turned by the commission and the government to child abuse in other schools also has the net effect of focusing the public mind squarely on religious residential institutions. It is undeniable that this creates and bolsters anti-religious and anti-Catholic sentiment.

In Chapter 10 of the Ryan Report, several former residents testified to the commission that they were treated well and were appreciative of the care they received while resident in an institution. Some people, including women who became pregnant out of wedlock, continued to receive support from religious orders long after their time at the institution was up. This chapter has been ignored by the hundreds of bloggers who concentrate entirely on the allegations of abuse, more often than not placing their own connotations on the words of witnesses and the commission to sensationalise their blog, wallpapering it with even more lurid conclusions.

The bloggers appear to have been helped along by the commission in the way it chose to write its report. Outside of chapter 10, it is hard to find any positive comments from the authors concerning the teaching/supervising staff who were mentioned in the report. They were never given the benefit of the doubt, a legal requirement had such cases been tried in court. Where obvious doubt exists, the commission reserved its incredulity for one side only and used the power of suggestion and innuendo to create misleading impressions. For example, in one case, an external lay teacher was suspected of having sexual relations with a pupil after another staff member found him with a boy sitting on his knee. The school authorities acted quickly and decisively, dismissing the teacher from his post, not on actual evidence, but on the mere suspicion that he was having sexual relations with the boy. However, the teacher subsequently took a case for unfair dismissal, and the congregation settled it before it came to court. The commission found correspondence about the case, which showed that the teacher in question had been a former resident of the same industrial school and that if it went to open court, he would no doubt reveal that he had been sexually abused while at the school. The commission took the speedy out of court settlement as evidence of a cover-up to maintain the good name of the institution. There is merit to this conclusion, but the case shows that when clandestine acts of sex abuse were suspected, the school authorities, on this occasion, acted swiftly and decisively to protect a child in their care from a sexual predator, and their actions were worthy of praise. No such praise was forthcoming from the commission who instead used the power of suggestion to turn a positive into a negative.

Several allegations were made including those of murders or deaths due to maltreatment, but all have proven false. The Ryan commission investigated one such allegation about a boy who died in Tralee, a resident in an industrial school who a witness alleged had died as a result of a beating he received from one of the supervisors.²² The medical records showed that the cause of death

²² 'Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse'. § 9.187

could not result from a beating. Nonetheless, the commission called for the death to be investigated due to their suspicion that an error on the death register was a deliberate attempt at a cover-up.

It is frequent for death registrations, at hospitals and other institutions, to be entered on the register in batches. In this particular case, five deaths were registered from the County Hospital in one day. Three of the four previous entries used the word 'senility' as one of the causes of death. Obviously, senility is a condition affecting old people, but it is entered on the death certificate of a sixteen-year-old boy along with the primary cause of death, Bilateral Pleural Effusion (fluid in the lining of the lungs). Clearly, it was a scribal error, and the record was corrected by the registration staff who did not alter the original entry but inserted a copied slip into the binding, denoting what the original registrar had intended to write, which was 'septicaemia', not 'senility'. The commission reported the error to the Gardaí who investigated and responded saying that the mistake had been corrected 'officially'. Despite it being an obvious scribal error, the commission remained inexplicably suspicious, implying that the death certificates have been interfered with, and calling for the death to be investigated.²³

In another case, a boy messing about on a stairwell, performing what a witness described as a 'circus act' at the Artane Industrial School in Dublin, during the early 1950s, fell from a height of 14ft sustaining facial injuries including lacerations to his lips and knocking out four of his central front teeth. He got up and was able to walk unaided, and his facial injuries did not appear to be life-threatening. He was transferred to a hospital where the medics decided to treat his injuries under a general anaesthetic at an operating theatre. The boy died shortly after the operation. All such deaths are required by law to be the subject to a judicial investigation, and the cause of death is to be decided by a jury having heard the evidence at a special court case. The judge is called a coroner, and the court case an inquest and the law took its normal course in this case. The commission judged that the school authorities bore no responsibility for the boy's death. That is where it should have been left but once again the commission could not resist temptation went on to suggest incompetence on behalf of the jury and the professional medics who gave testimony. They stated the real cause of the child's death 'remains somewhat unclear'. However, the purpose of an inquest is to decide on a cause of death and that is exactly what the jury did. This is how the commission concluded its investigation into the boy's death. Note the negative wording, avoiding more positive terms such as 'not at fault', exonerated, innocent, etc.

7.147 The evidence in this case does not support a conclusion that the Christian Brothers were at fault for the boy's death. The precise reason why the boy died remains somewhat unclear because of the multiplicity of medical

23 'Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse'. § 9.208

complications cited by the pathologist.

This claim stands in contradiction of the preceding paragraph.

7.146 The Resident Manager reported the matter to the Department of Education in a letter that was received six days after the accident, in which he briefly described the incident and expressed his understanding that the boy died when he ‘reacted unfavourably to the anaesthetic’. Dr Anna McCabe [State Inspector] visited Artane two days later to get details of the accident. She reported the following day in a short note, in which she recorded that the inquest found that the ‘cause of death was attributed to anaesthesia’. She went on to say: ‘No negligence was attributable to the School’.

The boy died due to cardiac and respiratory failure caused by an adverse reaction to an anaesthetic, which is the ‘precise’ cause of death as determined by the inquest and was in accordance with the medical evidence. As you can observe below, the pathologist was commenting on the conditions of various organs. These were not a ‘multiplicity of complications’ as claimed by the commission but were the biological evidence of an adverse reaction. Reactions to anaesthesia are very rare events these days but have not been eliminated, a recent study showed that 1.9% of children did not regain consciousness after receiving a general anaesthetic. That figure rose to 4% of elderly patients.²⁴ As you can clearly observe from the relevant paragraph, the pathologist states precisely the cause of death and records the probability that it was due to an underlying health condition. Judge for yourself.

7.143 The pathologist described the boy’s condition when he carried out the post mortem. Externally, there was a lacerated wound on the lower lip and the four central upper teeth were broken. There were superficial skin lacerations and bruises on the lower jaw near the chin. Internally, there were no fractures of the jaw or skull bones detected: ‘Both lungs were oedematous [inflamed]. The lower lobes, and the posterior half of the upper lobes of both lungs were congested with blood. The thymus gland²⁵ was enlarged. The heart showed slight thickening and contraction of the cusps of the mitral valve. The veins on the surface of the brain were distended with blood, otherwise no abnormality was detected in the brain. All other organs examined appeared normal’. The pathologist then gave his opinion as to the cause of death which was embodied in the jury’s verdict: ‘Death in my opinion was due to cardiac and respiratory

²⁴ Jaideep J. and Tim M., ‘Accidental Awareness during General Anaesthesia in the United Kingdom and Ireland’.

²⁵ The thymus is a specialised primary lymphoid organ of the immune system

failure, secondary to acute congestion of the lungs following the injuries accelerated by general anaesthesia and probably predisposed to by the presence of an enlarged thymus gland'. The coroner added that he regarded the supervision of the Brothers as adequate.

250 people died in Ireland in 2018 due to adverse reactions to medicine, yet the report's writers, rather than accept the normality of such events, which were more common in the past than they are today, imply, fallaciously, that the standards should have been higher than they were in the past.

These emblematic examples demonstrate a preference within the commission for the use of assumptions to support excitable conclusions over realistic alternatives. The use of emotional connotations is rife throughout the report and appears to be used, wittingly or unwittingly, to steer the reader away from contemplating more rational explanations. In a courtroom situation, this practice is called 'leading', which is asking questions in such a way as to influence the response of witnesses subconsciously into giving a predetermined answer to mislead or convey a false impression to the court and the jury. When such a practice is attempted during a court case, the opposing side's lawyer usually objects. Moreover, the legal system prohibits the use of certain types of arguments made before a jury. 'Improper argument' is the legal term for the practice of trying to sway a jury's opinion using emotional or irrelevant arguments. It is considered such a severe breach of court rules that if a lawyer even attempts to use 'improper argument', the case will be immediately declared a mistrial.

The Ryan Report is a series of judgements rather than a series of legal arguments put to a jury but nonetheless, we expect that government-appointed commissions of investigation are required to report hard facts as impartially as possible without the embellishments, which non-professionals would be tempted to include. There is an evident lack of impartiality in parts of the commission's report, even when witness statements on the side of former residents are clearly not genuine or mistaken, the commission, rather than rejecting these out of hand, uses them to suggest that there might still be some underlying truth, while at the same time lambasting witnesses on the side of former staff. Moreover, the commission was persistent in its unrealistic belief that the worst possible case scenario applied to all witness accounts. In the next chapter, I explore the spin it put on a series of inspectors' reports to imply that children were 'semi starved' and the significant relevant evidence it omitted.

The commission expected that perfection should have existed, and that institutional caregivers and overseers should have shown an awareness of child care and child psychology which belonged to the future. Today's understanding of child psychology is very new and only really starts in the 1980s. Remember that it was only back those days that mental illnesses and conditions like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) were first recognised in adults. Children

at that time were thought to be immune from such conditions because they lacked an adult understanding of the world. Observations of children showed that somehow, they seemed to be much better equipped than adults in dealing with traumatic events, like the death of a parent or sibling. We now know that children can be traumatised, and they tend to exhibit symptoms in a different way to adults. Understandings such as these were decades into the future from the time period examined by the commission. It takes a level of professionalism, particularly with regard to historical events, to ensure that the correct historical context is presented to readers to avoid the writing of pseudo-history through anachronistic interpretation. Such professionalism is hard to find in the Ryan Report, moreover, had it examined the issue of child abuse in state care of the present day, it would have found that we have progressed only a little. If it were to compress all the faults found over the course of four or five decades into one report, it would have been equally critical of the current system of secular state care.

Despite our deeper understanding of childcare issues, children in state care in the 21st century continue to be let down by its secular agencies. The state now spends vast sums of money on children in its care, up to and including €1,000,000 per child per year. The extraordinary sum of €11,000,000 was spent on 11 children, in one year who were described as ‘deeply disturbed’.²⁶ The children of the past in the same condition would have been sent to industrial schools, and despite spending 145,327% more on a child in state care than it did for the best part of the 20th century, instances continue to emerge into the public domain of the many failures of the state’s childcare agencies.

When we see an accumulation of failures over several decades, we tend to view this time compression as an uncompressed picture. Essentially, when we see all the negatives stacked together, it sets up a negative emotional tone, leading us into us to formulate false impressions. If one were to look at reports into all the reported failings of one’s local hospital over the course of the last four or five decades, one would naturally be inclined to think that it would be the last institution one would want to find themselves in. For this very reason, balance is of primary importance, which is achieved by using positives alongside negatives and comparing and contrasting situations and events with others elsewhere. The difficulty of rearing unwanted, abused, abandoned and disturbed children has been a problem for all childcare agencies for centuries, and we are far away from solving the problem today.

In June 2012 the report of the Independent Child Death Review Group (ICDRG) reviewing the decade from 2000 -2010 revealed that 196 children and young people died in state care or who were known to the child protection services. Out of that total, 112 were due to non-natural causes, one quarter were due to suicide, 14% were murdered 17% died in motoring accidents and 19% died in other accidents or due to causes unknown.

²⁶ See the last chapter for more detail.

St. Clare's Unit at Temple St. Children's Hospital in Dublin is an assessment and therapy service for children, young people and their families where sexual abuse is a concern. Children Health Ireland (CHI) revealed to the Irish Times that just 36 per cent of child sexual abuse allegations made between 2016 and 2020, and assessed at St Clare's, were credible.²⁷

Tusla, the state's childcare agency also has difficulties which are reminiscent of the past, it too like the Christian churches before them, now stands accused of 'mother-blaming' for removing children from what it considers to be abusive or incompetent mothers. It would appear that Irish feminists are of the quixotic view that mothers are incapable of abusing children. However, the historical and current evidence reveals that mothers are just as capable of abuse and murder of their children as fathers.

If we live in a time where progress from the past has been constant and improvement ongoing, why do we expect the standards of the past to be as high as or higher than they are today. In reality, despite decades of progress, the state is almost as bad at childcare today as it was yesterday.

Regarding the death of the boy in the Artane as a result of an adverse reaction to an anaesthetic, there is much more significance to the Ryan Commission's conclusion than immediately meets the eye. There is no mention of anyone in the section who had alleged that the death was due to the hand or actions of another, yet the commission choose a set of words for its curious conclusion: 'the evidence in this case does not support a conclusion that the Christian Brothers were at fault for the boy's death.'

'Suffer the Little Children' by Mary Raftery and Eoin O'Sullivan was a book based on a three-part documentary broadcast by RTE (the state broadcaster) in 1999. It depicted the industrial schools run by the religious orders in Ireland as horrifying places, where the full gamut of child abuse was perpetrated up to and including the killing of children. The book and the allegations made in the media by its authors, since its publication, have been subjected to charges of poor-quality research, failure to verify sources, and the omission of significant information like coroner's investigations. The Ryan Commission stated emphatically that there was no evidence to support Raftery and O'Sullivan's allegations. Not only were they not true, but their research mistakes are elementary and below the lowest academic and journalistic standards. Judge for yourself.

Barney/Bernard O'Connell had been a resident at the Artane Industrial School during the 1950s, who maintained that a child had fallen 40 feet to his death through an internal stairwell. He recounted that the boy fell past him when he was on the stairs, almost touching him as he passed. The same man told John Drennan from the Sunday Independent that 'the boy was thrown over the

²⁷ Holland, "“We Don't Put Mothers in Laundries Any More, but We Are Locking Them into a Bureaucracy””.

bannisters through an atrium and down two 60-foot-high floors, leaving blood and human guts to be cleaned up using sawdust'.²⁸ Mary Raftery claimed that there were a 'number of incidents' involving deaths on staircases, but there is no evidence to support any of these claims.

Astonishingly, University College Dublin, in 2019 decided to name a journalism award, the Mary Raftery Prize to be awarded annually to an individual or small team responsible for journalistic work produced on the island of Ireland which, in the view of the judges, combines the rigorous analysis and commitment to social justice which characterised Mary Raftery's journalism and resulted in a significant impact on society. One must have been stuck in a chimney for decades to claim that her work contained a 'rigorous analysis'.

Finally, before we depart from the Ryan Commission report, it has left the nation with several serious legacy issues. Apart from physical and sexual abuse, the commission also added and defined 'neglect' and 'emotional' abuse. The latter term emotional abuse was rampant in all schools of a bygone era. In this era of political correctness and its resultant hypersensitivity to language, archaic expressions are not only easily misunderstood but have been misconstrued to insinuate child abuse. I witnessed many teachers and parents threatening children with double amputation of the legs, 'if I catch ya, I'll cut the legs off ya', threatened with serious bodily harm, 'I'll beat the lard out of you', threatened with, with murder, if you don't stop that I'll kill you', threatened with abandonment 'you will be sent to a boarding school' or 'dumped in a bog hole'. There were plenty more such expressions, which were used by mothers, fathers, caregivers, and teachers to act as a warning to children that corporal punishment would follow if transgression of their rules continued. It was also a time when it was common to see mothers slapping their children in public. I never saw a father do it in public, but they certainly did it in private. My friend's mother used to threaten her children with the phrase 'wait until your father gets home'. I was in the house one day when the father got home, and he duly took the child into another room and gave him a few slaps.

These day-to-day motivational tactics used by teachers of the past were redefined by the commission as emotional / psychological abuse. Many of us as children were motivated to learn by teachers telling us that we were stupid, thick, dumb and worthless. A favourite tactic among my teachers was to tell pupils that if they did not do their schoolwork, they would end up working as navies digging holes in the ground or working as a Deliveroo cyclist! Back then they were called messenger boys! They were deliberately trying to instil fear in the minds of their young pupils, the fear of failure. If you were ever told you were dumb and worthless at school you are entitled to compensation, thanks to a precedent set by the Ryan Commission.

The Ryan commission was set up using legislation that empowered it to look

²⁸ Drennan, 'No Escape from a Vicious Legal Weapon'.

for instances of abuse, which resulted in ‘serious impairment’ to a child’s physical and mental health and development. It ended up defining as abuse, the same conditions, and actions which were commonplace in all other schools. Whatever its motivations, the commission blundered or deliberately redefined common and accepted disciplinary procedures and motivational tactics used by the teaching profession for centuries as abuse. Accordingly, it was no surprise that they found so much abuse! For those of us who are familiar with the genre of investigative reports, the Ryan Report stands out so much that we should be forgiven for suspecting that the outcome of its investigation was predetermined before the commission ever took one witness statement. It is, however, an abuse of history, because it took little precautions in mitigating the effects of historical presentism. Essentially that means it used the standards of today, which it then anachronistically applied to the past. The net result is that the government may find itself faced with a monumental bill for compensation. Politicians have not expressed such concerns in public, but some inextricable political behaviour indicates that, at least in private, there is political awareness of what could happen if ‘witness testimonies’ got into the public domain.

In 2019, the Irish government moved to have witness testimonies documenting child abuse, which were written for three tribunals, to be sealed for 75 years. Joe McHugh, the Minister for Education, stated that ‘seventy-five years is a very long period of time to restrict access to records, but it is essential given the sensitivity of the material’.²⁹ McHugh’s statement makes absolutely no sense as many witness claims had already been reported in the media and appear anonymised in the Ryan Report. Furthermore, redacted and anonymised testimonies are released all the time and are designed to protect the sensitivities of the individuals involved. It can only make sense in the light of a government cover-up to avoid paying compensation to all schoolchildren who attended school before 1982. That was the year when corporal punishment was banned in schools. Accordingly, by 2095 all those who might be entitled to compensation will be dead. In contrast, state papers are kept secret for 30 years; there is no other logical reason to keep documents secret for such a long time.

The commission of investigation into mother and baby homes was set up under a 2004 act which stipulates that its records have to be sealed for 30 years. When this came to public attention in October 2020, just as the final commission’s report was about to be sent to the government, it caused a public outcry. Rightly so, historians and the public should have a right to see what testimony the commission based its final conclusions upon. The attempt to hide evidence away from public scrutiny arises out of a governmental fear that if other people read what was classified as abuse and matched it with their own childhood experience of school, they too would realise that they may well be entitled to compensation. The gravy train awaits at Platform 9.5, if anyone wants to try and find it.

²⁹ O Kelly, ‘Testimonies Documenting Abuse to Be Sealed for 75 Years’.

I mentioned earlier that historians were absent from the mother and baby homes debate, it should be noted that in this entire litany of scandals, dissent and dissenters have been almost completely absent. Every area of human discourse has proponents and opponents, but when opposing views are quiet, alarm bells should ring loud. Why in the case of mother and baby homes have simple investigative questions not been asked? What was to be gained through abusing children for the women running the children's home? Why would they risk prison and even a death sentence (which was not abolished for ordinary murder until 1964)? Worse still for religious women, why would they risk excommunication? What exactly had a group of women to gain from the 'mass murder' of infants and children? How can it be that nobody found out about the murder and abuse at mother and baby homes despite the homes being subjected to inspections from local visiting committees and government health authorities for over all the decades of their existence? These questions have not been asked but have been anticipated with claims that the women/nuns hated illegitimate children. However, all the claims require that the women managing the Tuam Children's Home, held the entire population under a magic spell, and the government and health authorities were incompetent.

Only in Ireland

As we shall see later in this chapter, the Catholic Church has a long and distinguished record of rescuing unwanted children, including illegitimate children stretching back nearly two millennia. Why is it that now, in 21st century Ireland should it stand accused of the hatred and murder of illegitimate children. The church also has a proud record of opposing eugenics, for example, when the National Socialists Party in Germany started a programme to kill off disabled people, Hitler himself was challenged by a Catholic bishop, or to use the wonderfully Irish expression, he received a belt of a Catholic crosier. It was the biggest challenge the Nazis had ever faced, and the Aktion T4 programme was officially abandoned as a direct result of the intervention of Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen, who became known as 'The Lion of Münster'. If the women running the Tuam Children's Home were killing children or any politician, groups of politicians or social organisations were engaged in eugenics or euthanasia in Ireland; it is an absolute certainty, that they too would have gotten a belt of a crosier. Opposition to such practices is a fundamental of Catholicism, and many church officials have risked arrest, life and limb to defend the rights of people subjected to eugenics or euthanasia.

What differentiates one society from another is its culture, which is often manifest in unique ways through behaviours and attitudes. Like all European cultures, Irish culture has changed over the last few decades, but the cultural artefacts of the past have not all been thrown out, as we will see and have a significant influence on the genesis and nourishment of these scandals. Despite living in an age where quality information, scientific evidence, and rational discourse are within easy reach, not many people working in the media or academia

seem to be able to use such intellectual tools. When we look into the reasons why people of normal intelligence chose to believe irrational explanations over those based on basic reason, it points to a blindness caused by culture, and when it occurs in academia, it is due to the added factor of poor standards of quality control. It has been well noted that Irish educational standards have dropped over the last two or three decades and the consequent lack of knowledge by the current younger generations points to something uniquely Irish, and so the blame lies within the Irish psyche driven by its culture. For this reason, I have devoted an entire chapter to introduce and explore aspects of Irish cultural biases, which are seldom if ever subjected to analysis, nor have the malignant effects of the negative biases come under scrutiny so that their full totality has long gone unrecognised.

Moral Imbeciles

Individual sections of Irish society engage in a style of debate that is dogmatic, delivered with blunt force trauma, is highly resistant to countenancing contradictory evidence, and has inbuilt tactics to dissuade dissenters. One of those tactics is to accuse anyone who dares to mention the British in a comparative sense to the Irish is to label them as anti-British, especially if the British are shown in a negative light. The net result is that it causes us all to shy away from even mentioning the British, and it is a very effective tactic. For these people, history starts in 1922 when the brilliant colonial governors left, and the Irish took over and made a total mess of running the country. Accordingly, the terms of reference for the commission investigating mother and baby homes have been written to prohibit it from examining the history of child protection before 1922. No doubt, the class of persons who inserted that clause did not want the British to stand accused of even greater cruelty to children because it does not suit their agenda. However, there is more to such actions than meets the eye here, as it is but one manifestation of a particular set of Irish, anti-Irish cultural biases. For the most part, discourse on the subject of Irish society is rarely, if ever, validly compared with other societies, but completely invalid comparisons appear all the time, especially if they can make the Irish look bad and backwards ala Punch Magazine stereotypes.

A prime example is that of the British government who brought in a law in 1913, which classified unmarried mothers as ‘moral imbeciles’. It thus conferred the right upon the authorities to incarcerate such ‘offenders’ in mental homes and county homes for their own protection.³⁰ In this scandal and others, never has the Irish system been compared to the British system or any other nation’s system in the Irish media, nor has it appeared in the academic literature on the subject so far. The insularity is perfectly designed to produce a false impression but also the lack of valid comparisons naturally allows the human mind to make up its own comparisons. When this occurs, the mind has a strong tendency to compare ‘realistic alternatives with idealised ones, thus discounting or even

³⁰ Tredgold, ‘The Definition and Diagnosis of Moral Imbecility’.

dismissing realistic alternatives due to the comparison to a ‘perfect world’ or impossible standard.’³¹ In other words, the human mind naturally assumes that a perfect world exists and that a perfect solution exists. In practical terms, the use of this assumption is termed the ‘Nirvana Fallacy’, and it is the most often used tool in Irish discourse, intellectual or otherwise.

That said, the commission of investigation into mother and baby homes have compared various issues between Ireland, Britain mainly to berate and sneer at what they falsely claim are Irish failure and inactions. A subject will be dealt with in the last chapter.

Part II – Historical Context

History began before 1922

As the commission of investigation was prohibited by its terms of reference from looking at the history of child protection and Irish history in general before 1922, it was, therefore, hog-tied and unable to set history in its correct context by comparing the system of publicly funded child protection which existed in post-independence Ireland with the system it replaced under British rule. Moreover, the real story lies hidden under the rocks of logical fallacies and cultural prejudices. Accordingly, the rest of this chapter will briefly look at the conditions endured by men, women, and the children who were unfortunate enough to be confined to a workhouse, one of these buildings was repurposed to become the Tuam Children’s Home. Fittingly the workhouses were the institutions that previously catered for unmarried mothers and their children. The commission took a small liberty in its final report and briefly touched on the pre-1922 system but failed miserably to explain why there was such a stigma was attached to these institutions.

It would be an understatement to say that the workhouses were feared and despised by the Irish and British populace. While the great English author, Charles Dickens tried and succeeded in demonstrating how dreadful the workhouses were, I don’t think that any author since has managed to encapsulate the sheer depths of despair to which individuals and whole families were forced to endure under the brutal and austere regime of the workhouse. As the name suggests, the workhouse was not just a place where the destitute (and it was only the absolute destitute who entered the system) could get help; the workhouse was designed to be a ‘stimulant to exertion and to the observance of thrifty and provident habits.’³² In other words, the entire poor law system of which workhouses were a part, was founded on the precept that the poor were poor because they were ignorant, lazy and not God-fearing. Whole families were forced to enter together, which suited the landlords perfectly. Houses were emptied of their occupants and demolished, so the estates were cleared of tenants, making way for grazing animals, which by the mid-19th century were

³¹ ‘Nirvana Fallacy’.

³² Crowther, ‘The Workhouse’.

much more profitable than tenants.

Upon entering the workhouse families were cruelly split up, fathers put into the men's section, women in the women's section and the children in either the boys' or the girls' section. Children under two years were allowed to stay with their mother, but on reaching the age of just two years, they were taken away and put into the children's section. Some families never met up again, yet workhouses were not prisons, inmates were free to leave at any time. The system was deliberately designed to rob a person of their entitlement to a sense of dignity, with the express intention of increasing their desire to get out of it, and get out of it quickly, to relieve the burden on the taxpayer. Despite the meanness and austerity rampant in the system, the workhouses are sometimes seen through modern eyes as saving many lives during the 1840s famine in Ireland. However, I contend that the system cost at least as many lives as it saved due to a significant flaw in the system. The workhouses were funded through local taxes, the more people in the workhouse, the higher the amount of tax income needed to fund their operations. Accordingly, in the poor areas, the demand for the workhouse services was more significant than in more wealthy areas, so a higher and sometimes an impossible tax burden was placed on the areas that were least able to afford it. Consequently, a more considerable effort was made to keep people out, of the poor law system and the infamous Gregory Clause stands as a testament to that. (See glossary)

According to the website of the present-day museum, the Irish Workhouse Centre:

Life in the workhouse was harsh and frequently cruel. There were many rules. The food was poor. There was little to do. People were separated from their families, hungry, frustrated, badly treated, bored and mostly without hope. Often the inmates reacted against this, by breaking the rules and by fighting amongst themselves. Some preferred prison to the workhouse as the food was better and the regime not as strict. Staff were often ex police men or army. There was a very high dismissal rate with many of staff being cruel, incompetent and dishonest.³³

During the 1840s famine in Galway, a magistrate expressed his regret at not sending a man to prison for breaking windows after it emerged a few days later that the man had been found dead on the streets. Even though the man was desperate and starving, he would rather go to prison than suffer the dehumanisation and indignity of the workhouse; such was the fearsome reputation of these secular institutions.

The food provided was of poor quality and was the bare minimum to keep a person alive, stipulated expressly in the rules of the workhouse. The amount and type of food was strictly regulated, and adults got only two meals a day,

33 O'Connor, 'Portumna Work House Story, History & Heritage, Galway Ireland || South East Galway IRD'.

children three. People were divided into seven categories and which dictated the amount of food they were allowed. Able-bodied men, women, and the infirmed got eight ounces of Indian meal and half a pint of new milk for breakfast. The second meal was stipulated to comprise of fourteen ounces of brown bread and two pints of soup. The regulations dictated that soup should be made of peas meal, or oatmeal, or both, in the proportion of eight ounces of meal to one gallon of water. The diet varied from institution to institution, but in Ireland, the workhouse diet consisted mainly of stirabout (like porridge), milk and potatoes. The scantiness of food rations in the workhouse was famously visualised in the film *Oliver* when young Master Twist asks for more food, his audacity was met with surprise and anger. The two fat/obese workhouse supervisors, Widow Corney and Mr Bumble, haul Oliver up to the Governor's office for him to administer punishment. Dickens and the film's producers were obviously making the point about how well-fed the workhouse personal were in comparison to the inmates. Punishments ranging from meal deprivation and corporal punishment to prosecution by a magistrate were also a forgotten feature of the workhouses.

The primary principle upon which the workhouses were founded was parsimony — extreme miserliness aimed at providing the bare minimum of food to keep a person alive but no more. The secondary principle classified the majority of poor people as the authors of their own misery, through indolence and ignorance. They did, however, recognise that some poor people found themselves in poverty, not through indolence but by misfortunate circumstances like old age, disablement, or suffering from a disease. In the parlance of the times, these people were referred to as 'the deserving poor' or 'the decent poor' and were considered worthy of charity/relief. The opposite, 'the undeserving poor', were thought to be able-bodied people who didn't want to work, and the system went to great effort to keep spongers out by making sure that only the most desperate of people, on the edge of life, would be prepared to endure the harsh conditions.

The workhouses were the mother and baby homes of their day. The Waterford Museum website states:

Unmarried women who became pregnant often entered the Workhouse to have their children. In a census taken on 2 April 1853, on the number of children under 15 years of age in the Workhouses in Ireland a figure of 82,434 was recorded. Five thousand seven hundred and ten of these were illegitimate. In Dungarvan Workhouse, the Master reported that on 25 March 1866, 12 of the 15 births in the Workhouse were illegitimate. It was reported on 3 September 1863 that there were 10 illegitimate children in the house.

The workhouses also took in abandoned children; it is typical to find reports

such as this one:

‘Hannah and Cecilia Keily, father dead, mother married a second time and gone to America, leaving these two children deserted. They are aged 3½ and 2½.’³⁴

Despite our tendency to believe that mothers would die before abandoning their children, maternal child abandonment is prevalent in the historical record, especially when the mother’s own life is under threat.³⁵ It is still much more common than we are inclined to think. In famines, men die first, and while the reason has yet to be fully discovered, it is thought that it may be due to levels of body fat, which women have in greater proportion with regard to size and weight than men ³⁶

In 1850, there were upwards of 120,000 children in the workhouses kept in terrible conditions. An English clergyman in Ireland at the time described the children in Limerick workhouse as skeletons covered in sores and dressed in rags. The children were supposed to get an education while in the system, but the workhouse teachers had not the capability to teach hundreds of hungry and dirty children and were often incompetent and cruel. In response, from about the 1870s onward, the religious orders set up industrial schools where the children would receive their board, education, and training. The powers that be at the time reasoned that it would be a much more humane alternative to the abusive workhouse system, and it would give the children the skills necessary to gain employment as adults, breaking the cycle of poverty, and enable children to have a brighter future. The main policy of the workhouse system was to get rid of children out of their institution as quickly as possible without any regard for their future.

In the view of the British authorities, Ireland was overpopulated, and the Anglo-Irish elite wanted their land depopulated as cattle and sheep farming was more profitable than rent from tenants, thanks to the railways, which made the transport of animals to distant markets possible. People were also exported from the workhouses, entire families, and individuals mainly to America. An emigration commission toured the workhouses finding people to export. One group was of orphan girls who were exported to Australia as ‘breeder’ girls, with 4,175 sent over between 1848 and 1850, under a scheme supported by the Austrian government. In the 1850s, 15,000 Irish girls were sent to Canada to cover its shortage of domestic servants. These girls, health-wise, were the most resilient and robust individuals, who were perhaps luckier than the weaker children who died in their hundreds of thousands. We know that one million people died in the famine of the 1840s, but we have no real idea what proportion of that number children were. However, a relatively recent discovery might indicate that the number was likely to exceed 50%. In 2005,

34 Fraher, ‘Women And Children In The Workhouse - Desperate Haven - The Famine in Dungarvan - Waterford County Museum’.

35 Burnstein, ‘Child Abandonment’.

36 Zarulli et al., ‘Women Live Longer than Men Even during Severe Famines and Epidemics’.

a previously unknown burial ground dating from famine times was discovered at the Kilkenny workhouse. Excavations revealed a total of 970 skeletons, of which 545 were children or 56% of the total burials. There is no doubt that children are more vulnerable than adults in times of food crisis and the present-day medical evidence to support this is robust and irrefutable, but while the evidence was there in the past, our current understanding is only a couple of decades old. In the second decade of the 21st century, it is only recently that medics have come up with superfoods, like peanut butter, which has the power to save children from inevitable death.

To gain entry to a workhouse, people had to apply to the workhouse authorities, and only 'deserving people' were eligible to get relief. Those deemed to be non-deserving poor were refused entry. One expectant unmarried mother who applied for admittance was still in a relationship with the father, but he could not afford to maintain her, so apparently of her own volition, she applied to enter the workhouse and was successful. However, the Board of Guardians in charge of the institution were not pleased, and on hearing the facts of the case, the board wrote, 'it was of the opinion that all such cases should be more thoroughly investigated prior to the admittance of such applicants, as all Unions are more or less the **nurseries of immorality**.'³⁷ (the Union is a reference to a Poor Law Union, a designated geographical area where ratepayers paid taxes to support the workhouses)

Despite the stated intention to exclude specific individuals, the workhouses admitted categories of people who were considered unfit, but they were kept segregated for fear that they would contaminate the 'respectable poor'. These included 'unmanageable women' and 'women of bad character' including prostitutes who were all kept in the refractory ward, which was usually located in the front building and had a separate yard.

Whole books have been written about how bad the conditions were in the workhouses, and a more detailed overview is beyond the scope of this book. However, my purpose here is to introduce or refresh knowledge regarding their replacement in Ireland with specific reference to mother and baby homes. It serves as a short introduction to the mentality of the British élite and government and why many charitable organisations felt compelled to take practical action to improve the lot of the poor. It is a fascinating subject, and if you would like to explore it more, I recommend highly Peter Higginbotham's website. It is a comprehensive resource on all the workhouses, which once existed in the UK and Ireland.³⁸

The inescapable truth is that the secular workhouse system was one of institutional brutality, and its replacement concerning unmarried mothers was infinity more compassionate. You can see why the scandal propagators are so

³⁷ Fraher, 'Women And Children In The Workhouse - Desperate Haven - The Famine in Dungarvan - Waterford County Museum'.

³⁸ 'The History of the Workhouse by Peter Higginbotham'.

keen to keep this information out of the public domain and why they nobbled the commission of investigation even before it even got started.

The unfortunate British poor had to endure workhouses right up until the founding of the National Health System in 1948. However, the new Irish Free State would not tolerate the workhouse system, so it closed them all down in 1922. Some were converted into hospitals, old peoples' homes, and two into homes for children and their mothers.

Setting events in their correct historical context is a central theme of this book because when the historical context has been ignored, we have a natural tendency to interpret the past anachronistically using our current worldview, along with our knowledge and understanding of our present situation. Context is frequently confused with causes of events, but historical context can be defined as 'the political, social, cultural and economic environment related to historical moments, events and trends. Historical artefacts and sources were created within particular worlds and are tied to the political social and economic conditions of those worlds.'³⁹ The political social and economic conditions together with moral standards, which prevailed in the past, do not apply today, and so it is logically fallacious to interpret past events and decisions using today's understandings and standards. History is also a process of simplification; a great many details have to be left out and so it is one of the primary duties of a historian to ensure that the most relevant details are reported. As we will see, it is a process fraught with difficulties, even for the most ardent disciples of impartial history. In recent times in Ireland, historians have been in neglect of this duty, which has brought us to a point in time where claims like the 'killing fields of Tuam' and the women who ran the children's home being described as 'God's Little Executioners' have gone unchallenged. We have been told that the primary motivation, behind the "mass murder" committed by women, was to get rid of the 'embarrassment' to Irish society, for no other reason than they hated bastards. The big question, which no academic historian has so far asked is, why did the Catholic Church hate bastards? After all, any tinpot historian does not have to do much work to find that it had been saving the lives of unwanted and illegitimate children for the best part of two millennia. This book's secondary theme is to chase after the five double yahs⁴⁰ of history or even 'simple curiosity', which are why, what, where, when, and who, in any order. Answering all five leads to a good understanding of what is regarded as quality history but most of the time a combination of at least three has to be present, but it should spark a curiosity to find out why the rest have been left out. At this juncture, let us venture forth to see why the church and its people got involved in child rescue, rearing and education. Where and when did it start, who did what, and why. We will also keep an eye out for baby-killing women in history and see what motivated them.

³⁹ 'What Does Historical Context Mean?'

⁴⁰ A pun on the letter w

The long journey to Tuam

The journey for a French order of nuns to Tuam began nearly two millennia earlier at a point in the history of humanity when, for the very first time, religious beliefs motivated and organised people to carry out practical acts for the benefit of humankind. That might seem surprising, but in previous millennia, it could be argued that the old religions operated for the ‘benefit of humanity’ too by seeking benefits through prayers, human and animal sacrifices to stave off the wrath of their vengeful gods. It might even be viewed as an early form of altruism, but none of them to my knowledge had ever taken to helping the poor and the sick and were more likely to sacrifice a baby than to try and save its life.

In days of old, infanticide, defined as the crime of killing a child under one year of age was not a crime. Neither was it a crime to kill older children. In the Roman Empire, for example, child-killing was both widespread and common practice. While throughout the history of the Empire, child-killing continued unabated there are records that show that there were brief periods when infant killing was banned within it—banned because it was causing a shortage of recruits for the Roman army. Accordingly, the legal prohibitions were not designed to make the socially acceptable killing of infants morally reprehensible. However, that attitude began to change after AD313, in the time after the Edict of Milan (and the earlier Edict of Serdica, in the eastern Roman Empire) which ended the state persecution of Christians. Two years later, in AD315, the first hint of the outlawing of infant killing, based on morality, appears in the historical record. The emperor Constantine, under Christian influence, decreed that unwanted infants were to be left at a specified place in each Roman town, usually the vegetable market, where anyone who so wished could claim possession of an abandoned infant and be rewarded with the right to bring it up as a slave.⁴¹ Unfortunately, it is likely that the decree had little impact, and that most of the infants went unclaimed and died of exposure to the elements. The Christian interest in saving the lives and souls of children was due to references to comments made by Jesus on children’s innocence in the Bible.

Following Constantine’s decree’s failure to save many lives as was intended, it was clear that solving the problem of unwanted infants would require more direct action. So, ten years later, inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ and with an organisation growing in influence and numbers of followers, the First Council of Nicaea in AD325 set up the institutions we still have today and are so commonplace we take them for granted. The council decreed that every Christian parish was to establish a xenodochion, literally a strangers’ inn or a hostel where the poor were given food and shelter. The sick received free healthcare, abandoned, orphaned, unwanted infants and children were also to be given refuge. The young received care and nourishment in a separate section called a brephotrophium. Later the brephotrophia were separated into

⁴¹ Schneider and Macey, ‘Foundlings, Asylums, Almshouses and Orphanages: Early Roots of Child Protection’.

standalone institutions, and the first one was founded in Milan in AD 787 by Archbishop Dateus.⁴²

Whether the decree of the Council of Nicaea was responsible or not, it became an increasingly common practice to abandon new-born infants on the steps of churches, but new-borns are extremely vulnerable and can die quickly. Infants often remained outside exposed to the elements for hours before being found, usually, by such time it was too late to save their lives. The solution deployed by many churches and orphanages was to create what became known as ‘Culla per la vita’ (Italian for life cradle), ‘foundling wheels’ in the Anglophone, ‘Babyklappe’, ‘Babyfenster’ or ‘Babywiege’ in German-speaking areas.⁴³ A foundling was the term used in the English language for abandoned babies and foundling wheels were like a barrel with an opening on one side, containing a small baby cradle, which could be rotated to face the outside. On the outside, the baby was placed in the cradle, which was then rotated to the inside, and a bell was rung alerting the carers inside to the presence of a ‘little stranger’. Foundling wheels ensured that not only was an infant sheltered from the elements, but it would also receive rapid nursing care. To be ready to receive infants, each parish kept a register of women who could be employed as wet nurses to feed and look after them. One of the principles of the Catholic Church system, which it maintained for nearly two millennia, was that it guaranteed the anonymity of the mother or abandoner. The rationale behind it was to prevent baby killings due to family embarrassments, covering up of extra-marital affairs, and a myriad of other social and practical reasons. The child’s identity was known only to god, and the church was happy to let the women start a new life by protecting her identity, provided she did not kill the child or arrange its killing and disposal.

For some inextricable reason, the commission of investigation into mother and baby homes uses such a rare term that a Google search reveals that it only appears only six webpages, across the billions of pages worldwide. The search term used was {“turning gates” foundling}, and two of the six link back to the commission’s report on the Irish government’s webserver. The other four are about sluice gates and have nothing to do with foundling wheels.

In France many single mothers travelled to Paris to conceal their pregnancy and get rid of their infant - using the **notorious turning gates at foundling hospitals**, or giving birth anonymously and leaving their child with the authorities.

The author does not explain the purpose of foundling wheels but certainly wants to connotate the baby-saving devices negatively. It is unlikely that anyone other than a specialist historian or follower of the foundling genre would realise that

⁴² Covey, *The Smallest Victims*.

⁴³ Yoshida, ‘Japanese Baby Hatches and Unmarried Mothers/Children Born Out of Wedlock-A Comparison with German Babyklappen and American Safe Haven Laws.’

it is their unique term for ‘foundling wheels’. Furthermore, it was not just single mothers who abandoned their new-born babies in such a manner.

From the very early times of Christianity, the child was placed at the centre of focus. In today’s de-institutionalised world where the mother has become the centre of focus, the earlier child-centred policy is more often misunderstood, than understood. Unmarried mothers/child abandoners were not always subjected to society’s wrath as we now tend to imagine. Such outrage was deliberate and intended to end the vast human carnage, but it dates from only from the Reformation in certain societies, but more significantly it was only codified into British law as late as 1834.



← image: Foundling wheel at the
Ospedale Santo Spirito in Rome

Across the continent, unmarried mothers who took responsibility for their children, far from being outcast from society were much admired, principally because the taxpayer/parishioner was relieved the cost of rearing abandoned children.

Unmarried fathers did not escape the authorities’ wrath, both secular and ecclesiastical both wanted to pursue fathers for child maintenance. Unlike mothers, men do not have genetic security, so it was almost impossible to prove definitively who the father of a particular child was, but that did not deter the authorities in their pursuit of fathers. In Britain, before 1834 if a father failed to support the child, the mother could have him arrested on a justice’s warrant and put in prison until he agreed to do so. Local authorities supported unmarried mothers and their children until such time as the father came forward or was found. They when they would seek reimbursement, but as you can imagine, this rarely happened. The rising costs due to the increasing numbers of illegitimate children and unmarried mothers caused the authorities to seek to reduce the taxpayers’ financial burden by forcing fathers to marry the mothers. Accordingly, many men were forced into marriage on nothing more than the mother’s word, whether they were the actual biological father or not.⁴⁴ Needless to say, forced marriages were not likely to be of the happy variety and must have been the source of much domestic violence and even murder.

The vicious mother – beginning of the prejudice.

The point when unmarried mothers became social pariahs began in 1834 with an act of the British parliament, dictated that, all illegitimate children until they reached the age of 16, were the sole responsibility of the unmarried mother. During the debate, the earlier law, which had placed the burden on fathers, was

⁴⁴ Haller, ‘Bastardy and Baby Farming in Victorian England’.

denounced by many, including Thomas Carlyle for putting a

‘bounty on unthrift, idleness, bastardy and beer drinking.’ The New Poor Law Amendment would rightly place the responsibility for the support of the bastard on the ‘vicious mother’ thus relieving parish funds and end the ‘great offence against the sacrament of marriage.’⁴⁵

Child abandonment was a worldwide phenomenon, and few of us realised as children that the German story of Hansel and Gretel was a fate, which befell many such children across the entire continent and beyond. The unfortunate siblings were not only taken into the woods and abandoned once, but twice by their parents. The primary cause of their abandonment was poverty, which the evidence shows it was the most significant factor driving child abandonment over many centuries.

The story alludes to cannibalism, the fate, which before his rescue was to befall Hansel. Such horrible and unspeakable acts were a fate that was an all-too-common experience for many unwanted children. Accounts from Paris in the 1600s evince that many abandoned children fell prey to beggar-masters who, as the name suggests put them out on the streets begging. Pity increases the earning potential of beggars, and many children were disfigured and maimed to create a pitiful sight. Good people, troubled by the image of innocent, wretched, and misfortunate beings, dug deeper into their pockets than they would for fitter and healthier-looking children. Their sense of decency was deliberately exploited by the ruthless beggar-masters, but they had no way of knowing that it was they who were in effect, causing the maiming of more children. Those not maimed, both boys and girls were forced to work as slave labour in a variety of industries including as sex slaves. Such child exploitation remains a common practice in many parts of the world today, including western society but with the added danger of murder on the operating table due to illegal organ harvesting.⁴⁶ Knowledge of what happens to unwanted children should stand as a lesson for people of today who give money to beggars based on pity.

Payne (1916) tells the story of a Catholic priest named Vincent de Paul, who caught one of the beggar-masters in the act of deforming the limbs of a child. The legend claims that Vincent de Paul snatched the child there and then escaped across the city to safety. Beyond the legend, the truth is that De Paul motivated a group of wealthy ladies of Paris to establish reputable asylums for foundlings and orphans.⁴⁷ In 1647, the resulting organisation called the ‘Ladies of Charity’ was so overwhelmed with the numbers of children, and with charitable donations unable to keep up with demand, they considered closing their doors. Such difficulties were not confined to Paris, the historical record time and again, all over the world, evinces that organisations that set out to care for unwanted children encountered enormous difficulty, not only due

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Morelli, ‘Organ Trafficking: Legislative Proposals to Protect Minors’.

⁴⁷ Haller, ‘Bastardy and Baby Farming in Victorian England’.

to humanity's capability to produce unwanted children in huge numbers but also the susceptibility of young children to disease. The colossal burden placed on often scarce financial resources was more than many societies could bear. Accordingly, the quality of care could wax and wane as it was inextricably linked with a town's/city's/country's prevailing economic conditions.

The Catholic Church – Founders of the Child Protection concept and laws

In every ancient society for which records exist, infanticide was practised and culturally accepted.⁴⁸ The political movement, which advocated for child protection starts with the advent of Christianity, which progressively succeeded in getting the secular powers to legislate against practices such as child abandonment, infanticide and filicide.⁴⁹ History shows that the Catholic Church was the very founder of child protection and the first promoters of laws protecting children's rights. We today believe that it is morally wrong to kill or harm a child, but we fail to realise that our modern belief is founded upon Catholicism and is entirely due to the church's efforts to bring to an end the appalling carnage suffered by innocent children. In contrast, we have little idea of how accepting human society was of child abuse, abandonment and murder until relatively recently. Humanity has been killing, maiming, and ill-treating its children for longer than history has been recorded.

When murder became a crime, applied to all adults equally, is lost in the mists of time,⁵⁰ but we know when it became a crime to kill an infant. The momentous day occurred in AD589, a year after the Council of Constantinople (AD588) declared that the abandonment of infants outside of designated places, was the same as a homicide.⁵¹ Soon after, the Spanish government decreed that infanticide was a crime, and eventually, all of the secular powers in Europe followed their example.⁵² However, it is one thing to have laws forbidding infanticide on the statute books, quite another to prevent it in practice. The infanticide problem remained as prevalent as ever and arresting the human carnage seemed an almost impossible task, but that did not deter the church and its supporters.

Concerning infants, the original concept of the *brephotrophia* was that it was a place where infants would be wet-nursed and when weaned, fostered out to a married couple who would then raise it as a good Christian. The problem is that the churches were swamped with abandoned infants and consequently the demand for foster homes outstripped supply. The church, faced with this dilemma, had no choice but to rear the children to adulthood and the *brephotrophia* grew into orphanages which grew larger and more numerous with the progression of time. We may look down our nose at such institutions today, but we must remember that in contrast to other poor children of their

48 Castellani and Schmidt, 'Homicidal Abuse of Young Children: A Historical Perspective'.

49 Bloch, 'Abandonment, Infanticide, and Filicide: An Overview of Inhumanity to Children'.

50 Lennon, 'Review of: Murder Was Not a Crime'.

51 Schneider and Macey, 'Foundlings, Asylums, Almshouses and Orphanages: Early Roots of Child Protection'.

52 Radbill, *A History of Child Abuse and Infanticide*.

time, each child in an orphanage received an education and was better placed to obtain employment than their contemporary cohort, thereby helping to break the incessant cycle of poverty. One shining example is the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, which excelled at teaching girls music that its reputation was known throughout the continent. Despite it being an orphanage, many wealthy parents in Europe sought to have their daughters educated there but were refused as they did not meet the entry criteria! The orphanage's reputation grew from the public concerts it staged as fundraising events. The institution also cared for boys in a separate building who received the traditional male education, aimed at providing them with the skills to work as apprentice craftsmen, tailors, clerks etc. thereby improving their future employment prospects. However, the career choice was vastly different, so the orphanage taught music to provide girls with a future as musicians and music teachers. In 1703, the violin master who later went on to become the concertmaster at the Ospedale was a Catholic priest named Antonio Vivaldi, composer of 'The Four Seasons', a classical musical work that remains highly popular today.

So far, the historical evidence demonstrates that for the best part of two thousand years, the Catholic Church had been involved in saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of infants and children and possibly millions. Why then in 21st century Ireland should it stand accused of murdering babies in what has been called 'Ireland's Holocaust'?

Central to the notion of a group of Irish women providing an infant killing/disposal service is the assumption that their motivation was a hatred of illegitimate children. After reading of the long and proud history the Catholic Church has in saving the lives of illegitimate infants, abandoned infants, and children, it calls into question the allegation that these Irish women 'hated bastards'. If such a claim is to stand, then Catholicism cannot be blamed because this "holocaust" only occurred in Ireland, it can only be due to Irish women's viciousness. Yeah right.

Protestantism, people despised the bastard because 'he was living and undeniable proof that his parents were sinners and lawbreakers; they had transgressed God's laws... '
(McClure, 1981, p. 11).

Poor educational standards prevailing in Ireland in recent decades have allowed 'historians' to incompetently conflate the attitudes of the Protestant churches to illegitimate children with that of all Christian denominations including the Catholic Church. According to one historian,

'in England and the American colonies, strongholds of Protestantism, people despised the illegitimate child because he was living and undeniable proof that his parents were sinners and lawbreakers; they had transgressed God's laws. In

Europe, these prejudices were offset by the interests of Church and State; the former wanted souls, the latter soldiers'⁵³

Post-reformation Protestant churches abandoned some of the Council of Nicaea's ideals by refusing entry to Protestant managed orphanages to illegitimate children. The consequences were that in lands where Protestant denominations were dominant, new terms began to emerge like, *Engelmacherin* – German, *Anglamakerska* – Swedish, *Englemagerske* – Danish, all translating into English as Angel Makers. These were mainly women who, for a fee, offered to take care of unwanted infants but who in reality were killing them, hence the title of turning babies into angels. In England and the wider Anglophone, such women were known as baby farmers, and baby farming was a practice that went on up to WWII. In 1907, Rhonda Willis was the last woman baby farmer to be hanged for killing infants in her care in Britain. A few years earlier, an English woman, Amelia Dyer, suffered a similar fate and is thought by historians to be one of the most prolific serial killers in human history, with a tally of over 400 victims to her name. Hilda Nilsson in Sweden, an 'angel maker,' drowned many babies in a bath covered with a washboard and weighed down with a bucket. Despite receiving a death sentence, she cheated the executioner by committing suicide in prison in August 1917. She was the last of the country's women to receive a death sentence for multiple infanticides.⁵⁴ We see that women are capable of murder and mass murder and have many of the same faults as men, but pervasive universal philogyny keeps it below public consciousness.⁵⁵ It may come as a complete surprise to many males to learn that girls/women are not made of sugar and spice and all things nice, as feminist propaganda would have us believe. In reality, women are just as capable of murder and abuse as the male of the species but are more able to murder by proxy, taking advantage of the male tendencies toward philogyny. So, the women of the Tuam Home are just as capable of murder as any other woman, but the question remains what was in it for them? The angel makers and baby farmers were professional paid childminders who killed infants to reduce their costs and increase their profits. There is no question that they were in the game of angel making for hard cash but was that the same motivation for women who had taken a vow of poverty? Were the Anglican women at the Bethany home in Dublin paid to 'starve children to death', which has also been claimed, or was it done to increase profits at the institution? The answer is, of course, no, there was nothing to be gained and much to be lost reputationally. Later in Chapter 5, we look at what lies behind these false claims.

I would probably not have used McClure's comments for fear of being accused of being anti-Protestant, but such claims are historically undeniable, and the attitude of some Protestant religions is central to our understanding of the current scandals. The British domination of Ireland has caused its attitudes

⁵³ McClure, *Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the 18th Century*.

⁵⁴ Castellani and Schmidt, 'Homicidal Abuse of Young Children: A Historical Perspective'.

⁵⁵ 'Philogyny Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary'.

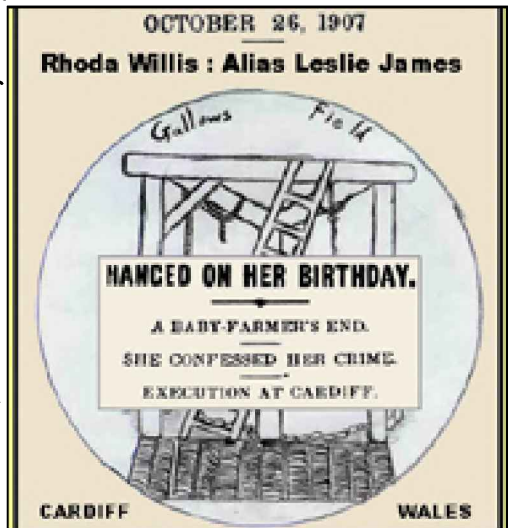
to be falsely projected on to other religious denominations by historians, bloggers, and journalists who are unfamiliar and unskilled in the subject matter. In reality, and to their credit, Irish Protestant organisations did not refuse entry to illegitimate children mainly because they were involved in a battle for souls with the Catholics. In one example, Fr Peter Daly, the Catholic Chaplain to the Galway Workhouse, baptised a dying foundling in his own religion. The act immediately drew the ire of the Poor-law Commissioners who sent a letter to Daly, extracts of which made *The Spectator Magazine's* pages in London in 1859. The Poor-law Commissioners wrote that 'it is an old opinion of some Attorney-General, that a foundling—the religion of whose parents is of course unknown—should be brought up in the religion of the State'.⁵⁶ 'The Commissioners directed that the child should be registered as a Protestant and the controversy became so heated and vituperative that Fr. Daly was forced to withdraw from the chaplaincy, despite having the support of the majority of the [local] Guardians'.⁵⁷ It is hard to overstate how fierce that battle for the souls of the Irish was and continued throughout the period of British Rule and beyond. The net effect was that in Ireland, the conditions which prevailed for foundlings and orphans were much different from the rest of the Protestant-dominated areas of the United Kingdom and beyond.

*Rhonda Willis hanged for baby
farming and murder →*

Infanticide in Ireland

Baby farming went on in Ireland too, but it seems to have been less of a problem than elsewhere. I can find no records of hangings of baby farmers even though children died in Irish baby farms. Baby farmers and baby killers were tried and punished, but the sentences were very light compared to our neighbouring countries. Such Irish philogyny is evident even when women committed barbaric acts, including brutal acts of murder, the state showed them mercy. In one case from 1925, a married woman, living with her husband and children in Dublin, threw her baby out the window, falling 28ft to its death. She was arrested and charged with murder.⁵⁸ The witnesses to the tragic event and the authorities treated the mother with great sympathy. If a man had committed such an act, he would have been sent to the gallows.

Since the state's foundation, 22 women have received death sentences, but



⁵⁶ 'THE IRISH FOUNDLING. » 12 Feb 1859 » The Spectator Archive'.

⁵⁷ Murry, 'History of Galway University Hospitals'.

⁵⁸ 'Child's Tragic Death In Dublin - Mother Charged With Murder'.

only one was ever carried out in 1925.⁵⁹ In comparison, 25 men were executed due to a criminal conviction, up until the last one in April 1954. This figure excludes political executions, i.e., executions for rebellion or during the civil war.

Ireland had inherited British law on gaining independence, which required that cases where an infant was killed by its mother be tried as murder, thus upon conviction, a mandatory death sentence was imposed. In 1922, the British changed the crime of infant killing carried out by the child's mother from murder to the crime of infanticide. The new law's inspiration was based on the discredited scientific theory that lactating women suffered from a type of madness that predisposed them to murder their own offspring. Accordingly, the new crime of infanticide did not carry a death sentence.

On the other hand, in the newly independent Ireland, the old British law required that mandatory death sentences be given to mothers convicted of killing their children. Accordingly, Irish juries were often reluctant to convict mothers of murder and so opted mostly to convict women on the lesser charge of 'concealing a pregnancy'. That very point was articulated in 1927 by Mr Carrigan, K.C., the State Prosecutor, during the trial of a woman accused of killing her new-born child and dumping its body out of a moving motor car onto a Dublin roadway. Addressing the Central Criminal Court in Dublin, he stated that, 'either she had to be convicted of murder or 'concealing a pregnancy'. He elaborated, 'the latter of which was an inadequate sentence on conviction against a woman who deliberately or wilfully destroyed her child'. He also remarked that 'there was, unfortunately, a great wave of infanticide in the destruction of illegitimate children passing over the Free State'. In other words, the greatest threat to the lives of illegitimate infants was from their own mothers. Nonetheless, in this case, the jury found the woman guilty of 'concealing a pregnancy'.⁶⁰

These days, if a mother commits infanticide, in most territories worldwide, she will escape a sentence whereas a man will be jailed for the same offence.

A typical Irish 'baby farming' case is that of Hannah Daly of 36 Mary's Lane, who was sentenced to two months imprisonment in Dublin in 1935. She was charged with undertaking the nursing of an infant named John O'Shaughnessy without giving notice in writing to the local authority, baby farming, in other words. The authorities noted that she had received £30, £16 of which went to provide a 'marriage trousseau'.⁶¹ A trousseau consists of the possessions, such as clothing and linens that a bride assembles for her marriage. I think, however, in this case, the reference is to a dowry. The child was in good health when given to Ms Daly but was transferred to 'the union' where it died.

⁵⁹ Black, "'On the Other Hand the Accused Is a Woman...': Women and the Death Penalty in Post-Independence Ireland".

⁶⁰ 'Great Wave Passing Over the Free State'.

⁶¹ 'Baby Farming Case'.

Note that women who took in infants for a fee were required to register with the authorities, allowing their homes to be inspected for suitability and to ensure the children were getting good care. Unregistered homes were illegal and considered by the authorities to be baby farms. It was such a menace that when found they were quickly closed down and the women prosecuted.

Even under British rule, Ireland was much more philogynous than their masters on the neighbouring island. In 1813, Sarah Jane Lane residing at 2 Temple Court, Dublin was charged with 'ill-treatment' the day after a child in her care was admitted to hospital suffering from a 'mass of sores and vermin'. She was sentenced on that day to 6 months in prison with hard labour, and the 'recorder' stated 'she was fortunate that she did not stand charged with murder or manslaughter. If the child died, he would have a very different sentence to impose.' She had the luck of the devil, due to the speed of the proceedings against her. A few hours after the sentence was imposed, the infant, Daniel Lacy, age three months, died at Jervis hospital.⁶²

Despite the existence of mother and baby homes and orphanages that would take in unwanted infants, infanticide remained a problem. In one example from 1935, the central criminal court in Dublin, three women from various parts of the country, pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of their own infants. Each woman was sentenced to just three months in prison. The judge ordered that the sentence on one woman would not be imposed if she entered into recognisances for 12 months and remains in the Legion of Mary hostel in Limerick for three months.⁶³ The woman was from Connemara in County Galway, a particularly poverty-stricken area of the country and so the judge must have found mitigating circumstances or she had other children to care for. Founded in 1921 the Legion of Mary was a marvellous organisation that operated in support of single or unmarried mothers with policies aimed at keeping the mother and child together finding employment for the mother, providing them with accommodation, looking after and educating their children. No distinction was made between married and unmarried mothers nor legitimate or illegitimate children. The critical difference between the Legion and all other organisations was that they kept the mother and her child/children together. Accordingly, poor mothers who wanted to keep their children could choose to go to the legion rather than to another home. Commenting on other organisations, Neville Wilkinson, the president of the Dublin and District Branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), made this very point in 1932 asking: 'was it beyond the powers of Christianity with 20 centuries of development behind it to find some better way of dealing with the first child being born out of wedlock than the present cruel practice of separating mother from child?'

At the same meeting General Eoin O'Duffy, chief of the Irish police stated

⁶² 'Baby Farming'.

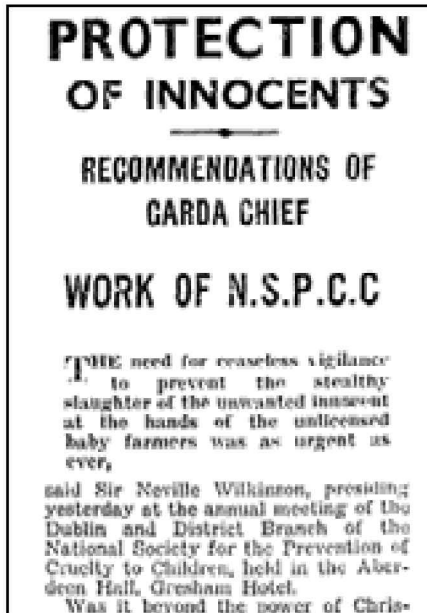
⁶³ 'Infanticide Sentences'.

that 'in the year 1931, seven infants were murdered and two persons were prosecuted; there were 59 cases of concealment of birth and 42 prosecutions on that score'.

Mother and baby homes were registered and subject to state inspection, and the high infant mortality rates were noted by officials, and at that time, it was thought to be due to the difficulty in rearing motherless babies. The formal homes were thought of highly but as Neville Wilkinson pointed out in 1932, 'the need for ceaseless vigilance to prevent the stealthy slaughter of unwanted innocent at the hands of unlicensed baby farmers was as urgent as ever.' As

we will see later, these comments and others relating to baby farming have been recently deliberately or accidentally conflated as comments about official licensed mother and baby homes.

← *Baby farming in 1931*



Chapter Conclusion

The problem of unwanted children has existed for centuries, and no matter how liberal or how anonymous the process of giving up an unwanted child was, infant killing continued. Why this should be in this a matter only of speculation, as nobody has been able to answer the question without using the assumption of societal shame. It is more than abundantly clear that without

the work of the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations over two millennia, the problem of infanticide would have cost millions of young lives. The fundamental right of a child not to be killed is a Christian principle which we take for granted today. We imagine it as a constituent part of our natural sense of morality, but it is a product of nurture because it did not exist in the Roman Empire or in many other societies, where killing or sacrificing infants/children was entirely socially and morally acceptable.

Humanity is capable of enormous cruelty, both intended and unintended. The latter is due to our survival instinct, which causes a sizable number of people to abandon their dependants when they perceive their own lives to be at risk. Poverty puts people's lives at risk, and the weakest members of society are more at risk from disease and neglect. It is the same the world over and has existed for all of time. Hansel and Gretel were abandoned by their parents due to poverty. The fate that awaited Hansel, falling victim to a cannibal, is illustrative of many abandoned children's fate throughout all of human existence. Almost paradoxically, humanity is also capable of great kindness and altruism, but

again it seems to be more from nurture than nature. Greek, Roman and other classic civilisations were extremely brutal societies with rampant paedophilia, pederasty, child rape, child killings, genital mutilation, castration of boys, clitoridectomy of girls (FGM as it is popularly known), and the list of what we now regard as abuses were endless. As one author put it:

Romans reported watching hundreds of mothers throwing their new-born into the Tiber every morning. So many infants were killed that even though mothers had eight or more babies the populations of antiquity regularly decreased. [...] Children playing in dung heaps, rivers and cess trenches would find hundreds of dead babies, 'a prey for birds, food for wild beasts to rend' (Euripides). [...] so many children were killed by their parents in early Greece and Rome that people were afraid their populations were declining and passed laws limiting the infanticide of children of citizens, which, however, were rarely enforced. As Tertullian told Romans, 'Although you are forbidden by the laws to slay new-born infants, it so happens that no laws are evaded with more impunity.'⁶⁴

Note that laws, which applied to citizens, did not apply to foreigners or slaves. The critical point is that we do not appear to have an innate sense of morality when it comes to killing unwanted children. The present-day abhorrence that we now have, that sense of morality has developed over the centuries and is undoubtedly a cultural artefact. In a time before these cultural abhorrences were in place, poverty and the survival instinct was not the primary driver of infant killing as the ancient Greek poet, Poseidippos stated, 'Even a rich man always exposes a daughter.' One visitor to Hawaii reported, 'There probably was not a single mother who did not throw at least one of her children to the sharks and wealthy royal families killed more than anyone.'⁶⁵ (Exposure is leaving an infant to die from exposure to the elements.)

Humanity's attempts, both secular and religious, in the Christian era at halting the human carnage might seem to us nowadays as ineffectual and mortality rates in nearly all institutions worldwide and for two millennia were high for several reasons. Infants even today are in a high-risk category, which is why in most of the world, the health authorities dictate/advise that children are to be born in hospitals. Abandoned infants, on the other hand, for obvious reasons (discussed in chapter 6) are in a super high-risk category. There was no end to the number of unwanted children humanity produced, which accounts for the introduction of the relatively recent prejudice against unmarried mothers and their children.

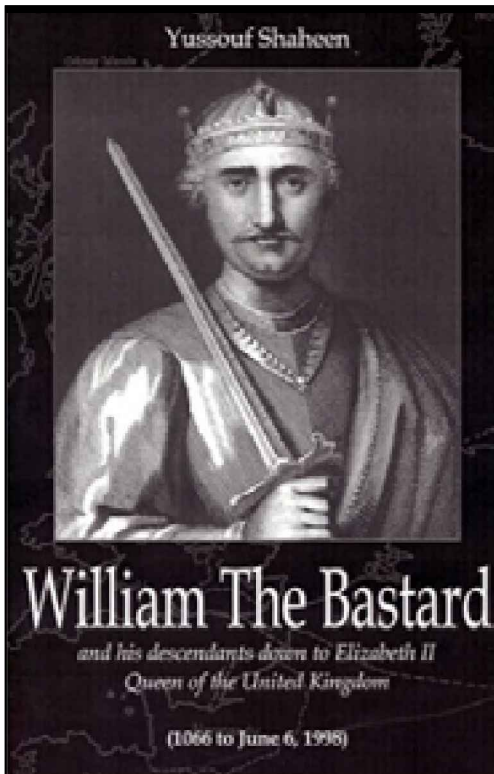
As we will see later in this book, high infant mortality rates do not reflect negatively on the quality of care given by an intuition. Many good hospitals

⁶⁴ DeMause, *The Origins of War in Child Abuse*.

⁶⁵ Breiner, *Slaughter of the Innocents: Child Abuse through the Ages and Today*.

around the world have high mortality rates. The reasons why good hospitals can have such high rates have gone unexplained in many of the articles and books which have so far been written on the subject of mother and baby homes. The most obvious conclusion which can be drawn for the lack of explanation is that they are written by people who not only have no expertise in interpreting medical statistics and have no knowledge of the very basics of medicine, epidemiology, healthcare, maternal and post-partum complications, epidemiology of infant mortality and more. Moreover, the prevailing environmental and social conditions, which existed in Ireland throughout the existence of the Tuam Children's Home, are well documented but rather than connecting the dots, Irish writers tend to use conjurings and assumptions to attack governments of the past and present for political gain. Political motives combined with cultural prejudices provide the very foundation upon which the Tuam scandal rests. Political activists of all hues weaponise what looks like history but is pseudo-history used to attack their opposition. In the middle of a political fight, impartial truth is disarmed, and the fuses of as many balderdash bombs as can be mustered are lit, and they fight fire with fire. No side holds the truth as its friend.

...



*William the Bastard
and his descendants
down to Queen
Elizabeth
Queen of the United
Kingdom
1066 to June 6th 1998
by Yussouf Shaheen*

The above book title attests that the word 'bastard' was not always a term of abuse. William the Conqueror was never known by that name in his own lifetime. Today in France, Bastard remains a proud family surname.

2. 'SLAUGHTERED BABIES' – 'OUR HOLOCAUST'

Ireland's holocaust: Special report on the Tuam Killing Field

Niamh O'Connor

Sunday World 9th June 2014

There is no higher form of criminal abuse than deliberately starving people to death. It is this allegation against the women in charge of the Bethany Home, the Tuam Children's Home and now spread to other similar homes, which has led to claims that it was 'Ireland's Holocaust'. The term 'marasmus' on death certificates of children at these homes has been used as the chief accusatory weapon or to put it in other words, and it has been put forward as the primary evidence that children were deliberately ill-treated and starved to death.

Two years before the Tuam story took the scandal into the stratosphere in 2012, Sinn Féin's Mary Lou McDonald, told the Irish parliament [Dáil Éireann] in a debate about a Protestant run mother and baby home in Dublin. Quoting from a 1939 inspector's report, she stated that the state's deputy chief medical officer held the 'barbaric belief that it was normal for children of unmarried mothers to suffer from starvation'.⁶⁶ The following year she again quoted a line from the same 1939 report, which used the phrase that it was "well known that illegitimate children are delicate and marasmic". Mary Lou helpfully elaborated by appending the phrase – 'in other words, that they suffered from starvation'. Dr Sterling-Berry was the deputy chief medical officer and author of the report in question. She then went further and cast a slur on the medical qualifications and reputation of the doctor:

It makes one wonder about the qualifications of the same Dr. Berry to hold the position of deputy chief medical adviser. [...] This so-called medical adviser, rather than protect the babies and children from the cruelty and

66 Dáil Éireann debate - Wednesday, 27 Jun 2012 Vol. 770 No. 2

neglect which his inspectors found, was more concerned that Catholic children committed there might become Protestants.⁶⁷

Dr Sterling-Berry was not commenting on ‘cruelty and neglect’, ‘starvation’ or any other charge which Mary Lou has levelled against him as we will be proved later.

Many politicians both left and right-wing have made similar comments over the years stating unambiguously that death certificates recorded deaths as starvation. However, in reality, all these death certificates record the cause of death as due to marasmus.

Deputy Robert Dowds, Labour Party (socialist)

Sterling Berry, in 1939. In his report, Berry reported that it was well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children were delicate and marasmic, which means they were suffering the effects of **starvation**.⁶⁸

Deputy Niall Collins of the right-wing nationalist party Fianna Fáil, complained of the exclusion of former residents of the Bethany home from any future investigation/compensation deal, insinuating that it was due to ‘sectarian discrimination’ and he went on to attack religious belief.

Records reveal that 54 of the children had died from convulsions, 41 from heart failure and 26 from marasmus, a form of malnutrition. [...] Survivors are of the view that the exclusion of Bethany Home represents sectarian discrimination against the Protestant minority. It is difficult to see how churches of all religious shades that have failed so acutely in their responsibilities should be treated differently in compensating for those failings. Suffering knew no boundary in religious belief.⁶⁹

Deputy Seamus Healy a non-party or independent representative, said:

State inspection reports described children as being fragile, pot-bellied and emaciated. Cause of death was regularly recorded as **starvation**.⁷⁰

No Seamus written on the death certificates was ‘marasmus’ not starvation.

Deputy Ciara Conway Irish Labour Party, (socialist):

Young women were forcibly separated first from their communities, then from any sense of pride or self worth and then from their babies. **Their babies were neglected and starved, with illnesses untreated.** They were

67 Dáil Éireann debate - Tuesday, 10 Dec 2013 Vol. 824 No. 1 Bethany Home: Motion [Private Members]

68 Dáil Éireann debate - Tuesday, 26 Feb 2013 Vol. 794 No. 1 Magdalen Laundries Report: Statements (Resumed)

69 Dáil Éireann debate - Tuesday, 10 Dec 2013 Vol. 824 No. 1 Bethany Home: Motion [Private Members]

70 Dáil Éireann debate - Wednesday, 11 Jun 2014 Vol. 843 No. 5 Death and Burial of Children in Mother and Baby Homes: Motion (Resumed) [Private Members]

seen as worthless and buried, ultimately, in unmarked graves, left in the end without even an identity.⁷¹

There is no doubt that this selection of quotes from parliamentary debates will provide future generations with evidence of a time when Irish parliamentarians sought to gain political advantage through the propagation of injustice. As we will see further on, marasmus is not evidence of starvation, and I suspect that some astute politicians already know this but ignore it for reasons of populism. Moreover, they are vastly outnumbered by politicians whose gullibility is driven by a lack of knowledge, the result of a drop in educational standards which is evident in the Irish education system from the top down to the very bottom. Gullibility is defined as 'an unusual tendency toward being duped or taken advantage of', but as we progress through the evidence, we will see it is has become more usual than unusual.

*There was slaughter [at the Bethany
Protestant Mother and Baby Home] from
1935 to 1944 during which years 132 babies
met their deaths there.*

Victoria White - Irish Examiner, January 03, 2013

Politicians, journalists, and influencers, who have not used the terms starvation or murder directly, passively rely on implication, insinuation, and obscurantism to stir up sensationalist and populist sentiment. It would appear that in a society that is turning increasingly anti-Christian, self-interest is best served by hanging on to the coattails of popular prejudices, no matter how unjust, silly and ignorant their foundations might be. Other than a meagre number of articles in the Irish Times, and in other newspapers, written by one or two brave or foolhardy journalists, no dissenting voices have been allowed to be heard. No matter what the subject matter happens to be, when dissent/dissenters is/are absent, all warning bells should ring loudly in the ears of impartial observers. In the case of mother and baby homes, Dissenters have been deliberately silenced or almost entirely ignored by the media. It is an indication of fear on the side of the scandal propagators who will not countenance examine, or present to their audience information that could potentially weaken or destroy their sensationalist claims. Vilification of dissenters is a common feature in these types of scandals, and it is a tactic deployed to shout down any attempt at rational discourse for fear that it will expose its dishonesty. The net result is that dissenting voices have to wait for some of the heat to die down, and so it will be years before the full extent of Ireland's most significant intellectual failings are revealed.

⁷¹ ibid

*We murdered them in their hundreds through
neglect and hate*

Kate O'Connell, Fine Gael TD

It might seem obvious, but the creation of anti-Christian fantasies surrounding mother and baby homes requires that historical information is bent and twisted to suit the agenda. The primary serpentine method was to use the appearance of the word 'marasmus' on death certificates. Victoria White, for example, writing in the *Irish Examiner* helpfully tells her readers that 'Marasmic' is really another word for 'starved', and in the same article tells us that **babies were slaughtered** at the Protestant run Bethany home. The article went on in the vein of, as a Protestant herself if she got no answers from the Protestant bishops, she was going to leave her religion.⁷²

'In the same paper over many articles, Conall Ó Fátharta helpfully tells readers that 'marasmus', was 'in layman's terms — malnutrition'⁷³. He informs readers further that it was a prevalent term used on death certificates to cause death. He never explains the term's technical details or how medics of the past diagnosed such a condition. As the scandal progressed and as if the term 'marasmus' was losing its power to shock, Ó Fátharta goes on the guide readers further, increasing 'marasmus' from mere malnutrition to 'severe malnutrition'. It would also appear that Ó Fátharta has concentrated on mother and baby homes and has not yet got around to looking for death certs of children who died in secular hospitals to see if any of them died as a result of 'severe malnutrition'. Nor would it seem has Victoria White looked to see were any babies 'slaughtered' in other secular Irish hospitals or institutions.

See for yourself, if the allegations made by these journalists and politicians are correct, in claiming that 'marasmus' is actual evidence that babies were 'starved to death', then a great many infants were 'slaughtered' at these Irish maternity hospitals. Note: none of these institutions listed below were mother and baby homes and the infants who 'starved to death' were not illegitimate.

***BABIES WHO STARVED TO DEATH
IN NUNS' CARE***

*Irish Daily Mail front page headline
31st May 2014 - Neill Michael, Chief Reporter*

The fact that no one bothered to check the factual basis of starvation claims, not even the academic historians, indicates the absence of critical thinking skills and/or anti-Christian bias.

⁷² White, 'Justice Needed for the Survivors of and Victims of Bethany House Abuse'.

⁷³ Ó Fátharta, 'Tuam and Bessborough'.

Journalistic inventions are nothing new, and one could argue that in the world of increasing freelance journalism, journalists are forced through circumstance to make up stories or embellish the truth with sensationalism to earn an income to survive. However, it is not just the freelancers who engage in and sensationalise historical events, many staffers do it too, either to sell newspapers or because there happens to be no exciting or gripping news stories available. While there is an element of commercialism driving the wild claims in the media, at least some journalists appear to be genuine in their beliefs. These unfortunates suffer from Disneyland type of magical expectations where our forebears are expected to cure diseases that were once incurable, diagnose illnesses with present-day knowledge and equipment, treat disease with medicine not yet invented, vaccinate children with vaccines of the future etc. Clearly, Irish journalism has educational issues. It would seem that the Walter Disney Company was also engaged in designing several academic courses, including many for the university history department. These magical expectations are necessary to deploy the most favoured artillery piece of the Irish propagandist; the logical fallacy called the Nirvana Fallacy, which we met briefly in the previous chapter, and which I will explain in more detail in Chapter 5.

I am interested in getting to the bottom of why people are so susceptible to creating and believing in myths. It is easy to write off the journalists as being ignorant and undereducated in the subject matter but a great many of us, are unaware how difficult it is to write quality history, and this applies even to those who have university degrees in the subject. I know that Conal Ó Fátharta has a history degree as have I and from the same university, but Conal appears to have little knowledge of medical terminology, its historical use, and historical semantic drift. However, that statement may be presumptuous of me, but why does he not use it if he possesses such knowledge? Moreover, some of the headlines used for his articles referred to the Tuam Children's Home as a 'house of horrors', bolstering the case that he has not got specialist knowledge to analyse medical terminology on death certificates correctly.

History is a difficult subject for many reasons. You have all heard of the term 'revisionism', and as mentioned previously, political activists of all hues weaponise history, and use it to attack their opposition. It is a practice as old as history itself and has not gone unnoticed by the discipline of history. However, while general history has been altered or revised, revisionism is not the appropriate term to use in this case. Historians would use 'historical negationism' which is defined as follows:

Historical negationism is applied to cultivate a specific political myth – sometimes with official consent from the government – whereby self-taught, amateur and dissident academic historians either manipulate or misrepresent historical accounts to achieve political ends.' Negationist historians rewrite history and use logical fallacies to construct arguments

that will obtain the desired results, a ‘revised history’ that supports an agenda – political, ideological, religious, etc.⁷⁴

The above definition is fundamental of this book. It provided me with the motivation to expose the evidence that shows how amateurs and academics set out to ‘manipulate or misrepresent historical accounts to achieve political ends’ and distort the historical record.

Most of us would still be tempted to use the term ‘revisionism’ for these revised ‘histories’, and while it is a revision, it intends to negate, meaning to deny the existence of evidence or truth. Accordingly, the less well-known term ‘negationism’ is technically the most appropriate term to use in this situation. Apologists of all hues try to negate historical responsibility for all sorts of events, ranging from crimes against humanity to justifying invasions of other countries, in areas like science, it is used to avoid responsibility for eugenics ad inf. Sometimes it is called historical denialism, which is defined as ‘an illegitimate distortion of the historical record’.

The absence of contrarian academic commentary might be due to a fear of being blackballed. As history attests, it is not conducive to good health to stand in front of a stampeding herd with a raised hand while shouting halt! Populism is another plausible explanation as it has become pervasive across the world in the teens of the 21st century. The university system itself would also seem to hold a measure of responsibility, despite its egotistical claims, it has not been able to nurture critical thinking skills in its graduates. There is ample evidence, even in the public domain, to show the absence of critical thinking skills in our third-level institutions, either through the work of its incumbents or progeny. Accordingly, I am inclined to believe that the clurichauns are now in the ascendant even in our third-level institutions. (Chapter 4 will explain all about the clurichaun ascendancy.)

*University/School - A place where
pebbles are polished and diamonds are
dimmed. - Robert G. Ingersoll*

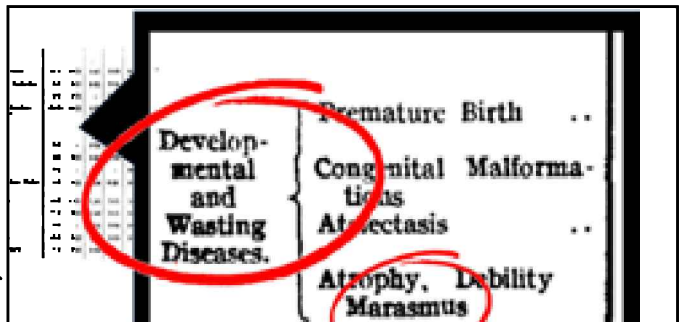
Marasmus – a disease!

Marasmus is a type of malnutrition, but it would appear that Irish ‘historians’ are reliant on Wikipedia for their definitions rather than trouble themselves to look at historical medical documents. For instance, the Registrar General’s report for 1913 (pictured on the next page) reminds medics that general terms for diseases like atrophy, marasmus and debility are not to be used when a more specific diagnosis can be made. Marasmus was historically medically classified as a ‘wasting disease’ not as deliberate starvation. Deliberate starvation is a crime,

⁷⁴ ‘Historical Negationism’.

and if it were suspected, the authorities would have held an inquest into such deaths. Many people who die from disease are emaciated, such is the toll taken on their body from battling disease, but again some 'historians' and most Irish journalists, not trained in medical terminology, particularly historical medical nomenclature, have jumped to incompetent conclusions. The Wikipedia entry on marasmus is quite short and therefore not too taxing on one's intellectual abilities. Even so, many journalists or indeed academic historians did not manage to get to the third section regarding the causes of marasmus which states 'viral, bacterial and parasitic infections can cause children to absorb too few nutrients, even when consumption [of food] is adequate. Marasmus can also develop in children who have weakening conditions such as chronic diarrhoea.'

A number of inspector's reports of institutions mention that some resident children were emaciated which has a similar appearance to 'marasmus' and these comments have been used as evidence of starvation. So, let us look



up Wikipedia for a definition- 'Emaciation is caused by severe malnourishment and starvation. Emaciation is a predominant symptom of malnourishment, a basic component of poverty and famine that also occurs with diseases that interfere with the digestive system and appetite, other systems and eating disorders.'⁷⁵ It appears our 'historians' and 'journalists' will not even consider disease as a cause because it does not suit their agenda. It takes no more than a very basic medical knowledge to realise that when patients are described as emaciated, it is due to the body's energy store being used to fight disease.

Here is a newspaper report of an inquest that makes for interesting reading. First, a few points to note, a nurse child was an old term for an infant. The word nurse literally derives from one who nourishes a child, a breast feeder. A wet nurse is a woman who breastfeeds infants who are not her own.

The original article is in poor condition, so I have transcribed it on the following page.

⁷⁵ Roland and Butler, 'Marasmus'.

Inquest on Child

Death from Marasmus was the verdict returned at an inquest held today at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital on the body of a nurse child named Donnelly, 9 months, of Thorncastle St., Ringsend.

*The coroner said in consequence of the condition of the child when it was brought to the hospital, **the house surgeon was of the opinion that it had died from starvation but the post mortem showed that death was due to natural causes.** The child had been under treatment for six months from July to January in the Children's Hospital, Harcourt St. and did not seem to improve and had been treated by Dr Creighton.*

Dr Hogan, house surgeon, stated was due to marasmus, the child not being able to assimilate the nourishment given it.

The jury found in accordance with the evidence.

Points to note: 1. when a doctor suspects that a death is suspicious, or a death is due to unexplained reasons he/she is duty-bound to report the death to the coroner. The coroner is a specialist judge whom prior to his/her appointment to the position must have at least five years' experience as a practising barrister, solicitor or as a registered medical practitioner. A coroner may order a post-mortem examination and may convene and preside over an inquest. An inquest is defined as an official public inquiry presided over by a Coroner. When the infant arrived at Patrick Dun's Hospital in January 1925 from Harcourt St. Children's hospital, it was in such an emaciated condition that the house surgeon suspected a case of attempted infanticide through starvation.

2. The post-mortem examination showed that the child died due to natural causes and the inquest recorded the death was not due to starvation, it was due to 'marasmus', an important distinction that has to be ignored. If a present-day history writer is going to claim that any case of marasmus was due to starvation, they need to find death certificates that record 'death due to starvation' and also need to find detailed inquest verdicts and/or records of post-mortem examinations. In the absence of such, the claim that marasmus on death certificates is evidence of starvation is mistaken at best and total rubbish at worst. However, substituting 'starvation' for 'marasmus' is a deliberate or incompetent act to seek notoriety and/or to sell publications.

3. The child was treated entirely in two secular run hospitals, so the nuns had no hand act or part in the child's care and could not have murdered him. It begs the big question, why are our inept bloggers, journalists, and historians not accusing the medical staff at Harcourt St. and Patrick Dun's Hospitals of murder?

The Registrar General's reminder we encountered earlier was asking doctors to be more specific regarding the cause of death rather than rely on general umbrella terms for wasting diseases. This causes a slow decline in the use of the term 'marasmus' and is not mentioned Registrar General reports thereafter but was used still on death certificates beyond the 1960s. Those unfamiliar with medico-statistics, reporting methods, and their evolution over time fall prey to the many traps set by history. The amount of work needed to understand archaic medical terminology is beyond the capability of most bloggers and journalists, but it should be well within the domain of specialist historians. The lack of specialist historians in Ireland is also a significant factor in giving rise to the scandal. Historians should understand the implications of even simple concepts like in the example below, which classifies marasmus as arising pre-natal (before birth). Without such skill, we no doubt would have them arriving at silly conclusions like babies starved to death in the womb.

The number of deaths of children under one year old investigated was 1,088 (593 males and 493 females), 190 of these occurred during the first week after birth, and 108 were due to prematurity, atrophy, debility, marasmus, and congenital defects, or, in other words, were due to pre-natal causes, that is to say, 9.5 per cent. were due to causes affecting the mother and child prior to the birth.

*Death due to marasmus which was thought to be caused prior to birth! – Report on Belfast city 1917*⁷⁶

To put marasmus into perspective, let us zoom on to the present with what we might like to think as our vastly 'superior' knowledge of disease...

The present-day understanding of malnutrition has with the might of modern science behind it, improved immeasurably from that of the 1920s to the 1950s. It cannot be emphasised enough how little was known about malnutrition back then, particularly in the public mind. Today our knowledge of nutrition is derived from pervasive and persuasive advertising, public health information campaigns, school education, and popular discourse. Nutrition has become commercial and is a big business, which spends billions promoting its products so much so that there is hardly a person on the planet who is lacking in knowledge of nutrition. It, therefore, may come as a complete shock to find that even though our knowledge has improved, 21st-century medicine is still

⁷⁶ Lawson, 'Infant Mortality and the Notification of Births Acts, 1907, 1915'.

struggling with malnutrition. To present supporting evidence, here is an extract from a paper published in 2011 by the Dutch Malnutrition Steering group entitled 'Guideline: Screening and treatment of malnutrition'. The opening paragraph states:

1.1 Definition and prevalence

Malnutrition is an acute or chronic condition where a deficiency or imbalance of energy, protein and other nutrients cause measurable and adverse effects on body composition, function and clinical outcomes. The problem of disease-related malnutrition has been recognised for years and since 2004, its prevalence is measured as part of the Dutch Annual Measurement of Care Initiative (LPZ). **The prevalence of mild and severe malnutrition in all sectors of the Dutch healthcare is high. On average, one out of four to five patients in hospitals, nursing homes and homecare suffers from severe malnutrition.**

Note that a quarter of patients in the Dutch healthcare system in the 21st century were suffering from severe malnutrition. A condition which according to many Irish journalists and politicians is due to starvation. Could there be other causes rather than a shortage of food?

The group goes on to define the causes of malnutrition:

1.2 Causes

Groups specifically at risk of malnutrition are the elderly, patients suffering from chronic illness, oncology patients undergoing major surgery and patients with severe trauma. The causes of malnutrition can be based in physical, psychological, medical and social factors. Physical factors include impaired taste, smell, mobility, anorexia, diminished feelings of hunger or satiety, malabsorption, pain and fatigue. Psychological factors include anxiety, depression, isolation, distress and changes in life circumstances. Medical factors include health problems such as infection and / or inflammation, problems involving chewing and swallowing, dementia, adverse effects of medication and addiction social factors include impaired ability to shop for and prepare food, isolation, bereavement and poverty. Knowing the cause of malnutrition makes it possible to identify the presence of cachexia, sarcopenia and wasting.

The Irish scandal propagators have ignored all these causes.

A point or two to note is that even in the 21st century, malnutrition continues to be a problem, and the instances are high within the health services. The NHS in Britain has a similar problem; one of their websites states that 'malnutrition is

a common problem, affecting millions of people in the UK'.⁷⁷ We can assume that it is a problem in Ireland too, but it has not been reported yet. Marasmus has many causes, and as we saw, even in 1925, it was possible using a post-mortem examination (autopsy) to determine whether it was due to starvation or medical issues.

So, what exactly is marasmus? It is diagnosed from the patient's appearance and is characterised by thinness, dry skin, poor muscle development and irritability. Other diseases associated with malnutrition have different characteristics such as Kwashiorkor which leaves victims with an emaciated appearance in all body parts except their ankles, feet and belly, which swell with fluid. Kwashiorkor was first described in 1933 Cicely Williams who noted that children who had plenty of food suffered from this form of malnutrition not because of starvation but because of the lack of certain nutrients in their maize diet, a monophagous diet.

The ICD manual, short for the International Classification of Disease manual is authored by the World Health Organisation (WHO). It is the standard manual used by medics worldwide to diagnose diseases. It is the diagnostic classification standard for all clinical and research purposes. Diseases have to be certified by a doctor, and the ICD-10 offers the following guidance for the certification of secondary diseases.

Any disease described as secondary should be assumed to be a direct consequence of the most probable primary cause entered on the certificate.

Secondary or unspecified anaemia, malnutrition, marasmus or cachexia may be assumed to be a consequence of any malignant neoplasm, paralytic disease, or disease which limits the ability to care for oneself, including dementia and degenerative diseases of the nervous system.⁷⁸

Note: how the WHO have separated marasmus from malnutrition and more importantly, that marasmus may be due to cancer or a parasitic infection.

*I thought: oooh, what does marasmus mean?
Then I realised it was a posh name for
starvation.*

*Stephen McGann - The Guardian
Newspaper (British) 29 Jul 2017*

It is clear that even today in the medical profession, the use of the term marasmus is not a synonym of starvation. After reading the evidence of what 'marasmus'

⁷⁷ 'Malnutrition'.

⁷⁸ 'ICD-10'.

actually is and its historical use, serious questions have to be asked why this definition and understanding of the disease has been kept out of the public domain. Why has the mistaken interpretation like that of Victoria White writing in the *Irish Examiner* claiming “Marasmic” is really another word for ‘starved’, upon which she bases the entirely hysterical claim that babies were slaughtered at the Protestant run Bethany home gone uncorrected by academic historians? Conal Ó Fátharta has a degree in history, and it would be reasonable to expect that he would have the ability and skills to do genuine impartial historical research. He might have taken the time to research instances of marasmus at other hospitals and in people’s homes reported in death certificates. He would have no doubt have been forced to make similar claims about the secular hospitals, all of which have multiple cases of deaths due to marasmus. It looks like his alma mater (and mine) has let its students down due to deficiencies in training. As we will see, there are a great many more academics who have been similarly forsaken and are thus left prone to believing in conspiracy theories and unable to engage in critical thinking. There is more than a prima facie case to be made that Irish academic intuitions are parchment factories, more interested in high salaries and grandiose titles but have abandoned the intellectual tradition and their students, none more so than its history students. Later in this book, when we examine the work and public pronouncements of a small selection of academic lecturers/historians, we will see that there is ample evidence to bolster this case.

Before that, let us have a look at what was claimed in various parliamentary debates.

During the last debate we had on this subject I gave an account of what had happened at Bessborough Mother and Baby Home. For a period during the 1940s the primary cause of death in 20% of cases was marasmus or severe malnutrition. What can that be other than neglect? It is extraordinary. - *Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Dáil Éireann debate - Thursday, 1 Jun 2017*

A total of 219 Bethany graves in Mount Jerome were discovered for the period 1922 to 1949. Records reveal that 54 of the children had died from convulsions, 41 from heart failure and 26 from marasmus, a form of malnutrition. As many as 86 deaths, or well over one third of Bethany’s 219 child deaths in the 28 years between 1922 and 1949, occurred in one five-year period, from 1935 to 1939. Almost two thirds, or 132 children, died in the ten-year period from 1935 to 1944. There is something deeply disturbing about the numbers, even in the context of the standards of the time. - *Deputy Niall Collins, Dáil Éireann debate - Tuesday, 10 Dec 2013*

According to a former chief medical officer of the State, James Deeny,

in his autobiography, To Cure and to Care, in one year alone, of the 180 children born in the home 100 died. One in five of those who died in the 1934 to 1953 period died of marasmus, that is, severe malnutrition. - Deputy Mick Barry, Dáil Éireann debate - Thursday, 9 Mar 2017

Only 14 out of the 796 death certificates for the Tuam Home record marasmus as a main or secondary cause, expressed as a percentage that is 1.89% of the total somehow that percentage did not make the parliamentary debate.

As you can see, our parliamentarians are not given to looking up medical information, nor does it appear that they have access to expert advice. It takes no leap of the imagination to claim that they have a marked preference for promoting Disney-esque fantasy and can be highly selective in their choice of facts and figures. No doubt the objective is to hang on to the populist coattails for fear of falling off the Disneyland gravy train. Aren't we blessed in Ireland with such erudite politicians?

Using the same brain machinations as the aforementioned, may I present evidence of 'slaughter' in other Irish hospitals, starting with the Protestant founded but secular Rotunda Maternity in Dublin, Ireland, the oldest continuously operating maternity hospital in the world.

No.	Register	Age	Sex	Cause of Death	Medical Attendant	Medical	SP
14	Register	6	Female	Marasmus	M. de Donnell	May	SP
15	Register	15	Female	Marasmus	M. de Donnell	May	SP
16	Register	3	Female	Marasmus	M. de Donnell	May	SP
17	Register	7	Female	Marasmus	M. de Donnell	May	SP
18	Register	2 1/2	Female	Marasmus	M. de Donnell	May	SP

Note in the Cause of Death column the word 'cert.' or 'certified' appears. When this is not present, it is common to see 'no medical attendant'. It means that the cause of death was not certified by a registered medical practitioner. The latter term was used when people could not afford a doctor, or a doctor was not available due to a sudden death, and the cause could not be certified. Usually, when a person dies, a registered doctor involved in their care writes a note

known as a 'medical certificate of cause of death' (MCCD) and gives it to the family who then takes it to the registrar's office to register the death. The name of the person who informed the registrar is recorded on the register, and their address and relationship to the deceased are recorded. In the case of hospitals or institutions, it is common to find records registered as a batch. Usually, an inmate or a member of staff was given the task of bringing the MCCDs to the registrar's office. Their name was then recorded on the register as the 'informant'. When a registered doctor has not seen a corpse, it is usual for a Coroner to certify such deaths. Currently, about a quarter of all death certificates are issued by a coroner. Coroners can only certify the cause of death following a post-mortem by a pathologist, an inquest or both. An inquest is held:

where there is reasonable cause to suspect that such person has died either a violent or unnatural death or has died a sudden death of which the cause is unknown or that such person has died in prison or in such place or in such circumstances as to require an inquest under any Act other than the Coroners (Ireland) Act, 1846, to hold an inquest upon the body of such person in accordance with the provisions of the Coroners (Ireland) Act, 1846 or of this Act. - Coroners (Amendment) Act, 1927

An inquest is an official, public enquiry, presided over by the Coroner (and in some cases involving a jury) into the cause of a sudden, unexplained or violent death. A jury was required to certify deaths in certain circumstances, including infanticide. On two occasions an inquest was held to inquire into deaths at the Tuam Home, so the system did work, and when the deaths were unexplained, the authorities had sufficient oversight to take the required action. A point missed by one and all is that all of the 796 death certificates had the cause of death certified. In contrast, many death certificates for children outside of institutions contain the words 'no medical attendant', indicating that the unfortunate family could not afford a doctor, or a person had died before they could be seen by a doctor.

Note on the following two copies of death certificates, 1. A death from 'starvation' at home but it was certified by a doctor. 2. A child born 'starving' at Temple St. Children's Hospital in Dublin 1945. Can a child be born starving? Marasmus for 18 days in an infant only 18 days old!

6th	labourer's child	~~Marasmus~~ Broncho pneumonia certified	 Ashtown	December Twenty eight 1942

Ulan's	Dr	Butcher	19 Days	Port Mander	Marasmus, 11 Days	J. Hall,	Sept 1943
St. Ultan's				San.	Malnutrition	Small	Sept 1943
					Gr. 11 Days	St. Ultan's Hospital	1943

On the following copies of two death certificates that appear on the same page of the register of deaths for Dublin South occurring on 15th January and the 23rd of January 1943 at St. Ultan's Children's hospital. Note, the second death certificate states malnutrition as a certified cause while the first certifies marasmus as a cause of death. Clear evidence that the medical profession did not regard the two conditions as the same.

6	Donofa	Marasmus & Intestinal Issues with Cardiac Failure	A. O'Doole	Twelfth
Who	Labourer	Certified	Present at death	Jan 15th
			St. Ultan's Hospital	1943

Age (in full birthdate)	Full Name (last, first, or complete)	Cause of Death (Certified Cause of Death and Duration of Illness)	Signature, Certificate and Date of Death (Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Informant)	Date of Death (When Reported)
(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
2 1/2	Daughter of Mr. A. Donofa	Congenital defect & malnutrition Cardiac Failure Certified	A. O'Doole Present at death St. Ultan's Hop	Twelfth Jan 15th 1943

The Ryan Commission were also keen to promote a near-starvation myth concerning industrial schools and reformatories. Note it chose to use the term 'near-starvation' because there is no evidence that children were actually starved to death at any institution. Instead, they decided to interpret efforts to improve institutional diets' nutrition as evidence to support their case. It is undeniable that there were issues found from time to time with regard to underfeeding in a small number of institutions, but readers can be misled by the blinkered manner of the reports, hiding from view is the big picture and the overly keen prefacing of sections and paragraphs with leading statements.

Accordingly, forgive me if I restore some balance and preface this section with a note on inspection reports in general. Inspection regimes and organisations exist to find fault and fix those faults to improve services and standards across the full gamut of industries. People in workplace situations become unaware

of issues due to everyday familiarity and the need to get a job done. Outside eyes are needed to expose failures within the systems in question, be they in the manufacturing sector, the service industry, food preparation, social care, etc. There is a natural human psychological deficit that allows complacency to set into familiar and routine situations. Critical inspections are the only tool to guard against these fallibilities, and such inspections find fault in all organisations all the time and where constant vigilance is imperative. Perfection does not exist today, and faults can be found in the best of institutions. For example, the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) reporting in 2015 found that 76% of the 50 public acute hospitals in Ireland it inspected had unclean thermometer holders, 50% had unclean bed covers and mattresses, 70% of hospitals had unclean commodes (patient toilets).⁷⁹ Add to that an ongoing problem with hand hygiene among medical staff, and we can say with certainty that there have been many deaths due to poor hygiene in 21st-century hospitals. If we were to compress all the decades of negative reports into one report, it would build into a very misleading picture of Irish hospitals' quality of care. Accordingly, it is now common for such reports to carry warnings about reading too much into their findings, the need for balance, and very often reports are suffixed with reminders of the need for more research. The Ryan commission took no such impartial stance, compressing all the negatives it could find to build a case for the prosecution and uses every insinuation it could muster to ridicule the defence. Exposing the many flaws with the Ryan report would take a whole book beyond this book's scope. Accordingly, I supply a representative sample to give you some idea of its bias.

The Irish government set up the Cussen commission in 1934 to examine the function of industrial schools and reformatories, to find ways to update the system to inform new legislation. The commission produced its report in 1937 with most of its 51 recommendations included in the 'Children Act 1941', which amended the 'Children Act of 1908'. The commission visited every institution and found that the food provided to the children was 'adequate'. One of its recommendations was that a medical inspector was to be appointed to keep an eye on children's health in institutions. Even before the legislation was enacted the Department acted on one of the commission's main recommendations and Dr Anna McCabe was appointed to the position in 1939. Her inspections from that time on revealed that in some institution's children were under the expected normal weight for a given age, which the commission then uses to say it contradicted the Cussen commission's findings. However, the Ryan Commission report can again be found to be lacking in balance. Medical officials reported to the Department of Local Government from 1939; children were found to be underweight in ordinary schools, which they attributed to the 'the difficulty found by the poor people in purchasing adequate supplies of the protective foodstuffs'.⁸⁰ There was a massive change in Irish society from

⁷⁹ McMahon, 'Hospital Patients at Risk from Bad Hand Hygiene, Report Finds'.

⁸⁰ Department of Local Government and Public Health, Report, 1940-41.

the start of Dr McCabe's tenure in 1939 due to the outbreak of a world war. Between 1939 and 1943 the cost-of-living index increased by a massive 58%, wage rises could not keep pace, and massive shortages of commodities, including clothing, caused the Irish government to introduce rationing.⁸¹

While the country remained neutral, the war had a buffeted the country economically with the poor bearing the brunt of the impact. Food prices soared, and catholic organisations ramped up efforts to feed the poor. In Dublin, a few short weeks after his appointment as Archbishop in January 1941, John Charles McQuaid brought about the establishment of 'The Catholic Social Service Conference' (CSSC). It was an umbrella organisation aimed at coordinating the relief work of many different organisations to the crisis but more importantly, remain capable of coordinating welfare efforts in the event of a breakdown of the Irish government. When France fell in 1940, the possibility of a threat of invasion by one or more of the belligerents looked increasingly likely; thus, the government would be unable to function. The Second World War created extreme conditions for Ireland's population, so the poor and the intuitions dedicated to their care were under intense pressure. The Ryan commission chose to completely gloss over and ignore the reality of the country's situation.

Despite the enormity of the challenge, the CSSC succeeded in providing clothing and millions of meals every year, by 1943 they provided between six million and eight million meals per year including three million meals at food centres in Dublin.⁸² They provided take-home meals that were sufficient to feed for two the three persons so that people could eat meals in their own homes and not suffer the stigma of pauperism.

Moreover, the Archbishop recognised the particular hardship suffered by pregnant women. Historian Ciarán Bryan wrote:

Owing to Emergency conditions, unemployment, rising prices, etc., the number of Dublin mothers in necessitous circumstances had risen considerably. [...] To address this issue, Archbishop McQuaid personally requested the creation of the Maternity Welfare Department to cater specifically for the needs of mothers and their children.⁸³

The hardships suffered by Dublin's poor community were reflected in other areas throughout the country and from time to time within several institutions. Dr McCabe suggested and asked for improvements to be made and was met with the same response in one institution after another. 'Where was the money going to come from' to finance improvements, with many school managers asking for an increase in the state grant. The Ryan Commission was quite dismissive of these arguments recasting them as resistance to change rather

⁸¹ Bryan, 'Rationing in Emergency Ireland, 1939-48'.

⁸² Bryan.

⁸³ Bryan.

than one of affordability. Affordability was an enormous issue for most families who had to balance their finances by making choices between buying clothes or buying food. In America, poor children were often dressed in old used flour bags, which was also the case in Ireland. This argument was put to Dr McCabe on many occasions that the intuitions had to balance the budget between buying clothes and food. Accordingly, at some cash-strapped institutions, the diet was at a subsistence level, especially those which did not have a farm attached. Department of education officials hype up reports in correspondence between one another and the department of finance using emotive terms like 'gross malnutrition' and 'near-starvation'. Such exaggeration is to be expected in officials to add urgency to finding solutions. It worked to a degree, and the department of finance increased the capitation grant by 40%. However, it was not enough to cover the rising costs, as evinced in the application by the school managers to the department for an emergency increase of 140%. The department and Dr McCabe knew of the difficulties facing the intuitions, but at the same time, they continued to press for improvements from both the government and the school authorities, rightly so. However, in this case, their efforts were resisted by the extreme economic circumstances of war, rather than a reluctance to comply with the regulations.



Ignorance is a term loaded with emotional connotations; accordingly, if one wanted to be neutral, the term 'a lack of knowledge' is more preferable. High infant mortality rates were frequently blamed on the 'ignorance of the mother'. Such a description today would shock most people, and the Ryan commission did not shy away from the term 'ignorance' to describe the common lack of knowledge regarding nutrition, rife in yesteryear.

Using the heading 'Failure to provide a properly balanced diet (even when the quantity is adequate) owing to lack of training in the management of institutions for children and ignorance of fundamental deictic [sic] principles.' This is of course riddled with presentism and the false assumption that people of yesterday should have the same knowledge of dietetics which is infinitely more prevalent in the 21st century.

This lack of specialist knowledge is mentioned by Dr McCabe in a memo dated to Nov 1944.

I introduced many items of food to the school diet which were not then in use because they were unknown to the school managers. For a time all went well but that was in the halcyon days when food was plentiful and fairly cheap. The position on this regard cannot now be regarded as satisfactory.

Perhaps she introduced something similar to today's advertising campaign of consuming 'five fruits and vegetables a day', but she also alludes to the extreme conditions of WWII. Moreover, where inspectors found that food was provided in adequate quantities, but malnutrition persisted, they instigated a retraining programme for the people in charge of catering. In due course, they were brought to Dublin and received instructions over four weeks on the 'fundamentals of institutional cookery as applied to industrial schools [sic] needs, on costing, storage, and preparation of foodstuff'.

*Rampant pro-abortion forces had nothing on God's
little executioners when it came to children out of
wedlock.'*

Niall O'Dowd or Elaine Byrne Irish

Central.com 22nd August 2017

From her appointment in 1939, Dr McCabe could be quite forceful, and at times could be quite acerbic, in her criticisms of the management of some intuitions. She succeeded in improving conditions and had two incompetent managers removed from their positions. After the war, there was a marked improvement in Ireland's living conditions, which was again reflected in the institutions. Dr McCabe's reports declined in their criticism of school authorities simultaneously. Rather than attribute this to the rising social climate and Dr McCabe's success, the Ryan commission suggested that it was due to her mental illness. They were very keen to attribute the lack of criticism to bouts of severe depression suffered by Dr McCabe from the late 1940s to her retirement in 1965. I think this is disgraceful behaviour and it shows that the Ryan commission sought, at every opportunity, to present a negative case rather than admit that improvements had taken place and that many people were working to improve matters, often under challenging circumstances.

Defenders of the Ryan commission will surely blame its blinkered approach to history on its terms of reference. The legislation forced it to focus too narrowly on one aspect of history, dispensing with the broader historical context's imperative viewpoint. It certainly prejudiced the commission's investigations before they began, but the evidence suggests that the commissioners themselves were completely unaware of quality historical investigation techniques and practices. The net result is a failure to set events in their correct historical context and the inability to control for researcher bias. The Ryan commission

became more powerful than God himself, since God is unable to change the past.

*One dog barks at something, and a hundred
bark at the bark. ~Chinese Proverb*

Chapter Conclusion

The central pillar upon which the allegations of abuse and murder stand is entirely reliant on a false interpretation of documentary evidence. The medical evidence and death recording system speaks for itself, demonstrating that the use of the marasmus on death certificates was not a synonym of starvation. For the starvation/abuse myth to stand as truth, hundreds of members of the medical profession, over many decades, would have to have been complicit. When the question is asked what was in it for individual members of the medical profession, the mythmakers become exposed. There was no financial gain, no moral gain, and no reputational gain and everything to lose by turning a blind eye to instances of abuse and murder. When exposed, the result would be career-ending events like getting struck off the register and/or getting charged in a court of law with something like aiding or abetting manslaughter or murder. If that was not a sufficient deterrent, then suffering pillory from one's peers and a career-ending in disgrace, for absolutely no gain, would be more than ample. Such outlandish explanations can only make sense in the minds of conspiracy theorists.

The only explanation proffered by the mythmakers is that illegitimate children were killed because their religious carers hated bastards. Hmm...

The reality is that the greatest threat to the life of an illegitimate child came for their own mother. This judge's summing up in an infanticide case from 1928 reveals the true attitude of how official Ireland viewed illegitimate children.

An illegitimate child is entitled to the protection of the law just, ns much as one born in lawful wedlock. It is in no extenuation of illegitimacy that I say that some of the most distinguished people who ever lived were illegitimate. [...] but somebody must pay the penalty —not the penalty for being immoral, but the penalty for taking human life. [...] their lives are just as sacred as the lives of any other children, and that the State is prepared and has always been prepared to support and maintain them until they reach an age when they can work for themselves.⁸⁴

The potential of such social commentary to challenge the credibility of claims like that of the 'state and church colluding to get rid of an embarrassment to Ireland', is probably the very reason why the scandal propagators work hard to

⁸⁴ 'Infanticide Industry - Judge on Protection of The Illegitimate Child.'

keep such evidence from public view.

Remember I opened this chapter with quotes from various politicians who took exception to and applied erroneous interpretations to Dr Sterling Berry's comment, that 'it is well known that illegitimate children are delicate and marasmic'. Not only was the doctor correct, but he was also expressing an opinion based on the best medical, scientific, and social knowledge of the time. Moreover, this delicacy of infants was not exclusively Irish, and the international literature on the subject is abundant and has been published for centuries.

Sterling Berry's observations are still valid today. The Office for National Statistics in the UK reported in 2004 that illegitimate children in England and Wales had an infant mortality rate 30% higher than for children born to married parents.

I'm sure, like me, you are astonished by that statistic, and thought that higher infant mortality rates for illegitimate children are a thing of the past. The figures appear in 'Health Statistics Quarterly, 2004'. If this UK statistical gathering proves anything, it is that Irish social and medical research is disconcertingly deficient. The consequences are manifest through misinformed beliefs and assertions, which are nearly always expressed with oikophobic belligerence.

The lack of quality research can easily be evinced through observing politicians freewheeling into the realms of fantasy, using assumptions in place of any genuine knowledge gleaned from validated or quality controlled research. According to the criteria used by the political establishment, I shall finish by hammering home yet more evidence of children who were starved to death at Irish maternity hospitals.

Examples of Marasmus occurring outside mother and baby homes

		Marasmus	Alice E. Carolan
1	Son of a	Lives	Present at death
year	labourer	1 year.	Dr Steevens
		Certified	Hospital

Without carrying out an exhaustive search, I managed to find quite a few instances of marasmus on old death certs at hospitals and places, which are not mother and baby homes.

6 weeks	Child of Lohman	Monamus International Accounting Certified	Mr. James O'Sullivan County Hospital	September 1960

Starvation at the county Hospital Tralee 1960

			Certified
42 days	born of Military Policeman	Monamus	Certified

Child of a military policeman - Starved?

		Certified	30 Nov 60	11/3	
3/12	Child of Lohman	Monamus International Accounting Certified	Mr. James O'Sullivan County Hospital	September 1960	

4 days	born of daughter	Monamus	Mr. James O'Sullivan County Hospital	July 1960

Note none of the children listed so far were illegitimate
- why were they starved to death?

When we ask why none of these establishments stands accused of murder through abuse and neglect, it stands as testament more to the existence of bias than incompetence.

This is our holocaust

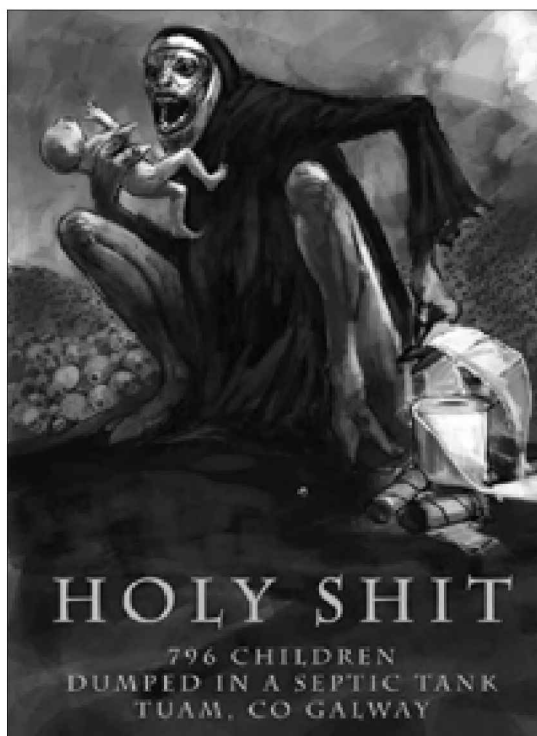
Sinn Féin Councillor Cathal Ó Conchúir
(Galway Advertiser 13 March 2017)

*'The State and Church colluded to get rid of
an embarrassment to Catholic Ireland'*

Prof Diarmaid Ferriter

Irish Independent 6th June 2014

Warning upsetting image overleaf



HOLY SHIT

796 CHILDREN
DUMPED IN A SEPTIC TANK
TUAM, CO GALWAY

3. MASS GRAVE, SEPTIC TANK FALSEHOODS

I would like to credit the artist for the image on the opposite page, but this work is unsigned. The image was shared on social media and come up on my Facebook newsfeed as a mobile upload from a Mark Bolton, 5th March 2017

<https://www.facebook.com/mark.bolton.guitarist>

The post is publicly available and was still accessible on 28-February-2021.

The text attached to the image reads...

I leave this here as this country disgusts me..... baby's bodies found up to 3 years old clearly MURDERED!! and we have to ask the question 'WILL'??? The Gardai get involved..... Let's not allow abortion lets just murder them when they arrive into the world.....!!! The Hypocrisy is for want of a better expression Biblical!!! The Catholic Religion should be outlawed and every asset it possesses frozen for the unholy crimes it has committed in this country so F**KING ANGRY!!!

The ellipses belong to the author and do not indicate where text has been removed. This image has appeared elsewhere on the internet and I take it to be in the public domain.

The local Tuam woman, Catherine Corless started on a noble quest to find the names of the children buried and have them named on a memorial. The story of 796 children buried at a memorial garden at the site of a former children's home did not at first create any excitement. However, when she claimed that the children were buried in a septic tank it was picked up by a British gutter press publication, and the story grew legs, and before you know, it had travelled all over the world. It was not long before those of a more excitable disposition were claiming it as a 'baby holocaust', headlines all over screamed of 'killer nuns', 'mass murder' 'starved to death'. This is typical of the reaction on social media.

The Facebook poster, Mark Bolton has no evidence to support his opinion, and

he, like many others, is clearly gullible and vulnerable to believing in fantasy stories. The mental processes underlying such behaviour I will explain in the next chapter, but for now, it is a clear manifestation of oikophobia, the colonial mentality, and clurichaun syndrome. The Facebook post shows, however, the lengths some people will go to driven by hate and to create a metaphorical pornography to titillate their prejudices. I mentioned the quote below in chapter one, but we have to compare Bolton's claims to the evidence at the risk of repeating myself.

The fifth interim report of the Commission of investigation

The human remains found by the Commission are not in a sewage tank

The unmarked gravesite lie

A Galway County Council planning map dating from 1978 of the housing scheme built on the site of the demolished children's home marks the location of the burial ground. Furthermore, when the sensationalist story broke in 2014 nearly all the photographs of the site appearing in the media show a gate at the entrance with a Christian cross built into its design. It was a known children's cemetery, marked out as such for decades. It was the curiosity to find out who was buried there and erect a memorial naming the children that motivated Catherine Corless to look for death certificates in the first place. Contrast that with media reports that expressed shock after an initial archaeological investigation found 'significant quantities of human remains'. This phrase was again wildly and sensationally reported in the media. Is it only in Ireland that people express shock when a known cemetery is excavated and when the findings are exactly what one would expect to find in a cemetery are found, go doolally. The commission of Investigation was not immune from going a bit doolally itself.

In the commission's third interim report, one comment, in particular, was behind many lurid headlines. I briefly introduced this in Chapter 1, but here is the full quote in the two relevant paragraphs.

The Commission has completed its test excavation of the Tuam site. The stratigraphic survey which was conducted in October 2015 identified a particular area of interest and identified a number of sub surface anomalies that were considered worthy of further investigation. These were further investigated by a test excavation in November/December 2016 and in January/February 2017. Test trenches were dug revealing two large structures. One structure appears to be a large sewage containment system or septic tank that had been decommissioned and filled with rubble and debris and then covered with top soil. The second structure is a long structure which is divided into 20 chambers. The Commission has not

yet determined what the purpose of this structure was, but it appears to be related to the treatment/containment of sewage, and/or waste water. The Commission has also not yet determined if it was ever used for this purpose. In this second structure, significant quantities of human remains have been discovered in at least 17 of the 20 underground chambers which were examined. A small number of remains were recovered for the purpose of analysis. These remains involved a number of individuals with age-at-death range from approximately 35 foetal weeks to 2-3 years. Radiocarbon dating of the samples recovered suggest that the remains date from the timeframe relevant to the operation of the Mother and Baby Home (the Mother and Baby Home operated from 1925 to 1961; a number of the samples are likely to date from the 1950s). Further scientific tests are being conducted.

The Commission is shocked by this discovery and is continuing its investigation into who was responsible for the disposal of human remains in this way. Meanwhile, the Commission has asked that the relevant State authorities take responsibility for the appropriate treatment of the remains. The Coroner has been informed.

Clearly, the writer of the second paragraph did not read what the writer of the previous paragraph had written and directly contradicted it or at least jumped to an excitable conclusion to justify an emotional outburst. The report clearly states that the commission does not know if the structure was ever used to treat sewage. It had found what is thought to be a septic tank on the site that had been decommissioned and filled in with rubble and debris. The report appears to be reasonably professional with a descriptive analysis up until the point where emotionally charged speculation caused a red mist to obscure the factual information. Consequently, the commission has left itself wide open to charges of unprofessionalism at best or so prone to sensationalism that their objectivity can easily be called into question.

Catherine Corless on Facebook

Catherine Corless maintains a personal but publicly accessible Facebook profile, which she uses from time to time to publicise her opinions on the Tuam scandal. Her newsfeed contains only a smattering of personal posts with the overwhelming majority are promoting her point of view, on the Tuam Children's Home, which I surmise is why it is open to all and sundry. Since the fifth interim report release, she has been quoting and publishing extracts from it but in a highly selective manner. In particular, one post appeared on my newsfeed when one of my Facebook friends shared it on 5th August 2019. She posted a copy of a photograph from the report showing two soil pipes leading into the excavated sewage tank, located beside the burial chambers. Here is the text of her full post.

This is what the Archaeologists found when they first excavated the Tuam Home babies sewage site: two inlet sewage pipes which facilitated the flow of sewage into the chambers where the babies remains were discovered. which caused some little remains to be forced against the wall of the chambers and to date one little digit was found compacted in the wall. I do not mean to disturb anyone, but I am only quoting from the Commission of Inquiry's 5th Interim Report on the Tuam site, and I include a photo of the sewage inlet pipes taken by the Archaeologists, and add (for the non believers) that neither Catacombs or an Ossuary would need sewage inlet pipes! Yet, not a stir from the Religious or the Church, the State at least are doing their best.

SEWAGE INLET PIPES: [referring to a photograph]

...

*'This erroneous assertion that 800 bodies were
dumped in a septic tank. That is not true'.
Prof Diarmaid Ferriter - van der Horst interview 2014*

I replied to Catherine Corless's post pointing out that she was mistaken, and I was rebuffed.

I replied: How about reading this section, which says that no pipes were found in the burial chambers. Your photograph is designed to mislead. You state it shows 'two inlet sewage pipes which facilitated the flow of sewage into the chambers where the babies remains were discovered.' but that is not true.

8.64 The limited excavations conducted by the Commission have not revealed the existence of a sewage delivery pipe/culvert; however, soil analysis illustrates that it is likely that the chambers were used for an unspecified duration as sewage tanks. If, after full excavation, no sewage inlet into the chambered structure is found, the likelihood is that the chambers were either never used for sanitary waste, or that waste was delivered into the chambers from the top.

Nowhere in the commission's report does it say that the force of sewage flow resulted in one little digit getting 'compacted in the wall'.

Silence ensued, but the post remains published and is the most 'liked' post on her Facebook account.

There is another aspect, which the commission has not considered, possibly due to restrictions imposed by its terms of reference and that is that the soil

in the entire area surrounding the old sewage system, including neighbouring properties is contaminated. Therefore, the soil analysis within the chambers would have to be contaminated even if it were never used for sewage. There are many reports over several decades in the local newspapers of the workhouse sewage system overflowing into neighbouring properties and the guardians paying compensation to the property owners and graziers. The problems of the sewage continued when the workhouse was turned into a children's home, and the newspapers mention efforts to have it connected to the town's sewage scheme. This finally happened in or around 1938.

The influx of groundwater is a common feature of underground burial chambers, and the commission stated that it was the groundwater, which caused what Corless referred to as 'some little remains', then 'one little digit' to get stuck in the wall. The commission report states on page 33 that it was a 'probable hand phalanx' (part of a finger bone, not a digit) and its position high above the remains, it took to be further evidence that the burial chambers were subject to a 'fluctuation in the water table'. In other words, the influx of groundwater floated the tiny bone up to near the top of the chamber where it became lodged in a crevice in the north chamber wall. The report also noted that the site is at the bottom of a slope descending north to south and that bones had collected to the south of each chamber which it took to be part of the natural drainage and the influx of groundwater. I surmise that the site was prone to instances of high groundwater levels from time to time, which led to the many overflow problems when the site was used for sewage storage/treatment.

Corless however, reworded or reinterprets the report's findings as the flowing force of sewage compacting little remains against the wall. In this one post, Corless makes two significant mistakes that she has refused to correct. Mistake 1 – her claim that the photographs showed the pipes which 'facilitated the flow of sewage into the chambers where the babies [sic] remains were discovered' are photographs of a completely different structure on the same site. It may be more than just a simple error as she has made many public comments calling for the law to be changed so that the burial chambers can be excavated. Mistake 2 – stating the remains were forced against the wall by sewage. By any measure that can be deemed wishful thinking, but I call them mistakes to give her the benefit of the doubt as anyone, including myself can make a mistake, and allow for her admitted lack of skill and training. However, when mistakes are pointed out, referenced with the paragraph number, and they remain uncorrected, it is likely to raise suspicions among more erudite readers. Catherine Corless has made other claims, which have been dismissed by the commission; however, I have avoided going through her claims one by one, to assess their veracity for one simple reason; Corless is merely the catalyst or focal point around which the cultural malignancy element of Irish society has coalesced. The blame for the scandal rests firmly on the shoulders of Ireland's incompetent historians who should have been in possession of the knowledge to spot the scandal's

mistakes, falsehoods, and fantasies and report them to the public.

One of the few historians willing to go public is Brian Nugent, author of the book entitled '@tuambabies' and he has an interesting theory concerning the burials. The site map from the 1970s shows the burial ground extending out to the west of the current memorial garden that is about three times its current size. The local authority built a roadway over this part of the burial ground, allowing access to the back of houses on the Athenry road. It begs the interesting question, why would the council build a road over a cemetery. It is not unusual for old unknown cemeteries to be built over accidentally, and indeed old cemeteries are often built over deliberately. However, when the act is deliberate, it is normal practice to disinter the remains and reinter them elsewhere. Brian Nugent believes that this is what happened, and he could be right. A significant proportion of the burial ground marked out on the map, is not part of the current memorial garden, and could date from the workhouse period but it is unlikely, as it was usual for remains to be buried outside the walls of the workhouse. In fact, in 2012, human remains were found buried in unmarked and unknown graves at a location just outside of the old perimeter walls during roadwork excavations and were deemed to date from the workhouse era. Thus, a full excavation of the entire site outside the memorial garden is required to know the truth, but that presents a significant problem and is unlikely to be carried out. Because if such an excavation were to confirm Nugent's view, it has the potential to cause great embarrassment to many people who had jumped to conclusions before the evidence was available, especially politicians, historians, and the self-appointed doyens of the Irish media. Consequently, I imagine that Ireland being Ireland, there will be pressure on the authorities to ensure that this part of the site remains unexcavated.

I am inclined to disagree with Brian Nugent; I think that the remains were entombed directly in the old disused chambers sometime after 1938. That is my guess, but while we wait for definitive evidence, we have to remain open to all possible scenarios and await a full excavation of the site.

Nugent's book is much different from this one. It is well worth having in the armoury, because he publishes all the details of public comment on the Tuam Children's Home, combined with a wonderful forensic analysis, spotting many inconsistencies in the commission's reports.

Mass Grave?

Would you consider your local cemetery to be a mass grave, perhaps an old burial ground with no headstones or grave markers? The term mass grave is used to imply a criminal act, but mass graves have a short time component. A criminal mass grave is defined by the United Nations as a burial site containing three or more victims of execution. Mass graves are used in times of natural disasters, war, disease epidemics when many corpses are buried together; in peacetime the motivation is often for reasons of sanitation. Mass graves also

have been used to cover up crimes, but a key feature of such graves is that a number of burials have to take place over a short period of time. A place where burials take place over a long period is called a cemetery. The children's burial ground was not unmarked nor is it a mass grave, it is a children's cemetery. The term 'mass grave' is used fallaciously and is, therefore, a significant constituent of a much bigger lie.

Were the bodies of the children dumped into sewage?

The sewerage system at the Workhouse caused significant problems over the decades, and on at least one occasion, the Board of Guardians had to compensate the grazier and landowner for the frequent spills of effluent on to adjoining land. The whole sewage system was modified many times over the years, but even as late as 1937, the residents petitioned Tuam Town Commissioners for the removal of the cesspool at the children's home, citing bad smells and the danger to the health of local people. Note, it is referred to as a cesspool, not a septic tank. The difference is that a septic tank retains the solids and allows wastewater to enter a leech field where it undergoes filtration. A cesspool is a pit lined with stone or concrete but cannot filter waste and eventually it will contaminate the surrounding soil. Cesspools are outdated and illegal in most areas today. There is much chatter in the political-historical record for Tuam about extending the town's sewerage scheme to include the children's home. After several years of attempting to secure the funding, it appears to have been finally achieved in about 1938. Assuming that the 20-chamber structure was used for wastewater treatment and was repurposed as a burial crypt in 1938, the number of burials that took place from 1939 to 1960 would total in the region of 483, leaving 313 buried elsewhere.

The problems with the sewage system, which date from the workhouse era right up to 1938 when the home was connected to the town's system, were I surmise, due to the influx of groundwater, which was the cause of the frequent overflows. I have noticed that many cemeteries are usually located on high ground, which I presume is to keep burials above the water table. The Tuam children's burial site is near the base of a long gentle slope, but it is still elevated above the main Tuam Cemetery located directly across the Athenry road. Accordingly, the influx of groundwater is likely due to the local hydrology's peculiarities, which the constructors of the children's cemetery were unaware.

The local newspapers report that a maternity unit was set up at the home around 1930 however, it appears to a maternity unit. A report in the Western People newspaper in 1936 mentions that the Galway board were to stipulate that when the contract came up for renewal on 31st March 1937, a provision would be inserted to allow expectant mothers to be admitted to the maternity hospital. There is little doubt that with an increase in the number of births a pro-rata increase would have occurred in the infant mortality rate, consequently more burial space was needed. The fact that women were having babies elsewhere before getting transferred to Tuam is mentioned in the sources and would appear

to be backed up by the mortality statistics. Only 43 infants out of the total of 796 died in the first week of life with the first such death being recorded in 1932. There was another single death in 1937 but from 1939 as can be observed on the graph at the end of Chapter 6, the number of deaths rose by a small amount. The peak in 1944 can be accounted for by the high number of people resident at the home. At this time it should be noted that stillborn babies were not counted in the statistics which if they were, would yield a more definitive picture. What is definite is that it was the facility not used solely as a mother and baby home.

I mention the establishment of a birthing maternity unit as there appears to be a coincidence for in 1937 when it was established, the works to connect the home to the town sewer were approved. That left vacant underground structures which could then have been repurposed as burial chambers. It is extremely unlikely that any burials took place at the site before 1938 and the commission of investigation agrees. Accordingly, the notion of babies being dumped in sewage is a lie designed to sell newspapers and believed by gullible ejits.

As I have demonstrated earlier, the term marasmus is not a synonym of starvation, and there is no evidence that any of these deaths were the result of abuse, bar one suspicious death, which was the subject of an inquest which in turn, absolved infant's mother of blame. It is highly unlikely that the women of Tuam were dumping bodies of illegitimate children in sewage. Moreover, the congregation of women would not have themselves carried out burials as the philogynous society of yesterday deemed dirty work to be the domain of men. Accordingly, if anyone was responsible for what the commission has termed 'disrespectful' burial, it was a caretaker, or some male individual charged with the task of child interment. Whether or not a disrespectful burial was carried out remains to be proven, and we have to await the full excavation report. There is hardly a mention of Tuam burials in the final report of the commission of investigation, they have mentioned it all in the 5th interim report.

Irish Burial practices were different

It has become common to read that the various children's cemeteries around the country were the result of the Catholic Church refusing burial to unbaptised children. It has even made its way into the academic literature, and because it is presented without any qualification, it can be validly construed as yet another anti-Catholic falsehood and further evidence of poor-quality work oozing from the Irish university orifice. Archaeology, the study of the human past through material culture, is one of the disciplines within the system, which fully embraces and encourages speculative theories. It adds to what would otherwise be one of the dullest subjects on campus, but it also acts as a perfume attracting a certain type of pollinators who would have otherwise passed it by. In comparison, science too has its speculative theories, but they are clearly defined as speculation and are useful in driving new research to prove or disprove the speculations. Speculative theories can serve a similar function

in archaeology, but in recent years, the discipline has become so immersed in speculative theories and the sheer number appearing in the public domain means that quite a few often masquerade as genuine history.

One medieval historian complained that archaeologists had more of a preference for chasing the sun up into dark passages to go and speculate endlessly about its possible meanings rather than engage in descriptive archaeology. The hippy types find archaeology appealing, especially some new-age hippies searching for evidence to justify their neo-paganism. In Ireland, archaeology is a popular subject choice for students, but there are very few jobs available post-degree and even post master's degree and doctorate. The net result is that archaeologists have taken to writing and broadcasting history, bringing to history the speculative nature of archaeology with total disregard for the quality control mechanisms required for good quality history. Archaeology has played no small role in the myth creation surrounding the mother and baby home scandals and in Irish child burial practices in general.

Irish burial practices were different from most places in Europe for several reasons but mainly due to the suppression of the Catholic religion under English rule. All the churches were confiscated and were given to the Anglican Church but to add insult to injury, the Catholics and all other denominations, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc. were forced to pay taxes (tithes) to support the official state church. With the seizure of churches and the outlawing of the Catholic religion, Irish Catholics refused to bury their dead where their souls risked coercive conversion to Anglicanism and took to burying their dead in the grounds of places, they considered sacred. These places included old ruined medieval churches, monasteries and holy wells, and also what are known as liminal burials. Many of the practices surround Irish burial are thought to be pre-Christian in origin but continued in some areas of the country until the early 1970s when the government finally stamped out most non-compliant burial practices.

Ferta is a term preserved as an element in Irish placenames like Ferta, Clonfert, Ardfert, and at least a dozen other examples. A ferta is a burial site used to mark boundaries and stake a tribe's ancestral claim to the land. Archaeological research has revealed many examples of burials found on hilltops, on spurs over rivers, on ravines overlooking vast expanses of the countryside, or on known boundaries. Furthermore, it is known from the large corpus of early medieval genealogies, laws, sagas, and topographical sources that graves were used to mark boundaries. A large number of graves are included in the medieval Irish corpus of topographical poems and prose texts known as *Dindsenchas Érenn* - 'the place-lore of Ireland'.⁸⁵

Anthropology also universally recognises that burial rites were used as indicators of cultural identity and authority over a territory. In early Irish

⁸⁵ O'Brien, 'Mapping Death: People, Boundaries and Territories in Ireland 1st – 8th Centuries AD - Final Report'.

sources, especially in the laws and in saints' lives, the legal process of taking possession of land involves the ability to cross and use the ferta or ancestral graves. This places burials at the heart of acquiring authority in early Ireland and may often explain the location of certain burials.⁸⁶

An abstract attached to a paper published in the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* reads:

Cillíní—or children's burial grounds—were the designated resting places for unbaptized infants and other members of Irish society who were considered unsuitable by the Roman Catholic Church for burial in consecrated ground. The sites appear to have proliferated from the seventeenth century onwards in the wake of the Counter-Reformation. While a number of previous studies have attempted to relate their apparently marginal characteristics to the liminality of Limbo, evidence drawn from the archaeological record and oral history accounts suggests that it was only the Roman Catholic Church that considered cillíní, and those interred within, to be marginal. In contrast, the evidence suggests that the families of the dead regarded the cemeteries as important places of burial and treated them in a similar manner to consecrated burial grounds.⁸⁷

The first part is self-refuting, but the author partially redeems herself with the last sentence. She begins with the now customary anti-Catholic slight using the phrase 'infants [...] who were considered unsuitable'. As we will see, all clubs, religions, and societies hold that membership has its privileges and only members of the club can avail of these privileges, which in this case is a Catholic burial. Protestants, Jews, apostates, schismatics, unrepentant sinners, etc. were not considered Catholics and so not entitled to a Catholic funeral. Secondly, she notes that the burial practices start in the seventeenth century but fails to equate it with the start of the penal laws. She also interprets the liminal locations of children's burial sites as being symbolic to Limbo but does not mention Fertá.

When anything goes wrong on my DIY projects, I call on Murphy to behave himself. He is named after Murphy's law who is the invisible joker always lurking in the shadows waiting to catch the unwary and ruin their day! Any Irish speaker will be able to translate Cillín or its plural Cillíní as little church/churches. Yet here we can observe that when evidence is blindingly obvious, it often goes unseen. The communities using these burial sites regarded them as consecrated (holy) ground, and they were used to bury all children, not just unbaptised or 'unsuitable' for Christian burial. If such authors had stopped to examine where the adults were buried, then they would have to claim these as burials were on un-consecrated ground too.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Murphy, 'Children's Burial Grounds in Ireland (Cillíní) and Parental Emotions toward Infant Death'.

The native Irish traditionally believed that the children would be lonely in an adult cemetery, which mainly accounts for children's separate burial. That said, it was traditional all across Western Europe to bury children in a separate part of burial grounds. These too are sometimes referred to in the literature as liminal burials.

At the Cillíní, individual burials appear to have been marked using a small uncut standing stone, which over time has fallen over, but none of them were inscribed, or no inscriptions survive. 'Love stones' are commonly found at Cillíní, and other burial sites and these stones appear to have some spiritual significance which are deposited at the grave of a loved one. Examples include a stone from a family homestead or from a favourite place or beauty spot, or indeed just a beautiful stone like quartzite. It is clear that the memory of people buried, in what today are regarded as unmarked graves, were held dear by their families, and were accorded the full respect of the community and a Christian burial.

As is the case with many adult cemeteries, when no one is left to remember the people buried at a graveyard, the site slips from memory, and so they are often called 'forgotten' burials. However, the Cillíní remained largely in the local folk memory and were subject to local respect for centuries. I suspect the Cillíní that have now slipped from memory and were forgotten due to the severance of continuous folk memory through the destruction of communities due to famine and emigration. The fact that graves are not marked with engraved headstones is entirely due to the people's poverty, and only the wealthy natives could afford an inscribed tombstone. From my own observations and not based on any extensive research, it is very rare to find names of children on adult memorials, right up until the early twentieth century. Moreover, nearly all of the old, inscribed tombstones bearing native Irish names in cemeteries are written in the English language, even in the west of Ireland, an Irish-speaking area. While I surmise it was the children of the poorest of the poor who are buried in Cillíní, that might not be the case due to the absence of children's names on adult inscribed tombstones.

I have read many archaeological papers and articles on excavations at Cillíní, and each and every one parrots an earlier work claiming these places were for those unsuitable for Christian burial. It is a false assumption and a classic example of an ACCE at work. (p. ah-chee. Fully explained in the next chapter or see the glossary.) None of our intrepid writers has bothered to compare and contrast Irish Catholic burial practices with those on the continent. The Irish burial practices concerning children were somewhat unique but were entirely in tune with Catholic Church practice.

The [Catholic] 'Rituale Romanum' provides a separate form of burial for infants and children who have died before they have reached years of discretion. It directs that a special portion of the cemetery should be set

aside for them and that either the bells should not be tolled or that they should be rung in a joyous peal. Further, custom prescribes that white and not black should be used in token of mourning.⁸⁸

Accordingly, the discovery of separate burial grounds for children has been construed as ‘designated resting places for unbaptised infants [...] who were considered unsuitable by the Roman Catholic Church for burial in consecrated ground’ is more reliant on imagination than on knowledge of Irish or Catholic funerary practices. Note also the use of the term ‘years of discretion’ meaning children below seven years of age. Furthermore, Irish academic historians and archaeologist might have been reluctant to make such claims had taken the time to look up some of the civil laws regarding burials.

The Cemeteries Clauses Act, 1847 contains the following clauses.

Note the act states that ‘the company’ shall mean the person by the special Act authorised to construct the cemetery. The ‘Established Church’ is the state church or Anglican Church.

23. The bishop of the diocese in which the cemetery is situated may, on the application of the company, consecrate any portion of the cemetery set apart for the burial of the dead according to the rites of the Established Church, if he be satisfied with the title of the company to such portion, and thinks fit to consecrate such portion; and the part which is so consecrated shall be used only for burials according to the rites of the Established Church.

39. The company may allow, in any chapel built within the unconsecrated part of the cemetery, a burial service to be performed according to the rites of any church or congregation other than the Established Church, by any minister of such other church or congregation duly authorized by law to officiate in such church or congregation, or recognized as such by the religious community or society to which he belongs.⁸⁹

There you have it in law, only a certain type of Protestant could be buried in the consecrated part of the cemetery. Catholics both adults and children together with people of all other religions, by law, were to be buried in officially unconsecrated ground.

One final point of note is that the author hints that the Counter-Reformation was the probable cause for the appearance of cillíní. It is possible, but it is more likely that the great upheaval occurring in Irish society, due to the English re-conquest and the resultant suppression of the people and Catholic religion was the cause for the Cillíní to start appearing on the landscape in the 16th and

⁸⁸ ‘Catholic Encyclopedia: Christian Burial’.

⁸⁹ Cemeteries Clauses Act, 1847.

17 centuries. The change process was captured perfectly by Nicholas Canny in the title of his book on the period, 'Making Ireland British 1580-1650'. It was a time when it was seriously uncool to be Irish in Ireland. A time when the Irish began to drop the Mac and O in their surnames to pass themselves off as the Old English (the original Norman invaders of AD1169/71), thus, avoid the worst of the discrimination. However, no matter what level of intimidation and discrimination was threatened, they steadfastly refused to change religion, not just because the command was based on the whim of a foreign tyrant king, Henry VIII but because it had taken a long time to evangelise Britain. Accordingly, by the time the English preachers got to Ireland, the Counter-Reformation was well established, and few if any of them could speak Irish. Therefore, the evangelisation of Ireland was a failure, and with each failure, the discrimination against Catholics became increasingly abusive. Consequently, the Catholics became increasingly ardent in their reluctance to change religion due to what we now call 'psychological reactance':

Reactance is defined as – the motivation to regain a freedom after it has been lost or threatened – leads people to resist the social influence of others.⁹⁰

Consequently, the Irish developed a long and proud tradition in the defiance of governmental authority, which did not end upon achieving independence. Catholics continued to bury their dead, both adults and children in places outside of official cemeteries for many decades after independence. This is particularly true of rural areas in the west of the country. Moreover, many births and deaths were never recorded in the official civil register. In some districts, it was estimated by historians that up to 70% of deaths went unregistered. Successive governments managed to bring down these figures but as late as the 1960s, scholarly articles have estimated that 7% of deaths were unregistered in the west of Ireland and 4% nationally. In one western county, Mayo, it was estimated to have 11.5% unregistered deaths.⁹¹ Progress concerning birth registration was made with the introduction of rationing in 1942 and the Children's Allowance payment in 1944. Food and money were the incentive, but there was little incentive to register deaths for people who had no property to pass on or no life assurance to claim. Besides, there was also the hassle and expense of travelling to the nearest big town to report the event to the registrar. The people simply carried on with their traditions regardless of what was on the statute books. The result is that the official government statistics are inaccurate, leaving ample room for historians and malcontents to engage in guesswork and use it for their own ends.

The Irish government in the late 1930s and 40s eventually began to succeed in closing down most of the traditional but unauthorised burial grounds. James Deeny, the chief medical advisor to the government, recalled how Dr Winslow

⁹⁰ Steindl et al., 'Understanding Psychological Reactance'.

⁹¹ Walsh, 'Life Expectancy in Ireland since the 1870s'.

Sterling Berry carried a pistol concealed under a blanket in his motorcar for protection. Berry was given the task of travelling up and down the country closing down unofficial Catholic burial sites. He expected that some Catholics might take violent exception to a closure order delivered by a Protestant, hence his perceived need to carry a health preservation device. In the end, Sterling Berry had no trouble, and slowly the traditions began to change. The rising tide of property ownership thanks to the land commission rental-purchase schemes, rising affluence in general, and deaths while under hospital care largely led to solving the issue of under-registration of deaths.

Chapter Conclusion

So far, we have seen that the assumptions that it was only children ‘unsuitable’ for Catholic burial who were buried in children’s cemeteries and that these were somehow disrespectful interments are false. The septic tank burial story is also false and so too is the assumption that it only contained the bodies of illegitimate infants. Paupers the world over, even today, or people whose families cannot afford a funeral cost are buried in mass graves without an individual grave marker. There is nothing-disrespectful intended by the authorities, but it is by any definition burial on the cheap. There are very few if any local authorities or taxpayers in the world will pay for full funerals, burials, and individual grave markers because it is perceived to be an unfair burden on taxpayers. Like the Tuam Home, Barnardo’s children’s charity in London has been subjected to sensationalist reporting for burying 500 children in unmarked graves. Furthermore, the local authorities are required by law in most jurisdictions to carry out such burials for public health reasons.

At a time when money was tight in the 1930s and 40s, to the women in charge of the Tuam Children’s Home, it might have appeared to be a crime to spend money on the dead when it was needed for the living. Accordingly, I think someone decided to repurpose an empty concrete subterranean structure as burial crypts. 80 years later, the Irish’ imagination got the better of them and stories of holocausts, abuse and septic tanks. Accordingly, Ireland can claim another world first as it is the first country in the world to have an organisational all-female inspired and executed holocaust in history.

We have a tidal wave of anti-Roman Catholic and anti-Christian sentiment sweeping Ireland. You can see a great many people are seeking notoriety and validation of their current religious beliefs but are forced to jockey for position on the overcrowded bandwagon. All the forces which balderdash must muster to pass for truth are deployed no matter how much the future reputational cost is likely to be. In 21st century Ireland, the allure of fame and status has taken precedence over logic and reason.

At this stage in the book and given all the slurs, which have been cast upon the dead, I hope you wonder why and what is behind all this present-day hatred. The next section of this book will focus on answering these questions.

...

A little extra information...

Paupers are always buried in unmarked graves

Under the terms of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, it is the council's duty to take care of the final disposition – the cremation or burial – of people who die, or are found dead within their boundary, if no-one else will take responsibility. The average cost of a pauper's funeral stood at £1,719,329, (sic) according to findings published by BBC findings in 2015.

(the figure quoted in error above is actually the total cost of 2,580 pauper funerals for the year 2013-14) Source: <https://www.funeralguide.co.uk>

Since 1976, Hart Island has been operated and maintained by the Department of Corrections, which transports inmates from Riker's Island to dig and fill the graves — as many as 2,000 new ones each year, organized into 70-foot-long plots that can hold about 150 adults each, or 1000 children. Somewhere between 850,000 to 900,000 poor, homeless, or forgotten people are buried there, making it the largest public cemetery in the world. Yet, aside from the inmates working there, only a very few have ever visited this burial ground. (Source: see link below)

I wanted to use a photo here of the bodies of children in wooden boxes about to be buried in a mass grave on Hart Island, New York but I was refused permission. You can view these photos on the New-York Historical Society blog page. (Google image search term: hart island burials)

<http://blog.nyhistory.org/rare-photographs-of-hart-island-new-yorks-potters-field/>

SECTION II WHY?

4. CULTURAL BIAS & THE CLURICHAUN ASCENDENCY

Preamble

So far, I have introduced you to the evidence that will convince most reasonable people that the anti-Christian movement in Ireland relies for its popularity on passing off major falsehoods as truths. It begs the question why? Why would a significant section of society fall prey to conspiracy theories, fake news, and all sorts of obvious balderdash? How could this happen in an age when scientific, reasoned, and logical information is so easily accessible? Why have the academic historians been so quiet or incompetent? It is tempting to attribute it to cognitive misery (p. my-sery), a natural human tendency towards intellectual laziness. It is one contributory factor, but the sheer scale of the problem points to cultural biases. We frequently underestimate their power, but Albert Einstein showed an astute awareness of the problem observing, ‘few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are incapable of forming such opinions.’ Most of us are happy to freewheel and go along with the crowd, especially when we don’t know much about the subject matter, and that is what gives conspiracy theories their great power.

In getting to the root cause of this phenomenon, I will start by looking at Irish culture from a new perspective and rearrange the components under new labels to bring to the surface a more realistic understanding of today’s prevailing cultural influences. In part two, I present several exemplars, which have appeared in the media, so you can judge for yourself if they are the product of cultural bias.

Culture

The factors driving the anti-Christian scandals are deeply rooted in Irish cultural bias, and although these biases have been in Irish culture for centuries, only

recently have they found a new means of expression. It is therefore essential that we look at these biases, because only then can we begin to understand the process, which makes fantasy appear to be such a genuine reality in some people's estimation.

The most common cultural bias, begrudgery is well known to all and sundry. It is often described as a tendency to be jealous of the success of other people, which is most often expressed through derogatory commentary. It has been studied before but only on that level, however, if we drill down deeper, we find that there are enormous psychological benefits to be gained from acts of begrudgery. Accordingly, we have to dive deep to a place where few have ventured before, to expose the many cultural artefacts, psychological and social factors, which combine to fabricate what we now call 'Irish Culture'.

We were all inculcated with biases from an early age with both positive and negative aspects of our culture, and as with any population group, some people are more negative than positive and vice versa. For this chapter, I am concentrating on the negative aspects of Irish culture and am therefore conscious that I will leave my readers with a negative view of the people of the Irish nation. Accordingly, I feel duty-bound to balance the negativity with a more positive and realistic overview of the Irish nation at the end of the chapter. For the moment though, we must first evaluate why significant elements within the Irish nation surf on negative waves.

Historians use the term 'ascendency' to describe the dominance of one social group in society; the Protestant Ascendency is a prime example. It covers the political, economic, and social domination of Ireland between the 17th century and the early 20th century by a religious minority. Nearly 100 years after its demise, the Protestant Ascendency is still resonant in Irish society today and plays no small role in the scandals.

The 'Clurichaun Ascendency' is my term to describe how the half-witted, inept, most culturally biased, and undereducated people have risen to high office over the last few decades. I know a bold statement, but I am hopeful by the end of this chapter; you will see that I have presented a number of exemplars that make and bolster the case and point to the pervasiveness of the problem. Despite easier access to third-level education and an increasing number of people holding university degrees, quality education has not improved but has declined. In the twenty-first century, Ireland has grown to become a country where ignorance has been allowed to prevail above intelligence and erudition. That is another bald statement, but as we will see, the evidence to support this claim is abundant and manifest right across Irish society and in a wide range of institutions, including universities. Places where one might reasonably expect to find the custodians of Ireland's high intellectual tradition, but they have either vacated the institutions or are being kept quiet, confined to the university's padded cells.

Moreover, by the end of Chapter 5, you will be as shocked as I am, to witness how low the standard of education has dropped. Many university academics are not empowered with the most basic knowledge to recognise even the most implausible of conspiracy theories. I do not doubt that the academics will try to dismiss this claim as polemical, so another principal aim of this chapter is to posit the supporting evidence. It will take us into the behavioural sciences realm, a place where a general audience may find the concepts difficult to understand and the going a bit tough. However, to make for easier reading, I have tried to use as much plain language as possible and explain technical terms as I go along. Full explanations of terms and concepts can be found in the glossary at the back of the book. The second half of this chapter is much more readable with examples of comments, quotes, and works, which further evinces the existence of clurichaun syndrome.

Clurichaunism

Have you ever stepped outside in your night attire and the door slams shut and locks you out, opened a cupboard, and it disgorges its entire contents down on top of you? Has it ever felt like someone is working behind your back, just to annoy you, doing stuff like hiding your keys, your purse/wallet, putting holes in your favourite pair of stockings etc.? At times you become aware of your inner voice sneering at your failures and mocking your successes, that is the work of a clurichaun.

In Irish folklore, a clurichaun is a type of leprechaun, a poisonous little sprite who is always up to no good. They are always playing practical jokes and not only mock your success but put obstacles in the way of your achievements like turning off your alarm clock ahead of an important appointment and so on. Clurichaun, are practically invisible and physically inaudible so they hunt for empty minds to use in sneering and scoffing at others.

Using the clurichaun as inspiration, I have coined the term clurichaunism/clurichaun syndrome to describe a set of subconscious cultural biases unique to Irish society; some of these biases have long been recognised and studied. Begrudgery, for example, is now widely viewed as a contributing factor to Irish society's self-hatred. In this chapter, I will seek to explain why these biases are unique to Irish society and posit some examples as evidence. The complexity of the subject would take many volumes to explain, but I am hoping that a brief synopsis of the most compelling evidence should suffice to persuade even the most sceptical reader of their existence.

The term clurichaun syndrome is intended to encapsulate the negative and peculiarly Irish set of self-hate biases, which are in turn a product of the 'colonial mentality' which is defined as:

The internalised attitude of ethnic or cultural inferiority felt by people as a result of colonisation, i.e., them being colonised by another group. It

corresponds with the belief that the cultural values of the coloniser are inherently superior to one's own. The term has been used by postcolonial scholars to discuss the transgenerational effects of colonialism present in former colonies following decolonisation.⁹²

The colonial mentality is far more than a mere feeling of inferiority; it has real-world consequences. Many are detrimental to the nation and the cause of individual self-harm. Depression and suicide rates are higher in post-colonial societies, resulting in a debilitating and restraining effect on social and economic development.

Oikophobia is another term that is akin to clurichaun syndrome but takes no account of the unique Irish cultural differences. In recent political usage, it has come to mean a hatred of one's own culture and people. Many philosophers argue that in today's western societies, those involved in left-wing politics tend to be oikophobic. In contrast, those in the right-wing are the exact opposite, xenophobic.⁹³

The colonial mentality and oikophobia are also deeply embedded within the institutions of the Irish state. Take the barristers organisation as an example; remember it handed out a human rights award to Catherine Corless. It is a profession that honours King Henry VIII, and wears black robes mourning the death of King Charles II who died in 1685. The newly independent government of the state kept the British civil service intact complete with their notions of British superiority, anti-Irish attitudes, and practices that remain common within it. Evidence of the colonial mentality can be observed daily in the Irish media, even a century after gaining independence. The harm the Irish cause to themselves is extraordinarily palpable and blindingly evident when such instances are collated.

During a speech given in February 2021, at a seminar on the centenary of the war of independence and colonialism, the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, posed these questions:

‘Are there residues of post-colonial inferiority in attitudes to the Irish language and wider Irish culture? Do the terms so often used as something being ‘very Irish’ or even that on occasion decisions are described as ‘an Irish solution to an Irish problem’ reveal a residual belief that a description of being Irish is synonymous with being lesser?’

As I will elaborate later the answer to these questions is in the affirmative. The President went on:

‘In all of this, there is the grounding fact of humiliation, inflicted, experienced, recalled, remembered or imagined. The psychological impact of the cultural

⁹² ‘Colonial Mentality’.

⁹³ Beckeld, “‘Oikophobia’”.

imperialism that was experienced over the centuries in Ireland was perceived as a deeply ingrained urge to humiliate.’

As it will be explained later, humiliating others has many psychological benefits for the humiliator. There is no doubt that our colonial past has left deep psychological scars on the Irish people and culture. The malignancy of which are only recently beginning to be countenanced, but only by a small few intellectuals.

350k unemployed and yet talent has to be imported.

I will start by looking at Ireland’s talent shortage as exemplified in a quote by the president of Dublin City University, Ferdinand von Prondzynski who said in March 2010 that Irish education faced a series of problems.

‘We have a school system that is offering an education that, while staffed by dedicated teachers, is largely out of date, with questionable learning methods and with a syllabus that is not sufficiently adapted to society’s changing needs.’

The comments came at a time when Ireland had nearly 350,000 people unemployed (16% unemployment rate). Accordingly, there was no shortage of people available for work, but the country had a shortage of educated people, thereby necessitating the importation of talent from abroad.

The same article also suggested that many of the top global companies headquartered in Ireland have a blacklist of third level institutions from whom they will not hire graduates. People on the ground can see that many of the top companies are staffed with non-Irish workers. Ireland has imported hundreds of thousands of workers over the last decade. Over that decade from the time when the international financial crisis hit at the end of 2008, Irish newspapers were full of stories of young people emigrating to places like the UK, Australia and Canada. Figures varied wildly depending on the amount of hysteria need to sell a particular newspaper, but after a year or two, most authors settled on a figure of about 200,000. All the stories stopped after the 2011 census revealed that the population had risen by 100,000. That means that if 200k people left the country, they were replaced by 300k non-nationals. The same census revealed that there were 544,000 documented non-nationals living in Ireland, that is half a million people who, unlike the natives, thought that Ireland was a great place to live. An influx of five hundred and fifty thousand into a country with a total population of only 4.6 million and a workforce of only 2.2 million is a significant number, but the official figures do not include the migrants who became Irish citizens, which from 2011 to Sep 2018 was estimated to be a further 114k people.⁹⁴ Going back to 2011, when the numbers of persons unemployed rose to about 350,000, the inescapable conclusion is that the

⁹⁴ No official figures are produced by the government.

technical institutes, the universities, and indeed the entire education system failed the population of the country and were not able to produce graduates with the talent required to work in the new high-tech world of the 21st century.

Covering up academic failure

As we will see later, the academics have a strategy for covering up their failures by deploying the 'lack of resources' canard. It works brilliantly every time, pulling the wool over the eyes of politicians and the public. That can only happen in a political system where many politicians are not of sufficient intellectual calibre to question the fallacies, bad theories, and crazy policies, which emerge from academics and academically trained individuals from time to time. The failed National Spatial Strategy launched in December 2002 is one prime example of the many failed policies created and underpinned by academically trained individuals. The area of childcare policy is perhaps their most damning failure, which unlike the British; the Irish have not begun to examine the fundamentals of the many failures in social work due to the poor standard of training. The investigation into the appalling and incompetent management of what was known as 'Baby P Case' by social workers in England, who through incompetence, facilitated the abuse and murder of a toddler, revealed a training regime, which was 'too academic'. In other words, being able to write a good academic essay does not confer, nor is it an indicator that students possess practical abilities concerning the management of families and individuals in crisis.

To be fair, politicians always make easy scapegoats, it is a national sport in Ireland and other countries too, but the net effect is that the politicians get all the blame, even when it is not due. Heaping all the blame on the politicians diverts attention away from the incompetence lurking deep down in the system, like in the permanent government, also known as the civil service and public service, which includes the universities and many quangos. Ireland is technically a democracy, defined as being ruled by the people but the people do not rule it; therefore, the term 'representative democracy', is more valid. In theory, people's views are represented through the use of delegates who take decisions on their behalf. That is not what happens, and they can sometimes rule over the people with all the arrogant condescension of an absolute monarch. Whether real or imagined, this impression propagates and sustains negative attitudes among the populace towards the political classes. Complaints about politicians' pay and behaviour are so common that they stand as evidence of a significant 'them and us' attitude between the people, politicians, and civil administration. Political and administrative arrogant attitudes are manifest in many ways, including the condescending attitude of the Road Safety Authority to Irish motorists and a similar governmental attitude to alcohol consumption. The Irish are not the biggest consumers of alcohol in Europe, the Germans are the biggest per-capita consumers of beer in the world, but no one is lining up to call them drunkards. There is evidence to suggest the presence of the 'self-

fulfilling prophesy' (a belief or expectation that helps to bring about its own fulfilment), in the way Irish alcohol consumption statistics are gathered and interpreted.

The influx of vast numbers of talented individuals has been the cause of significant unanticipated social problems like the housing crisis, a shortage of places to live, which has placed a strain on many state services. For example, Dublin benefits more from foreign direct industrial investment than the rest of the country and the importation of talent combined with good salaries has driven accommodation rents and domestic property prices to unaffordable levels for many native Dubliners. The result is that Dublin in for the duration of the 2010s and into the 2020s, has a homelessness crisis. This has had knock-on effects throughout the country as a whole. Certain sections of the community are enraged and see the government consigning them to a life collecting social welfare payments while at the same time workers are imported. When such a disconnect exists between a government and its people, the tension, in all likelihood in most other countries, would lead to revolution or a tremendous social outcry, but that does not happen in Ireland because the Irish have access to, and frequently use a safety release valve called emigration. That said that social outcry finally began in earnest as a result of the February 2020 General Election. It was notable for a significant shift in support away from the traditional political parties, going instead to Sinn Féin, a party with nationalist and socialist agenda, which was/is the political wing of the IRA. The party is hated by the establishment which scarcely missed an opportunity to cast aspersions on it, for decades. However, the establishment's incrementally rising enthusiasm for negativity had the reverse effect of what they intended. The more it vilified Sinn Féin, the more appealing it made the party, to protest voters and its support grew. It is reverse psychology, which was missed by all the pundits and political parties. If the voters want to protest the failed policies of the established parties, one of the best methods is to vote for a party that will annoy them, and that is what happened. Alas for the electorate, Sinn Féin members display a typical Marxist hostility to religion, and they have been at the forefront in making false claims that babies were starved to death at mother and baby homes.

It is usual in Ireland that when individuals become disillusioned with the government, they simply up and leave the country rather than stay and become advocates for change. Such defeatism is rooted in Irish cultural biases resulting in a circularity of inaction. The sneering attitude of some but not all, of the emigrants appearing in many publications across the Anglophone, is the highly visible evidence of the negative aspects of Irish cultural bias. One could argue that the emigrants' sneers are a response to what they see as a sneering attitude, the Irish government and civil/public service holds for them. All sides work hard to sneer at one another, but no one has taken the time to examine the madness of the situation nor try to understand the social and psychological

forces underpinning such behaviours nor how and why they appear unique to Irish society.

To sneer or to sneer, there is no question

One such sneering article was written by an Irish, and at that time, a recently unemployed lawyer, published by the Boston Globe in 2010.⁹⁵ This article piqued my interest so much that it started me off on a decade long research project examining Irish cultural biases. The subject of the article was the international financial crash, and it customarily started with a sneer at the Irish people when readers were told to ‘expect more misery memoirs in 20 years time’. It went on to call the Irish people ‘arrogant’, ‘competitive’, ‘rude’ and ‘champagne binging’. It was only one of the hundreds of articles, before and since, which would lead readers to falsely believe that the Irish were the sole cause of the international financial crisis. The author, Rory Fitzgerald, was aware of Irish self-loathing writing that it was making a comeback but carried on with his own self-loathing not realising the circularity of his argument. As we will see later, poking fun at people who carry the same label as oneself is to sneer at oneself, family, and friends, which is why Clurichaun Syndrome is classified as a self-hate bias. However, it that was not the sneering of Rory Fitzgerald that was the most shocking part of the article, but the many anti-Irish comments attached to the online version, many from the Irish themselves. Fitzgerald was not the only person sneering at his fellow country people as thousands of more sneering blogs, newspaper articles books etc. have appeared before and since. Far from blowing my gigantic Irish trumpet, I declare that the Irish are no better or worse than any other nation. I do however object strenuously to my children, my wife, my parents, my ancestors, friends, and relations being labelled ‘arrogant’, ‘competitive’, ‘rude’ and ‘champagne binging’ for no other reason than they were born on a particular rock in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean. The primary reason for such sneering behaviour is so that a small mind can feel like a big mind.

Other societies have similar biases or fetishes; the German word ‘schadenfreude’ means to derive pleasure from another’s misery. During the financial crisis, it became a popular term appearing in many English language publications. On the surface, there is an element of schadenfreude evident in many post-financial crash articles like Fitzgerald’s, however just beneath the surface lurks a deeper set of prejudices, most noticeable by the application and intensity in the level of schadenfreude compared to other societies. Neither the Americans, the British nor any other nation took to sneering at their own people with the same gusto and bile, which the sections of the Irish people and media did. Deriding the people who had lost their jobs, homes, and sometimes families and lives as a result of the financial crash in most other nations would cause a backlash but not in Ireland, and that is because the Irish are used to it, ignore it and get on with their lives. Such behaviour has a psychological benefit for the

⁹⁵ Fitzgerald, ‘Irish Eyes Aren’t Smiling on the Emerald Isle’.

sneerer, which we will explore later but first, back to the financial crash.

One-sided stories

Many nations had been through many financial bubbles and crashes in history, and one would reasonably expect that Irish writers would search out such histories to see what lessons lie therein. Such articles are hard to find in the records of both in the formal Irish media and informal media, like online bloggers and none became popular or entered the popular arena. In effect, any evidence, which proved that such events were part of the normal human experience, was subconsciously self-censored out of the story to support the peculiar notion that Irish people are particularly faulty human beings.

The clurichauns had the most fun they ever, and they were beside themselves sneering at the Irish politicians who, at the height of the financial crisis, sought a government loan from Britain. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, it has never been published in an Irish newspaper that, even after that loan was secured, the British government borrowings from the Irish government were €9 billion more than what the Irish owed them, €113.5 billion vs €104.5 billion. The figures are from 2011, but one has to look up the website of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to get such information.⁹⁶ Thus, we see that at the very heart of Irish cultural biases lies self-censorship, which has the effect of promoting and perpetuating bias. Seldom if ever, is contradictory evidence countenanced and so it goes that mitigation against the effects of these biases is thus practically non-existent.

Imaginary social climbing

Aside from the 2010 Boston Globe article, another moment of inspiration for my cultural bias research was provided by a man at a branch of Allied Irish Bank, located at the historic Lynch's Castle building in Galway in 2009. I was standing at the bank counter waiting to buy American dollars for a forthcoming trip when in off the street walked a dishevelled and inebriated vagrant man who proceeded to shout abuse at the bank staff. 'Are ye not ashamed of yerselves and what ye did to the country.' 'Bankrupting us.' 'Are ye not ashamed, you should all be ashamed of yourselves', and it continued in that vein for a minute or two before he walked/staggered back out on to a beautifully sunny Shop Street. The bank staff and customers mostly tried to ignore the man, but the demeanour of the bank staff indicated that what worried them the most was not the insults, but the kept a vigilant eye out for projectiles. It was also obvious to me they had become accustomed to abuse not just from vagrants but from customers too. Indeed, so much abuse directed at bank staff that at least one committed suicide as a result. However, when mulling over the events I had witnessed at the AIB that day, with some bemusement and bewilderment, I tried to figure out what would motivate a person to behave that way. It slowly began to dawn on me that for him, there was an enormous psychological benefit. Not wishing

⁹⁶ 'Eurozone Debt Web'.

to cast aspersions on an unfortunate class of persons but it is not untrue to state that an alcoholic street vagrant ranks low in the social order. In his mind, by sneering at the bank staff, he was mentally placing an entire cohort of people beneath his social level. Accordingly, it elevated him to a higher social rank, so he could demonstrate to himself that he was socially and intellectually superior to all the bank staff in the country. Having created for himself the illusion of high social standing, it conferred upon him the right, perhaps even the duty to chastise the subordinate classes beneath his social stratum, as all good snobs do. Therein I discovered where the genesis of many Irish cultural biases lay. The foundation stone is a type of gaseous psychological snobbery held by the ego when actual real-world social advancement is impaired or impossible through lack of ability, or opportunity, or financial means, or a combination of all three.

Our ancestors, who were stuck in a poverty trap through no fault of their own, assembled for their psychological wellbeing, a sense of dignity through imaging that their social rank was above that of others in their immediate and distant society. The tool used to achieve a high rank involves no more than the psychological generation and the holding of derogatory views aimed at different cohorts in society. Over the centuries, these derogatory views have been transmitted down through the generations and are endemic in Irish society today. As most cultural artefacts are passed on early in life, plenty of us never become aware, let alone re-evaluate our childhood-initiated prejudices later in life. Moreover, some prejudices masquerade as a societal norm like self-deprecating humour, there is no nation on earth better than the Irish at self-deprecation. Self-deprecating humour is terrific, but there exists a threshold that when crossed, becomes a manifestation of self-hate.

The begrudgers

The international financial crisis unleashed a tsunami of Irish anti-Irish begrudgery, but the genesis of anti-Irish prejudice and the resultant racism can be traced back to the 12th century Norman invasion. The British for example, until relatively recently, had many racial terms for the Irish including the term 'white ni**ers', but what many people do not realise is that it is the Irish themselves who are the most racist anti-Irish nation on earth. It is difficult to understand and perhaps incredulous at first, but if I put it this way, Irish people, as a rule, are inculcated from an early age with a subconscious hatred for every other Irish person and all things Irish. There are many exceptions to this rule, which keeps the society functioning and helps the cultural biases masquerade as self-deprecating humour. Excluded from this hatred are most members of one's own social circle and the Irish they meet as strangers. The most potent hatred is reserved for those whom they have never met but are perceived as being the paragon of Irishness. Because the bias, its resultant prejudices and their expressions are directed at people they have never met, its circularity goes unnoticed. The upshot of it all is that other Irish people who have never met you think that you are backward and so your expression of hate/backwardness

comes back on you; thus, it is a self-hate. This is why we have the uniquely Irish love of the phantasmagorical, which escapes even the mildest veracity test, and fallacies come to be believed as if they were fact. This is especially true of information and lore, which shows that the other Paddies and Biddies are backward. It arises out of the nation's long history of poverty, particularly the social stagnation that prevents people from moving up the social order. When blocked from social climbing through material purchase and display, the human mind, for reasons of self-esteem will create illusions of higher than justified social standing, autonomously. One of the primary mechanisms it deploys is the denigration of others. Perceiving others to be lower down the social order than one's self creates the illusion of superiority and high social standing. Consequently, a major psychological benefit accrues that is highly resistant to rational influence as it diminishes one's impression of their worth, they think that they bring to society.

Nirvana fallacy

The immunosuppressant obscuring the pathogens of Irish cultural biases from recognition and attack is the Nirvana Fallacy. It never allows Irish people nor Irish society to be validly compared to other human societies. Perish such thoughts; the Irish usually compare their society to unrealistic models of behaviour and idealised humans. Illusory superiority and the Nirvana fallacy are the two foundations upon which clurichaun syndrome stands.

If we think back to the street vagrant shouting abuse at the staff of a bank in Galway, we see that he was subconsciously using denigration to create illusions of superiority for himself. It points to the existence of a subconscious psychological defence mechanism linked to self-esteem. The famous 'Stanford Prison Experiment' allows us a glimpse of this defence mechanism.

The social setting holds substantial influence

One seminal psychological experiment set out to test how much influence the social setting would have over people's behaviour. A pretend jail environment was set up with volunteer students who at the outset were divided into two groups to play roles as prison guards and prisoners. It was initially planned that the experiment would last for a two-week period where the behaviour of the various actors would be monitored and recorded to study the psychology of imprisonment. The guards were given no training on how to be guards and were free to make up their own rules on how to maintain law and order and to command respect from the prisoners, within limits. However, it was not long before the guards began to abuse their authority, but even more surprisingly, the prisoners reacted with defiance. Logically it would be easier to comply with the guards, but the prisoners' defiance caused the guards to become even more abusive, which led to more defiance, and the vicious circle led to a prisoner rebellion. Even though all the participants, guards, and prisoners were of equal standing in the real world, the experience of prison became so real for the participants, that it caused psychological distress, and the experiment was

ended after only six days.

Even though it was a pretend prison and to make the experience more real, the prisoners were deliberately humiliated and dehumanised and were told that this would happen in the contractual agreements that they all had signed. At first, they were stripped searched, then given prison numbers instead of their name, and had to wear a prison uniform including a cap made from women's nylon stockings, a substitute for having their heads shaved. The defiance of the prisoners in response to the guard's suppression shows the existence of a threshold where the human mind will not allow an individual's sense of dignity to fall below. We know many films and prison documentaries that prisoners in real prisons maintain a social hierarchy, the sex offenders are placed at the bottom of this hierarchy and have to be kept separate from other prisoners for their safety. All prisoners while in prison at least, are at the very bottom of the social order, yet none of them will see it that way because the human mind needs a sense of dignity to maintain self-esteem to give an individual sense of self-worth. Today the experiment stands as a seminal study in behavioural science as it is one of a series of experiments, which revealed what is called the 'power of the situation', a basic premise of social psychology that assumes people's thoughts, actions and emotions are influenced substantially by the social setting.⁹⁷ It means that even people of strong character and moral fortitude can subconsciously act in ways, which are contrary to their beliefs. The situation has much power over personal character and beliefs.

Today some people claim that the Stanford Prison experiment was flawed because of knowledge that came to light later, that the instigator and researcher Philip Zimbardo had instructed one of the guards to be tougher. However, that does not mean that all the findings were flawed, and no one disputes that the psychological reactance of the prisoners was genuine.

The roots of clurichaunism are deep-seated and go back many generations. Under British rule for centuries, the Irish suffered dehumanisation, humiliation, suppression, discrimination, poverty, and more. You could say that the vast majority of the population lived in forced equality due to poverty, but even with equality, some sections of society will find ways to maintain a sense of superiority over other sections of society. No stone will be left unturned to create a sense of superiority ranging from employment type and farm size to sexual prowess, hair colour, family origin, etc. By far, the easiest way to become upwardly socially mobile, especially when one has no financial means, is to create and hold opinions that denigrate groups of individuals or individuals.

Hob Knobbing

Another favoured tactic of the illusory social elevation process is to create a sense of affinity with groups higher up the social order. Think of someone joining a golf club to consort with the big knobs or at least be in their company.

⁹⁷ 'Power of the Situation'.

In clurichaunism, from time in memoriam, aligning with the superior British, even if the relationship is entirely imaginary, empowers clurichauns to pour scorn upon and sneer at friends, neighbours, countrymen, and countrywomen, ancestors, etc. It is a surprisingly pervasive behaviour, which appears with such commonality that hardly a day goes by in the Irish media without a clurichaun writing about how faulty the Irish are compared to the British. This pro-British illusory superiority is around for so long that Irish society has developed descriptive terms, including Jackeens or Union Jackeens, i.e., people who are lovers of the Union Jack flag. Seoneens, derived from the Irish word for George and translating as little Georges, i.e., named after the patron saint of England, and of course much-used insult calling Irish people West Brits. It arises from a late 18th/ early 19th-century proposal, which emerged around the time of the 1801 act of union to change the name of Scotland to North Britain and Ireland to West Britain.

The tennis player Andy Murray is nearly always described as British when he wins by the English media and Scottish when he loses. This type of behaviour has been observed in many individuals and societies across the globe and is a manifestation of two psychological processes that are also a feature of clurichaunism. The first process was identified and empirically researched by Robert Cialdini in the 1970s who termed it using the acronym BIRGing. A decade later, its opposite CORFing was added to the lexicon. These behaviours were first and are now most easily observed in sports fans. When 'their' team wins, even though they had made absolutely no contribution whatsoever to the team's victory, they exclaim with delight 'we won'. When the team loses, the exclamation changes to 'they lost' thereby distancing themselves from having any responsibility for the loss. BIRGing is an acronym for Basking in Reflected Glory while CORFing stands for Cutting Out Reflected Failure.

Aligning oneself with winners allows a person to boost one's self-esteem, while self-esteem is protected from negativity by CORFing. Self-esteem is a powerful influencer of our behaviour and is defined as 'the degree to which the qualities and characteristics contained in one's self-concept are perceived to be positive.'⁹⁸ Self-esteem is, therefore, proportional to one's perception of the accumulation of these qualities and characteristics. A reasonably high perception of self-esteem is regarded as a vital ingredient of mental health. That is a significant point; people with low self-esteem are more prone to negative thoughts and mental illness. Self-esteem is central to our psychological makeup, and the human mind will go to extraordinary lengths to boost it, even without a person's conscious knowledge. While BIRGing and CORFing are easily observed when the biases are manifest, they comprise but a fraction of the many psychological processes, which collide and coalesce to form a complete cultural bias.

Regular readers and viewers of the output of the Irish media, particularly the

⁹⁸ 'Self-Esteem'.

most observant among you will note that in most instances when anti-Irish biases expressed, the authors or quoted individuals, usually have one thing in common, Gaelic Irish surnames. One would naturally expect that the last people on earth who would hold anti-Irish biases would be the native Irish. I can only surmise that arises from their ancestral vanquishment when their ancestors took to CORFing after the collapse of the Gaelic aristocracy post the Elizabethan Wars and the Flight of the Earls in 1607. As a direct result, and unlike many other nations, the Irish have no native aristocracy to go BIRGing with. The Gaels who might see themselves as aristocracy have long since gone over to the British tradition. Consequently, to create the illusion of prestige through association, the Gaels are forced to side with an external aristocracy. The net result is that the native Irish have a long tradition of despising themselves, which has been in situ for over 400 years.

Clurichaunism shares several of its features with classic groupthink. However, in this case, and contrary to what the name implies, membership of a real-world group is not necessary for the symptoms of clurichaunism to become manifest. The group can be entirely imaginary as clurichaunism is a selfish, self-serving, self-aggrandising bias. While group membership is not strictly necessary, holders of the bias do actively seek out friends and acquaintances who hold similar opinions. Think of a sports fan who will join a club to be with people who agree with him/her.

On top of that, they will selectively seek out evidence to support their opinions through a myriad of sources including social prejudices, publications, political rancour, biased journalists ad inf. However, it is possible to support a particular team without ever joining a supporters' club, and individuals can create the illusion of belonging to a group without actually belonging to a group or meeting anyone from the group! This entirely psychological membership can be just as powerful actual as actual membership, which accounts for the bias's similarity to groupthink. The Meriam-Webster dictionary defines groupthink as 'a pattern of thought characterized by self-deception, forced manufacture of consent and conformity to group values and ethics' The Psychology Today Magazine, defines it as 'occurring when a group of well-intentioned people make irrational or non-optimal decisions that are spurred by the urge to conform or the discouragement of dissent.' Although it can be the case, the encouragement of conformity, and/or dissent is not necessarily imposed by a group leader, as group members will naturally act to bring this about as a way of endearing themselves to the group. In clurichaun syndrome, group leaders are not necessarily people who sit at the head of the table; leaders can be remote and psychologically appointed to the position. The leaders are those who express similar prejudices in the media or real life. The populist journalist Fintan O'Toole is an exemplar. O'Toole writes in an intellectually superior and scornful manner about politics and society, attacking the Irish more frequently than not. In one article for example, about the Cypriot Financial Bailout in

2013, he quotes from the film *Trainspotting* about how the Scots were ruled over by ‘effete arseholes’, who are, of course, the English, to suggest that all of Europe was then currently so ruled. O’Toole even went so far as accusing all the politicians of the entire continent of behaving like ‘drunken rhinos’.⁹⁹ If we agree with O’Toole’s denigration and illusory superiority, we can easily piggyback on it and feel just as superior. It has the net effect of anointing him as the virtual de facto group leader.

It is just like groupthink, but!

I do not wish to bore you with a lengthy explanation of groupthink; nonetheless, it is worth exploring it a bit further because not only is it evident in clurichaun syndrome, but it is also rampant within actual groups. Particularly within the Irish media and politics, and it is central to answering the big questions on why so many people believe the falsehoods surrounding the mother and baby homes.

The psychologist who first identified groupthink, Irving L. Janis defined it as

‘a strong concurrence-seeking tendency that interferes with effective group decision making. Symptoms include apparent unanimity, illusions of invulnerability and moral correctness, biased perceptions of the outgroup, interpersonal pressure, self-censorship and defective decision-making strategies. Causes are thought to include group cohesion and isolation, poor leadership and the stress involved in making decisions.’¹⁰⁰

This definition adds another critical feature of groupthink, which is the biased perceptions of the outgroup. Earlier I noted how the self-hating actions of the clurichauns arise from the failure to realise that the scornfulness directed at the entire Irish nation is therefore also directed at their family, friends, acquaintances, and themselves. Their expressions and actions evince a disassociation or a disconnect between reality and their overall worldview but are also symptomatic of prejudices of outgroup biases. If you remember earlier in this chapter, a key feature is that the bias does not seem to apply to anyone they have met who are thereby automatically consigned as members of the in-group. I often have met strangers who immediately launch into a rant about how backward and stupid ‘we’ Irish are, mostly aimed at politicians. At first, it appears to be an expression of self-deprecating humour, but underneath they do not include themselves. It is a bit like the ‘royal we’ where royals pretend to be down at the level of the people to suggest empathy for the plight of the ordinary person, but the clurichauns use the ‘Royal We’ to indicate their intellectual superiority. Inherent in each expression is the superior notion that they consider themselves to be erudite and intelligent. The illogicality of it all makes everyone think that what looks self-deprecating humour, is, in reality, a self-hating bias. Indeed, for many years, thanks to its illogicality, I took it to be

⁹⁹ O’Toole, ‘Cypriot Bailout Shows Troika to Be Hapless Incompetents’.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Groupthink – APA Dictionary of Psychology’.

self-deprecating humour, and many still do. Only after the 2008 international financial crash when the Irish cultural biases went into overdrive did I begin to see the harm it was causing.

The most distressing part of these cultural biases for me was that I had caused three children to be born Irish, and these clowns were calling them stupid for no other reason than they were born on a particular rock in the North Atlantic. Another exemplar was given to us by Davy Carton, a singer of sorts and as it so happens, a native of Tuam in Co. Galway declared during a programme entitled *For One Night Only*, which aired on national TV in August 2012, using words to the effect ‘we’re stupid, absolutely stupid, now it is said, let’s get on with it.’ If we examine what Carton was saying, he was letting us all know that he had a superior analytical ability, which empowered him to see all that the mere peasants could not see. Thus, he conferred upon himself the right to sneer at everyone carrying the label Irish in his mind. Mr Carton has every right to call himself stupid, and many would agree with him, but he has no right to call anyone else stupid including his mother, father, grandparents, and the people who buy his music. Most of all, he has no right to damage the future of the young, robbing them of hope, forcing them to go abroad to live with less stupid people.

Of course, science has an explanation for Mr Carton’s outburst; it is merely an expression of the outgroup homogeneity bias. It is defined as ‘the tendency to assume that the members of other groups are very similar to each other, particularly in contrast to the assumed diversity of the membership of one’s own group.’ Accordingly, if one is not in the same social group as Carton, one will be tarred with the same brush. Carton is Irish and expressing the same type of outgroup bias we see here in this rather extreme example from 1860.

I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country...to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black one would not see it so much but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours.’ - *Cambridge historian Charles Kingsley, letter to his wife from Ireland 1860*

Now that we have introduced groupthink here is a summary of its main features, which will help recognise when it is present.

1. Illusions of Invulnerability - The group begins to believe its own hype and starts to think it always makes the right decisions – they can do no wrong.
2. Rationalisation of Warnings - The group convinces itself that despite evidence or warnings to the contrary, it is making the right decision. The group creates rationalisations such as, ‘We know there is contrary opinion to this decision, but we’ve been right before in the face of negativity and

we'll we right this time too'.

3. Complacency - After reaping the rewards of making many correct decisions, the group begins to overlook the negatives. Think of the financial derivatives, which had gains in the short term, so bankers and investors ignored the likelihood of would happen to an investors/bank's financial position, if house prices began to fall in the years leading up to 2007.

4. Stereotyping - Those who are opposed to the group are pigeon-holed as heretics, non-believers, or just plain stupid.

5. Loyalty Pressure - Direct pressure is placed on any team member who raises a contrary opinion, with typically the entire group openly calling the team member disloyal or fickle.

6. Self-Censorship - Individuals refrain from airing any private concerns they may have for fear of ridicule, for example, if you are in a group with 10 clever people who all agree with each other, then you begin to question if you might look like a fool for raising your concern – perhaps you a just being stupid.

7. Illusion of Unanimity - If asked, 'does everyone agree with this decision?' and nobody speaks up, then the decision is understood to have been made unanimously. In essence, silence is regarded as compliance.

8. Mind-guards - The group contains self-appointed members who protect the group from conflicting opinions from both inside and outside of the group

There is a complex psychology behind groupthink which I won't bore you with, but if you are interested in exploring the subject through examples, groupthink has been blamed for such disasters as the loss of the Challenger Space Shuttle, Pearl Harbour, the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Disasters in other areas such as business also have groupthink as their cause c.f. Swissair, Marks and Spencer, British Airways, and many more.

Clurichaun syndrome

I'm sure that many Irish people have come across some aspects of these sets of biases before and might be inclined to think that clurichaunism/clurichaun syndrome are just new terms for the age-old hilarious practice of Irish self-loathing, but self-loathing is but one of the easily recognisable symptoms of the syndrome. Self-loathing on its own would be classified as a mental illness as it serves no useful function for its holder, it is a leading cause of depression and all types of self-destruction, up to and including suicide. The label self-loathing refers to the subconscious circularity of the prejudice. An

Irish person holding anti-Irish prejudices holds them against themselves, but the syndrome comes with no mirror. Those who are aware of the circularity, imagine themselves as being from another planet or nation, usually British, in a vain effort to divorce themselves from being Irish, thus creating the delusion that their derision is not directed back at themselves. It is still quite common in Ireland for socially insecure people to develop fake foreign accents. American accents have become popular in recent times but British, particularly what may be perceived as upper-class English accents are king for the *clurichaun*. A fake English accent is never a barrier to social advancement and nearly always an advantage, particularly when it comes to applying for a job with the Irish national broadcaster, RTE.

Biases, prejudices, and indeed simple opinions, which have been acquired at an early age, are seldom re-evaluated by individuals on reaching maturity nor in light of accumulating life experience. Opinions are mentally compartmentalised in a different way to experiences because new experience augments or override earlier experiences. In contrast, opinions are much less malleable, especially those formed early in life which are central to one's self-identity. Childhood opinions can wield significant influence over a person and can withstand the onslaught of contradictory evidence. Earlier I quoted Albert Einstein who is not known for his work in psychology, recognised this particular bias writing that 'few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are incapable of forming such opinions.'¹⁰¹ Einstein may also have been behind two more related aphorisms, 'common sense is actually nothing more than a deposit of prejudices laid down in the mind prior to the age of eighteen'¹⁰² and 'it is easier to crack an atom than a prejudice.'

I appreciate that so far you might be inclined to think that this chapter is entirely polemical, but it is based on applied scientific research. While I also appreciate that many of you will have encountered this for the very first time, possibly triggering the Semmelweis Reflex, it will, in time make perfect sense. The Semmelweis Reflex is a metaphor for the reflex-like tendency to reject new evidence or new knowledge because it contradicts established norms, beliefs, or paradigms. We will return to the Semmelweis reflex later in this book.

Arriving at the Truth - Mitigating the effects of clurichaun syndrome

The scientific method has long since recognised that there are problems with how the human mind processes information and has taken steps to mitigate its effects. Papers based on scientific research these days are required to be written to a rigid structure including sections such as the abstract, literature review, research methodologies, and discussion section through to the conclusion. Apart from the writing structure, a foremost requirement is that the null hypothesis is to be tested, forcing scientists to consider alternatives. In essence, scientific

¹⁰¹ Essay to Leo Baeck, 1953

¹⁰² Quote attributed to Einstein by Lincoln Barnett, a former editor of *Life* magazine in a work published in May 1948

research projects have a research question at their heart, and the research is about exploring for answers that are supported by evidence. The research question is called the hypothesis some examples of hypotheses include 'bad air is the cause of disease', 'John Lennon was a genius' and 'children grow at a constant rate'. When people set out to research any of these questions, science has observed that researchers will prove what they set out to prove in nearly all cases. In science parlance, people tend to prove their hypothesis, even when there is a lot of evidence to disprove it. Many unscientific claims masqueraded as science and went mostly unnoticed until the 1960s when Robert Rosenthal demonstrated that the experimenter's expectations, influenced the outcomes of scientific research. He set up a study where groups of students were tasked with performing experiments by testing the time it took two different groups of lab rats to complete a maze. The students were told that each group of rats had been specially bred, one to be maze bright and the other to be maze dull. Sure, enough under test conditions, the maze bright rats proved to be quicker at solving the maze. Brilliant you might think, except there was only one problem with the outcome of the experiments, Rosenthal had randomly selected the rats, and he knew the rats were not maze smart or dull.¹⁰³ Yet the hypothesis under test was confirmed. Rosenthal's discovery was later confirmed by many other research projects, and it led to the introduction of several elements to the scientific method to mitigate these cognitive biases. A cognitive bias is defined as a mistake in reasoning, evaluating, remembering, or other cognitive processes, often occurring as a result of holding onto one's preferences and beliefs regardless of contrary information.¹⁰⁴ Cognition 'is the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses'. Essentially it is the technical term for mental information processing.

Blind testing was one outcome and testing the null hypothesis the other. The research question is hidden from the person(s) who is/are carrying out the experiment. A double-blind experiment is used where the researcher and participants are kept uninformed, and sometimes triple-blind experiments are used where cognitive biases are expected to influence the outcome of experiments.

Testing the null hypothesis is effectively trying to prove one's research question wrong. Present-day researchers have to show that they have a least looked for evidence, which contradicts their expected outcome and then to make a case for why such evidence should be rejected. Using the three sample hypotheses from earlier, the resultant null hypotheses would be 'bad air is not the cause of disease', 'John Lennon was not a genius' and 'children do not grow at a constant rate'. As you can see, it is almost the same as the hypothesis except for the inclusion of the word 'not'. Take the later hypothesis/null hypothesis as

¹⁰³ Rosenthal, 'Experimenter Effects in Behavioral Research'.

¹⁰⁴ Jackson and Harel, 'Systems Engineering Decisions Analysis Can Benefit from the Added Consideration of Cognitive Sciences'.

an example; it was assumed that children grew at a constant rate until someone decided to measure children's height daily. It was discovered that not only did children not grow at a constant rate but that they grew in spurts, sometimes as much as 15cm/6in in a single night. No one had tested the null hypothesis and therein lay a great discovery. Miasma or bad air was long thought to be the cause of disease even long after Louis Pasteur proved the existence of germs in the 1860s. John Lennon set up the most successful band in history, a feat that has not been equalled since. If one tests the null hypothesis, Lennon comes out as an ordinary bloke who had a big chip on his shoulder as a teenager and in the eyes of some people, not a nice person. On the other hand, if only the hypothesis is tested, then Lennon comes out a superhero and musical genius. By testing the two, it leads to a balanced and realistic view. For the record, I think Lennon was a genius, but then again on the subject of John Lennon, I am biased. Discovering one's biases is the key to quality work.

Finally, there is one other principal feature, which feeds clurichaun syndrome, which is present in many life areas, which is the cognitive bias known as confirmation bias. This is defined as the tendency to countenance only evidence, which confirms a viewpoint and ignore or reject all evidence that casts doubt on it.

Clurichaun syndrome is the term I use to describe the negative manifestations of social and cognitive biases that include similar biases and prejudices found in other human societies with the addition of those, which are unique to Irish culture. We are all aware that Beggery is the Irish national sport but beggary is found in other societies too, as are social climbers, belief supremacists, the condescending classes and more. The reason is almost self-evident; holding certain types of prejudices yields an enormous psychological benefit to its holder due to its connection with self-esteem and the hierarchical nature of human society. Empirical evidence has revealed that when it comes to calculating our position on the hierarchy/social rank, the ego always miscalculates; ranking itself much higher than it is in reality. Not surprisingly, therefore, the net result is that we have a higher opinion of ourselves than is justified which most of the time is not a problem, as seeing oneself as having a high value to one's society and a willingness to improve upon it has many benefits for the individual and society. However, when our natural illusory superiority crosses the threshold into illusory supremacism, it becomes extremely dangerous. In this phase, prejudice advances from demeaning the views of others to full-blown dehumanisation. Humans are capable of terrible crimes, but while dehumanisation is the foundational psychological process underpinning terrible atrocities, it underpins a spectrum of behaviours ranging from discrimination and racism to murder and genocide. Supremacists exist in all societies, but they are kept in check by societal controls, which become most noticeable when these controls break down due to various forms of crisis like social unrest, war etc. Supremacism has been responsible for many

abominations in history, but we do not have to go far back to find them. Supremacist outrages are visible even today in Syria and Myanmar and even in Europe, a continent that has vowed to learn the lessons of the Second World War. It was powerless to stop the Srebrenica massacre in 1995 when 8,000 men and boys were taken to a warehouse and massacred by the Bosnian Serb Army. Just the year before, the Rwandan genocide claimed as many as 800k victims, the Khmer Rouge regime (the Communist Party of Kampuchea/Cambodia) killed more than one million people between 1975 and 1979. While 18 million souls fell victim to forced conversion to atheism in the Soviet Union. Behind all these abominations lay belief supremacism, using dehumanisation as its primary weapon, psychologically zooming even the lowest order plebs up to the realm of the élite, thereby conferring the illusion of privilege, authority and power over the outgroup.

Clurichaun syndrome is illusory superiority, not illusory supremacism, but it is not without its consequences, which are found far beyond sneering at outgroups. For example, Irish soccer suffers from a lack of resources because most Irish soccer fans prefer to support English teams. It is not just confined to soccer, clurichaun syndrome causes the Irish to invest anywhere but Ireland. When the British bank Northern Rock bank went bust in 2007, it was bailed out by the British taxpayer. At its only tiny branch in Dublin, a run on the bank occurred with queues of depositors very anxious to withdraw their massive €2.5 billion in deposits. Vast investiture by the Irish outside Ireland is nothing new, as we will see in a later chapter, during the 1930s the Irish parliament discussed ways and means of getting the enormous sums of Irish money invested in Britain repatriated. One can easily see the reasons behind the behaviour when one believes that their nation to be incompetent and stupid; it will not inspire investor confidence. Post-independence it took decades for politicians to realise that the clurichauns were never going to invest in Ireland and it had to come from outsiders in the form of foreign direct investment.

Clurichaun syndrome is the mentality behind the current wave of Irish anti-Irish prejudices sweeping the country and although in existence for centuries, it was sent into overdrive when the International financial crisis hit the Irish economy at the end of 2008. The little bit of pride, which had started to creep into the Irish psyche thanks to the Celtic Tiger economic miracle was firmly trounced, and the nation went back to its old ways of despising everything and anyone Irish. Its myth creation machine was once again plugged in, and the clurichauns aware that present-day myths could be disproved pointed their machine at the dead and set about rewriting Irish history. The sole purpose of this machine was to turn small knobs into big knobs, and it achieved it brilliantly, even though in reality, they remain knobs. It is only through examining the prejudices within Irish society that we can understand why certain sections of the society are prone to believing claims that are outlandish and false.

I have come across articles before attempting to describe Irish cultural biases,

and like my examination here, they tend to concentrate on the negative aspects. However, I must attempt to give it some balance briefly. The Irish nation, clurichauns included, are among the friendliest and welcoming people on the planet. Their humour is brilliant, and almost everyone can bring a smile to another's face, especially a stranger's, and if one passes off the expressions of clurichaunism as self-deprecating humour, life in Ireland produces a laugh a minute. It is a brilliant and highly effective antidote to all the negatives. Irish ancestral poverty has also left many functional artefacts including a generosity towards the poor and genuine concern for the plight of other people in other nations across the globe who are currently suffering from the same maltreatment and deprivation from which the Irish suffered historically. Even though we appear to hate one another, it is an abstraction, which is hated, not individual people. I love living in Ireland; I love living amongst the warm kind-hearted people so many of whom are always out to do a good turn. I love being Irish even though it can be hard at times, especially when our most inept people in society rise to the top, the exact reverse of a meritocracy.

I do not doubt that most people who suffer from clurichaun syndrome are well-intentioned, but the bias is ingrained at such a young age that it operates completely within the subconscious. The primary purpose of this chapter is to set the mother and baby home scandals against its correct historical and cultural background. A secondary purpose is to bring it to consciousness a phenomenon, which normally resides in the subconscious mind so that the problem can be recognised, discussed and dealt with by Irish society. We can only live-in hope.

*'The great enemy of the truth is very often not
the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest
but the myth, persistent, persuasive and
unrealistic.'*

John F. Kennedy

Part II -Supporting Evidence – Examples

In 2014, Ireland was ranked first in the world when compared with 125 other counties in the inaugural Good Country Index. The creators of the index define a good country as 'a country that contributes to the greater good of humanity. A country that serves the interests of its people but without harming - and preferably by advancing - the interests of people in other countries too.' They set out to measure what each country on earth contributes to the common good of humanity and what it takes away, relative to its size—using a wide range of data from the U.N. and other international organisations. The Good Country Index is Simon Anholt's brainchild, a government policy advisor and Honorary

Professor of Political Science, University of East Anglia. Dr Robert Govers built the Index with support from several other organisations.¹⁰⁵

I imagine that it would be the equivalent of a country winning a Nobel Prize and that its government and people would be justifiably proud of being conferred with such an accolade but what do you think happened? That is right; the clurichauns took to email, social media, airwaves and blew hard through their bugles lambasting the results. Anholt later joked that ‘Irish people were beastly to me’. He said Irish people suffer from ‘a severe case of Groucho Marx syndrome’ by not wanting to be part of any club that would have them as a member and cannot believe the country is ranked first.¹⁰⁶

Most Irish people were rightly proud of the accolade, but it was drowned out by the cacophony of the bugle blowing clurichauns. Prof Anholt said, ‘I have advised 53 countries in my career, and I’ve only come across three that do not suffer from low self-esteem - Sweden, the United States and Kazakhstan’ so it can’t have been low self-esteem, which was the cause, but Anholt had no way of knowing that the behaviour was due to the Irish self-hate bias which is known only to a few and has never been brought under an umbrella term until now. It was not Groucho Marx syndrome, but it was clurichaun syndrome behind the ‘beastly behaviour’ of a minority of Irish ignoramuses.

David McWilliams went on national TV the night before Queen of England’s visit to Ireland in 2011 to tell us how brilliant the British were and how stupid the Irish were and are still in comparison.¹⁰⁷ McWilliams is an Irish economist, not a historian and he preceded to give us his Dublin barstool version of Irish history. McWilliams is a native of Dublin or a Jackeen in Irish slang. The slang name ‘Jackeen’, a contraction of the full term ‘Union Jackeen’ meaning a person who loves all things British and its corollary, hates all things, Irish. It is not therefore surprising that his version of history would be tinged with more than the usual British historical supremacism. McWilliams grew up on the same Dublin street as Des Cahill, who went on to become a broadcast sports reporter. In his young days, he was nicknamed ‘the Culchie’ because he was a fan of Gaelic Sports. Culchie is a pejorative term for anyone not from Dublin. Dublin was for centuries the seat of English power in Ireland, so it is not surprising to find artefacts of racial prejudice in such a society. What is surprising is the blindness to the self-harming consequences that occur when prejudices are held against the very society in which they reside. Here is a prime example, most Irish soccer fans support English teams leaving Irish soccer with a level of support well below what would be normally expected. It means that Irish professional game is starved of resources and unable to reach any level of prestige, which might attract greater sponsorship and support. Consequently, Irish professional soccer is caught in a vicious cycle, lampooned as fifth-rate

¹⁰⁵ ‘The Good Country - Background’.

¹⁰⁶ McGreevy, ‘Irish People Take Issue with Topping “Good Country Index”’.

¹⁰⁷ ‘What Have the Brits Ever Done for Us | RTÉ Presspack’.

bog ball and drained of money, resources and support, which is packaged and sent to English teams. The net result is that Irish children aspiring to have a career in professional football have their chances hampered, and ambitions flattened thanks to the prejudices of their parents and community. A typical Irish self-perpetuating self-harm.

The Jedward effect.

It is not just in soccer; it is very difficult for anyone to achieve fame and success in the world of entertainment in Ireland. However, there is a way for even a musician with little or no ability, not to mind talent, to make it big in Ireland. John and Edward Grimes provide the exemplar, they are twin brothers, a singing duo who dubbed themselves Jedward came to public attention as contestants on a British talent show called X-Factor. The lads appeared sporting a mad stand on end hair hairstyle that certainly attracted much attention. Throughout the competition, their singing ability was below that of many other contestants, but they got to the final thanks to their innocent, sweet and adorable personas. Jedward improved throughout the competition and went on to great success, representing Ireland twice in the Eurovision song contest. There is no way on earth they would have been so successful if they had started out in Ireland. It demonstrates the existence in the Irish psyche of the inferiority complex; we have to look our superiors, the British for guidance. If the British love an act, the Irish will love them too. If it is only successful in Ireland and not in Britain, it will be almost entirely ignored by the Irish or its success derided and diminished. Johnny Logan, a twice winner of the Eurovision song contest, is a popular singer on continental Europe but has little or no following in Ireland or Britain. If he was big in Britain, there is no doubt he would be big in Ireland too.

The Lazy Irish but Brits proved Lazier

In 2012 John Drennan, a political journalist, wrote about how the Irish were too lazy to vote in a referendum because of a low voter turnout of just 33% of the electorate. Yet, just 6 days later in the England and Wales in the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, the voter turnout figures showed a meagre average of 15%. The Staffordshire police area had the lowest turnout, where nearly 90% of the electorate showed themselves to be totally disinterested. A paltry 11.6% of the electorate exercised their right to vote. Not surprisingly, Drennan and his ilk were not writing articles with a screaming headline about the English and Welsh being too lazy to pick up a pencil and vote. It is the very exemplar of the Irish protecting the British and reserving all criticism for themselves. It's a crackpot logic.

Myers in need of a Shoe Leather-ectomy

Many journalists in Ireland have built careers out of expressing anti-Irish prejudices but perhaps the most vociferous and offensive in recent years was

Kevin Myers. Once described as ‘a Hate-filled Irish journalist’¹⁰⁸, there was hardly any aspect of Irish culture, which Myers had not attacked over the years ranging from St. Patrick’s Day to the Irish language. Myers worked for decades in the Irish media, until 2017 when he switched to writing for the British newspaper the Sunday Times. His writing style was mostly invective, and when he took aim at the Irish, the British loved it, but when Myers pointed his weapons at the British feminists and the Jews, the counterattack was swift and decisive. Myers article was published on the internet late at night, and by the time he awoke the next morning, he was out of a job, labelled a misogynist and an anti-Semite. Stunned and like a deer, in the headlights, he took to profusely apologising becoming increasing grovelling but ultimately to no avail. Incontrovertible evidence that a writer can attack the Irish all they like in the Irish media and can make a good living out of it, but if they are foolish to attempt a similar attack the British in a British newspaper, it will leave such a poor soul requiring a rectal shoe leather-ectomy. I imagine that if Myers was writing in any other country with a similar invective directed at the natives be, they French, German, American, Spanish etc. he would no doubt have required the same operation which his attack on the British left him requiring.

Myers has form and this letter to the Irish Times, after an attack by him on the Irish language is a good exemplar of his ‘style’ which he used for most of his career as a journalist.

Madam, - Last week Kevin Myers apologised to his readers. How sincere was this apology? How capable is your diarist of remorse? He is back to his old offensive ways again.

Having wounded a vulnerable section of society, your predator apologises, but, as he is still bloodthirsty, all he can do is yield to his baser instincts and search for another vulnerable target. Why, of course! The Irish language. Let’s get the boot in again.

And you actually pay him to incite anti-Irish feeling? - Yours, etc.,

GABRIEL ROSENSTOCK, Gleann na gCaorach, Co Átha Cliath.

After the Sunday Times fired him, Myers stated,

‘I am responsible. I offer no justification. My career is over. I bitterly regret it. I have a number of failings as a journalist – the throwaway aside sometimes it works sometimes it doesn’t, and this time it didn’t. I would have hoped not to be taken too seriously. The problem is I’m a very poor judge of my own work.’

So too were the editors who gave him a channel to pour his bile down. The

¹⁰⁸ O’Dowd, ‘Hate-Filled Irish Journalist Kevin Myers’.

work of Myers et al. shows the clurichaun nature of many Irish publications including the so-called broadsheet or the snooty braggarts who consider themselves to be the producers of quality stories and the 'paper of record'.

Superior Brits!

The broadcast media also holds many examples of significant clurichaunism. Gavin Jennings, working for the national broadcaster RTÉ as a presenter on Ireland's most popular morning news show, Morning Ireland, declared one morning in 2012 'they do things differently over there.' Referring to yet another political scandal in Britain. His implication was clear, British parliamentarians are superior to the Irish because when they get caught wrongdoing, they resign fast, all in 'a single weekend'. British politicians in his mind were far superior to their Irish counterparts despite the many scandals, cash for honours, cash for questions, cash for access, cash to clean my castle moat, better known as the expenses scandal. Apart from the latter, Ireland did not have any of these scandals because it is easy for anyone to get access to Irish politicians; no money needs to change hands. The Irish prime minister is far easier accessed than in most other countries. When Irish politicians are caught wrongdoing, their fate is the same and just as swift if not more so than in Britain. Jennings, no doubt had in mind the Willie O'Dea affair but seems to have forgotten the details. In 2009 the Minister for Defence Willie O'Dea tried to spread false rumours to a journalist about a politician from a rival political party. He told journalist Mike Dwane, 'I suppose I'm going a bit too far when I say this, but I'd like to ask Mr Quinlivan is the brothel still closed?' When the story broke in the media O'Dea denied he made the allegations, but Mr Dwane had a recording and when he made it public, O'Dea apologised and paid damages. As a direct result of this case, he was forced to resign two months later due to a clamour of political shenanigans. O'Dea tried to hang on by denying the allegations, but it was only when the recording of him making the claim emerged that he resigned straight away. O'Dea was certainly caught red-handed doing the dirt on the opposition, which is what many politicians do. It was nowhere near the same seriousness as taking money or soliciting a party donation for access to a politician, or to have a parliamentary question asked or fiddling expenses. The British politician who was forced to resign was Peter Cruddas, and you can be sure that he would have tried to deny the allegations against him, but he too was recorded in a sting operation by journalists posing as potential donors. Politicians are the same the world over, and any objective comparison between Irish politics and British politics show that the Irish are not free of scandals by any means but are less prone to scandals than their British counterparts.

A characteristic feature of clurichaunism is to devise a phantasm of British superiority to create a false sense of prestige through association, thus elevating the clurichaun above the Irish in his or her mind. The power of attaining illusory superiority is so immense that it overpowers logic and reason; hence the self-flagellation aspects are lost on the clurichauns somehow, they can ignore their

own label as Irish to sneer at the Irish and not realise they are sneering at themselves, and everybody else.

La Pièce de Résistance

In an opinion piece in the Irish Times in 2012, Brendan Logue provided us with the very exemplar of the clurichaun's divorcement from reality, taking a major sneer at the Irish, labelling us all as alcoholic Catholics and pontificating that the best and the brightest people emigrated leaving 'behind the more deferential, insecure and apathetic people'. Brendan Logue is a former registrar of credit unions at the Central Bank of Ireland. He was one of the people in charge of institutional financial regulation during the boom and the economic crash. One of the individuals at the helm of the financial regulator, which was the organisation, through regulatory failure, which bears most of the responsibility for the Irish financial crash. Ironically and lost on Logue, was the fact that his article makes it obvious that he could hardly be considered one of Ireland's brightest individuals. His diatribe was published in the Irish Times on Sep 20, 2012. There are scores of similar articles loaded with Irish anti-Irish prejudice in the Irish media, but Logue's is special. If I had commissioned someone to write a piece using all the negative stereotypes, racism and clichés that are illustrative of the types of self-hate, biases and prejudices, the elements which combine to make clurichaun syndrome, I could have done a no better job. It stands as a genuine, authentic exemplar of clurichaun syndrome.

Note how he is under the illusion that label Irish does not apply to himself nor I surmise to his family, friends, parents etc. evidence that the bias only applies to an abstraction and not to people who are near and dear. Note also that Logue is a Gaelic Irish surname and forename is too, nobody could be more genetically or culturally Irish. It is more than a bit ironic that any foreigner expressing a similar litany of prejudice would be labelled a racist.

D'Irish - All Alcoholic Catholics

Leadership needed to mend our sorry state of delusion

Published in the Irish Times Newspaper Thu, Sep 20, 2012

OPINION: IMAGINE YOU belong to a dysfunctional family. The parents are profligate, incompetent and reckless. They tend to be corrupt, lazy, dishonest and self-serving.

The children (other than certain favourites) feel oppressed and neglected. Many of the favourites exhibit ruthless self-interest and greed.

The parents are under pressure from the moneylenders to whom they have had to turn as a result of their profligacy so dysfunctional is this family that they have had to be taken under the care of outside agencies, which are struggling to bring them under control.

Many of the children abuse alcohol, drugs, religion, or alternatively delude themselves about their true

situation, in order to ease their pain.

Others flee the family home at the earliest opportunity or resort to suicide. They abuse and exploit each other and are in a perpetual state of inter-sibling rivalry.

The concept of family wellbeing is almost unknown among them.

Such a family mirrors the national situation.

Self-delusion is a characteristic of Irish society. In the old days, we were told things about ourselves that in retrospect seem laughable. We were morally superior to other races, O'Connell Street was the widest street in Europe, the Shannon was going to be drained, the country reunited and the Irish language restored.

Such was the pathetic nature of the society that it tended to grasp at any idea, no matter how absurd, seen as positive to our warped sense of nationhood.

Those who were literary figures and who attempted to hold up a mirror to the Irish to reflect the weirdness of the society were generally derided, abused, saw their work suppressed and were forced to flee the country in despair. Abroad they often achieved due recognition.

That is not to say that individual Irish people aren't as capable, creative and energetic as other peoples but the damaged and deluded culture of our society often drags them down.

Despite this some groups and individuals have managed to overturn the deadening effects of Irish consciousness but they are the exceptions to the norm.

The negative effect on Irish society of the Catholic Church is deep-rooted. Its doctrines have tended to produce a populace that is superstitious, apathetic and fatalistic.

The progressive exposure of some of Catholicism's true characteristics has left many of its loyal adherents confused and disillusioned.

The main institutions of the State – government, church, banks, the judiciary, the professions etc. – are regarded by many Irish people with loathing but many are also envious of those who belong to these interest groups. Most people feel powerless to attack these groups, who seem exempted from any corrective process that could limit their ruthless pursuit of self-interest.

In a normal democratic society a dissatisfied populace will overthrow an abusive regime, given time. However, in Ireland this has not happened.

The Republic of Ireland has never been truly independent. This could be because the best and the brightest were and are the most likely to emigrate, leaving behind the more deferential, insecure and apathetic people. British rule was overthrown in this part of the country in 1922 only to be replaced by an equally abusive system controlled from Rome.

This itself is in the process of being gradually overturned but is being replaced by a regime controlled from Frankfurt, whose intentions are, as yet, unclear. Unless something fundamental changes in the public psyche, Ireland seems doomed to endlessly repeat its history of failure and to be a society that is deferential and provincial in outlook.

One possible benefit of the present financial, economic and social crisis may be that the Irish may begin to awake from the dreamlike state of delusion into which they had long ago fallen. To emerge from this nightmare will require leadership. Straight talking such as has never been heard before in this country needs to be the hallmark of future leadership. This will be a painful process but could provide healing.

This State must never again allow itself to be humiliated and disgraced in the eyes of the world. The Ireland that has up to now been regarded internationally only in a semi-serious way as a country must be reformed.

No more corruption, no more incompetence, no more alcohol abuse, no more self-delusion, no more abusive religion, no more secrecy, no

more deferential forelock-tugging.

Unfortunately, leadership is absent just now in a way never before experienced. Neither politics nor religion, neither law nor commerce are fit for this purpose as they themselves are central to the country's problems and act in a self-protective way to preserve the status quo.

What is left to undertake this gargantuan task? Maybe the media is up to it – who knows?

It is nearly time Robert Emmet's epitaph is written – but not just yet.

Not until this society is fully cleansed of the rot that pervades it.

- Brendan Logue is former registrar of credit unions at the Central Bank of Ireland

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There you have it. Every man, woman and child unfortunate enough to have the label Irish is a drunkard, drug taker, deluded, deferential, insecure, apathetic, corrupt, incompetent, holds an abusive religion, prone to secrecy and deferential forelock-tugging. Wow: almost the full list of clurichaun biases in one short article – that was some achievement.

The financial crisis that hit Ireland at the end of 2008 was entirely due to a failure of regulation, particularly bank regulation, which the Central Bank of Ireland holds primary responsibility. It was their professional incompetence, which necessitated the Irish government stepping to rescue the Irish banks. At that time, the sovereign debt was very low, and the country could have easily managed the economic downturn, but the bank bailout cost so much money that it resulted in the Irish people bearing an enormous financial burden, which is now one of the largest per capita debts in the world. The central bank had no idea how much the bailout would cost, and any advice they gave to the government was not based on the kind of expertise one would expect from financial professionals. Mr Logue had a senior regulatory role within this incompetent financial regulator leading up to the crisis. Logue does not see himself as being incompetent even though his logic claims that he was and remains 'deferential, insecure and apathetic', just like his fellow country people. The anti-Catholicism is a relatively new addition to clurichaun

syndrome and is a result of its association with the Irish nation and a decline in formal religion.

Logue tells us that 'self-delusion is a characteristic of Irish society' and proceeds to show us how self-deluded he himself is. His diatribe is probably the result of a psychological defence mechanism due to getting a lot of flak from people blaming him for the failures of the financial regulators. Failures, which contributed to the financial woes of the country and their collective inability and lack of expertise to inform and give expert guidance to the representatives of the people. I think you can see through his diatribe that it could not be described as being based on fact, intellectual or erudite analysis and is more indicative of personal and social deficits. I am sure Logue did not intend it, but his article stands as a laughable exposition of the calibre of people working as mandarins, particularly in high office who are clearly, by his definition, are deferential, insecure and apathetic people.

What intrigues me more about this article is an exposition of Village Idiot Syndrome. It arises from the tendency of village idiots to think that they are very smart while everyone is thicker than himself or herself.

His mention of the drainage of the River Shannon is yet another classic expression of clurichaunism and as we will see in the next chapter has attracted much attention over the years. Even from the likes from Ireland's most attention-seeking historian, Prof Diarmaid Ferriter.

A victim of Irish self-deprecating humour!

The 'Paddy Games' were held in Cork city in 2010 the brainchild of a then unemployed lawyer Colin Carroll. A great example of how Irish cultural biases have a negative effect on the future prospects of Irish people; it is metaphorically akin to taking their children out into the garden and shooting them in the foot. The event he said was 'inspired by Ireland and held in Cork's Mardyke Arena on 14th August 2010; and the pre-event publicity claimed that the programme promises to baffle the world's media with challenges such as the backwards 100m race, a blindfold sprint, mobile phone throwing, inter-species relay and the pogo-stick high jump'. In the end and not surprisingly he was unable to secure sponsorship, but he got some media coverage, none of it financially beneficial. The divorcement from reality caused by the prejudices had fairly sad consequences for Carroll as he used his own money and more to finance his idea. You could say that the clurichauns got him with the consequence that he was forced to leave Ireland stone broke and go where the cost of living was much less. Carroll's big mistake was his failure to realise that clurichaun syndrome masquerades as self-deprecating humour but is not in fact humour. Irish people who entered the backwards race did not really believe that they themselves were backward. They were simply poking fun at others reinforcing their illusory superiority. If they ever thought that people would believe that they were backwards, they would not do it.

The Irish Independent in 2010 offered readers a helpful guide entitled ‘How to sort the real Paddies from the Pretenders. . . Darragh McManus guides us through a test of true Irishness’. McManus’ guide posed various questions based on the old stereotypes of him and everyone else as drunkards etc., but this one was particularly interesting because it reveals the educational deficits behind such a mind-set.

Do you find our oddball place names -- like Newtwopothouse, Ballydehob, Cappataggle, Horse and Jockey, Stoneybatter, Hackballscross, Ovens, Nobber, Ahascragh, Ballinspittle, Borris in Ossory, Watergrasshill to be endearing or just stupid-sounding? ¹⁰⁹

Those ‘stupid-sounding’ names are a gift from our English rulers, eight are transliterations from the Irish language, and the rest are English dating from a time when the country was ruled over by England. However, it would appear that quite a few of our people lack the education to know this. Think of all the fun McManus could have had with native English language place names in England like Boggy Bottom in Hertfordshire, Scratchy Bottom in Dorset, Bitchfield in Lincolnshire, Cock Lane & Tutts Clump in Berkshire, Horneyman in Kent and hundreds more, some too rude to mention!

Another journalist Shane Hegarty complaining about the British getting legless on St Patrick’s day, blaming the Irish for exporting it, ‘You know,’ I would explain, ‘Ireland is a land rich in culture beyond the limited stereotypes of leprechauns, flailing dancers, red hair and alcohol. It is a modern society, at the cutting edge of information technology, yet still rooted in an appreciation for language and song that . . .’ ‘Just say ‘turty-tree and a turd.’ ‘Turty-tree and a turd.’ ‘Brilliant!’

That was Hegarty at his journalist peak, just months before retiring from journalism to write for children. He was sneering at working-class Dubliners whose accents include the inability to pronounce the ‘th’ in words. Third-turd, thing-ting, the-dee and so on.

As for equality and gender balance, we should not forget the women who keep the traditions of their ancestral begrudgers alive.

Emer O’Kelly is the living embodiment of the Colonial Mentality as she frequently publishes articles, which are sneeringly anti-Irish and pro-British. In her days as a newscaster, she was chiefly noted for her imitation ‘English Accent’. The Gaelic Irish surname adds to the evidence that where one would expect to find anti-Irish biases at their weakest, they are found in strength and numbers. That said, I do not think she has much influence even within clurichaun circles as her name is never mentioned political or social discussions, nor does she cause much of a stir on social media. I include her name here only for reasons

109 McManus, ‘How to Sort the Real Paddies from the Pretenders. . .’

of gender balance. The Sunday Independent provides her with the outlet to vent her spleen, and her column is surrounded with many more authored by others with the same motivation as they engage in a weekly sneer at the Irish nation. Just to quote one of her sentences which is a classic of BIRGing writing on the proposed visit of the Queen of England to Ireland she stated: 'I have a horrible feeling that everybody involved in a State visit would be determined to show the Queen how unimpressed they were by her royal lineage and status.'¹¹⁰ Does she really not see that her BIRGing is present to overcompensate for her own psychologically perceived lack of status!

It appears that it is not long before anyone who dwells in Ireland becomes infected with society's cultural biases. Clara Rose Thornton describes herself as Chicago-born, New-York-simmered, and Dublin dwelling. However, the headline of an article and the sentiment published therein is typically Irish, typically Jackeen prejudice; 'Drink, oppression and church cast long shadow on Irish soul – Chicagoan' - Clara Rose Thornton – Published 06 May 2014 Evidence that people who are willing to attack the Irish zoom up to the top of Irish society. After all, for the clurichauns, when foreigners appear to agree, it convinces them that they are valid opinions and not just prejudices. 'The Catholic Church is a cult' and Ireland is 'backward' - polyamorous Irish Big Brother contestant Jade-Martina Lynch. Jade-Martina Lynch thinks she is not backward even though others might disagree with her. These-days having many sex partners at the same time might indicate that the biological distance of six in inches or 15 centimetres, which many people value the most, does not lie between their ears!

Journalist Lisa McInerney entitled her blog as writing from the 'Arse end of Ireland', which is apparently Gort in Co. Galway, her native 'arse end'. I noticed one wag commenting on an article about her new book announcing that it was to be found in the 'arse end of the bookshop'. (like this one!)

The Irish tendency for self-hate has not gone unnoticed by science or mental health professionals. Psychotherapist Padraig O'Morain writing in the Irish Times on the subject of the results of a 2016 survey called 'The Census of the Heart' found it interesting that while three-quarters of the respondents were proud to call Ireland home and more than 80 per cent said they felt loved, only 61 per cent said that they loved themselves. He went on to write,

'the gap suggests that the Irish reluctance to engage in self-love is still with us. Having thrown off the shackles of the old society, I wonder if we have replaced it with new shackles: namely expectations about ourselves and about what we ought to be able to do that we cannot actually meet because we are, after all, only human.'¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ O'Kelly, 'A Sullen Post-Colonial Mentality'.

¹¹¹ O'Morain, 'Why Don't Irish People Love Themselves?'

Throwing off the shackles of the past is a common refrain in present-day Ireland, but one does not have to wear spearfishing goggles to see that it is not true. Indeed, the nation has merely changed its shackles; due to rising affluence, the Irish nation has become so aspirational that they blindly shackle themselves to materialism and personal debt. What Moran missed is that the shackles of clurichaun culture remain firmly attached to the ankles of Hibernia.

Here is a funny exemplar of Dublin illusory superiority: ‘a stand-up comedian who called a *Gárda* (policeman) a ‘bacon, cabbage and spud-munching culchie’ during a disturbance at a Dublin hospital has been ordered to keep the peace for a year. Alex Lyons (52) was being removed by security from [hospital] A&E over a parking dispute when he shouted the insult at the investigating officer.’¹¹²

Chapter Conclusion

There is no doubt whatsoever that the negative, self-loathing Irish cultural biases are prevalent within Irish society and that their malignant influences are impactful. However, because they reside mostly in the subconscious mind and provide holders with a sense of social superiority, they are highly resistant to eradication. The biases are entirely reliant on illusions and delusions for their both genesis and sustenance, which accounts for the tendency of some people to believe that obvious fantasy, is truth. When imaginations are used to promote an anti-Irish agenda, the tendency to use such for social climbing proves irresistible. It is an iterative process where the fallacies are embellished with each iteration morphing into full-blown conspiracy theories. The Irish have long since held many conspiracy theories mainly surrounding the political and Mandarin classes. What is new in recent times is that with the decline in formal religion, the Catholic Church has come to be regarded as quintessentially Irish and therefore has been included in within the realm of Irish self-loathing. Only in Ireland has a group of religious women Protestant and Catholic been accused of hating bastards so much that they murdered them through abuse and neglect. There is no doubt whatsoever, even at a cursory glance, the claims are untrue, many Irish people know it but have been silenced. Their voice drowned out by the cacophony emitted from Tumulus Hystericus and its dwellers of chattering Clurichauns.

¹¹² Andrew, ‘Comic Bound to Peace for Calling Garda a “Spud Munching Culchie”’.

5. THE FAILURE OF IRISH ACADEMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

Historical Equivocation

As this book seeks to explain the causes, the motivations and the machinations of the people who promote conscious and subconscious anti-Christian bias, it is imperative that I introduce you to some of the pitfalls to which afflict the historian and the non-historian alike. This scandal, like all the other related scandals, is entirely historical. Even with no intent to mislead on behalf of anyone, it is easy for false interpretations to emerge and masquerade as actual history. The self-appointed gatekeepers of quality historical interpretation are the academic historians who are duty-bound to deploy all of the quality control mechanisms available to historical studies, which alas, are small in number. Historiography is the term used by historians for their quality control methods. It is what historians like to call, a history of history. It subjects history to critical evaluation asking questions that include the writer's motivation, agenda, to what ends it written, are the sources authentic, and how the writer's perspective influences their claims. However, even with quality controls in place, academic historians get it wrong all the time, and in systems where the controls are dysfunctional, history is but a splatter of manure used to fertilise the imaginations of a spectrum of people including social climbers, illusory supremacists, monomaniacs, fanatics, right down to the ordinary person with little or no interest in history. If the occupiers of the ivory towers are prone to getting it wrong, what chance do mere mortals have? With that in mind, let us take a brief look at some of these pitfalls.

Rocket Science is easy.

History is not rocket science; it is much more challenging to do it well and is a more challenging intellectual endeavour than most people realise. The discipline is fraught with difficulties, mainly due to the way our brains process information and the sheer amount of background knowledge that has to be

obtained to set historical events in their correct historical context. First, let us consider one of the main problems; we are forced to read the book of history from back to front, and if we do that with any book, it influences our opinion of all the characters we meet along the way. To illustrate this point, imagine a book written to look at the behaviour of various economists working for various investment organisations, before the financial crash of 2008. We like our stories to start at the beginning going through the middle before arriving at the end. Accordingly, we have to forget that we know anything about anything post-2008. Now that we are in an imposed amnesia mode, we are ready to start the story initially. It was a time when a great many of the world's economists had become fans of David X. Li's Gaussian Copula formula. A mathematical risk management formula that the economists used to package mortgages, bonds, good and bad loans into a single profitmaking package, known as Collateralised Debt Obligations (CDOs). It was not the first time in history that the economists argued that investors were sure to profit on their investments thanks to the 'infallible' science of mathematics. CDOs were a niche product until 2003/4 when the economists turned their attention to the US Housing market, which was in a boom phase and included non-prime mortgage-backed securities as a new source of collateral for CDOs. To say there was an explosion of popularity is an understatement as CDO sales rose almost tenfold from \$30 billion in 2003 to \$225 billion in 2006. As the story unfolds, we take sides with the economic superheroes making vast sums of money for their investors. We marvel at their genius and are motivated to take their advice and purchase as many CDOs as our financial resources will allow. So impressed are we by the success of other investors, bankers and finical gurus and with their mathematical genius that we seek to replicate their success by re-mortgaging and borrowing money from wherever we can to invest in CDOs. Everybody was making vast sums of money, mostly on paper, that is until the bubble burst. Keep in mind that these people could not see the future and had accepted the 'scientific' case for investment rather than look at the history of economic boom and bust cycles. All through reading the piece, you, of course, knew the ending because of your personal knowledge and experience, and/or because of the way I introduced it so now with the full knowledge of the 2008 financial meltdown. However, when you look back over the story starting at the end, you see the story in a completely different light. We are likely to see those who got it wrong as complete buffoons, while the few who did not lose everything we see as being canny or even heroes. Hidden with this example is our subconscious tendency to use our current knowledge and understandings to process information from the past, which is labelled 'presentism'.

Historical Presentism

Historical Presentism is defined as 'the anachronistic introduction of present-day ideas and perspectives into depictions or interpretations of the past.' Anachronistic means that it cannot be in chronological order because it belongs to a later time. For example, think of a film set in the 19th American cowboy

era with one of the characters wearing a digital watch. Prof Nathan Finn put it thus,

Any good historian strives to avoid presentism; in fact, this is a key difference between professional historians and activists who use the past as an apologetic for their present preferences. [...] Rejecting presentism is a matter of historical integrity.¹¹³

Historical presentism is a double-edged sword, which set out to impale quality history in two different ways. According to Lynn Hunt, president of the American Historical Association, the two methods of impalement are '(1) the tendency to interpret the past in presentist terms and (2) the shift of general historical interest toward the contemporary period and away from the more distant past.'¹¹⁴ In other words, without training, every one of us will naturally interpret the past using our current knowledge and biases. At the same time, most history students chose to study in areas of the discipline, which are close to the present. The net result is that most modern historians remain so blissfully ignorant of history beyond the late 19th century that they leave themselves open to having their opinions given to them.

Presentism is but one occupational hazard facing the historian, readers of history, schoolchildren and history enthusiasts also face challenges. History is a process of simplification, as the full complexity surrounding causes, actions and consequences have to be distilled down into a narrative that a general audience can understand. Furthermore, history is a summary, not a day by day, hour by hour diary documentation of events. Historians use such documents to tell the overall story, but the choice of what is seen as important and unimportant to the story is left to the individual historian. A lot of information has to be left out; consequently, history can be biased one way or another by either by mistake or deliberately. The discipline of history is well aware of these shortcomings and has mitigation strategies in place. Before history books are published in academia, it is usual for authors to publish a paper on the subject or subjects contained within the book. The purpose is to test the arguments' veracity and discover their strengths and weaknesses by inviting experts to critique the paper. This quality control mechanism is a significant part of the peer review process, which was introduced earlier, and we will meet it again later. By the end of this chapter, I hope to have proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the Irish academic peer review process is not only broken, but any attempted repair will take decades to achieve.

The First Duty of a Historian

The first duty of a historian is to set events of the past in their correct historical context. Anybody can read historical accounts, but without comprehensive background knowledge of the times in which they occurred, their understanding

¹¹³ Finn, 'On "Presentism" in Historical Research'.

¹¹⁴ Hunt, 'Against Presentism | Perspectives on History | AHA'.

will likely be in error. Historians do essential work in providing the historical background information to their readers, explaining how and why decisions were made, alerting the present audience that the information we now have, could not have been available to decision-makers of that particular time. Would people have invested their money in the Lehman Brother's bank if they had known what was going on there and that they would lose all their money? Hindsight is not wise, but it can be the foundation of future wisdom, which has been learned through hard lessons, but humanity being humanity, hindsight is most commonly used as a device of illusory upward social mobility, through denigration.

Historians are human too!

The best historians can show their audience that the story can be told from many different perspectives, all of which can be totally or partially valid or invalid, and explain each one's merits and demerits, thereby allowing the reader an informed opinion. A historian is totally within his/her rights to state which perspective or a combination thereof they favour or bolsters their opinion, but the reader must be given, in as far as possible, the option to agree or disagree, rather than be shoehorned into a particular belief due to the differential and partial presentation of the evidence.

Here are a few quick examples to show how historical myths develop when the correct context has not been set. Napoleon was not short; in fact, he was 5' 7" (1.69m) tall in imperial measures, which was above the average height of a Frenchman at that time. The myth arises because his height was recorded as 5 feet 2 inches, but this is in French feet. No one thought the earth was flat in ancient times; only modern idiots believe that they did. Many accounts exist from medieval times and further back to show that scholars were discussing the existence of the antipodes. Dictionary.com defines the term as places diametrically opposite each other on the globe. 2. those who dwell there. Marie Antoinette did not say 'let them eat cake' when she heard that the French peasantry was starving. She was an intelligent and generous woman by all accounts, but the myth was invented by Jean-Jacques Rousseau show how aloof monarchs could be. (Rousseau discarded his children to foundling hospitals) Mrs O'Leary's cow kicking over a lantern did not cause the Great Fire of Chicago in 1871. The story was purely the invention of a journalist. Britain did not fight the First World War for the freedom of small nations; in reality, it was another colonial war. The list of myths believed by everyone is endless, and academics are not immune from believing in myths or propagating them inside and outside academia. Historians and academics have the same human failings as the rest of us - and have much of the same difficulty in admitting as much.

The Second Duty of a Historian

The second duty of a historian is to check the veracity of historical accounts and to compare and contrast accounts of the same event/events from as many diverse sources as possible. As I have already alluded, history is a complicated

subject; quantum mechanics is easy in comparison. There are many reasons but most boil down to the fact that the human mind is prone to making knowledge-processing errors that we touched on earlier. Technically, information-processing errors in a normally functioning brain are called cognitive biases.

A cognitive bias refers to a ‘systematic error’ in the thinking process. Such biases are often considered as a type of heuristic, which is essentially a mental shortcut – heuristics allow one to make an inference without extensive deliberation, and/or reflective judgment, given that they are essentially schemas for such solutions.¹¹⁵

In other words, heuristics are like a store of step-by-step instructions which we can quickly select and enact when certain situations arise. Think of an emergency situation where you need to know how to act to remove yourself from danger. When the danger occurs, it is far too late and too long a process to try and think through and draw up an escape plan. When no heuristic is available, people are often rooted to the spot, paralysed by indecision. Training, which is the formulation of mental heuristics, gives people a sequence of actions to perform when required and can be acted upon quickly. That is the purpose of a fire drill. The exemplar of this occurred with the Grenfell Tower disaster in London in 2017. It could be interpreted psychologically, that the fire service leaders were unable to select a heuristic for the situation because none existed in their minds. The situation they faced was new to them, so they stuck to the heuristics already in place. Having seen what happened in a cladding fire, we all now have a new heuristic should we find ourselves in such a situation. I mention cognitive biases at all because there are a number of them pertinent to the study of history.

Historian’s Fallacy

People of the past could not see into the future, but history writers have a tendency to think they did and when passing judgement upon them, think they should have at least seen it coming. Countless times and through numerous books, films, websites etc., claims are made with lurid headlines like the 10 Deadly Disasters We Should Have Seen Coming – Listverse or 6 Horrible Historical Disasters (We Actually Saw Coming). The subjects range to everything from the Titanic to Pearl Harbour, and all have one thing in common, the benefit of hindsight. While those who are interested in history are drawn to such publications, they are not history for the straightforward reason that history is about what happened not what might have happened. What might have happened is known in the trade as counterfactual history because it runs counter the facts. Counterfactuals play an essential role and define the importance of history. The purpose of studying history is to learn from the mistakes of the past and avoid repeating them. Learning from others’ mistakes is not only inbuilt but hardwired in our brains for survival reasons, which is

¹¹⁵ Dwyer, ‘12 Common Biases That Affect How We Make Everyday Decisions | Psychology Today New Zealand’.

why we have a morbid curiosity and rubberneck at the site of road accidents. We want to know what caused the accident, to learn, even subconsciously, what mistake was made. Hardwired behaviours nearly always occur in the subconscious, leaving us unaware of the reasons for our actions.

Hindsight clouds our judgement and is formally recognised as a cognitive bias. A subset of the Hindsight Bias is known as the Historian's Fallacy which is a natural tendency to interpret past events anachronistically. As it works in the subconscious mind, no history writer will be aware of it unless they have encountered mention of such through training. That is an important point; if no formal instruction has been given, then the historical interpretation will likely be misguided. When passing judgment on historical decision-makers, we have to use only the information available to them and expunge from our analysis or be aware of the historical evidence that belonged to their future. Only then can we validly set events against their correct historical background and place the foundations of quality history on the bedrock of truth.

Building upon the mistakes of others

An old Irish proverb goes aithníonn ciaróg, ciaróg eile (p. ah-neon key-rogue key-rogue el-ah) directly translates as 'a beetle recognises another beetle'. It is often made out to be the equivalent of the proverb, it takes one to know one. It can also be a metaphor for building on the work of another of a similar mind. In an academic sense, it can be one academic building on the work of another academic. If the first academic has got some information wrong and goes without correction, the mistake will likely carry forward through the bulk of subsequent works.

Consequently, Murphy's Law kicks in and when more mistakes collide and coalesce the result is that balderdash masquerades as history. It is well recognised in the domain of academic history, which devotes much time and energy to analysing and discussing historiography. Historiography, to put it in simple terms, the history of history, in other words, how can we know that our current and prevailing views of historical events are genuinely representative and well matched to the actual historical evidence. Academic historians spend countless hours going back over every author's work in a particular subject area. The arguments for discounting one claim and replacing it with another, fill many academic journals pages and often become the subject of debate for many an academic conference. Unlike the sciences, where experimentation can confirm or discount scientific theories' veracity, all other areas of human intellectual endeavour have no independent or impartial means of checking the credibility of various hypotheses and theories. The only quality control method available to intellectual endeavour outside the sciences is called 'peer review'. As the name suggests, it is a system that invites people to evaluate works that have similar competencies to the producers. It is used in the sciences too because but is a flawed process as nothing in the human intellectual tradition is free of human interpretation, consequently, when other analytical tools are available,

their use is imperative to quality work. Over many recent decades, much scientific research has been devoted to discovering, naming, and mitigating human interpretation flaws.

Much ink has been spilt in recent times within the specialist publications discussing and analysing the problems incurred when seeking to discover truths. Scientific truths can be discovered and underpinned using experiments, but the theory underpinning a scientific understanding is always subject to revision. This is reflected in the relatively new way of reporting on scientific research through the use of phrases like ‘research indicates’ or ‘this theory enjoys much empirical support’. New discoveries were reported as ‘scientific facts’ or ‘incontrovertible facts’ only to become dropped as facts by later research in previous eras. Einstein’s debunking of Newton’s theories is a case in point. Many of today’s scientific theories will become the misguided and outmoded theories of tomorrow.

*Facts all come with points of view
Facts don't do what I want them to
Lyric: Crosseyed And Painless - Talking Heads*

As one author put it in an article titled, Peer review: a flawed process at the heart of science and journals:

Peer review is at the heart of the processes of not just medical journals but of all of science. It is the method by which grants are allocated, papers published, academics promoted and Nobel prizes won. Yet it is hard to define. It has until recently been unstudied, and its defects are easier to identify than its attributes. Yet it shows no sign of going away. Famously, it is compared with democracy: a system full of problems but the least worst we have.¹¹⁶

So, what exactly is wrong with the peer review system? It is beyond the scope of this book to go into a comprehensive overview of all its flaws, but by introducing you to a small number of the concepts involved, I hope to give you a good grounding in quality historical analysis thus making it easier to spot errors in history.

Accordingly, in this the next section, I will examine the writings and claims of a few writers whom I have chosen because their writings are representative of the now hundreds of published articles which present historical evidence in such way as to support their agenda. I will analyse some of the historians’ claims concerning mother and baby homes and compare and contrast them with the actual historical evidence and set the evidence against its historical

¹¹⁶ Smith, ‘Peer Review’.

context. To that end, I have included relevant extracts from primary sources (copies of original historical documents or text).

Before we do that, I want to introduce a new term I have come up with to describe a phenomenon that I hope by the end of this chapter you will see is a common malady afflicting these articles and others with the domain of history and beyond. I suggest the term for two reasons. First, I do not think there is a single term in the lexicon to describe this particular psychological process. Secondly, I want to encapsulate an explanation, which reduces many words to a single term. The definition is easy to understand, and once a label has been applied, and after a few uses, it saves the need to explain it every time. Accordingly, I have named this phenomenon using the acronym ACCE (p. ach-ee), an acronym based on the Irish proverb, *Aithníonn Ciaróg Ciaróg Eile* which I define as,

The repetition of erroneous information without any check of its veracity, especially when it suits a particular purpose. Such information is also likely to have become erroneous having been subjected to an iterative process of embellishment.

History writing is particularly prone to this affliction. It is similar to the illusory truth effect, also known as the reiteration effect, truth effect or the validity effect, which occurs subconsciously when people believe the information to be correct after repeated exposure. Even though there is a little more to this, it is close to the aphorism, ‘repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth’, often attributed to Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister. The original experiment that uncovered the effect was first performed in 1977, and a great many experiments have shown illusory truth effect to be a robust scientific theory. It has become the focus of much public attention recently thanks to the #fakenews debate. Despite its similarity, the term ACCE is intended to be different, marking out the shortcomings in writings, especially those written by people who claim expertise. Such authors are expected to have checked the truthfulness of their information. It is a competence issue, and where historians have used an ACCE or two, it can potentially destroy the credibility of their work. Irish academic history has not yet awoken to this serious issue, especially concerning recent modern history.

Most university history students are taught that history is always written with a purpose. Those who write first accounts of contemporary events do so for many reasons including vainglory, to create a self-serving mythology to promote one’s superiority or group superiority and to dissuade any criticism and vilify the opposition. It is often captured in the maxim; the victor writes the history. In other words, history is biased because the victor’s view of events always seems to prevail, which is never a true and accurate description of historical events. For this very reason, historians spend much time comparing and contrasting various accounts from eyewitnesses from other viewpoints

like that of the vanquished and independent sources. In academia, quality control is an iterative process that usually starts by publishing study findings in academic journals to await critical evaluation, correct any errors, and republish the revised papers. That is assuming they get published in the first place as many journals subject articles to peer review in advance and can be rejected for publication if they do not meet the required standard. At the end of the process, when and if a consensus emerges between historians, it is taken to be the best current understanding of a particular historical event. It is an interpretation and always open to revision, especially when new information comes to light, or the previous history has been proven to be mistaken.

Essentially, since the beginning of this chapter, I have been arguing that it is incredibly easy to get historical interpretation wrong, which is why quality control measures are imperative within the discipline. Forearmed with this background information we can now ask, are these quality control mechanisms functioning in Irish academia? Let us look at the evidence.

Making the Case for Compo

Niall Meehan is not a historian but a teacher of journalism at Griffith College Dublin. I include him in this chapter which is mainly about histories written by historians because he has involved himself heavily in the controversy by claiming that abuse occurred at various institutions but focusing his efforts on one in particular. In this section, I will concentrate mainly on one of his articles entitled 'The Irish State & the Bethany Home' dating from 2011, long before the Tuam scandal, and submitted to the Minister for Education. The essay was placed in the public domain by Meehan himself and can be found by a simple Google search. The arguments within the Meehan's essay attempt to prove that the state was negligent and therefore claim compensation (compo) on behalf of some of the home's former residents. Bethany was a Home and a refuge for women, infants and children, run under the control of the Church of Ireland in Dublin. The Bethany story is particularly significant because the Protestant churches also stand as co-accused alongside the Catholic Church using the false allegation that they deliberately despatched illegitimate children to the next life through neglect. Meehan accuses the Irish state of similar attitudes, and his entire case for governmental responsibility stands on the one single pillar, casting a most egregious slur upon the reputation of one particular senior doctor at the Department of Local Government and Public Health (DLGPH).

To be fair to Meehan and give him the benefit of the doubt, the article is chiefly remarkable for its elementary errors. He falls into traps that properly educated students of history are taught to avoid but often don't manage it. Many historical commentators, including experienced historians, cannot resist the lure and beguilement of imagining what would have happened had circumstances been different. The phenomenon is termed counterfactual history and appears to be driven by Walter Mitty Syndrome, which lives inside us all. Counterfactuals are great fun and provide history with entertainment and educational value

by examining the past mistakes and using the imagination to ponder what might have happened. However, history is the story of what happened, not what might have happened. Accordingly, counterfactual history is not history; it is merely a conjecture. Meehan concludes his paper with a counterfactual stating emphatically, ‘lives lost could have been saved had the home had more money.’¹¹⁷ That is mere speculation, which runs counter to the historical facts, and as we shall see by the end of this section, the evidence he uses to back up his claims does not appear to have been subjected to any component peer review, in the domain of history. Later on, in the last chapter, I will put this statement to the test by looking at the enormous sums spent on children in the care of the state today. We see that the system is far below any acceptable standard, not to mind the standard of perfection that we expect, think is in place now, and in the past.

Sectarianism

The article’s integrity would have significantly benefited had it demonstrated an erudite knowledge of historical paediatric medicine, medical statistics, aetiology, and pathology of disease. Also evident is a lack of familiarity with current or historical medical reporting practices and most of all with the regulations and archaic terms within the law and historical reports relating to different types of maternity homes and nurse-mothers. As we will see, through extracts from the essay, several assertions are based on erroneous interpretation. First, let us start where it announces to the intended audience how the paper sets out to prove the foundations of its claims and illustrate their veracity.

Death and neglect of children in Bethany home from the mid 1930s to the late 1940s is a direct result of state officials making the health and well being of Bethany children secondary to sectarian regulation of that provision. This can be illustrated by looking at how, at that time, the then Department of Local Government and Public Health dealt with concerns about ill health of Bethany Children.¹¹⁸

In this essay, Meehan acknowledges that the Bethany home was regarded by Catholics ‘as a proselytising institution’. In other words, its primary mission was to convert Catholics to Protestantism, offering free accommodation and care in return for ‘jumping’ to Protestantism. It is more emphatically stated in an earlier article he wrote where he informs readers that the ‘managing committee included clergy who were members of the Church of Ireland’s Society of Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics (ICMRC)’¹¹⁹. However, neither article attempts to inform readers of why this was considered so important nor is the phrase ‘sectarian regulation’ defined, so permit me to set the correct historical context.

¹¹⁷ Meehan, ‘The Irish State & the Bethany Home’.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Meehan, ‘Church and State Bear Responsibility for the Bethany Home’.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, considerable mistrust had built up between the two main Christian denominations due to each side attempting to retain as many souls as it could and capture as many as possible from the opposing side. Earlier in chapter one, we encountered the enormous international controversy which took place after Galway's Fr Peter Daly baptised a dying foundling, a Catholic. Hostile proselytisation, particularly on the Protestant side was supported by the British establishment during the Protestant Ascendency. It was so prevalent in the society that the Irish developed their own terms to describe it. Converts from Catholicism to Protestantism were known as 'soupers' or said to have 'taken the soup'. A reference to Protestant organisations' actions would only offer relief or food to the starving poor after the unfortunate and destitute persons agreed to convert to Protestantism. Jumpers is another term for converts but has nothing to with jumping or the woolly variety, it derives from the Irish word for a convert, *iompar* (p. um-pur). The net result was that people were very worried about being forced to convert against their will, especially at a time when they were particularly vulnerable to coercion. Unsurprisingly, when Catholics and Protestants wound up in each other's institutions, it was always a cause for concern and drew correspondence from each side when nearly each and every incidence was discovered. However, it is not sectarianism or bigotry because the purpose of the correspondence was to ensure that the rights of various adherents were respected, no matter what institution they happened to find themselves in. Protestant proselytising organisations had failed miserably over centuries to convert the Irish people, but far from giving up the ghost, it only strengthened their resolve. The Bethany Home continued the long tradition of coercive conversion of Catholic women and children in return for the institution's help and support. It was these concerns that lay behind the comments in inspectors' reports. However, it appears that reports of hostile proselytising have now been construed into a new present-day phrase, 'sectarian regulation'. The use of the word regulation suggests the existence of some law on the statute books empowering statutory bodies to regulate institutions based on their religious ethos. No such law existed at the time.

I will come back to this point later for fear of getting bogged down in this issue before I have the chance to set the socio-medico history in its correct context.

Casting a most egregious slur

Meehan uses the following extract from the book 'To Care and to Cure' by Dr James Deeny, a former Chief Medical Advisor to the government of Ireland who worked at the Department of Local Government and Public Health. This particular paragraph has proven to be highly popular with the scandal propagators in recent times. It relates to an account of one of the Doctor's inspections, not at the Bethany Home but at the Bessborough Mother and Baby Home located outside Cork City. (Meehan uses the ellipses or the three dots to show where he has omitted some text from the original paragraph.)

‘a beautiful institution, built on to a lovely old house just before the war and seemed to be well-run and spotlessly clean. I... could not make out what was wrong; at last I took a notion and stripped all the babies and unusually, for a Chief Medical Adviser, examined them. Every baby had some purulent infection of the skin and all had green diarrhoea, carefully covered up... without any legal authority I closed the place down and sacked the matron, a nun and also got rid of the medical officer. The deaths had been going on for years. They had done nothing about it, had accepted the situation and were quite complacent about it.’¹²⁰

Meehan uses the above paragraph as one of his attack prongs on Dr Winslow Sterling Berry, the Deputy Chief Medical Adviser at the Department of Health and Local Government before Deeny arrived department, and he continued in that position during his tenure. Meehan quotes, again with ellipses, from Sterling Berry’s report on the Bethany home carried out on the 6th of October 1939 and compares it to the Deeny extract to insinuate a prejudice against illegitimate children:

‘These children were delicate from birth backward in walking... I am satisfied from my investigations that the children were not neglected while in Bethany’.

However, in direct contradiction of the last part of the quote, Meehan writes,

Deeny did not remark, as the Deputy Chief Medical Adviser had in Bethany in 1939, ‘it is well recognised that large number [sic] of illegitimate children are delicate... from their birth’. The contrast between the responsible approach of Deeny and the negligent approach of Berry could not be more striking. That is why Bethany Children continued to die and to be [sic] become ill in large numbers during the 1940s.’¹²¹

Three points to note, 1. the ellipses mark where he left out text from Sterling Berry’s original quote, however, Meehan also used similar quotes from the same report of Sterling Berry in a letter to the Irish Times dated March 1st, 2013. On this occasion, two more words appear, ‘it is well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children are delicate and marasmic [starving]’ adding in square brackets a helpful reminder to readers that the children were ‘starving’. Two years later writing in the Irish Examiner on 25th Nov 2015, Meehan writes a fuller version of the sentence ‘...it is well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children are delicate and marasmic [emaciated] from their birth and if removed from constant medical supervision and nursing attention often quickly deteriorate.’ ‘Starving’ was changed to ‘emaciated’ which evinces he holds the opinion that the word ‘marasmus’ has at least two

¹²⁰ Deeny, *To Cure & to Care: Memoirs of a Chief Medical Officer*.

¹²¹ Meehan, ‘The Irish State & the Bethany Home’.

more interchangeable meanings. However, far from casting a slur on illegitimate children, the full quote reveals that Dr Sterling Berry was reporting, as any competent medical inspector would do, on a category of children known to be from socially and economically deprived backgrounds and advocated greater care for these infants.

Point 2. Meehan claims that ‘Children continued to die and to be [sic] become ill in large numbers during the 1940s’. He supplies figures for the number of deaths but not the number of illnesses. Moreover, if we are to use his figures for deaths at the home, he contradicts directly his own argument. He supplies a graph, entitled ‘Bethany Home Interments in Mount Jerome Cemetery 1942 to 1949’ shows that children died in greater numbers in the 1930s. The figures for the 1940s taken at face value show a great improvement, down from 102 to 63, a drop of nearly 40%.

Bethany Home Number of Interments in Mount Jerome Cemetery
1942 to 1949 (ibid)

1920	-		1930	6		1940	2
1921	-		1931	1		1941	9
1922	2		1932	2		1942	10
1923	6		1933	5		1943	9
1924	4		1934	4		1944	16
1925	8		1935	18		1945	4
1926	10		1936	28		1946	5
1927	5		1937	13		1947	6
1928	6		1938	16		1948	1
1929	10		1939	9		1949	1

Here and there Meehan supplies figures for the number of residents in the home but it does not appear possible to build a full year by year table to show how many people were resident in the home any particular year. Consequently, there could have been a drop in infant mortality rates or indeed, child mortality rates as the total number is required to perform this calculation. Without these

figures, authors are forced to speculate, but we can view these figures through the perspective of that time using the relevant Registrar General's Reports. The 40s peak occurred at Bethany in the year 1944, as shown in the previous table. The RG's report for that year shows that in the whole country, 176 women died from causes associated with pregnancy, childbirth and the Puerperal state (maternal deaths). A total of 64,425 children were born of which 5,198 did not live to celebrate their first birthday. In that context, looking at the Bethany Home and the one year where the highest total 16 deaths were recorded, it represents nothing out of the ordinary for that time.

Point 3. Meehan is saying in black and white that deaths at Bethany were due to Dr Winslow Sterling Berry's negligence. He claims that Sterling Berry was making a moral judgment about illegitimate children rather than a medical judgment. Meehan does not attempt to equate the children's 'delicate' state with appalling social conditions, economic deprivation, and the plethora of other factors at play. The women in Bethany and all other refuges, including 'mother and baby homes', were almost all from Ireland's most economically deprived communities. Research in the last few decades has shown conclusively that economic deprivation, where it exists in the world today, remains the primary cause of high IMRs and high maternal mortality rates.

Dr Sterling Berry was at least as competent as any other medic of the time and perhaps even better than most, reflected in his office's status. For almost the full duration of the 20th century particularly in the early to mid-20th century, many speculative theories existed as to what was causing high infant mortality rates, but no one knew what the actual medical cause was. It turns out that they were right to suspect poverty, but the evidential confirmation of the causes lay decades into the future from the 1940s Nobody at that time was able to prove conclusively what was causing the high infant mortality rates in general and in particular why they were higher in the illegitimate cohort of infants, outside of economic deprivation theories. That means nobody; it is logically fallacious to use evidence that belongs to the hindsight of the future to criticise people who had no access to such evidence, precisely because it belonged in the future. Many historical errors rely on a quixotic view that the people of the past could engage in time travel. Writers continually imagine that our antecessors could hop aboard a time machine and travel forward to the future to grab information from there, and then carry it back to their present. However, when they find that there no evidence that the antecessors used this future information, they jump to the conclusion that they were faulty people guilty of bungling and negligence. Historical evidence that belongs to their future and our past is easily conflated, and fallacious history mostly takes flight when assumptions are used in place of knowledge.

Highly selective extracts

Many bloggers, commentators and conspiracy theorists have used various extracts from this one paragraph in Dr James Deeny's book. For such writers,

this paragraph is the very foundation stone upon which they build the scandal, mainly due to the lack or non-existence of negative reports, criticising the management of mother and baby homes, nor have any come to light over the decade long scandal. Moreover, many inferences are drawn from the paragraph, but the inferences can only stand by leaving important information out. Permit me to put some of that back in so you can see for yourself and make up your own mind. Here is the full text of that paragraph which Meehan partially quoted from Deeny's book. (The removed text is shown in italics)

One of the things I tried to do was to organise public health monitoring. For example, going through the returns for infant deaths in Cork I noticed that there was something unusual traced the matter to a home for unmarried mothers at Bessborough outside the city. I found that in the previous year that some 180 babies had been born there and that considerably more than 100 had died. Shortly afterwards, when in Cork, I went to Bessborough. It was a beautiful institution, built on to a lovely old house just before the war, and seemed to be well run and spotlessly clean. I marched up and down and around about and could not make out what was wrong; at last, I took a notion and stripped all the babies and, unusually for a Chief Medical Adviser, examined them. Every baby had some purulent infection of the skin and all had green diarrhoea, carefully covered up. There was obviously a staphylococcus infection about. Without any legal authority I closed the place down and sacked the matron, a nun, and also got rid of the medical officer. The deaths had been going on for years. They had done nothing about it, had accepted the situation and were quite complacent about it.¹²²

Almost every writer attempting to prove that neglect and therefore abuse was rampant in mother and baby homes have quoted parts of the above paragraph, but none of them has decided to use the next paragraph nor the one after that. Here again, is the full text of the following two paragraphs.

A couple of days later I had a visit in Dublin from the nuns 'man of affairs' and he was followed by the dean of Cork, Monsignor Sexton and finally the bishop of Cork complained to the Nuncio who went to see De Valera. The Nuncio Archbishop Robinson (formerly a millionaire American stockbroker) saw my report and said we were quite right in our action. For once, the Bishop, Dr Lucey, a formidable fighting man was silent.

Later on the place had been disinfected and repainted and so on, the Order supplied a new matron and we appointed a new doctor. During the succeeding years, while many hundreds of babies were born each year,

¹²² Deeny, *To Cure & to Care: Memoirs of a Chief Medical Officer*.

the number of deaths never exceeded single figures. Today the deaths of only a few infants in such an institution will bring about a furore in the press.¹²³

A cursory glance through these paragraphs might at first appear to defeat my agenda, which is to present the evidence that neglect/abuse was not behind the high Infant Mortality Rates at the mother and baby homes. It demonstrates that I, unlike many other writers, am not attempting to hide information, which may contradict my arguments. When examined with care, these paragraphs not only bolster my position but exposes the arguments of the mythmakers as self-refuting.

James Deeny was an extraordinary doctor with capabilities beyond the norm in many respects, not least his medical skills that were well above that of a mere General Practitioner (GP) and above most of the medics of the time. His high level of skill and knowledge empowered his intuition for medicine and medical problem solving; on top of that, he had the political skills to know how to get a job done. Today, the Irish public knows nothing of him, but at least they know something of Dr Noel Browne. Therein lies a problem; Browne lionised himself and has falsely claimed or has been given credit for achievements that were not his to claim. The upshot is that his personal historical reputation soars above that of all other medics of the time. The reality was somewhat different; he had nowhere near the same ability medically, professionally nor politically as Deeny.

Moreover, there is significant information in the historical record to prove that Browne did more harm than good to the Irish health system, but Ireland is alas not yet ready to read it. Deeny had everything, which Browne had not, and it was he who was behind the building of regional sanatoria, not Browne. It was Deeny who was the author of the Mother and Child Scheme, not Browne. Browne got rid of Deeny from the department when Deeny criticised his combative manner. Seemingly it was a personality trait which Brown had used to significant effect to alienate himself from the medical profession and others. He made life hard not only for himself but many other health department officials as well. When Browne alienated one too many, including his party leader, Sean McBride, he got kicked out of office. Deeny was then brought back to his old job as Chief Medical Advisor. Among his many achievements was the implementation of the Mother and Child scheme with silent resolve and no bluster, unlike the socialist blowhard. More on that story later.

Hygiene was of paramount importance in the pre-antibiotic era.

Note that Deeny said of the home, it 'seemed to be well run and spotlessly clean'. That is a significant point. Prior to the introduction of antibiotics, hygiene was of paramount importance in the prevention and spread of disease. The nuns did hygiene very well and, in every hospital, or institution, which

¹²³ Meehan, 'The Irish State & the Bethany Home'.

they were involved in its running, much time and effort was devoted to making and keeping wards and the building spotlessly clean. When the number of nuns working in the Irish health system began to decline in the 1970s, the smell of iodoform went with them, and hospital hygiene standards began to fall. It is more than a coincidence that 21st-century hospitals now provide a home to many hospital-born superbugs, manifest through hospital-acquired infections. Every report that has survived about the mother and baby homes says that the homes were spotlessly clean. Even Meehan quotes Dr Berry on the Bethany Home, 'the institution is kept very well is clean & comfortable.' Like the rest of the extant reports for all other mother and baby homes and many other institutions.

Another critical point easily missed is that nurses/matrons are not involved in making diagnoses and do not dictate the course of treatment. Doctors do that, and nurses carry out the instructions of a doctor. Having stated that, a competent nurse will know when a doctor has it wrong and will report it accordingly. That is why the doctor in charge of the home, referred to as 'the Medical Attendant', was also fired and replaced.

'Every baby had some purulent infection of the skin, and all had green diaorrhoea [sic], carefully covered up.' 'Carefully covered up' can be interpreted in two ways. It could mean covered in clean bandages well applied, or it could be interpreted in a more sinister metaphorical manner as hiding the skin diseases to deceive inspectors. However, as we will see in the last chapter, Deeny's knew precisely where the blame lay was brutally direct in his comments.

Notice how the information that the Pope's representative in Ireland agreed that Dr Deeny was right to fire the Matron and the Doctor is very conveniently left out of the scandal propagators' narrative.

Also, significant and similarly ignored was the second paragraph which declared that when a new matron, a nun from the order was appointed, the mortality rates dropped to low levels. If the Catholic Church had a policy of killing illegitimate babies, this achievement would not have happened.

Dr Deeny was no fool and was not deferential to the church. If he thought that the Catholic Church was disposing of babies through medical neglect or starvation, he would have found out and have done something to stop it. He was not afraid to challenge the bishops as he recounts in this extract from an incident in 1939.

I got into an argument with Dr O'Neill Bishop of Limerick, a former president of Maynooth [university]. I pointed out that there were some twenty thousand priests and nuns in Ireland all educated to third level and I asked what had they done to improve the social situation of the country apart from teaching and some nursing. He said that a priest's job was to

preach the Gospel not act as a social worker. While he was largely right, I did not think it ended there and so the argument grew to be hot and heavy.¹²⁴

Finally, an example of the fallacy of the lonely fact, Deeny, and the department had oversight of all mother and baby homes, and we see that when a problem was noticed, the department took action. No similar action was necessary for other mother and baby homes.

The prison myth.

Many writers are guilty of propagating the myth that the so-called ‘mother and baby homes’ were places to incarcerate women and children. Frequently the prison myth masquerades under the phrase ‘Ireland’s architecture of containment’, and we find that Meehan again is keen to reinforce this idea. However, the arguments bolstering this view, directly contradict the central argument of most if not all claimants, that the abuse took place due to a hatred of unmarried mothers and illegitimate children. Accordingly, Meehan has to overlook many of these institutions’ sanctuary roles to argue that they were places of detention.

Bethany Home was a combined mother and baby home, children’s home and place of detention for Protestant women referred by the courts, who were there on remand or who were convicted of crimes ranging from petty theft to infanticide. It also functioned, from 1945, as a place of detention for offending Protestant female children and teenagers, on the nomination of the then Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Barton, who was invited to do so by the then Minister for Justice, Gerry Boland. A large majority of residents were from the Church of Ireland.

[...]

‘It was reported in the High Court in January 1940 that ‘The Civic Guards [police] were in the habit of sending any homeless Protestant girl to Bethany’’.¹²⁵

Like many others, Meehan has mistakenly renamed the Bethany Home as a ‘mother and baby home’. Without realising it, it contradicts this claim, showing his audience the evidence that homes such as Bethany were not exclusively used as homes for unmarried mothers. They were a refuge for destitute women, mothers and children, battered wives, abandoned and unwanted children, up and down the country. That is confirmed by the historical evidence and court records that the justice system used these Homes as women and children’s refuges. Had the quote regarding the ‘homeless Protestant girl, been left out it would have bolstered the prison argument no end. Even today, the courts will

¹²⁴ Deeny, *To Cure & to Care: Memoirs of a Chief Medical Officer*.

¹²⁵ Meehan, ‘The Irish State & the Bethany Home’.

place a child in care, yep in an institution, nowadays called care homes, if the court deems a child to be at risk. There is nothing new or untoward about the police and the courts placing children at risk in care. I am sure many children, particularly feral and rebellious teenagers in crisis, would regard care homes as places of detention, but they are not prisons nor places of incarceration. That brings us to another significant problem facing the amateur historian, attaching present-day meanings and connotations to archaic terminology. When medical reports use the word 'inmate', they do not refer to a prison inmate, which is about the only context the word is currently used today. In the past, anybody in an institution, including a hospital, due to acute illness or for the longer term was called an inmate; there were no connotations of incarceration meant or implied.

As we saw earlier, women convicted of infanticide were dealt with compassionately by the Irish courts, often sparing women prison if they agreed to reside at an institution for a period of time, to aid their recuperation both physical and mental. That does not make it a prison or a place of incarceration. The same compassion is evident in courts today, which will reduce or strike out sentences on the grounds of compassion, provided the offender agrees to spend time at a rehabilitation facility. If one is going to rename these as places of detention, then there is a lot of them in Ireland and elsewhere at present, and one has to ask why there is no outcry. The answer is that mother and baby homes were rehabilitation facilities, and nobody then as now viewed such as places of incarnation.

Many historical articles contain numerous errors due to a misunderstanding of archaic terminology upon which many inferences are drawn. Most scandal propagator articles demonstrate abysmal knowledge of even basic historical terminology. Any mistake based thereupon is exacerbated when esoteric medical terms are encountered, often resulting in spurious connotations. What we call foster mothers today were referred to as nurse-mothers in the past. The word nurse derives from the same source as nourishment, literally meaning a woman who feeds infants. The word 'nurse' is a far cry from what we understand a nurse to be today. The women referred to in the historical sources were not hospital nurses or RGNs (Registered General Nurse), they were mostly ordinary women who may or may not have had any medical training or qualifications. Any woman calling themselves a nurse-mother, could advertise to take infants into their care on their premises. High infant mortality and low standards of care caused the authorities to act consequently bona fide nurse-mothers were forced to register with the authorities and were subject to inspections by the health authorities. Accordingly, when nurse-mothers were found to be providing care below an acceptable standard, action was taken. Meehan quotes selectively from reports of a child being neglected in the care of an external nurse-mother named Mrs Humphreys. The foster mother, it turns out, had committed a cardinal offence of childcare by having an infant in her

home and under her care, which was not registered.

The registration of infants in foster mothers' care was required by law to ensure that no children went unknown to the authorities. Unregistered children were a sign of baby farming, much frowned upon by the authorities and society because infants could be disposed of without anyone knowing anything. An inspector from DLGPH found one such unregistered child in Mrs Humphrey's care and reported that he/she thought it was in a dying condition. Dr Winslow Sterling Berry changed the inspector's comments from 'dying' to read 'very low'. We cannot know what eventually happened to this child, other than its return to the Bethany Home. Still, Meehan is trying to insinuate that Dr Winslow Sterling Berry was trying to cover up for poor Bethany Home conditions. However, the lack of proper care did not occur at the Bethany Home and besides the case was found by the department's inspection regime. It ends up in a report because the Bethany authorities fostered out other infants to that particular foster home. Also, a point missed by Meehan contained within the inspector remarks; that one child should not have been sent in that condition to the foster home. He/she was sent there because the doctor in charge of Bethany thought, 'the country air might improve the child's condition'. This episode dates from 1939, a time when fresh country air was supposed to have almost mystical curative properties. This is why all sanatoria were located in the countryside, and why patients were wheeled on to hospital balconies each day to breathe the fresh country air. It was all that could be done to help the sick at that time. It appears that Meehan is unaware of the significance of the terminology and seems to conflate remarks about external foster homes and foster parents with staff and residents at the Bethany home. Mrs Humphres had an unregistered child (not a child from Bethany) who was kept in such a terrible state of neglect that the inspector recommended that 'the Board of Assistance should be asked to deal drastically with the woman and to prosecute'. And yet Meehan uses it as evidence of poor-quality care at the Bethany home.

Perfect World - Sure aren't we all perfect.

Leaving the Meehan essay aside for the moment, the chief weapon of the clurichaun is the use of the Nirvana fallacy, which is both frequent in its use and is the product of some peculiar Irish cultural bias. It is essentially a false comparison, like comparing apples not even with oranges but with something outrageously dissimilar like nuclear devices. It can also be achieved by making no comparison, thus allowing the human mind to naturally make unrealistic and idealised comparisons. It uses the assumption that we live in a 'perfect world' or in a world where impossible standards are achievable. If one believes that society has progressed from the past, especially in the field of medicine, then the past cannot have had higher standards than those of today. Thus, using today's standards to criticise the past is not only a crime against science, logic and reason, but it is also an utterly buffoonish endeavour. To give you some insight into how perfect our world is today and how brilliant the training of

medics and nurses is at present; indulge me briefly, while I explore the core evidence.

In many articles written on the subject of mother and baby homes, there is the expectation on behalf of authors that perfection should have existed in the past, and that its absence can be taken as evidence of neglect. Still, perfection does not exist in this world, even in the present day. Humans are cognitively flawed creatures and the institutions, which they found, manage and operate, are consequently. Accordingly, over the decades, new and improving quality assurance methods have been developed. As you know, quality control is not confined to the healthcare sector; it is in all industries and has advanced immensely in recent times, especially with the advent of powerful computers. The result is that the once common circumstance of buying a brand-new faulty product has become a rare experience today. In patients' care, quality control is a much more complicated endeavour, and poor-quality care is harder to discover. It might appear contradictory to note that poor professional performance is limited to a tiny minority of healthcare professionals, but at the same time, it is more prevalent than we are inclined to think.

In the UK, the Nursing and Midwifery Council reported that in the five years between April 2006 and March 2011, 994 nurses were struck off its register. Of that figure 104, striking offs were as a result of a complaint from the police. In total, the Nursing and Midwifery Council investigated 12,083 complaints against members of the nursing profession for this period. Using these figures, we can extrapolate that 198 nurses are struck off per year in the UK on average.¹²⁶

In the UK, 213 doctors had their names erased (struck off) from the General Medical Council register in the three years from 2014 and 2016 with a further 274 doctors suspended. That gives a figure of 71 doctors on average are struck off per year with a further average of 91 suspensions per year.¹²⁷

Instances of poor professional performance and poor care can be found everywhere and in all care facilities at one time or another. Obviously, the management of institutions is never keen to have instances of poor performance published for fear that it will cast a slur on the entire staff and the institution. For that specific reason and to improve standards, all care facilities are subject to inspection and have a complaints procedure to find cases missed by inspectors. The evidence is abundant, and it supports the assertion that all the institutions of humanity are flawed, including inspection regimes and such flaws, can be found even the complainants themselves and in the complaints procedures. However, it must be noted, that standards are gradually improving with the progression of time, but it is imperative to realise that there would be no need for improvement were it not for the existence of mistakes.

¹²⁶ 'Number of Nurses Struck off between 2006 & 2010 - a Freedom of Information Request to Nursing and Midwifery Council - WhatDoTheyKnow'.

¹²⁷ 'Fitness to Practise Statistics 2017'.

How can we expect standards to have been higher in the past when we are far from achieving such perfection ourselves? Do these instances mean that the whole healthcare system in the UK is abusive to its patients! Of course, not but that will not stop the amateurs from falling into the many traps set by history and as a consequence, end up promoting historical falsehoods.

*Even a mistake may turn out to be the one thing
necessary to a worthwhile achievement. - Henry Ford*

*A failure is not always a mistake, it may simply
be the best one can do under the circumstances.
The real mistake is to stop trying. - B. F. Skinner*

Vital statistics AWOL

At no point does Meehan attempt to produce complete figures for the number of residents in the Bethany Home, how many were abandoned infants or orphans, and how many married or unmarried mothers and their babies. If we are to know what the mortality rates were, these figures are imperative. Once or twice, there are tantalising mentions like in a 1937 report which states ‘of 57 children ‘in the home since the last inspection 14 died’ but other than that, only once more is an overall figure for the number of residents is supplied. In 1939 Sterling Berry’s report on Bethany mentions that.

‘there are 22 expectant mothers or nursing mothers in the home + 42 children. There are 19 children boarded out. The institution is kept very well is clean & comfortable, no evidence of overcrowding. The mothers & infants are well looked after & appear happy & contented.’

Meehan’s figures show that nine children from Bethany were buried that year, but nowhere does he attempt to calculate mortality rates but instead relies on the phrase a ‘huge increase in mortality’. The reliance on such an overall figure is insufficient on its own to imply neglect or abuse, as we will see later on. Meehan also uses the phrase that ‘children continued to die in record numbers’. I struggle to make sense of this claim. He mentions the year 1936, which is the peak year for the record number of deaths at Bethany standing at 28. In subsequent years the figures never came near that total, so how can the claim that ‘children **continued** to die in record numbers’ stand? He tells us that the authorities agreed to limit the number of residents after that year, and that may be why the number of deaths declined, but the implied high ‘record numbers’ of deaths can’t have continued. Inspectors found the Bethany was overcrowded in 1936, which is the year with the highest recorded number of interments. Higher numbers of residents would directly correlate with the number of cemetery interments, but we are still not able to calculate the mortality rate. Neither is the loss of the 28 souls put into context. In 1936, 4,309 infants died

before reaching the age of one year in Ireland. It was a year where deaths from whooping cough, one of the greatest killers of infants of all time, was once again rampant in Ireland. Factors such as disease outbreaks and pandemics in society, in general, are missing from the equation and half-baked statistics cannot be logically used to instantiate or bolster claims of neglect and abuse.

Reports of intermittent overcrowding are often used to insinuate chaos and poor-quality care. Health service overcrowding is still with us from time to time, and when nursing trade unions report overcrowding at Emergency Departments and hospitals today, it does not in itself stand as evidence as poor-quality care. A hospital or institution can easily avoid becoming overcrowded by using the delightfully simple solution of turning patients away, in effect, abandoning them to the streets. It was a strategy deployed at the National Children's Hospital, at Harcourt St, Dublin in the early 20th century. Despite being a free hospital for poor children, it had a policy of not taking into care children suffering from an infectious disease.¹²⁸ It may appear callous, but that is how the Harcourt St Hospital kept its mortality rates low. Thanks to our poor grasp of statistics and their long-time use manipulate our opinions, and we are erroneously inclined to equate low mortality rates with excellent quality care.

We never countenance the circumstances behind the numbers fully; low mortality rates could be due to offering no care to the very sick or deliberately choosing to treat only low-risk patients. The corollary is to ask where all the high-risk patients went when they were turned away from these institutions, and you guessed it! They went to the only institutions, which would not refuse any sick child admission. That is why mortality rates were high at the institutions; they were dealing with high-risk individuals, which can be found in medical statistics all over the world today. There is nothing sinister in statistics, which show high mortality rates. To cite one example, present-day hospitals with a specialist unit for dealing with the victims of a heart attack nearly always have a higher number of deaths due to cardiac arrest than other hospitals. Why? Because high-risk cardiac patients are sent to specialist units from other non-specialist hospitals and usually in a big hurry. When patients are beyond the help of current medicine, their deaths are recorded at the specialist hospital and not at the hospital, which first admitted them. Thus, one cannot draw valid inferences for high mortality rates without first seeking corroborating evidence.

Historians are sometimes forced to use assumptions when little or no evidence is available. Some assumptions are better than others, but assumptions are always flagged in quality historical writing and are most often expressed as counterfactuals. Statisticians too use assumptions to interpret statistical data, and these are nearly always flagged and are often misinterpreted by non-statisticians as fact. When no evidence is put forward, and inferences are drawn nonetheless, it undermines any argument based thereupon. It can only stand as speculation, not as evidence.

¹²⁸ Mulcahy, *Margaret Ó Hóghartaigh: Kathleen Lynn—Irishwoman, Patriot, Doctor*.

Missed proselytisation

Returning to his claims of sectarianism, Meehan writes, ‘this sectarian containment allowed child neglect that was effectively protected, not inspected, by state officials.’ Yeah Right. First Meehan quotes from inspection reports, and now he writes that the home was not properly inspected. I have no idea what the term ‘sectarian containment’ means (possibly referring to the existence of Protestant and Catholic homes) but can it be itself a cause of neglect? In this scandal, both the Catholic and Protestant churches stand equally accused of negligence. If it is due to sectarianism, it would mean that each was neglecting members of each other’s flock who were unfortunate to end up in the wrong institution. Accordingly, the Protestant institutions would be only killing only Catholics and vice versa, but there is absolutely no evidence to support any of these notions.

Meehan gives us another partial and redacted extract from one of Dr Sterling Berry’s reports. (emphasis is mine as is the sic)

Consequently, on 6 October 1939, William [sic] Sterling Berry returned to the Bethany Home. He began, I... made inquiries re the children [BLANKED - NM]. These children were delicate from birth backward in walking... **I am satisfied from my investigations that the children were not neglected while in Bethany**’. Berry then rationalised sickness and mortality with, ‘it is well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children are delicate... from their birth and if removed from constant medical supervision and nursing attention often quickly deteriorate’. Berry then steered the discussion away from his statutory responsibilities and toward what he perceived to be religious tensions.¹²⁹

In a ‘Confidential, for Department’s own use’ memo appended to his handwritten report, the Deputy Chief Medical Adviser stated, ‘I am meeting the Bethany Committee... to get them to consent to put an end to this most objectionable [proselytising] feature of their work’. In an appended note he reported that he returned to the home where a resolution was passed at a special meeting on 27 October 1939 in the inspector’s presence. This, wrote **Berry, ‘should satisfy any Roman Catholics concerned by Bethany’s proselytising activities’**, On three occasions in 1939 the Medical Adviser neglected his statutory duty toward sick and dying children. He justified this stance by reliance on and promotion of, a social prejudice with no basis in medical practice or knowledge. He then attempted to deflect public concern in this matter by concentrating on sectarian tensions between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Deputy Medical advisor **appears** to have threatened the Home with

¹²⁹ Meehan, ‘The Irish State & the Bethany Home’.

negative financial consequences if they did not pass the resolution he recommended, excluding Roman Catholics. The Irish state forced Bethany home to change its admissions policy.¹³⁰ (note the insertion above in square brackets is Meehan's not mine)

Note the use of the speculative term 'appears' and what it is used to insinuate.

Anyone with the slightest knowledge of Irish history knows what a big issue coercive proselytisation was and the claims that medics were more interested in sectarianism than medicine requires a huge leap of the imagination but has no basis in fact. Consequently, Meehan's case is built entirely on innuendo and therefore cannot stand as evidence. Moreover, it is easy to defame the dead, and picking a fight with the dead who cannot defend themselves has become a popular pastime in Ireland of late. However, I will place Dr Sterling Berry's historical reputation and the truth of the matter with Dr Deeny, Chief Medical Advisor to the Government and Dr Sterling Berry's immediate superior at the Dept to pass judgment on his contemporary.

[Dr Winslow Sterling] Berry was an old pet. He was the son of the Bishop of Killaloe and had been a Colonel in the RAMC [Royal Army Medical Corps], was the receptacle of all the local government and public health lore in Ireland and was very good at his work.¹³¹

Note: not just good, not just ordinary but very good at his work. In footnote 14 Meehan partially quotes from Deeny but leaves out the comment about being 'very good at his work' and for some reason has decided not to use ellipses and so many selective sentences get combined to look like a single comment.

Another Bald Claim

Yet another bald claim is that:

The Irish state began inspecting Maternity Homes under the 1934 Registration of Maternity Homes Act in 1936. **The Act was designed primarily to deal with high levels of child mortality in mother and baby homes.**¹³²

No, it wasn't. If a historian made such a claim, it would be such a calamitous howler that he or she would be the subject of derision for the rest of their career. Let us look up the parliamentary record rather than take this statement at face value. The historical record can be looked up under 'In Committee on Finance. - Registration of Maternity Homes Bill, 1934—Second Stage'. At the second reading of the bill in the Dáil Éireann debate on Wednesday, 7 Feb 1934, Dr Con Ward, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, introducing the bill stated that 'the Bill is intended to give effect

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Deeny, *To Cure & to Care: Memoirs of a Chief Medical Officer*.

¹³² Meehan, 'The Irish State & the Bethany Home'.

to a recommendation made by the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor including the Insane Poor.’ The commission was appointed on the 29th of March 1925 and published its report two years later in 1927.

The homes referred to in the report were foster homes, and the commission was recommending ways to stamp out the practice of baby farming.

Here is the relevant extract from the report of Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor including the Insane Poor (1927). Dr Ward explicitly stated that the bill was based on the following paragraph numbers 266, 267 and 268 contained within the commission’s report.

Here are those sections. Note: the emphasis mine.

Section entitled -

Regulation of Maternity Homes.

266 - It would seem from the evidence given before us that in the City of Dublin there are a number of poor class Maternity Homes from which children are placed out to nurse.

We are of opinion that all **private** Maternity Homes should be licensed annually by the local authority and that no license be granted unless the Home is properly and suitably equipped for the purpose and that it was in charge of a respectable person trained in maternity care and nursing.

267 - From the Registrar-General’s Report for 1924, it appears that one in every three illegitimate children born alive in 1924 died within a year of its birth and that the mortality amongst these children is about five times as great as in other cases.

268 - It is high for many reasons but there is one to which we wish specially to refer. The illegitimate child, being the proof of the mother’s shame is, in most cases sought to be hidden at all costs. What frequently happens is that the mother, or the mother’s family, at the time the mother leaves the hospital or Home, **make arrangements with someone to take the child, either paying a lump sum down or undertaking to pay something from time to time. These arrangements are often made or connived at by those who carry on the poorer class of maternity homes and the results to the child can be read in the mortality rates. If a lump sum is paid or if the periodical payment lapse, the child becomes an encumbrance on the foster mother, who has no interest in keeping it alive.**

269 - We concur in the view expressed by Miss Macnaghten, on behalf

of a group of former Guardians of the Poor of Dublin Union, that Part 1 of the Children Act, 1908, dealing with Infant Life Protection, should be amended. The provisions of this Act, whilst no doubt, to some extent bringing 'baby farming' under control, do not, in our opinion go far enough, inasmuch as the child is allowed to be **placed out at nurse** before the notice is given to the Local Authority and there is not sufficient power to prevent people who are not fit to look after a child being given the care of it.

With the 1934 act in 1936, the Bethany home and all other mother and baby homes now accused of abuse became licensed. In other words, each and every Home was deemed by the Department of Health to be suitably and adequately equipped for the purpose, and that the Home was in the charge of a respectable person trained in maternity care and nursing. The maternity homes referred to in the commission's report are the private homes of baby farmers, not licensed maternity homes, nor were they maternity homes/hospitals as we understand them today. That is obvious to historians familiar with the archaic terminology of yesteryear or those who have looked up the context of the debate. These 'private maternity homes' were not institutions. Almost every writer who has made allegations based on this legislation has been mistaken and has conflated comments about baby farmers, foster mothers, and institutions to be references to formal institutions. Even the investigation commission is confused and muddled on the subject, perhaps because they took other people at their word and failed to check the sources.

There is no evidence to show that Meehan had looked up the Dáil record or the Act, yet he asks and states emphatically.

Why was Bethany Home's huge increase in mortality during these years not picked up and dealt with by the inspection regime set up under the 1934 Act, an Act whose purpose was to investigate and curtail deaths of children in institutions born to unwed mothers?¹³³

Another mini-series of elementary mistakes, like all Acts, the 1934 Act provides definitions of the terminology used therein. It states that 'the expression "maternity home" means any premises which are, either wholly or partly, used or intended to be used for the reception of pregnant women or of women immediately after child-birth.' The act was not set up to 'investigate and curtail deaths of children in institutions born to unwed mothers'. The claim is simply an insinuation as indicated by the use of a question mark. This purpose of the act, was, to protect women and babies from quack midwives and baby farmers and entrust their care to institutions which the legislators saw as the high-quality licensed homes like Bethany. Moreover, the Act explicitly holds in high regard such institutions and confers rights upon them above other

¹³³ Ibid.

‘maternity homes’. There is only one reference to institutions in the 1934 Act, which is contained in a clause stipulating, that only maternity homes that were not ‘carried on for private profit’ could apply to the Minister for an exemption from the regulations¹³⁴.

High mortality rates were picked up and duly noted. If they were not, no one would know anything about it today. The simple fact is that the medics knew and wrote about the high infant mortality rate amongst illegitimate children, but as we now know, medico-scientific research was decades away from finding and proving what the causes actually were. Another ambiguity is contained in the phrase ‘huge increase in mortality’. Note this is not the same as a huge increase in the mortality rate. A mortality rate is calculated from the total number of residents or births, but it seems only to be supplied once for girls and twice for children. Therefore, it is possible to have a considerable increase in mortality, and it could also correlate with a huge decrease in the mortality rate! It all depends on the population of the home at a given time, but due to the passage of time, we are left with patchy figures, and the gaps have to be filled with assumptions. Assumptions drawn from an incomplete dataset require careful analysis, and in its absence, it is a crime to draw inferences of neglect and abuse. We know that the home was a refuge like the Tuam Children’s home and others, so it is unlikely that all the deaths that occurred were exclusive to illegitimate children. This lack of explanation, empowering the use of the assumption that they all were, further undermines the case for abuse.

Using present-day understandings to interpret the past is a booby trap set by time to catch all but the most skilled and erudite of history readers.

Meehan justifies his counterfactual conclusions by pointing to correspondence between the management of the Bethany home and local authorities with the DLGPH regarding the correct procedures for applying for funding under various schemes. In 1940 the management of the Bethany home raised nearly £1,000 in funds and so Meehan confidently correlates this with a drop in the number of interments and so the rise in the following years he attributes to the money running out. Other fundraising efforts he writes ‘were clearly insufficient to preserve the lives of children who were again dying in increasing numbers’. Again, a statement is not backed up with statistical evidence, which would undoubtedly point to other factors like changes in socio-economic conditions, a possible rise in the number of residents, disease outbreaks, etc. Most of all, it ignores the hardship caused by the Second World War, known colloquially in neutral Ireland as, ‘The Emergency’.

During the financial year 1943-44 considerable hardship existed amongst the poorer classes in Dublin County Borough, many of whom experienced difficulty in obtaining sufficiently nourishing meals owing to the increased cost of living and the scarcity of fuel. This applied particularly to expectant

¹³⁴The Registration of Maternity Homes Act, 1934

and nursing mothers. It will be evident that this situation arose out of emergency conditions.¹³⁵

The government moved to dispense meals to pregnant women by providing grants to local authorities who in turn funded charities to undertake the work. There is no doubt whatsoever that during WWII, times were very hard for the poor, particularly in urban areas and this factor was the most significant in driving increases in mortality.

The war had other effects not immediately obvious, including a stalled hospital building programme due to a shortage of building materials, fuel shortages made transport difficult, and a range of shortages including raw materials for industry. After the war, all began to change in Ireland regarding the health of the nation. In 1947 the department of Health was created along with the post of Minister of Health and thanks to the ground-breaking Health Act of the same year. It gave health officials unprecedented powers to detain and isolate any person who was deemed to be a probable source of infection. It dictated new food hygiene standards, sanitary standards, vermin control standards and all enforced by the police. It unleashed one of the most aggressive attacks on infectious disease in history, which was ultimately highly successful. The act by itself would certainly have reduced the mortality rates across the spectrum of diseases all by itself, but it was bolstered by an amazing coincidence, the arrival of antibiotics on to the world health market. Meehan takes no account of the changing social conditions and medical zeitgeist and so declared that when the home received government grant money in 1948, the deaths at the home were due to a lack of funding in the previous years stating, 'after this point, Bethany children stopped dying'. It is an inference drawn from very flimsy and patchy data and can only stand as speculation, not fact. If we again turn to the Registrar General's report earlier, we saw for the year 1944, that 5,198 died before reaching their first birthday. In 1948 that figure had dropped by nearly 2,000 to 3,313 infant deaths. A drop of 64% in the national figure indicates more factors at play that have not made it into Meehan's analysis.

Finally, I love this one.

'It [the Bethany home] closed in 1972, due to the evolution of liberal social attitudes toward unwed motherhood among Irish people generally.'¹³⁶

Could there be other reasons for the closure? For example, the 'Tuam Mother and Baby Home' closed in 1961, a full 11 years before Bethany. Was this due to the evolution of liberal social attitudes, too, in Galway's more advanced society, long before the backwards society of Dublin or has Meehan jumped to a conclusion without presenting any evidence to support yet another bald statement.

¹³⁵ 'Women in 20th-Century Ireland, 1922-1966'.

¹³⁶ Meehan, 'The Irish State & the Bethany Home'.

*It is a capital mistake
to theorise before one has data.
Arthur Conan Doyle*

Warming up cold statistics

Michael Dwyer describes himself as a professional historian who works as a part-time lecturer and Head Tutor at the School of History, University College Cork. So proud are the School of History that they posted a link to the online version of an article on their Facebook page when his research featured in this article in the Irish Examiner written by journalist Conall Ó Fátharta.

The article goes under the lurid headline:

‘3 disease outbreaks in mother and baby home had 100% infant death rate.’

The article centres on a 1945 report in the Irish Medical Journal concerning the prevalence of diphtheria in infants at the Sean Ross Abbey mother and baby home, operated by the Sacred Heart Sisters in County Tipperary. The report was co-written by the then county medical officer for Tipperary North Riding, Dr JB O'Regan, who lists seven diphtheria outbreaks between 1935 and 1941.¹³⁷

The Irish Examiner article states:

Michael Dwyer of UCC's School of History, who uncovered the report, said the attitude by the county medical officer to the children in Sean Ross Abbey exuded a 'disturbingly cold detachment'.

The article quoted him further:

‘In one outbreak of diphtheria, all nine affected infants, none of whom were older than two months old, perished. Their passing is represented by a short, stark statement: ‘Nine cases nine deaths — 100% mortality.’ This tragedy stands somewhat analogously with what appears to be an effective public health response to diphtheria in the wider community, a response orchestrated by the very same health professionals responsible for the well-being of infants residing in Sean Ross mother and baby home,’ he said.¹³⁸

Dwyer claimed that a medical article published in a medical journal ‘exuded a disturbingly cold detachment’. A bold statement, illustrative of a lack of familiarity with science or medical reporting in general. Emotional articles or comments have no place in medical journals, nor do many medical journals allow excitable sensationalism to be published. That stated, one might find one or two articles somewhere in obscurity to contradict this statement but while

¹³⁷ Ó Fátharta, ‘3 Disease Outbreaks in Mother and Baby Home Had 100% Infant Death Rate’.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

it is common to find fault with claims made in scientific papers, it is not only rare but extremely rare to find statistics reported emotionally. Science is a cold hard discipline to which emotion is an anathema. Finding a lack of emotion or emotional detachment in medical reporting is like finding snow and ice at the North Pole. It is a no story, and it looks like what we have here is a classic example of subconscious biases imagining things that do not exist in reality.

Given that Ó Fátharta, the article writer's interest in the subject, his many articles and use of marasmus, with the clear innuendo of it as evidence of starvation and neglect, we might expect to encounter the use of innuendo due to conscious or subconscious bias thus rendering misrepresentations of Dwyer's opinion. However, Dwyer is quoted directly, and we can take it that these are the exact words of a person calling themselves a 'professional historian'. In reality, he is a teacher, not a professional historian, as it would appear that it is from teaching, which he derives his primary income, not writing history.

In contrast, an article written with balance and impartiality would have attempted to put those child mortality figures into their correct perspective and would have included the following medico-statistical information.

In 1945 there were a total of 236 deaths from diphtheria in Ireland which breaks down as follows. 61 people died at General hospitals while 131 deaths occurred at county homes and district hospitals with a further 49 are listed as occurring 'elsewhere'. This means that 81% of (192) all diphtheria deaths occurred at institutions, i.e., places offering medical care, either privately, at a cost or at places which offered medical care free of charge. Only 19% of deaths occurred outside institutions. From the total of 236 deaths, 189 or 80% were children 14 years of age and under.

In 1945, the number of diphtheria deaths was on the decline having peaked in 1943 at 310, decreasing to 293 deaths in 1944. 1945 marks a turning point for in 1946 the number of deaths recorded declined massively, dropping to 139 then and then to 56 in 1950.

The figures do not include 4 cases which were recorded as uncertified. It means that the sufferer or his/her family could not afford a doctor, or the patient had died before a doctor could certify the illness; consequently, no formal diagnosis was made, and an informal diagnosis was recorded. Due to Ireland's economic situation, this is a very common occurrence and found in abundance in the medico-historical record.¹³⁹

It is more than a mere coincidence that the number of deaths per year from diphtheria plummets in 1946 and continues to nosedive after that. Diphtheria is a bacteriological infection which now can be cured using antibiotics, but they only became available to the public after WWII. The drop during the war is

¹³⁹ All the figures quoted here are taken from various Irish government's registrar General's Reports for the relevant years.

due to a rising uptake in vaccinations. Vaccinations for many killer childhood diseases were not available at that time. A safe vaccine for pertussis or whooping cough, which was a big killer of infants and children, only became available in the mid-1950s, while a safe measles vaccine did not become available until the 1980s

A plethora of logical fallacies has been used to imply that the care of infants at mother and baby homes was less than could be got elsewhere. Let us start with this one.

The ‘Draw Your Own Conclusion’ Fallacy (also the Non-argument Argument; Let the Facts Speak for Themselves). In this fallacy of logos an otherwise uninformed audience is presented with carefully selected and groomed, ‘shocking facts’ and then prompted to immediately ‘draw their own conclusions.’ - University of Texas¹⁴⁰

The use of the term ‘an uninformed audience’ in this case is not intended as an insult. In this case, it is the fact that a general audience will not be familiar with the vagaries of statistics and the many fallacies and pitfalls that surround statistical analysis. Neither are they likely to be familiar with the historical aetiology of disease and historic medical treatments. People not thus familiar will rely on their current information store and automatically draw comparisons with today. High death numbers tend to shock, especially when compared to the low numbers of today. However, when put in the correct context, there is nothing strange or startling about these figures, and it takes a considerable flight of the imagination to see high mortality rates as evidence of murder through neglect.

Comparing two 30-year periods 1982 to 2017 (most recent period) to the period 1925 to 1960 when the Tuam home was in operation you can see what I mean. In the recent period, a total of 12,000 children died in Ireland before reaching their 16th birthday, which is 90% lower than the older period when 167,000 children died.

There are many hospitals in Ireland and in the first world, which currently have near 100% mortality rates and will be explained greater detail in the next chapter.

Mother and baby homes were not exclusively used for unmarried mothers and their babies; many institutions also took in destitute children who had no other place to go. Private hospitals were certainly not going to take them in to contaminate their patients and treat them free of charge. That was left to the nuns who would refuse no child treatment or palliative care.

Dwyer carefully selects and grooms his shocking fact using the big hint approach using terms like; ‘what appears to be an effective public health response to

¹⁴⁰ Williamson, ‘Master List of Logical Fallacies’.

diphtheria in the wider community'. The use of the word 'appears' clearly shows a lack of knowledge is present, but the statement is purely speculative and used to bolster the big hint, and the article headline relies on emotion, not science to catch the reader's attention.

Abuse - The Catholic cure for Poverty

I could present no more exceptional exemplar of all the maladies that infringe upon quality history writing than within the one article entitled, 'The Catholic cure for Poverty' written by Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley working as a history lecturer at Galway University¹⁴¹. A classic of the genre, where a highly partisan interpretation of historical events is used to promote a current agenda. To her credit, Buckley manages to wrap several agendas into one invective piece, killing many birds with as many stones to hand. The article is a left-wing supremacist attack on what she sees as the right-wing establishment; her artillery cannons are loaded with 'straw man' shrapnel, aiming the barrage at the Catholics, the Irish political classes and the Irish people. Named after the huffing and puffing, big bad wolf in the Three Little Pigs story, a straw man attack is where the views, actions and arguments of the opposing side are misrepresented, and these misrepresentations are then attacked. It is a recognised informal logical fallacy that aims to discredit and humiliate the opposition using tactics ranging from the exaggeration of small facts to complete fabrication of falsehoods; it is regarded as dishonesty, which serves to undermine rational debate.

That is a definition, and I am not accusing Buckley dishonesty, she is not the first author to fail to put the mother and baby homes story in its correct historical context and is merely repeating the fallacies of other writers without checking their veracity. While her agenda clearly shows elements of Marxist socialist, feminist and anti-Catholic tendencies, she lets the sisterhood down by failing to credit the various women's movements for their input and considerable influence on the moral and social hygiene movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Failure to recognise women's achievements is an all-too-common feature of extreme feminism, which prefers to resort to false historical self-victimisation to both support their *raison d'être* and promote self-notoriety. All built on a ton and a half of falsehoods. In this section, I will get through some of the claims made in Buckley's article and I will do the job of a historian and place these claimed events and arguments in their historical context. I am sure that I will be attacked, and stand accused of promoting my own agenda, but at least I fully inform my readers of all the issues surrounding these historical events, even if they oppose whatever agenda I may stand accused of promoting. Readers of history are entitled to be permitted to formulate an informed opinion rather than have it manipulated through cherry-picking small bits of information, filtered through present-day understandings and misunderstandings. Accordingly, I have gone back to the original documents, which historians refer to as primary sources, have included the relevant extracts

¹⁴¹ Buckley, *The Catholic Cure for Poverty*.

below so that my readers can judge for themselves whether or not the history is based thereupon has been subjected to impartial interpretation.

As one author builds the mistakes of another, adding embellishment on top embellishment without dissent, myths grow into those of epic proportions that incrementally creep further away from the grain of truth towards having no basis in reality, thus becoming complete conjectures.

Carrigan Report Myths

One of the common myths that have emerged in recent years goes under the title ‘the suppression of the Carrigan Report’. In reality, the Carrigan report’s findings were not suppressed and incorporated into law through the Public Dance Halls Act 1935 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, which raised the age of consent and banned contraception. If Dr Buckley read the report, it states that it was never intended to be made public. The myth arises because of a memo sent to the cabinet on October 27th, 1932 from the Minister of Justice, James Geoghegan TD, which was severely critical of the report and insisting that it was too one-sided. He was right, the report was one-sided, even for the mentality of the 1920s, blaming motorcars, cinema and dance halls for the rise in illegitimate births. Highly selective extracts from the report have over recent decades, provided the propagandists with fertile soil from which to propagate all sorts of fallacies. Even where the report provides no soil, the fallacies still manage to grow but in keeping with the laws of nature, can only grow with the application of more manure.

Buckley writes, ‘the Carrigan Report revealed abuse was rampant in Irish institutions.’¹⁴² Nowhere in the Carrigan Report does it say any such thing. It is a blatant falsehood or a mistake of monumental proportions due to her qualifications in academic history. We all can make mistakes and a single elementary failure to look up a document, which she herself has hyperlinked in her article, might be forgivable but for the plethora of other historical falsehoods and misinformation peppered throughout her invective article.¹⁴³ Published several years ago in May 2016, the article has remained uncorrected since then, and no erratum has been prefaced to the online article to date. It reveals that Dr Buckley remains unaware of the mistakes and that the article has not been subject to competent peer review until now.

Dr Buckley mistakenly claims that the Carrigan committee’s report dates from 1935, in reality, it delivered its findings on August 20th, 1931, and its report was circulated to members of the Cabinet on December 2nd, 1931. The report offers an essential insight into the mentality and the concerns of the élite and middle classes regarding the specific problem of protecting girls and women in 1920s, not just in Ireland but also worldwide as evinced through this statement

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ A hyper-link is highlighted text within an electronic document when clicked brings readers to another (linked) web-page.

contained within the report.

The Secretariat of the League of Nations, at the instance of the Department of External Affairs, supplied us with official publications and a summary of the legislation in different countries on subjects pertinent to our investigation. The Secretariat also prepared for us a special Memorandum, drawn up by one of its members, Dr Max Habicht, comparing the provisions of Stead's Act [the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885]¹⁴⁴ with existing international conventions having for their purpose the protection of women and children.¹⁴⁵

Note: the primary purpose for establishing the Carrigan Commission was 'the protection of women and children'. Note also, a fundamental of clurichaun syndrome requires that Ireland be treated in isolation from all other countries, thereby falsely promoting the notion that Irish find solutions to Irish problems without reference to the international context. Moreover, when comparisons are made, they tend to be with Britain rather than another country similar to Ireland, which faced similar social problems. In the period under study, Britain was the richest country in the world and Ireland one of the poorest with just over half the GDP per capita of Britain. In light of such, hardly any comparison to Britain concerning efforts in mitigation of poverty is valid. Research validity requires academics to be able to work outside the Anglophone, and that seems to be well beyond the capability of most social historians and sociologists working Irish academia. Note again, however, in the above extract; the committee was concerned to look at what is now called best practice in other countries for the protection of women and children. However, Buckley states that 'the Carrigan committee was tasked with investigating the 'moral state' of the country.'¹⁴⁶ The Carrigan report again, begs to differ.

Under the terms of our Reference we had to consider the secular aspect of social morality which it is the concern of the State to conserve and safeguard for the protection and well-being of its citizens. We looked upon it as our duty in the first place to collect sufficient information from such authentic sources as would enable us to determine whether the standard of social morality is at present exposed to evils, which the existing laws of the Saorstát [Free State], for the suppression and prevention of public vice, are inadequate to check and should they be in our opinion inadequate, to proceed, in the next place, to consider how best they can be made effectual and to recommend [changes to the law]¹⁴⁷

144 Book (eISB), Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885 An Act to make further provision for the Protection of Women and Girls, the suppression of brothels, and other purposes. [14th August 1885].

145 Knitter, 'Days In The Life'.

146 Buckley, *The Catholic Cure for Poverty*.

147 Knitter, 'Days In The Life'.

Interpreting ‘social morality’ as the ‘morality of the country’ is an easy mistake to make, but anyone who reads the report will see that it was primarily concerned with the protection of women and girls from sexual predators, to analyse the dangers faced and recommend action. The report was not in the modern sense moralising nor accusing women of immoral behaviour. If anything, the report authors can be accused of it is philogyny (opposite of misogyny) and misandry (prejudice against men). Only one small section of the report mentions the need to protect boys who were as we know today just as much if not more in danger than girls from sexual predators.

Buckley’s claim that ‘the Carrigan Report revealed abuse was rampant in Irish institutions’ is not only not supported by any statement in the report but is directly contradicted. The report is full of praise for intuitions like industrial schools and even calls for the establishment of penal borstal intuitions, which were already imposed on boys, to be extended to girls.

For girl offenders between 16 and 21 years of age we recommend the adoption of the proposals favoured by the majority of the witnesses, who were examined by us on the subject. They appeared to us sound and practical and can be given legal effect without difficulty by the application, with suitable adaptations, of Part 1. (Reformation of Young Offenders) of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908, under which the Borstal system was established, which on the whole has proved satisfactory for dealing with male offenders between these ages.

At present, in the numerous cases of girl offenders, which would be most judiciously disposed of by sentences of detention under the Borstal system, if it were available...¹⁴⁸

As for the ‘Catholic cure for poverty,’ the cure is striking secular in the Carrigan Report:

In explanation of the numerous cases of outrages upon young females, the Commissioner pointed to the fact to which attention was directed by other witnesses, that in this country the children of the poorer classes are less protected than in Great Britain. In Dublin the necessity in the case of many families living in tenements, for the parents, both father and mother, to leave the children to look after themselves in the day time while they themselves went out to earn their livelihood, was a constant source of danger. In rural districts girls of 14 years are sent out to service, which deprives them of the protection they had with their parents.¹⁴⁹

The report expressly states that children are left on their own or forced to work

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

as servants, depriving them of parental protection due to poverty. The mother and baby homes commission confirmed that most of the women in the homes were previously employed as domestic servants. The landlord classes (both Irish and Anglo Irish) have been abusing young girls and boys for centuries, but it seems to have escaped the attention of Buckley et al. Also escaping attention is the role which women, and in particular women doctors played in analysing the problem of unmarried mothers and how to protect them and children from venereal disease. The Carrigan Commission was keen to seek out the opinion of knowledgeable women and report it accordingly.

The period of 16 to 19 years of age is regarded as the dangerous age for girls, being the period when they are most susceptible emotionally and least capable of self-control. In a pamphlet issued by the [British] National social Purity Crusade, of which the author is Miss Helen Wilson, a prominent member of the Association for Moral and social Hygiene and an advocate for raising the age of protection for girls in England to 18 years, at least, figures are given showing that in the examined cases of 401 women, who were professional prostitutes, 231 had first lapsed between 16 and 19 years of age and of 317 similar cases 194 had become prostitutes between these years. The Poor Law Commission of 1927 reported (clause 259) that mothers of firstborn illegitimate children, who seek relief in this country, are commonly between 17 and 21 years of age and it recommended that the age of consent should be raised to at least 18, if not 19 years.

We concur and would add that the necessity for the better protection of girls has become more acute since the Report of the Poor Law Commission was published. We accordingly recommend that it shall be an offence to have carnal knowledge of a girl under 18 years of age.¹⁵⁰

Language and the connotations associated with certain words has changed over the decades, and if such a passage were written in the same language as today, it would be sternly rebuked, and the authors would have probably gotten George Hooked. The snowflake generation is particularly sensitive to certain words' connotations as they have grown up in an environment of political correctness and sometimes, to borrow a tired old expression, political correctness gone mad. However, snowflaky connotations are anachronisms and can have no place in history, but this ignorance has many harmful consequences. A case in point was that of the elderly Irish radio presenter, George Hook, who, perhaps ham-fistedly but with avuncular intent, proffered advice to women about not putting themselves in danger of sexual attack. He was hysterically accused of victim-blaming and ended up being hounded out of his job. Many of us, men included, have developed strategies to avoid situations, potentially putting us

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

in danger. There are certain streets, specific venues that I would not visit alone or even venture near, late at night. I would also advise my daughters and wife on avoiding putting themselves in danger and any stranger I think might be in danger. Not only that, I would do the same for my son and my male friends too, but I will also put their safety before the hypersensitivities of the snowflakes and make no apologies for doing so.

Interpreting historical documents like the Carrigan Report is where the role of the historian assumes its primary importance, translating such documents into today's parlance so that they can be easily understood by the people of the present, including the snowflakes. The commission was not casting a slur on girls of 16 to 19 years of age it is an observation written in the archaic language of the 1920s where the connotations on such words as illegitimate, ignorant, morality, purity did not carry the attached extra emotional meanings of today. The next extract is illustrative of that when it refers to 'ignorant girls'. Ignorance would be replaced with the phrase innocent and naïve in similar reports of today, and that was what was meant, not thick or stupid.

Reason : The evidence satisfied us that the uncontrolled freedom the promiscuous entertainments in which town and country girls are now in the habit of participating, such as Dance Halls, Picture Houses and 'joy' drives in motor vehicles, are designedly resorted to 'and availed of by male prowlers' as they were described, to bring ignorant 'girls to ruin'; and to render them easier prey, intoxicants, as well as drugged drinks, not infrequently are given to them.¹⁵¹

Without knowledge of the past, any person attempting to read through historical documents can easily make mistakes by doing what comes naturally, filtering information through the prism of current understandings.

The contributors to the Carrigan Report and others in similar reports during the Free State period did not see poverty as a moral failing as Dr Buckley implies, nor were they advocating a Catholic cure for poverty. Such an allegation is untrue especially because the Anglican Church also stands accused of 'slaughtering' poor babies. Accordingly, would Buckley's article not be better retitled, the Christian cure for poverty?

Women prevented from occupations 'unsuited to their sex'

According to Dr Buckley:

The new constitution privileged the family, giving primary responsibility for care and social reproduction to the women in them. The document also enshrined a conservative morality that protected marriage 'against attack,' prevented women from occupations "unsuited to their sex",

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

and emphasized the importance of a 'life within the home.' Gendered legislation also cemented the inequality women experienced in education, pay, welfare, marital status and domestic violence, as well as their continued lack of reproductive rights.¹⁵²

Note the phrases in double quotation marks most notably this one: prevented women from occupations 'unsuited to their sex'. Let us see what the constitution says:

Original Irish constitution 1937 - Article 41

1 1. The State recognises the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of society and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.

2. The State, therefore, guarantees to protect the Family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State.

2 1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

2. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers **shall not be obliged by economic necessity** to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.

3 1. The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded and to protect it against attack.

2. No law shall be enacted providing for the grant of a dissolution of marriage.

3. No person whose marriage has been dissolved under the civil law of any other State but is a subsisting valid marriage under the law for the time being in force within the jurisdiction of the Government and Parliament established by this Constitution shall be capable of contracting a valid marriage within that jurisdiction during the lifetime of the other party to the marriage so dissolved.

Later in Article 45 – under the heading - Directive Principles of Social Policy we find the other phrase.

4 1. The State pledges itself to safeguard with especial care the economic interests of the weaker sections of the community and where necessary,

¹⁵² Buckley, *The Catholic Cure for Poverty*.

to contribute to the support of the infirm, the widow, the orphan and the aged.

2. The State shall endeavour to ensure that the strength and health of workers, **men and women and the tender age of children** shall not be abused and that citizens shall not be forced by economic necessity to enter avocations **unsuited to their sex, age or strength**.

Dr Buckley is mistaken in the view that the constitution ‘prevented women from occupations ‘unsuited to their sex,’. In 1937 it was recent in living memory that the British forced destitute people, men, women and children to work on ‘relief schemes’. The British state would not give people handouts unless they worked for their money (infirm and old were exempted or thrown into the Workhouse). Often half-starved people were put to work, and the work was on public infrastructure schemes, mainly road building because it was labour intensive. Men, women and children were forced by ‘economic necessity’ to carry out tasks, like rock breaking, lifting heavy boulders, unsuited to their sex, age or strength. Note the feminist-centric interpretation or spin which Dr Buckley has attempted to put the articles in the constitution, but in reality, the constitution is forbidding abuse or using Buckley’s words ‘to prevent’ all the workers of Ireland from being forced to do the labour which was ultimately damaging to their health. Note well, that includes men who were not able for heavy manual labour along with boys and girls and as you can see from article 45 2. The article clearly gives women equality! It is worth comparing what Buckley states that the constitution states: the Constitution prevented women from occupations “unsuited to their sex”. The Constitution actually states; **‘men and women and the tender age of children** shall not be abused and that citizens shall not be forced by economic necessity to enter avocations **unsuited to their sex, age or strength’**.

It is clear that Buckley is not just wrong but dead wrong and is possibly just parroting the jaundiced view of other Irish feminist writers. Buckley’s whole paragraph is misleading and very few people would go to the trouble of looking up the Constitution. Therefore, they would trust a history lecturer who holds a doctorate degree to know what she is talking about. As the article was published in America, the audience would not be familiar enough with Irish politics to know what the Irish constitution precisely states.

In the next paragraph:

It wasn’t just the Catholic Church and the state that perpetuated anti-women policies. An archipelago of oppression that included the medical profession, the courts, the police, politicians social workers, religious orders, families and voluntary organizations all reinforced the structural

inequality of Irish women.¹⁵³

For a conspiracy theory to work many people have to be in on the act. As we have seen, the view that there existed an ‘archipelago of oppression’ of women is reliant on blatantly untrue statements, but it did not end there. The hole she dug for herself, she continued to dig it deeper.

Misogynist fallacy

Dr Buckley referring to the early years of the Irish State writes:

Yet many of the hopes of this period were dashed. Politically socially and economically, the 1920s and ‘30s were full of setbacks: censorship was introduced, legal divorce was abolished, women were banned from sitting on juries, the civil service marriage bar was introduced along with quotas for women working in industry and contraceptives were banned. The radical women of the revolution — like many of their male counterparts — disappeared from public life or were silenced.¹⁵⁴

‘Women were banned from sitting on juries’ is another falsehood. Women were not banned but were allowed to exempt themselves from jury duty as you can plainly see from the relevant section of the Juries (Amendment) Act, 1924.

Every woman to whom this section applies who is qualified and liable to serve as a juror in any administrative county or county borough shall be entitled, **if she so desires**, to be entered in the register of electors for the registration area comprising such administrative county or county borough as exempt from serving as a juror and while so entered shall be exempted from so serving.

Men were not given the right to exempt themselves based on their sex. It looks like that many women did not want to serve on juries and opted out when a summons arrived. Thus, putting a lot of unnecessary work on the administration, so the Juries Act, 1927 amended a woman’s right to opt-out, to the right to opt-in. It also lists people who were ‘banned’ to use Dr Buckley’s term.

Persons Absolutely Exempted include the Governor-General, Members of the Oireachtas, Members of the Defence Forces of Saorstát Éireann on full pay, Members of the Garda Síochána, Persons holding any paid judicial office in Saorstát Éireann, The Attorney-General of Saorstát Éireann and many more.

And lists those who were not ‘banned’ but could opt-in:

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Persons Exempted but Entitled to Serve on Application (sic). Women, Peace Commissioners, Registered medical practitioners [...] Veterinary surgeons actually practising as such, Registered dentists actually practising as such, Pharmaceutical chemists duly registered actually practising as such. Persons actually employed as professors, schoolmasters or teachers in any university, college, school, or academy, Masters of vessels actually employed as such, Duly licensed pilots and more.

Note the philogynist ladies first in the legislation. Irish feminist writers have long been re-interpreting Irish law as being anti-female, and Buckley is no doubt building her claims on the work of *ciarógí eile*.¹⁵⁵ When promoting such myths, it is not in the interests of the mythmakers to state what motivations lay behind these apparent ‘misogynistic’ laws. Chief is the civil service marriage bar that forced women to retire from government jobs upon marriage. Not all women were subject to it, my mother was required to leave her job as a nurse, but her new sister-in-law continued to work for the civil service for many decades despite being married and rearing four children. The marriage bar did not apply to teachers, but you will not see that mentioned. Women were free to take up jobs in the private sector if they so wished. There was no outcry about this policy from the feminists at the time, which accounts another of Dr Buckley’s unsubstantiated speculative statements.

The radical women of the revolution — like many of their male counterparts — disappeared from public life or were silenced.¹⁵⁶

Rather a sinister claim but the revolution was long over, and no woman or women’s groups nor trade unions opposed maximising the state’s resources for the benefit of as many single women as possible.

Buckley makes another major faux pas due to a lack of knowledge and critical thinking. Trade unions have, for many decades, advocated policies of early retirement. The intention is to make way for new entrants which is especially important when jobs are scarce. The opposite is also true; in recent times governments across Europe reduced the number of early retirement schemes due to labour shortages in specific industries. There is no doubt that early retirement schemes are designed to benefit young entrants to the workforce. In Ireland of the 1920s, the country’s industrial heartland was retained by the United Kingdom, and the prospect of building an industrial base from ground zero to create jobs was going to take a long time. Rather than wait decades, the government acted to create as many jobs as possible for single women in the most instantaneous way it could find. However, the Clurichaun Ascendency has worked hard to make falsehoods look like genuine history to fool people into believing that a wonderful philogynous act was an act of misogyny.

¹⁵⁵ *ciarógí eile* – lit. another beetle - claims based on the work of others which have not been tested for veracity.

¹⁵⁶ Buckley, *The Catholic Cure for Poverty*.

Yes, Rubber Johnnies were banned under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1935, but that never stopped most of us from acquiring the said articles. A collectivist society is very efficient at getting around the decrees of the prohibitionists. Think of how freely available commodities like moonshine, illicit drugs and anything in short supply. Even today's individualist societies have thriving black markets in cigarettes, prescription drugs, diesel fuel and every type of contraband.

I am reminded of a story from 1971 when a group protesting at the ban on contraception boarded a train and headed to Belfast to buy condoms in defiance of the law, in what has now become known as the 'Condom Train'. One of its male passengers went to buy a few packs at a pharmacy near the station and enquired about its price. The sales assistant replied in a heavy Belfast accent; they're 30 bob plus tax. To which he replied, forget the tax, I'll use glue instead.

The old Mother and Child Scheme Canard

Buckley also uses the old well-worn canard of Irish social history with the following statements, 'In 1951 progressive doctor Noël Browne attempted to introduce the Mother and Child Scheme, guaranteeing free health care to mothers and children under sixteen.' She goes on to tell us that 'The Church responded by rallying against 'socialised medicine,' the transfer of responsibilities from the family to the state and used fears over reproductive control to ultimately defeat the plan.'¹⁵⁷ The debacle over the mother and child scheme lives in infamy, but the truth of the story is seldom if ever told.

Dr Buckley makes no mention that Dr James Deeny and his team were the authors of the Mother and Child Scheme, had made considerable progress on having it approved by the Catholic Church and the medical profession, well in advance of the arrival of Dr Browne as Minister of Health. The scheme was contained within a section of the 1947 Health Act, which had nothing to do with Browne. Dr Buckley primarily lays the blame for the scheme's demise at the door the church, but the scheme had many other powerful enemies including the entire medical profession, almost all of the politicians along with an ever-increasing list of enemies which Browne had created for himself.

Dr Deeny wrote:

During the ten years that people messed about with it [the mother and child scheme] and before I could see it in action the most incredible things happened to it; bloody-mindedness bad luck, folly, idiocy scheming, religious obscurant politics, government crisis, defeats, anxieties, ideologies, all over a simple matter of introducing a simple scheme.¹⁵⁸

The primary purpose of the scheme was to give free health care to all mothers

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Deeny, *To Cure & to Care: Memoirs of a Chief Medical Officer*.

and children. The inclusion of 'all' frightened the medical profession who opposed the scheme because it would threaten their income plus other concerns. All sides were concerned about the lack of a means test, which proposed to give everyone free medical care, including those who could afford to pay for it. As it then stood, the scheme was seen as a foolish waste of money. The Catholic Church objected mainly due to Brown's tactless handling of the proposed bill. Brown complained of having to go to the Bishops' office and explain his intentions, expecting the bishops to come to him and kiss his ring! (I write jokingly)

Although Dr Noel Browne had a charming, avuncular personality, it was balanced and perhaps overbalanced by all accounts, with quite a cantankerous side. He has the dubious distinction of being kicked out of no less than three political parties and 'kicked out' is the apt term. However, his charming persona was the only side that the public saw and heard as he was a self-publicist, courting publicity through the radio and the media in general. Deeny says of him 'Browne was ruthless and much more calculating than people had thought and indeed possibly vindictive.' In this statement methinks Deeny was holding back out of good old-fashioned gentlemanly politeness to Browne.

To his credit, Browne was passionate about Tuberculosis as he suffered from the disease himself as a young man. It attracted him to a new political party that gave primary importance to eradicating the scourge of TB from the country. Browne was a founder member of the Clann na Poblachta, a political party founded by Sean MacBride, a former Chief of Staff of the IRA in July 1946. It came to power due to an amazing turn of events. After the 1948 general election, the biggest party was Fianna Fáil, but it did not have an overall majority so it could be kept from power only if all the opposition parties and independent TDs combined to form a grand coalition. Subsequently, six political parties and 11 independent TDs joined forces bringing about the First Inter-Party government in the Irish state's history. Clann na Poblachta with 10 TDs got two positions at the cabinet table, one for Sean MacBride who became Minister for External Affairs and he, in turn, appointed Dr Noel Browne as Minister of Health. Browne became a minister on his first day as a parliamentarian. As time went on, Brown's lack of political skill and his tendency to engage in surreptitious dealings made his party leader, Sean MacBride suspicious of his minister. He increasingly became convinced that Brown was working to undermine his position as leader.

The inexperienced Browne did not recognise the danger of the situation and did nothing to allay McBride's fears, and carried on regardless. It may also have been due to his cantankerous nature, which got the better of him on many occasions. On one occasion, he launched what was described as 'a vicious and vehement attack' on doctors while giving a speech at the Royal College of Physicians. In one short moment in time, Browne managed to alienate himself from the medical profession, which did not take Brown's attack 'on the chin'.

When Browne sat down, each and every subsequent speaker launched an equally 'vicious and vehement attack' on Browne. The upshot was that he had an innate talent for alienating himself from the very people whose support he required to get anything done. Browne famously alienated the church too, and despite the bulk of the blame for the failure of the Mother and Child Scheme being heaped upon the church's shoulders, in reality, it only played a small part in the downfall of the scheme. However, the fairy-tale narrative's popularity continues unabated because Brown lionised himself as a David vs Goliath figure. We all love an underdog story so much so that it has become accepted without any critical evaluation. It is not due just to apathy and magical thinking, Irish cultural biases, collectively known as Clurichaun Syndrome, holds critical thinking as its foe.

Dr James Deeny puts it quite succinctly.

Browne had insufficient negotiating experience, not enough knowledge of the subject matter of Maternity and Child Welfare, without guidance and restraint from the cabinet, party or leader, all of whom he seems to have alienated and depending on the medical profession who he had antagonised.¹⁵⁹

The real story of what happened has yet to be discovered by Irish historians, and it looks like the present batch of academic historians are not up to the task either.

The Anachronistic use of 'Reproductive Rights'

Buckley considers attempts to help women and girls avoid becoming unmarried mothers was an interference with their 'reproductive rights'. An anachronistic term, referring to a concept and movement that began to develop only in the late 1960s. On this very subject, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) states that its mission is 'to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.'¹⁶⁰ Even today, with easy access to contraception, millions of pregnancies worldwide each year are unwanted. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 56 million induced abortions took place each year during the period 2010–2014.¹⁶¹ Not only was the term or concept 'reproductive rights' not in use, nobody from the late 1960s and for two millennia preceding was concerned with 'reproductive rights' or interfering with such rights. Of concern for many people was the product of reproduction, not so much of children in general but of unwanted children, who were often killed, abandoned, used and abused by criminal elements within society. Of primary concern to social commentators of the past, was their efforts to solve unwanted children's problem and the historical debate is more often than not, focused on the root causes.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ 'A United Nations Population Fund - About Us'.

¹⁶¹ 'Induced Abortion Worldwide'.

It is a phantasmagorical fantasy of epic proportions to base arguments upon or give the impression, that all the children born to unmarried mothers in Ireland were all the result of wanted pregnancies. In circumstances where there is no care system in place, there is no doubt that humanity would revert to its previous methods and taken care of its dirty little problem as it always had. If you believe that children have rights and believe that those rights should be protected, child protection law has to be imposed, imposed, and still is by the secular authorities. History has shown that it is folly to expect that humanity will own up to its responsibility all by itself, which is why laws on children's rights are needed.

We live in a time when we think that all the problems surrounding unwanted children have been solved and that the governmental system caring for children appears to be reasonably both competent and effective. Yet, poor quality care and outcomes for children in the care of the Irish state and elsewhere is still rampant and can be viewed as a miserable failure. Our present-day hypocrisy has the potential to reveal how future generations look back on our failings and will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

The Criminalisation of Women and Children

Buckley makes yet another bold claim that the new Free State brought about 'the criminalization of women and children, particularly unmarried mothers who were shepherded by the thousands into Magdalene laundries and mother and baby homes.'¹⁶² She is not using the term 'criminalization' metaphorically, and she strongly implies that being born illegitimate was enough to make one automatically a criminal. Nowhere is it on any Irish statute book or decreed in any Irish law that unmarried mothers were deemed criminals. This statement is purely false. She is emotional about the subject, which comes across through this entire article and others, which she has written. On top of that, her writings and appearances are often promoted by left-wing socialist organisations.

Let us look at laws regarding women, there was a criminal act on the statute books that only women could be accused of, but it was merely a misdemeanour. The crime was that of concealment of pregnancy, and its introduction had nothing to do with the Catholic Church. The law currently remains in force in Ireland and in many former British colonies under the title Offences Against The Person Act, 1861. Note the date; it was enacted at a time when Ireland was under British rule. A time period named by historians as the Protestant Ascendancy.

Articles of even the lowest academic standard would have taken a look at custom and practice in other countries and compared and contrasted them to Ireland. For example, the British government in the 1913 Act for the Protection of the Feeble-minded labelled unmarried mothers, particularly those who had managed to get pregnant twice, 'moral imbeciles'. The Act conferred upon the

¹⁶² Buckley, *The Catholic Cure for Poverty*.

authorities in England and Wales the right to incarcerate unmarried mothers in County Homes and Mental hospitals for their protection. Despite Ireland being under the British Government's control in 1913, the law was never introduced into Ireland. As we will see, Dr Buckley's knowledge does not appear to extend to Britain, Europe or even the Anglophone nor the zeitgeist in other jurisdictions driving social protection initiatives.

Dr Buckley also seems to have anachronistic views on social welfare sees the British as the paragon of social justice.

While Britain and most other countries in the advanced capitalist world had made moves toward developing a welfare state to deal with poverty by the 1920s, in Ireland the Church and state retained control of families through the continued and expanded use of institutions.¹⁶³

Astute observers of Irish society will have noted the strong tendency in certain sections of the society, particularly within the Gaelic Irish, to have a deferential admiration for the British. It is always used to create an illusion of aloofness, to raise self-esteem by claiming prestige through admiration and affinity while looking down at their nation, who are not smart enough to imitate the British. The greater the achievements of the British, the loftier the feelings of aloofness and oikophobia. It is more akin to Stockholm syndrome than mere BIRGing. It is a condition where kidnap victims or hostages develop irrational positive feelings towards their captors.

Buckley is either not aware or is not keen to credit the modern welfare state's foundation to Otto von Bismarck in the 1880s. At that time, Britain was well behind the curve following in Prussia/Germany's wake. She takes no account that the social forces that strove for stronger welfare reforms in other countries were not present in Ireland and no account is taken that a newly independent Ireland was left with an economy in tatters and with little or no industry. Not only that, the British, post-independence, imposed a massive financial drain on the Irish exchequer through the RIC (police) pensions and land annuities payments. In 1932 c. 14% (£4,764,767) of the Irish total tax income of £35.5million was due to be paid to the British government but was withheld the new Fianna Fáil government, sparking the Economic War of the 1930s when Britain retaliated. The country also lacked practically all the key ingredients, imperative to building an industrial economy. Firstly, the two main natural resources are not found in Ireland any commercial quantity, coal and steel. Human resources were abundant, but skilled labour was in very short supply. Capital for investment was not found either as most of the Irish élite class thought of themselves as British and were inclined to invest in Britain and were inwardly and sometimes openly hostile to an independent Ireland. History is the study of the élite, and many of their hostile views still permeate through to Irish history to this very day. However, the important point is that

¹⁶³ Ibid.

while every other country in Europe had a wealthy élite not only willing to invest but invest heavily in home industries, Irish industrial investors were like Connemara bus stops, few and far between. We can even put a figure on it from this parliamentary debate.

I heard it stated repeatedly from the Government Benches during the Budget debate that there was approximately £200,000,000 [c. £9.157bn in today's value] worth of Irish investments in Great Britain and that it was the policy of the Government to repatriate those investments. Where do those investments come from and to whom do the dividends go? - *Daniel McMenamin TD. Dáil Éireann debate - Wednesday, 1 Jun 1932 Financial Resolutions (1932-33) Report. - Resolution No. 1. -Income Tax.*

Industrial societies suffer from high unemployment, which was the primary driver behind the introduction and reform of social welfare schemes. With the advent of industrialisation, labour began to agitate for better conditions, which accounts for the rise in socialism from the latter part of the 19th century. Bismarck, the founder of the modern welfare state, was a member of the élite and abhorred the idea of social welfare but by introducing it, he cemented his reputation as the most astute politician who ever lived. He introduced social welfare to take the wind out of the sails of the socialists — leaving them like a deer in the headlights, left with little left to agitate for!

Failing to put economic and social history onto its correct context or leaving out significant information is all too common in Irish social, political and economic writing. The interplay between all three is complex, but no number of assertions, even those masquerading as a critical evaluation, can stand over its claims without welding them all together.

Britain had some social welfare in place by 1920s, which also applied to Ireland like the National Insurance Act 1911. It remained in place in Ireland after independence and was supplemented by many Irish initiatives, including 1923 Home Assistance Act, 1933 Unemployment Assistance Act, 1935 Widow's and Orphan's pensions Act, Public Assistance Act 1939, 1942 Urban Fuel Schemes, 1942 Wet Time Scheme, 1944 Cheap Footwear scheme and also in 1944 the Children's Allowance was introduced. Yet Buckley would like to leave her readers the impression that Ireland did nothing while the superior British had the best system in the world. However, the British continued with their workhouses up to 1948 until the National Health Service was established. Then many workhouse buildings were turned into public hospitals. The effort and achievements of the Free State in alleviating poverty were commendable, especially when viewed in the light of the massive financial burdens placed on the taxpayer by the British, the collapse in the world economy due to the great depression, followed by the economic trade war, which Britain fought against Ireland and of course the economic stagnation and enormous financial

hardships due to WWII.

In terms of social welfare, the backwards Irish insinuation relies wholly on an invalid comparison, especially with ‘the advanced capitalist world’. In 1938, British GDP per capita was \$USD378; the Irish figure was \$252 per capita, a difference of \$126 per person lower than Britain. On the face of it, we have a comparison of one of the poorest countries in the world to one of the richest, with the poor country’s government demonised for not being able to spend like the rich. Furthermore, Ireland on gaining independence had no industry and was still a largely agricultural economy, which cannot be validly compared to one of the most industrialised nations on earth. In light of the reality of the situation, the British working class’s achievement concerning social welfare was far less that should have been expected given the size of the economy. Remember that it was only after the war that a socialist labour government in Britain established the welfare state alongside the National Health Service in 1948. In contrast, and despite having a centrist right-wing government, Ireland was heading down a similar path. Earlier in 1945, a similar free health service was proposed by an Irish government departmental committee advising that ‘existing health services be integrated and extended and made universally available’.¹⁶⁴ However, the country could not afford to do it at this time. Moreover, rather than stand still, the government pressed ahead with a radical reform programme and in 1947, a seminal year, with the establishment of the department of social welfare and a department of health separated out from local government.

Buckley claims that the ‘Church and state retained control of families through the continued and expanded use of institutions’. Compare and contrast that to Britain where the 1913 Act for the Protection of the Feeble-minded remained in force right up until 1959, only two years before the Tuam Mother and Baby home closed down. The changes in both countries could have been due to change in the international zeitgeist and economic conditions, but these aspects of the story have not been examined or deliberately left out.

To illustrate what a change in zeitgeist looks like, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) listed homosexuality as a mental illness right up until 1973. Nowadays, most homosexuals would be highly offended to be classed as mentally defective, but that is how the medical profession once thought of the condition. We could easily use this information to attack our forbearers, or we could just as easily use it to explain the evolution of medico-social thought so that students of today could formulate a realistic view of the present day and bypass Groundhog Day. However, having nobody to pillory would be counterproductive to our present-day illusory superiority and delusions of grandeur.

Back to Dr Buckley’s article, all the myths and bad histories are also mustered

¹⁶⁴ Geary and Lynch, ‘The Irish Healthcare System - An Historical and Comparative Review’.

to attack the Irish government's policy on direct provision for asylum seekers. Using history to promote current political agendas is nothing new, and cultural biases to attack the Irish nation are still all too prevalent in Irish society. In reality, direct provision means that people who are seeking asylum are accommodated in hotels at the taxpayers' expense with free meals, clothes, healthcare and more are provided to them, but they are given a mere €21.60 per person, including children, in cash per week in spending money. When the UK system in comparison paid £37.75 for each person in an asylum seekers household, they have to pay for food, clothing and toiletries, etc. I imagine it is a system deliberately designed weed out genuine asylum seekers from economic migrants, hoping that economic migrants will not endure the hardship of hotel living. All countries deploy various means to achieve the same aim. A small few Irish individuals, particularly on the left-wing, together with the politician bashing classes, are ruckus in their offensive against the Irish system. Their ballyhoo has fallen on deaf ears for decades thanks to a campaign flawed by its failure to look at the alternatives and how other countries accommodate their asylum seekers. Many use prisons or detention centres, including countries like Britain, Australia, Germany, France and the US, to name a few. If I were in such a position, I would certainly choose to have my application processed in Ireland over being stuck in a prison type of detention centre.

Dr Buckley's article was published in the American magazine, Jacobin, which describes itself as 'a leading voice of the American left, offering socialist perspectives on politics, economics and culture. The print magazine is released quarterly and reaches over 30,000 subscribers, in addition to a web audience of 1,000,000 a month.' It is not an academic journal, so it would be fair to assume that it did not subject the article to expert historical peer review. Furthermore, it would be a bit much to expect an American publication to be familiar with Irish law to be able to spot the article's many errors. Its motto is Reason in Revolt but if Buckley's article is anything to go by, then Revolting Reason would be a more apt motto. Moreover, because the article suited their political purpose, the truth will always take second place, besides the truth is far too dull and will not sell many magazines. One could validly take a quite cynical view is that was why Jacobin chose this article and why Dr Buckley chose it.

'Through the twentieth century, Irish elites treated poverty as a moral failing — and built a brutal carceral state to correct it.' The commission of investigation was emphatic in dismissing most of the falsehoods in Dr Buckley's article, including her charge of a brutal state which incarcerated women in mother and baby homes:

4.109 The state and the local authority did not coerce women to enter these homes, and neither did the Catholic church. However it is not surprising that many families or single women, faced with a crisis pregnancy and the cost of ensuring their daughter's privacy and care, resorted to mother

and baby homes. They provided accommodation, which was undoubtedly superior to what was available in a county home or some private nursing homes, and maternity care, free of charge, without the stigma associated with the poor law. This was a considerable financial saving for the women and their families.

A line from a paper Buckley co-authored with Caroline McGregor states that ‘the paper is written from the viewpoint that evidence and accuracy of reporting from key moments in the past is crucial to ensuring authentic and reliable histories.’¹⁶⁵ As we have just witnessed, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that ‘evidence and accuracy of reporting’ have escaped from this particular work of Dr Buckley.

Ireland’s Most Attention-Seeking Historian

University College Dublin’s Prof Diarmaid Ferriter is deserving of the title of Ireland’s most attention-seeking historian, thanks in no small part to his frequent appearances in the broadcast and print media. He is noted for his one-sided opinion and even admits it himself as this extract from one of his articles in the Irish Times, 23 June 2018, demonstrates.

I won’t pretend that I have always been able to achieve that balance, especially given that this newspaper’s Peter Crawley suggested this week I am a historian ‘who conveys such personal anger with the past that he seems ready to give it a head butt’.¹⁶⁶

Whether it is true or not, Ferriter’s personality comes across through an angry demeanour, I have never seen a photo of him smiling and despite him not being follicly challenged; he maintains a skinhead haircut, reminiscent of English soccer hooligans. Hence, I think the source for Peter Crawley’s reference to head butting. He certainly comes across as angry at Irish history. I contend that his anger has a lot to do with the cultural prejudices of the society in which he grew up. His reporting style on social-historical events is combative; not unlike a war correspondent who wears a blue helmet to hide the fact that he is fully armed with artillery and assault weapons aimed un-impartially at one side. Reading through some of his many works, readers would be forgiven believing that even before Ferriter even sits down to touch his keyboard, the conclusion of his article or book has already been written and is as predictable as a German railway timetable, so too is the target of his invective.

There is no bandwagon travelling up, down, back, forth or sideways on any boreen anywhere in the country that Ferriter will not chase hard and attempt to jump on-board especially if he can use it to gratify his prejudices. To cite one example and take you away on what appears to be a complete aside from the subject of social history, when the River Shannon flooded in 2015, Ferriter took

¹⁶⁵ Buckley and McGregor, ‘Interrogating Institutionalisation and Child Welfare: The Irish Case, 1939–1991’.

¹⁶⁶ Ferriter, ‘Diarmaid Ferriter: We Can’t Let Dark Past Define Irish Social History’.

to the Irish Times to claim that the cause of the flooding was Irish incompetence.

Ferriter, rather helpfully, uses subtitles for sections of his article. In the one titled 'Bungling Manner,' he states.

Historic and very recent floods have highlighted both the best and the worst of us; an extraordinary sense of community solidarity and selflessness, people risking their lives to save others, alongside the persistence of denial, broken promises and inadequate commitment to addressing the fundamental causes of flooding.¹⁶⁷

Firstly, note and retain the use of the word 'us', like Davy Carton in the previous chapter it is the 'royal we' of superiority. Note also the reference to 'fundamental causes'.

Under the section headlined 'Incompetence' Ferriter states:

It would be deceptively easy to centre an analysis of the problem on the incompetence of various governors at various stages. That incompetence is relevant and made all the more painful by the distressing experiences of those who witness their homes – their own little republics – and their livelihoods destroyed and to add insult to injury, cannot get insurance and still have to pay mortgages but extreme weather has the capacity to defeat the best of plans, the strongest of commitments and the most lavish of spending.

In the first sentence, he seems to discount incompetence only to reinstate it in the second sentence, and he arrives at the completely contradictory conclusion that no amount of money can stop the mighty river flooding and then circles around himself in this second paragraph.

More can and must be done to limit damage, however. The challenge for those who can do something is to respond more robustly than previously by listening to those who know what they are talking about and act on their knowledge, especially when, at a time of frightening climate change, that knowledge is extensive and backed not only by the heartache of direct experience of the deluges but by relevant research.¹⁶⁸

An exemplar of the invective by proxy, flanking manoeuvre. Ferriter urges his readers to 'listen to those who know what they are talking about and act on their knowledge'. It implies that Ferriter has no real knowledge of the subject, and this is borne out through his lack of knowledge of the geography of the River Shannon. He thinks that he is outflanking the authorities in charge of the river, landing the huge hint that they are not experts, and they should listen to

¹⁶⁷ Ferriter, 'Diarmaid Ferriter: Time Running out to "Drain the Shannon"'.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

the real experts and act on their advice.

Ferriter's attempt at populism is blatantly obvious in this article and many others. The term is defined on dictionary.com as:

any of various, often anti-establishment or anti-intellectual political movements or philosophies that offer unorthodox solutions or policies and appeal to the common person rather than according with traditional party or partisan ideologies.¹⁶⁹

Populism is rife in western society and a growing problem in the second and third decade of the 21st century. The excitable populists have moved on from the Millennium Bug hysteria of the late 20th century and have replaced it with climate change hysteria. Ferriter uses the emotionally charged term 'frightening climate change' and then goes on to state that the 'fundamental causes of flooding' on the River Shannon are due to climate change. Nothing could be further from the truth, and if Ferriter had talked to real experts, his article would not have been able to satisfy the aims of his invective. Note well, I am not a climate change denier, far from it, but the debate is tarnished with an element of hysteria from some sections of humanity, who lack a fundamental understanding of geography, science and climate change.

The problem of flooding on the River Shannon, particularly of homes and farmsteads can be solved quite easily, and the solution is so deceptively simple that is always the last option to be thought of. Stop building homes and farmsteads on the river's flood plains and remove the buildings already there to higher ground. The river has natural flood plains that it constructed for hundreds of thousands of years, which it uses in times of heavy rainfall when it needs extra storage capacity. Fighting against nature in places where there is no need to fight it, is sheer stupidity. The mighty Mississippi river located within the richest country in the world and is complete with extensive flood defences has had no less than 10 major floods in the last four and a half decades. We all saw what happened in 2005 when the flood defences were breached, protecting the city of New Orleans and hundreds of people were drowned and tens of thousands displaced never to return.

Ferriter makes the false assumption that climate change is the cause of the flooding, but these flood plains were in place long before the current climate change scare. If there were no buildings on the flood plains, no one would ever hear about it when the river is in flood. However, there is more; Ferriter appears completely unknowledgeable of the primary fundamental fact that the mighty River Shannon has the lowest gradient of all of Europe's major rivers. Even if a drainage canal were to be dug from Athlone to Galway, it would flood half of east Galway. Thus, we can safely conclude that on the subject of the 'fundamental causes' of flooding on the River Shannon, Ferriter is entirely

¹⁶⁹ 'Definition of Anti-Populism | Dictionary.Com'.

without knowledge.

Going off the Piste

While you might think I have gone completely off the piste, miles away from the issue of child protection and attacks on Christianity, by explaining Ferriter's intervention in the River Shannon drainage debate, it has an important significance. It demonstrates that Ferriter has not looked at the fundamentals of the problem. Armed with fundamental information like the fact that the river has the lowest gradient of any major river in Europe, one would make a better-quality argument and perhaps argue in favour of flood plain abandonment, rather than flood defences, which are likely to be an expensive failure. Ferriter is not a geographer and so might be forgiven for lacking basic knowledge from within that domain. However, the same disregard regarding fundamental historical evidence is also evident in abundance in his many publications.

Occasions of Sin

His hefty tome on historic Irish sexuality, 'Occasions of Sin' is most notable for its failure to examine the debate's fundamentals. Instead, Ferriter gives us his opinion supported by concentrating almost exclusively on the legal and political debate. In the game of politics and in particular, in political debate, truth is seldom to be found, for its primary purpose is to cause injury to the opposing side. In every political debate in Ireland and elsewhere, throughout history, where the topic has an emotional component, weapons on all sides are loaded with the full gamut of injurious shrapnel, including canards, exaggerations, fabrications, and rumours, spoof, lies, damn lies ad inf. It is the easiest of endeavours to selectively take extracts from political debates and order them in such a way to bolster one's agenda, no matter what side of the debate one happens to be on. The old adage applies 'the devil can cite scripture for his purpose'. Historians are well aware of the need to be suspicious of such sources and are duty-bound to search for both confirming and disconfirming evidence.

Furthermore, it is incumbent on historians to go outside the political world and look for sources that have nothing to benefit from being on one side or the other. Truly independent sources of information are sometimes hard to find in history and socio-medico history. When the evidence provided by science and medicine is left out, it is akin to turning history into an actor on a film set. A film set is a contrived imitative or imaginary construction, which can only look real when the audience is prevented from viewing the entire set.

Artful Paltering

I have to admit that I have not forensically examined Ferriter's book 'Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland'. I find it too difficult to read as I am annoyed by how he fails to explain the fundamentals to his audience, and his motivation is blatantly obvious, which is to go after religion in general and the Catholic Church in particular. However, the book should not be written off

as it stands in the world of Irish literature as a monument to ‘Artful Paltering’. In psychology, paltering is defined as; ‘the active use of truthful statements to convey a misleading impression’. The use of the word ‘active’ in the definition might suggest a conscious decision, but I believe, for the most part, his beliefs guide him subconsciously.

Just to cite one example of how to use paltering effectively and leave out important details.

On Page 40, Ferriter explains that Ireland was not immune from the eugenics movements that started in England in the mid-19th century. He informed his readers of the formation of the Belfast Eugenics society in 1911 and that its ‘president approved of the vigour of forced sterilisation to prevent the birth of the unfit’.¹⁷⁰ Readers are not provided with any further explanation, which might help their understanding of the issues. Eugenics is the ‘science’ which gave us the Holocaust and forced sterilisation programmes in countries like the United States, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland etc. Its victims included people from ethnic minorities due to racial stereotyping, chronic alcoholics, manic-depressives, epilepsy sufferers, the mentally disabled and more. Famous eugenicists included the likes of Winston Churchill, who thought that the maladies afflicting society were due to genetics and therefore, the way to solve the problems was to prevent these bad genes from being passed on. It is a crackpot science, which has been totally discredited and is now illegal in many countries, but at the time, many erudite people thought it was a valid science and the arguments of the losing side always seem buffoonish in retrospect. This statement does not seek to absolve anyone from blame; instead, it puts eugenics in its correct historical context. I could easily do as many authors have done before and use presentism to slight the characters of prominent eugenicists including Marie Stopes, Teddy Roosevelt, Helen Keller, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, Alexander Graham Bell and more.

The full quote is ‘...the formation in 1911 of a Belfast Eugenics society, whose president approved of the vigour of forced sterilisation to prevent the birth of the unfit.’¹⁷¹

Not explained in that section is that the president in question was the Reverend Charles Frederick D’Arcy, who was appointed the Protestant Archbishop of Armagh in 1920 and was the first president of the Belfast Eugenics society.

A central theme of his book is what he calls the authorities’ attempts both lay and clerical, to ‘manage sexual desire’ as he sees it and their ultimate failure to do so.¹⁷² It is classic paltering, while it can be construed that they were indeed trying to curb desire, nobody gave a damn about sexual desire so long as it did not result in unwanted children. That is the pivot around which

¹⁷⁰ Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland*.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

concern for children and the law rotated. Granted, the laws regarding male homosexuals were different, but in Christianity, it started with the Council of Elvira c. AD305-6, as a way of protecting boys from the sexual exploitation known as pederasty. Fusing the two entirely different issues and framing them as an attempt to ‘manage sexual desire’ is altogether misleading. Of all the laws regarding and all the institutions set up to deal with the results of human ‘sexual desire’ by far the most prolific in number had to do with unwanted children’s production. It is by far the most critical issue in the history of sexual morality and a point entirely missed by Ferriter.

To cite one other example, Ferriter went on to write:

‘There is little doubt that increased prosperity in the western world undermined much traditional consciousness in relation to sexuality and that such a relaxation came to Ireland later than to some other European countries.’¹⁷³

Did increased prosperity really end it? How about 18th and 19th century England when it zoomed right up to the top of the prosperity ladder. Did they relax sexuality laws? In a word no, nor did any other prosperous country do so in the western world of the time. There is ‘little doubt’ that when the problem of unwanted children was solved, it was the pivotal reason for the undermining of the ‘traditional consciousness in relation to sexuality.’ The next chapter will begin to reveal how the problem was solved.

Ferriter is not the first anti-religious commentator, and I surmise he, like I, is of a generation, which emerged from Catholic school as full-blown atheists. Atheism is a perfectly fine and reasonable belief to hold, but a defining feature of apostasy is hostility toward the old religion, and this has become increasingly abundant in Ireland and has gone into overdrive since the financial crash, post-2008. As evinced by the aims and actions of organisations like Atheist Ireland, organised atheism is an expression of not only belief superiority but also sometimes wanders into belief supremacism. All religions hold that their beliefs are superior to those of others, but history has shown that they become dangerous when these beliefs move toward supremacism. In Ireland of the 21st-century religion is constantly under attack, and religious people are often labelled backwards. The old guard is changing, as it is in many European countries, but the function driving the production of the majority of anti-religious diatribes in Ireland is to create myths for the primary purpose of reinforcing belief superiority.

I think most readers who examine Ferriter’s motivations through his writings will see that they bear striking similarities to Marxist anti-religion attacks. There is nothing wrong with Marxist atheism or atheism in general. I will uphold everyone’s right to hold their religious beliefs what I’m not too fond of the use

173 Ibid.

of conscious or subconscious belief superiority to attack other people in order to validate one's own beliefs. When atheism needs to create myths and atheists need to believe in them, it can have no claim to superiority above religious beliefs. In Ireland and at the extreme level, one non-theistic religion expresses its supremacy in a manner reminiscent of not so thinly veiled sectarianism.

Giving Irish History a Head Butt

To 'head butt' Irish history and Irish social history, Ferriter is required to set up and deploy several logical fallacies and aim them at his primary target, which is the Catholic Church, and his secondary targets are the historical Irish political classes, especially those who supported the Catholic church in the past and the Irish nation in general. Despite benefiting from a Catholic education, his main aim is to prove that we were all backwards in the past and as I shall go on to demonstrate, he takes a highly selective approach to the evidence he presents to readers, promoting confirmation bias over impartiality. Moreover, and perhaps the most defining aspect of his historical writings is not with evidence he chooses to include but the significant evidence, which is left out, obviously evidence which would frustrate or destroy his attempts to 'stick a head' in the people of the past.

When it comes to mother and baby homes Ferriter is not for remaining behind the bush, and as the bandwagon passes, he cannot help but leap on it, but he does it in a more intelligent way than many others. In one of his first newspaper articles shortly after the 'shock revelations' started in 2014 and keen to support the myth that a holocaust occurred at Tuam, and elsewhere, he helps his readers to imagine that a Wannsee Conference type of final solution took place writing: **'the State and Church colluded to get rid of an embarrassment to Catholic Ireland'**.¹⁷⁴ Was the 'embarrassment' a reference to illegitimate children? Ferriter is the master of the big hint and given that the Irish and international press was full of allegations that these 800 children were murdered through neglect and their bodies were hidden/dumped in a septic tank. It would appear that the good professor, if not stating it directly, was pouring a slippery substance on a slippery slope to increase its slipperiness.

Under this subheading of 'getting rid of an embarrassment', Ferriter opened his 2014 article.

In a letter to the Catholic Bishop of Waterford, Dr Bernard Hackett, in 1924, the minister at the Department of Local Government and Public Health (DLGPH), Seamus Burke sought the bishop's support for establishing a home for unmarried mothers. He wanted such women removed from the county homes, both for their own benefit and in the interests of what he called 'the respectable poor who are compelled to seek its shelter so that

¹⁷⁴ Ferriter, 'Families Saw These Homes as a Solution to Their Shame and Stigma: The State and Church Colluded to Get Rid of an Embarrassment to Catholic Ireland'.

there should be no undesirable associations connected with it'.¹⁷⁵

Ferriter uses this opening paragraph without explaining the context so that readers will not only jump to their conclusion but get shoved towards what Ferriter wants them to believe. Despite it being expressly stated in this departmental report that the primary concern of the minister and department officials was for the care, protection and rehabilitation and eventual return of unmarried mothers back to society, with their reputation protected and intact, Ferriter is keen to dismiss such notions by labelling it 'occasional sympathy'. He went on to quote directly from a department report in 1931, which stated 'in county homes little can be done to bring new influences into their lives and help them to start afresh.' In plain black and white, without the need for much interpretation is laid the foundation stone of mother and baby homes, whatever stigma society was going to place upon unmarried mothers, the mother and baby homes were designed to give women a new start in life, free from stigma.

While there was occasional sympathy shown towards what were called 'first offenders', who were seen as unfortunate rather than immoral, 'repeat offenders' were regarded as in a different category; those who, in the words of a DLGPH report in 1927, 'have lapsed a second time or oftener' and who were regarded as 'hardened sinners'. Mother and baby homes were regarded as more suited to 'first offenders'.¹⁷⁶

When I argue that Ferriter fails in the first duty of a historian to set historical events in the correct historical context, he provides the very exemplar in the extract above. It is not immediately visible to a general audience. This article was published in a newspaper with such an audience, so the historical background must be explained, especially the archaic terminology, which is highly susceptible to semantic drift. In other words, the meaning of words and phrases changes over time with the result that using today's meanings will mislead an audience who are not au fait with the process of semantic drift. Take the word 'adventure' as an example, we have all been on many adventures, and some of us have taken our children or other people's children on such experiences. The word comes from French and means to 'risk the loss of' something, usually to go on an adventure means to risk losing one's life. Of course, if we used the word today with the first intended meaning, it would be gross negligence to let anyone take a child on an adventure! Think of the many coroner's court verdicts, which declare 'death by misadventure', defined as a death due to an accident which occurred due to a risk taken voluntarily.

Ferriter by not explaining the archaic term 'the respectable poor' allows the implication to take hold that unmarried mothers were in the opposite category, i.e., the 'unrespectable poor' category. 'The respectable poor' and 'deserving poor' were interchangeable terms referring to people who could not avoid

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

poverty through circumstances like illness, eviction from their property, old age etc. and were therefore deserving of charity. On the other hand, the 'unrespectable poor' were healthy but indolent, alcoholics, vagabonds, thieves etc. who were determined by society and government to be deserving of lesser forms of charity or none at all.

When the correct historical context does not suit the agenda, it is usually ignored altogether, or attention is deflected using extraneous information. A more impartial historian would not have missed the opportunity to show how other nations regarded 'repeat offenders' or unmarried women who became pregnant at least twice. For example, the British regarded 'repeat offenders' as 'hardened sinners', as insane, criminally insane, labelling them 'moral imbeciles' which justified incarcerating them in mental asylums and county homes. In reality, the Irish use of terminology followed international best practice or more correctly, the international medico-scientific zeitgeist of the time. It is defined as the advice of the leading scientists, medics and sociologist of that time. Today we find such terminology strange and bizarre which is why we have to have it explained to us that despite the archaic terminology, the politicians, medics and social commentators had the best interests of unmarried mothers and their children in mind.

In the same newspaper article, Ferriter wrote: '[Tuam] is now the focus of national and international attention due to the discovery of an unmarked mass grave containing the bodies of 800 children.'¹⁷⁷ It was not an unmarked mass grave; it is a children's cemetery which is clearly marked as such, enclosed by a wall with a gate containing a Christian cross, designating it as holy ground and it had a religious grotto in one corner. It is all distinctly visible in nearly all of the photographs of the site and was in place long before the controversy started. To claim that it was unmarked is more than a bit devious but its excellent choice of weapon to force a gullible audience up the garden path. Ferriter is not an innovator of this tactic and as we will see, has been used to significant effect by a good many other similarly minded authors.

Later he tells us that another historian Earner-Byrne found this quote deleted from a report for an unnamed Catholic charity. 'These babies are our own; they are entitled to Irish citizenship; above all, the country needs them. From the point of view of church and State, there are no unwanted babies.'¹⁷⁸

Despite ending his article with the term 'unwanted babies', Ferriter never once told us how the problem of unwanted babies was solved and used the false assumption that all the babies in mother and baby homes were wanted by their mothers. That is nonsense as the statistics on unwanted children shows, and we will see in the chapter on statistical analysis. The production of unwanted children is the central issue and the Rosetta Stone to understand the history of

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

sexual morality and its so-called ‘regulation’.

Fear of Attack

Ferriter relies on the credentials conferred upon him through the title ‘professor of modern history’ for protection from quality control measures, as challenging his assertions and biases is not for the faint of heart, especially as he is largely clever enough to leave himself wriggle room by using the wishy-washy or a nebulas style of argument. However, I should note at this juncture that it is not the fault of Ferriter that his work has not come under scrutiny; this is due entirely to failures internal to the Irish academic system. In the above extracts from one of his articles, we see that he sometimes refers to the essential relevant contradictory evidence but only to throw it out, seldom or never is a full explanation provided nor put in its proper context. Moreover, by mentioning what seems contradictory evidence in a wishy-washy manner, he cannot stand being accused of not introducing it to his readers. It is a masterful use of the art of making a one-sided article appear to have balance and just as nebulously, he even admits it himself that he ‘struggles with balance’.¹⁷⁹ Over the years, I have questioned many scholars on the subject of Ferriter’s lack of balance, and I have to report that it has not gone unnoticed by academic historians. However, they express views in private, which they are unwilling to say openly for fear of causing offence or getting into a longwinded unwinnable argument. Therein lies one of the significant flaws of the peer review system. Let us scratch the surface to see what is beneath it.

There are many flaws at the heart of the academic system, and one of them is the creation of specialists. To qualify with a doctorate (PhD) degree (research), a scholar must demonstrate a deep understanding of a specialist topic. The criteria set out in the National Framework for Doctoral Education states:

the core of doctoral education is deep engagement with a question, problem or hypothesis at the frontier of knowledge and advancement of this frontier under the guidance of expert and committed supervision. To be awarded a doctoral degree, the candidate must have made an original contribution to knowledge.¹⁸⁰

In other words, research is focused on a tiny area of a particular discipline, which then becomes a scholar’s area of expertise. The ‘frontier of knowledge’ requirement means that a PhD candidate is forced to choose an area of study that previous PhD candidates have not covered. The result is that each scholar’s ‘area of expertise’ as defined by their research thesis, does not fully match that of another scholar. Consequently, academics who are willing to engage in peer review are forced to study topics and issues outside of their primary interests to write a good quality critical review. Needless to say, this is a time-consuming

¹⁷⁹ Ferriter, ‘Diarmaid Ferriter: We Can’t Let Dark Past Define Irish Social History’.

¹⁸⁰ Ward, Gorman, and Brennan, ‘Analytical Framework and Student Perceptions: Assessing the Quality of Doctoral Education in Accounting in Ireland’.

endeavour, with the potential to rob academics of spending quality time on their subject. In contrast, little work and hardly any knowledge is needed to write a glowing review, all that has to be done is take the author at their word. Also writing a critical analysis is fraught with danger as Irish academia operates in a very small parish and criticising another academic work has the potential to create career-long animosities and are likely to meet face to face with the new foe on many occasions. Awkward! Which is often why criticisms are expressed in private but never appear in the literature.

History - Mundane Dull and Sexy

Many observers have noted Ferriter's anger or more correctly his emotional approach to historical writing. In the genre of historical fiction, emotional writing is imperative, as fiction which does not stir emotional responses is pointless and likely to be a flop in terms of sales. That is an important point, history is often mundane, and to sell a 'history' book, it must be sexed up. Observe how many history books are advertised using screaming sensationalist subtitles like, *lifting the lid on the Vietnam War*, *shining a light on our dark past*, *the truth finally exposed*, ad inf. As in science, emotion has no place in historical writing; the presence of emotion is often evidence that the work is written to promote an agenda. Sensationalism may be the best salesperson of printed materials and other media, but at least one book published in 2013 has explored the relationship between sensationalism and hatred. If it is proven to be a form of hate, then sensationalism is a vehicle of illusory superiority, and illusory superiority is at the very heart of a plethora of Irish cultural biases.

From memory, I can recall Ferriter early in his public career, presenting a TV programme telling his audience that it was possible to do history using a scientific approach, citing the great Irish historians and advocates of this study method, F.X. Martin and T.W. Moody. He argued against the scientific approach stating that the historian should be allowed to give his opinion. However, I would argue that the scientific approach to history does not debar a historian from stating their opinion, for this would not only be unrealistic but impossible. Rather, it demands that each side of a debate be presented in a fair and balanced manner but what is of prime importance to the scientific method is that evidence which opposes the research question or the author's opinion, and agenda are studied and presented to the reader — thereby empowering an audience with the necessary information to be able to formulate an informed opinion. It is then possible to interject with one's own opinion, but it is imperative that the readers are allowed to agree or disagree with the author.

I have taken a scientific approach to writing this book, and I am sure that many people will disagree with me, and that is fine. Its purpose is to bring some kind of balance to Irish history by presenting the evidence, which most other authors on the subject have left out.

Sigmund Freud was probably one of the most influential people in the history

of behavioural science, not because he was right and his theories infallible but because he triggered thousands of scientific experiments by people trying to prove him wrong. The pursuit towards quality information is fuelled by the desire of one person trying to prove another wrong and without it; progress would be even more painfully slow. It is vital to the intellectual tradition that criticism is allowed a free hand. Alas, for Ireland there are not even thousands, nor hundreds, not even a few, competent authors outside of the North-West European archipelago who have an interest in Irish history. Also, suppose experts could be found with such an interest. In that case, they might be put off by the enormous time and effort required to peer review works, which potentially could yield little reward, especially in monetary terms, due to the small Irish market, which is yet another reason why the Irish peer review system is broken. If time is an issue, then Ferriter uses the tactic of overwhelming force either consciously or subconsciously to put off potential analysers as his books are mighty in size and packed to the hilt with small print. Accordingly, it would take hours upon hours of research to check his texts against contradictory evidence. There are very few researchers with the time, inclination and resources to do an effective peer review and so it will be decades before his books are used as props for library shelves with broken feet.

Where Eagles Dare.

The fundamental of history writing is that it must be entirely based on facts; fiction has no place within the genre unless one is writing a history of fiction. Ferriter in 'Occasions of Sin', not only uses fiction, but relies heavily on the work of fiction writers particularly for the more salacious claims involving nuns, priests and sexuality. The book references fictional works of authors like Colm Tóibín and plays like the *Playboy of the Western World* by John Millington Synge, the *Chastitue* by John B. Keane. Also works like that of George More who wrote novels containing stories about priests falling in love and who live in such close proximity to their housekeepers that 'they sin and elude discovery'. P34 The purpose of fiction is to write fantastical stories for entertainment and imagining the bad behaviour of priests and nuns is a particular favourite of Irish fiction writers. Such Irish narratives are nearly always tainted with Irish cultural biases, mostly clurichaun syndrome and the resultant false narratives are always predictable with Irish society always depicted as backwards. Fiction is made to masquerade as fact to promote and maintain notions, which have little or no basis in reality.

On page 251 Ferriter mentions, a report from the Commission on Relief of the Poor dating from 1924 but I can find no such commission report on the Irish parliament's website. I have however, located a report of the Commission on Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, which was established on 19th March 1925 and its report contains the text to which he was alluding. While on the parliament's website, I discovered that the same dating mistake shows up in a 2017 parliamentary debate in a speech given by Deputy Joan Collins. I can

only surmise that the source of her information came from Ferriter. Another ACCE where one mistake perpetuates to infinity. However, it is not just the title and dating errors, which makes this page significant.

When the primary sources do not really concur with what Ferriter intends his reader to believe, he is forced to interject placing his own opinion in brackets. For example, not all unmarried mothers were accommodated in mother and baby homes; some were accommodated in County Homes. Ferriter seems to be making out that the 1924 (sic) report suggested that they be accommodated at home or elsewhere cared for by social workers. As usual, the passage is delightfully ambiguous containing the comment, 'the need identified was for social workers (in this respect we remain in the Dark Ages)'. Is it today that we remain in the 'dark ages' or when was it? I think he might be alluding to today, but the evidence suggests that social workers are not the solution and remain in the 'dark ages' in Britain. In later chapters, we will encounter one of the endemic failures in the social work system, which ultimately led to the murder of a toddler in the care of social workers in Britain, which sparked a government inquiry.

The next sentence: 'For those girls who agreed to stay in mother and baby homes (in effect imprisonment), their child was boarded out...' Here is a fairly harmless statement with some truth but Ferriter interjects with a comment to reinterpret the word agreement as 'imprisonment'. In a court of law that would be called leading the witness and if any barrister pulled that stunt, I am sure that the judge would not only pound his/her gavel on the bench but throw it at such an unfortunate lawyer. p251

Wonderfully ambiguity and plain old ambiguity is Ferriter's best friend. Seldom does he let his guard down, but he must have got a bit excited when speaking at the Galway Arts Festival in 2018 declaring unambiguously, that in mother and baby homes, 'malnutrition was very common, gastroenteritis and various infectious diseases spread very quickly especially when these institutions were overcrowded, and they often were.'¹⁸¹

Let us start with his claim that 'malnutrition was very common' in mother and baby Homes. In Tuam for example, out of the 796 death certificates, only ten record marasmus as the primary cause of death with a further four as a secondary cause. Accordingly, 14 cases in total represents less than two per cent of the total. A two per cent occurrence cannot, even by a very wild stretch of the imagination be classed as common, let alone 'very common'. The terms malnutrition and marasmus can be found on death certificates for many other maternity hospitals, so we have to ask ourselves why Prof Ferriter is not accusing them of abuse or incompetence.

The Tuam workhouse building was designed to cater for 800 people when it was

¹⁸¹ *First Thought Talks*.

opened in 1846. However, records show that a mere two years later, in 1849, 2,368 people were crammed into the building or accommodated in specially built sheds at the time of the famine. The maximum number of residents in the same building never exceeded 260 when it operated as a children's home. The claim that it was overcrowded is used to imply chaos and to give credence to the statement that 'various infectious diseases spread very quickly especially when these institutions were overcrowded, and they often were'. The extant historical evidence to bolster such an emphatic claim of frequency and epidemiology is flimsy at best and insufficient in reality. Some institutions and hospitals were, however, overcrowded from time to time as they are today. It is not stand-alone evidence to lend veracity to sinister claims.

Gastroenteritis killed thousands of infants and was one of Ireland's biggest baby killers before and after the foundation of mother and baby homes. In 1949 for example, 13.4% of all infants (children under the age of one) in the state, died of diarrhoea and enteritis.¹⁸² The Registrar General's report for that year reveals that 3,415 infant deaths were recorded and when we begin to add up the figures to reveal the big picture, a more trustworthy perspective emerges, which in turn evinces that the deaths at mother and baby homes are minuscule in the totality of the statistics. Furthermore, during the first half of the 20th century, the infectious nature of the disease was unknown. Nearing the middle of the century, its infectious nature was suspected but remained unproven. Some medics believed it was infectious while others did not. That was the reality of the time. It is a travesty of history to take our present-day knowledge and use it to criticise the actions of people who could not possibly have had access to knowledge that lay in the future.

I think we can also ask the questions, has Ferriter done his own research, is he reliant on others to give him his opinion. I can only surmise, that had he worked out how easy it would be to dismiss his direct claims and being aware of the ability of the entity known as 'questionable veracity' to open a can of worms, he would have steered far clear.

Returning to *Occasions of Sin*, Ferriter now ventures into the realm of psychology:

While it is true that there was little open discussion before the 1970s about sexual crime, it is not true that there was no awareness of it; parents, doctors, judges and charity workers were aware but it is likely parents and police were ignorant of the extent of the emotional and psychological trauma it caused and failed to grasp that an assault of a very young child was different to that of an older girl or adult woman.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Redmond, *That Was Then, This Is Now: Change in Ireland, 1949-1999: A Publication to Mark the 50th Anniversary of the Central Statistics Office*.

¹⁸³ Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland*.

Not only is it likely that they were ‘ignorant’ of the psychical trauma. It is a clear example of the use of anachronism, which is either deliberate or subconscious due to a lack of knowledge. The understanding of psychological trauma that we have today is relatively new, and the evidence to support the concept of childhood psychological trauma has only emerged in the last two decades and is still not fully understood. For example, a 2015 study complained that even today ‘there is a lack of psychometrically sound diagnostic tools for directly assessing trauma symptoms in children’.¹⁸⁴ Children may or may not exhibit the symptoms of psychological trauma, which led many theorists to believe that even though they had experienced traumatic events, they were protected by not being able to understand them. In the time period which Ferriter expects people to have been aware of psychological trauma in young children, nobody, not even the experts understood the condition. It is clear that Ferriter has no knowledge whatsoever of historical medical/ psychiatric/ psychological theories and research, and it is this lack of knowledge causes him to make claims, which he would not do if he knew how easily they can be dismissed by anyone with even the slightest amount of the aforementioned knowledge. Furthermore, far from the magical expectation that once a new medical or scientific discovery has been made that everyone discards the old knowledge and instantly change tack, the reality is that it takes a long time for new medical or scientific knowledge to become accepted.

Science historians are aware that scientific knowledge and indeed, most new knowledge can take decades to become accepted within the professions and even longer enter the public domain. All new knowledge, including scientific theories are subjected to the Semmelweis Reflex, and most early psychological theories were dismissed as ‘psycho mumbo jumbo’. Max Plank, a physicist and the originator of quantum theory, once wrote, ‘a scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.’ — Max Planck, *Scientific Autobiography*, 1950.

Another major problem, which faces new ideas in medicine and other areas of endeavour, is our natural tendency to reject new information without examination, introspection or even curiosity, especially if it contradicts established norms, beliefs or paradigms. The moniker gaining traction for this tendency is the Semmelweis Reflex. From the story of a 19th-century physician, Ignaz Semmelweis who claimed his fellow physicians were killing their patients due to not washing their hands. His peers, the physicians and almost the entire medical profession emphatically rejected his claims, often scornfully, and without ever performing the slightest test for veracity, even though it was possible at the time to prove it observationally and experimentally. The primary reason was that Semmelweis’s claims were made in a time before

¹⁸⁴ Buss, Warren, and Horton, ‘Trauma and Treatment in Early Childhood: A Review of the Historical and Emerging Literature for Counselors.’

germ theory had been established, and the prevailing etiological theory of disease was the miasmatic theory. It held that bad air was the cause of and was responsible for the spread of disease. Accordingly, by the best science of the day, disease transmission through contact with skin or other objects was deemed impossible. Remember, this was the mid-19th century, a time just in advance of the confirmation of germ theory and Semmelweis could offer no scientific explanation for his findings.

The scientific method does not accept the results of one or even two experiments as proof of a concept or theory, and it demands that experiments are subject to a good deal of replication and peer review. The net result is that it can take decades for a scientific theory to be put into professional practice and longer still to enter the public domain. Psychology has only really come into the public domain in the last 30 years and is increasing in popularity and familiarity. So familiar has society become with the discipline that psychological terminology is hardly recognised and has become part of the everyday language. These terms include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), work-related stress, the fight or flight response, anxiety, attachment, extroversion/introversion, the unconscious mind etc., are so commonplace today that many people do not realise how recently they have become accepted by society. PTSD, for example, was only included in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual in 1980. The manual is the primary tool used by medics worldwide to diagnose mental illness.

When Ferriter states that parents and police were ignorant of the psychological trauma caused by sex abuse, he is telling no lie. The way the passage is written implies that they should have been aware of it. As Ferriter is a keen user of the word 'ignorant', I can state without fear of contradiction that Ferriter appears to be ignorant that science before and during the 1970s had not yet reached conclusions regarding 'psychological trauma'.

In practically every page of this book, Ferriter points his blunderbuss at the Christians and pulls the trigger.

There were also battles won in the quest for sexual liberation and the struggle to force confrontation of truths long denied and buried and ultimately successful challenges to the ignorance and prejudice of professed Christians' when it came to understanding the plight of sexual minorities.¹⁸⁵ p36

The sexual minorities in question are the homosexuals, and he leaves his readers in no doubt who are to blame for the misunderstanding of the sexual minorities. He makes absolutely no attempt to explain the genesis of the misunderstanding or that it was not only Christians who misunderstood the plight of homosexuals. The medical profession regarded homosexuality as

185 Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland*.

a psychiatric illness and right up until 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed it from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), the pre-eminent global authority on mental illness. While the notion is entirely laughable today, if one examines homosexuality through the prism of logic and reason, it appears to be utterly incompatible with nature and out of kilter with the human body's design. That is how people of the past saw the issue, but it is not how the majority of people see it today. As we are naturally inclined to view issues through the prism of our own present understandings, one has to 'forget' to set the context to instantiate new misunderstandings.

In chapter three, I used a two-sentence quote of Ferriter's from the van der Horst interview as a blockquote: 'this erroneous assertion that 800 bodies were dumped in a septic tank. That is not true'. Since 2014 he has become a more ardent disciple of Catherine Corless or the 'brilliant Catherine Corless' as he referred to her at a talk given at the Galway Arts Festival, but his inconsistencies in his claims have not all gone unnoticed. In an interview on the Claire Byrne Show, a current affairs programme on national television station RTÉ, on March 6, 2017, Claire Byrne put it to Ferriter: 'In 2014, you said that the assumption or the claims that were 800 children dumped in a septic tank in Tuam were erroneous. Do you still hold that view?'

Diarmaid Ferriter: "I don't know."

Missing important facts

The kind of work one would expect from a professor of modern history is to place the Tuam Children's Home correctly in its historical context. It might be hard for individuals not trained in history but is an elementary requirement of academic history. When it comes to looking why so many infants died in the one facility, it must be noted that the home was the only one of its kind in the entire province of Connacht. That is right, Leinster had 9, Munster had 3 and Ulster 1. The three counties surrounding Tuam inc. Galway had a population of 425,612 in 1926, which had steadily declined to 332,434 in 1961. Thus, the average population was 384,233. Dublin had 5 homes serving an average population of 628,025.

Population	1926	1936	1946	1951	1961	Average
State	2,971,992	2,968,420	2,955,107	2,960,593	2,818,341	2,934,891
Leinster	1,149,092	1,220,411	1,281,117	1,336,576	1,332,149	1,263,869
Dublin	505,654	586,925	636,193	693,022	718,332	628,025
Munster	969,902	942,272	917,306	898,870	849,203	915,511
Connacht	552,907	525,468	492,797	471,895	419,465	492,506
Galway	169,366	168,198	165,201	160,204	149,887	162,571
Mayo	172,690	161,349	148,120	141,867	123,330	149,471
Roscommon	83,556	77,566	72,510	68,102	59,217	72,190

Leinster had nine homes serving an average population of 1.263 million, which works out at one home for every 140,430 people. In contrast, Connacht had only one home serving 492,506 people. To save argument, I know that Galway and Mayo County Councils funded the Tuam Children's Home, but it took in people from beyond these two counties. Without having access to all the 796 death certificates and while spot-checking, I found patients from counties Clare, Carlow, Cavan and Offaly. Nonetheless, if we exclude all other counties, the single Tuam Home had a catchment population of 312,042, which is over 222% greater than the Leinster ratio. Hence, it was by far the biggest single institution of its kind in the whole country, and this may be staggering news in light of all that has been claimed, it is absolutely no surprise to find that the biggest institution in the country had a higher number of deaths than smaller institutions.

Furthermore, when all the figures are calculated, the Tuam Children's Home's mortality rates were lower than many of those at other institutions. Can we draw the conclusion that it was better than most, if not the best? Well, there is a lot more to consider before we get there.

Connacht was then and remains now, the poorest region of Ireland. Although, it must be stated that the poverty which existed while the Tuam home was in operation, was so severe that it is all but unimaginable to us today. The province of Connacht contains mostly bad land that is difficult to farm and make a living from, which is why the English chose it as a reservation to place the indigenous Irish who were ethnically cleansed from other parts of the country, keeping the rich farmland in the rest of the country for themselves. Ireland until 2006 was classified in the Objective 1 category for European Union Structural Funds. The Funds were established redistribute the wealth of Europe to aid disadvantaged regions of the Union to rise to parity with the wealthy regions. Connacht, along with the borders and midlands areas, to this very day, is still classified as a disadvantaged, remaining in the Objective 1 category. Ireland started to industrialise before it became a member of the European Union in 1973 and it has used it to lift the country from centuries of poverty and neglect to one of the richest countries on earth. In 2018, the USA Today magazine listed Ireland as the 10th richest in the world ahead of Germany, France, USA and more.¹⁸⁷ Global Finance magazine places Ireland in 6th place for 2019.¹⁸⁸ For the last three decades, small countries aspiring to join the European Union, all held Ireland as the exemplar of what they could achieve through membership of the Union. Ireland has come a long way in its efforts to eliminate poverty but has not attained perfection by any means, but no one within the Irish economy is as poor as their recent ancestors. For reasons of clarity, I must state that America

¹⁸⁶ 'Central Statistics Office'.

¹⁸⁷ 'Richest Countries in the World 2018'.

¹⁸⁸ April 15 and Pham, 'Global Finance Magazine - Richest Countries in the World 2019'.

is still the richest country in the world, followed by the emerging China, which has deposed Japan and Germany from second and third spots. Ireland measures as a rich country using per capita income, not overall wealth. In one way, it is not surprising that the Irish people of today cannot comprehend the absolute dire poverty to which the vast majority of the populace was forced to endure. Some of our historians have taken the quixotic view that the newly independent country should have been able to turn around centuries of economic neglect and industrialise overnight, taking no account of economic effects of the Great Depression and WWII. The quixotic view has become popular recently and is used as a vehicle to attack various Irish governments in history. When competent scholars examine the issue and look at the likes of the German economic miracle, a more realistic view emerges. Germany was able to restore its economy because it had access to all the ingredients, which Ireland did not enjoy like skilled labour, coal, steel, etc., and most of all investors willing to invest in their own country.

Now isn't that the kind of historical evidence and analysis one would expect from a historian, not to mind the ones perched high in ivory towers.

So far, we have established that the Tuam Children's Home was the biggest institution in the country and working with the poorest individuals in the poorest province. That is a highly significant point and goes a long way to explaining the 796 death certificates. When we investigate why no academic historian has made this point, it is further evidence that nobody in Irish academia working in the area of modern history at present, has the capability to do good quality work. The poverty aspect is significant, and I will examine the economic, scientific and medical evidence in a bit more detail in later chapters.

Leftie Canards

The misconstrued history, which surrounds the Irish attack on Christianity, may seem like a relatively new phenomenon, but it has been going on for many decades and even centuries. Each political partisan will selectively choose historical evidence, deploy canards and a raft of equivocations to support their political aims, there is nothing new in that. In Ireland, the left-wing has never been entirely successful. Consequently, it has become increasingly desperate retching up more and more lurid versions of history, which it then tries to present as fact. The aim is to rise to power by discrediting previous right-wing or centrist governments. The many manifestations of misconstrued history have become so commonplace that the illusory truth effect is evident and therefore the left-wingers have come to believe their own BS. On the left-wing, lurid history would probably have remained there were it not for the international financial crisis. It created a sense of mass distress and distrust in the centrist/right-wing parties, which have ruled the state since its foundation. Eager to blame their own failures and losses on others, as Brendan Logue provided us with the very exemplar in Chapter 4, a sizeable section of the populace has used all the evidence it can muster, no matter how incredulous it may be, to attack

the political classes and establishment. As history attests, when a population is anxious or under stress, a portion of the people within it are inclined to endorse far-fetched or outlandish explanations for the causes of their tensions. The result is that Ireland's anti-Christian scandals bear a striking resemblance to the McCarthyism of 1940s/50s America. The country went into a panic, believing that communists were under every bed. The only difference is that the American populace had genuine grounds for fear as it faced a clear and present danger of nuclear annihilation from the Soviet Union. McCarthy stirred things up for reasons of achieving personal notoriety. With same enthusiasm as McCarthy, but without any political or security threat, motivated entirely to seek notoriety, Irish politicians, academics, journalists went back into history, picked a fight with the dead. Others were encouraged through the additional prospect of making substantial sums from financial compensation. The dead cannot defend themselves, and only one criminal action for fraud had been taken against those who made false claims in earlier scandals; thus, everything is to be gained, and there is nothing to lose.

A Powerful Instrument of Persuasion

History's powerfulness has long been recognised, used as and feared as a tool of persuasion, provocation, and inspiration. History has been used to motivate humankind into actions, which cross the full gamut of deeds ranging from good to evil. The fear of history motivated the Irish government in the 1970s and 1980s to deploy educational obscurantism to water down Irish history teaching for fear it was driving recruits to the Provisional IRA. They had a point, as studying Irish history without the imposed blinkers will leave students with anti-British views, especially when they discover the many crimes she carried out against civilians, the abject poverty which almost the entire populace was forced to endure, the blatant discrimination, sectarianism, repression and dehumanisation, all of which were perpetrated against the majority of people on the Island. With the lifting of the repression in 1922, it is no surprise that the pendulum swung towards nationalism and Catholicism, but the result of the 1970s/80s obscurantism has caused the pendulum to swing back to the Anglophile viewpoint. Understanding this point is imperative to appreciate the factors driving the current wave of hostile Irish anti-Irish historical revisionism. Irish educational obscurantism is deceptively simple to expose, just ask a few pertinent questions, and it can be found that hardly any young Irish person knows of or understands what caused 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland. The loyalists set off the first bombs, Catholic areas were attacked, and the British Army was deployed on the streets to protect Catholics from attack by Protestant/loyalist mobs. In contrast, most people think that the IRA started the conflict to end British rule in Ireland. It certainly became such a conflict, but the IRA was inactive at the outbreak of the troubles in 1969. It was the organisation's failure to defend the Catholic areas, which caused the organisation to split. The breakaway group called themselves the Provisional IRA, and at first, their self-appointed mission was to defend the Catholic areas. It was not until 1971-

72 that the high-intensity Provisional IRA campaign began against the British military, security forces and infrastructure. The lack of knowledge about the recent history of events in their own country is clear and unambiguous evidence that the accurate accounts of what happened have been obscured from view deliberately by the Irish and British governments, elements within the media, politics and the department of education. Why? 1. The ruling élite think Irish people can't handle the truth. 2. Historical truth seldom serves any useful political purpose. 3. Clurichaun syndrome.

The great Irish Historian T.W Moody predicted the consequences of Irish education obscurantism, shortly after the beginning of the current wave.

Moody wrote in the Irish Times on 27 November 1972:

Much of our problems springs from a refusal to face unpalatable facts, an addiction to make believe, a tendency to prefer myths to the truth. But a new realism, a new questioning of case-hardened assumptions has emerged, and this has been greatly, perhaps decisively, encouraged and stimulated by the development of broadcasting. If the measure of freedom that the RTE has had is now to be drastically reduced, one of the **first casualties will be the truth**, and the process of awakening the public mind to the realities of the Irish predicament may be disastrously halted. We need more, not less, communication in Ireland.

Moody was writing in the context of the firing the board of the national broadcasting organisation RTÉ by the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Gerry Collins. One of the stations, reporters, Kevin O'Kelly, reported on an interview he conducted with the (Provisional) IRA Chief of Staff, Sean MacStiofáin. Even though the interview was never broadcast and MacStiofáin's voice was not heard, the government came down with a massive heavy. It was the day the truth was killed off in Ireland, marking the start of RTÉ's slithering journey to the bottom of the manure heap to become Ireland's biggest propagator of anti-Christian bias and fake news.

However, obscurantism has had unforeseen side effects and is a significant factor behind many of the current scandals. With the pendulum swung back to the Anglophiles, they took to revising history in their favour at the nationalists' expense. They were aided and abetted by British social engineering, which overflows into Ireland due to the high volume of broadcasts and publications that flood the Irish market. To cite one example of its consequences, the British retelling of the story of WWII (which is full of obscurantism) has obliterated the Irish story of a neutral country in a time of a national emergency. Many people in Ireland today think that we should have joined the fight against the evil Nazis to save the Jews but no one, including the British, fought the war to save the Jews. All the nations of the world had the opportunity and the agreement of Hitler to save the Jews before the war in 1938 but decided against

it. Look up the Évian-les-Bains conference of 1938.

In 2012, the Irish government proposed to apologise to men who deserted the Irish army during WWII. The notion arose from the Irish parliamentary act of August 1945 that prevented returning deserters from getting state jobs, favouring the men who served the state loyally. In other words, only loyal ex-army men could get priority when applying for state jobs. The British did exactly the same thing, but the British are not silly enough to apologise to the 100,000+ men who deserted the British army from 1938 to 1945. As you can probably surmise from this vast number, it was the very reason why the British military authorities did not prosecute their deserters. However, they carried out the exact same ‘vindictiveness’ which the Irish government was accused of and were joined by the Canadians, South Africans, Australians etc. who all acted to ensure that the men who served the state loyally got first call on public jobs, while the deserters were ignored. The Irish government did exactly what any sensible government would do, but in 2014 after a campaign was mounted using blatant and buffoonish historical revisionism, the Irish government apologised to its wartime army deserters for ‘discriminating’ against them. None of the other governments anywhere in the world to my knowledge have ever apologised to their wartime armed forces deserters. These facts and figures regarding what happened in other countries were never raised in the parliamentary debate. If there were any dissenting voices, none were heard above the political ‘cac’-ophony¹⁸⁹. Successive Irish governments, reflecting their society’s prejudices, have demonstrated a deep love of self-hate and ignorance of Irish history. They think that they can create a sense of being intelligent by taking the British view and then using it lambast their predecessors. As their internal sense of intelligence is not rooted in erudition and any hint to the contrary, they would likely be deeply damaging to their credibility. They defend and defend their hollow principles with blunt force trauma. Dissent has been silenced, and nowhere is the voice of reason to be heard.

British social engineering is never behind the bush in promoting its deep-set anti-Catholic prejudices. It has a massive bearing on the scandals and the spreading of many falsehoods. It must be said that the Irish are very good at creating their own historical falsehoods but use them to spread muck, rather than bragging. Moreover, Anglophilia is a major component of clurichaun syndrome, and its BIRGing supremacism used to distance the Irish from the Irish.

However, the British once knew the value of religious congregations and recognised the abusiveness rampant in their secular institutions. Accordingly, it will come as a surprise to many Irish historians to learn that the first proposal for mother and baby homes in Ireland was made under British rule in 1906 by the Vice-Regal Commission on the Irish Poor Law.

¹⁸⁹ Cac is the Irish word for brown stuff.

The commission advised that:

these homes should be owned and run by religious organisations; alternatively they should be established by local authorities, who would place them under the control of a religious community.¹⁹⁰

‘Prejudice not being founded upon reason cannot be removed by argument’¹⁹¹, but prejudice is highly resistant to change and will defend itself no matter what the cost is to its holder. The Irish Anglophiles retain as their nuclear attack option, which is the accusation of holding anti-British views. It is enough to scare most authors away from positing even the slightest negative criticism of the British, but we cannot write Irish history correctly through the prism of quixotic pro-British views. It remains one of the prime reasons why quality history has been suppressed in Ireland. The latest peace accord between Ireland and Britain is known as the ‘Good Friday Agreement’, has caused the Irish government, in particular, to redouble its educational obscurantism with the result that Irish children are well behind in the knowledge of their own country’s history. American children are better educated in Irish history, and that fact can be demonstrated repeatedly by observing social media commentary.

Conclusion

As we have witnessed in this chapter, our academic historians, the self-appointed gatekeepers of quality history, are not averse from using the full gamut of propagandistic tools ranging from pure fabrication to paltering, in the gratification of their biases and prejudices. Of deep concern is that many of the people who believe the raft of fallacies are teachers held in a position of trust by their pupils and the nation. Pupils are entitled to be taught truthfully both in school and university. When truthfulness is absent or diminished, the commitment to quality also diminishes, allowing cultural and personal bias to creep in promoting ignorance and conspiracy theories.

There are many capable, competent, intelligent individuals working in academia who are deserving of admiration and respect, but all are tarnished by the problems within the Irish education system. The net result is that the historians of the future will look back on this period of the early 21st century and conclude that it is the most embarrassing era in the Irish nation’s entire history and its long and proud intellectual tradition.

In this chapter, we have established several important historical factors that our historians have passed over. Tuam was the largest institution in the country with a minimum catchment population of over 222% more than any of the homes in Leinster. Economically the country was struggling right from independence as the Irish government was paying more in land annuities and RIC pensions

¹⁹⁰ Commission of Investigation, ‘Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Final Report’.

¹⁹¹ Quote attributed to Samuel Johnson

to the British than the Germans were paying in war reparations. The economic neglect and over-taxation of Ireland to pay for British wars could not be reversed overnight. As Niall Meehan's document demonstrates, compensation is a major motivator. We are forced to conclude that very few Irish historians, specialising in early 20th century Ireland and or social history, despite what the parchment says, cannot write quality history, nor is there any effective quality control in academia.

How Ireland dumbed down

On the sixth of March 2012, the Irish Times carried an article with the above title revealing that in the previous December, some of the top executives from the three multinational companies headquartered in Dublin met with the minister of education, Bat O'Keefe. The executives from Google, Intel and Hewlett Packard complained to him about the drop in Irish educational standards and demanded he and the government take action. Together with the Institutes of Technology (IT), the universities entered an arms race handing out higher and higher grades to students to create the illusion of high performance. The resultant 'grade inflation' was at that time being highlighted by the Irish Times for more than a decade. Six months prior, Intel's former boss Craig Barrett, addressed a summit on Ireland's economic future. His message was summarised by one of the attendees thus: 'drop all that guff about a world-class education system and face the truth: Ireland is average on education, and average is no longer good enough.' Ireland has been deluding itself into believing that it had a world-class educational system and a well-educated population, but the people in the market employing graduates were not as easily fooled as the public and the politicians. The teachers' unions attributed the rise in the number of higher grades to better teaching, while the colleges claimed that it was due to their improving standards. However, all argued for and received higher salaries; they lined their own pockets at the taxpayers' expense and gave nothing in return. The blame lies fully with the Irish government who have allowed the third level institutions to effectively govern themselves, devolving oversight to the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the Higher Education Training and Awards Council (Hetac). All of Ireland's university presidents or their nominees sit on the IUQB board, while four senior IT figures sit on the Hetac board. If the world university awarded a degree for a person's ability to pull the wool over gullible politicians' eyes, it would be a prerequisite for Irish university governance jobs.

The article's author concluded that the minister was on 'a personal mission to modify the system, protect the economy and, in the process, leave a lasting legacy. But the task of turning around Irish education, with its high level of self-regard, its culture of secrecy and its evaluation deficit, is formidable.' So formidable was the challenge that the government had made no progress on it ten years later.

SECTION III ANALYSIS - WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

6. THE SCIENTIFIC, MEDICAL & SOCIAL ZEITGEIST

*A logical fallacy is a flaw in reasoning.
Logical fallacies are like tricks or illusions of
thought and they're often very sneakily used
by politicians and the media to fool people.*

Don't be fooled!'

Thou Shalt Not Commit Logical Fallacies

<https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com/>

It is the biggest killer of babies of all time and remains the killer of 800,000 infants per year in the world of the 21st century. What do you think it is? Using present-day scientific-medico understanding, we are in a position to explain why the Infant Mortality Rates (IMRs) were so high in the past and why the rates were higher for illegitimate children. From time to time in history, legitimate children suffered from similar IMRs. However, it should be noted that science and medicine, until relatively recently, had no proof of what was caused high IMRs, they had their suspicions, and it was the subject of considerable debate, increasing in intensity from the last decades of the 19th century when Pasteur's germ theory was becoming accepted. As is the case with all debates, some people guessed right, and some guessed wrong. In the absence of clear and unambiguous evidence, scientific debates can rage and continue to rage for decades, until eventually progress or new tools and instruments come along, enabling the debate to move on. Too often, we are inclined to take a Disneyesque fairy tale view of progress and scientific advancement; for example, many think that when Louis Pasteur confirmed germ theory in the 1860s, the entire medical profession abandoned the century's old zeitgeist of the miasmatic theory of disease overnight. As evinced by Max Plank's quote

in the previous chapter, the reality of scientific progress is much slower than people realise, decades slower. Again, cognitive biases play a significant role, allowing imagination to overrule reality. When something new is invented, or a brilliant idea or discovery is made, the full difficulty of the work and process behind such progression is not appreciated, because it appears to our minds to have been a simple endeavour.

Take the voyage of Christopher Columbus, all he had to do was sail west. Right! It seems so simple, but no one had done it before, and Columbus was an expert sailor and navigator. Moreover, not only did he make it across the Atlantic Ocean, but he also knew how to get back. The phenomenon is illustrated in an allegorical story called the Egg of Columbus. However, in science, it is called the hindsight bias¹⁹², it occurs when people feel that they ‘knew it all along,’ that is when they believe that an event is more predictable after it becomes known than it was before. Hindsight bias embodies any combination of three aspects: memory distortion, beliefs about events’ objective likelihoods, or subjective beliefs about one’s own prediction.¹⁹³

A subset of the hindsight bias is called the Historian’s Fallacy, which we encountered in the previous chapter and is defined as ‘judging a person’s decision in the light of new information not available at the time.’¹⁹⁴ We only have to look back at our generation’s attempts at predicting the future to see a trail littered with expert predictions which turned out to be well, laughable, like new ice age prediction of the 1970s, the Gaussian copula formula, peak oil, the end of the world on March 10th 1982 ad inf. With the progression of time, we tend to forget the ludicrous. Still, we remember those whose guesses turned out to be nearly accurate, ascribing to the guesser powers of perception that does not exist in reality. We are so hell-bent on sticking to our childhood magical fantasy that we want to believe that have the capability to predict the future. You might think that science can make predictions like the position of the stars on any given date, but that knowledge came from history.

History is the only tool humankind has for predicting the future; it involves observing, looking for events that repeat over time, calculating the distance between, theorising about causes, and making predictions. Accordingly, history is at the heart of science, and there would be no science without it. Moreover, the sciences are absolutely useless in areas like morality, which, through criminal and civil law, has a much more significant influence on our lives and freedom than we might realise.

Due to our natural inclinations, it is incumbent on a capable historian to seek to eliminate or mitigate the negative or positive influence of information that belongs to the future of the past. In other words, we have to view historical events through the eyes of the people of the time and judge them without expecting

¹⁹² Look up the egg of Columbus for a better understanding.

¹⁹³ Roese and Vohs, ‘Hindsight Bias’.

¹⁹⁴ ‘Historian’s Fallacy’.

people to have had access to magical crystal balls or time machines. Every generation thinks that their time was/is at the pinnacle of human achievement, but our world today, I am sure, will appear equally ludicrous to generations of the future.

In the past cigarettes were good for you and were sold as a treatment for asthma, bad breath, and all diseases of the throat. Coca Cola was also first sold as a medicine, a cure for many diseases, including morphine addiction, indigestion, nerve disorders, headaches and impotence.

Doctors, medicine and science all promoted the health benefits of smoking. Take the ad here...

More doctors smoke Camels than any other cigarette!

The text reads...

I'm going to grow a hundred year old... and possibly she may - for the amazing strides of medical science have added years to life expectancy.

A clear implication that cigarettes are good for you and medically approved.

Other cigarette advertisements used statements like 'scientific evidence

demonstrates that smoking Chesterfield cigarettes has no adverse effects on the

nose, throat and sinuses of the group smoking Chesterfield for over 10 years'.

In light of the information, we now have that cigarettes and tobacco cause many

fatal diseases the advertising claims appear totally preposterous but think of

how the people at the time who did not have this knowledge would view these

claims. It is almost guaranteed because they knew nothing of the harmful effects

of tobacco, they were inclined to believe expert opinion. Any medic or scientist

who valued their reputation in posterity over short-term financial gain would

also not have endorsed such products if they could have gotten a glimpse the

future.

...and possibly she may - for the amazing strides of medical science have added years to life expectancy

"I'm going to grow a hundred years old!"

It's a fact - a woman, wonderful even - that this American child, at your own child, has a life expectancy almost a whole decade longer than was her mother's, and a good 10 to 15 years longer than that of her grandmother. Not only the expectation of a longer life, but of a life by her health.

Thank medical science for that. Thank your doctor and thousands like him - smiling confidently - that you and yours may enjoy a longer, better life.

According to a recent Nationwide survey

More Doctors smoke Camels than any other cigarette!

Not just the doctors, but the people who smoke Camels. They are the people who are the most health-conscious and the most intelligent. They are the people who are the most successful and the most happy. They are the people who are the most beautiful and the most loved. They are the people who are the most powerful and the most influential. They are the people who are the most successful and the most happy. They are the people who are the most beautiful and the most loved. They are the people who are the most powerful and the most influential.

CAMELS *Camel*

THE "DOCTOR'S" TEST WILL TELL YOU

The "DOCTOR'S" TEST will tell you - in your own smoking ground. For you will know, after you have smoked a Camel, that you are getting a longer, better life. Thank medical science for that. Thank your doctor and thousands like him - smiling confidently - that you and yours may enjoy a longer, better life.

Due to our natural inclinations, it is incumbent on the capable historian to seek to eliminate or mitigate the negative or positive influence of information that belongs to the future of the past.

Miasmatic Theory of Disease

‘Miasma’ is defined as a poisonous vapour or mist believed to be made up of particles from decomposing material was primarily held by medicine and

science as the cause disease and could be identified by its foul smell. When we look back at history, we can see that there were hints that germs were the cause of disease and the hindsight bias will make us believe that the medical profession should have recognised much sooner than they did. Furthermore, when scientific theories are debunked, we tend to think of them as laughable using presentism.

Early Modern Protective Attire
- Forerunner of the modern
biohazard protection suit. →

Miasma theory started in the Middle Ages and held sway long after germ theory was proved in the 1860s, right up until after the introduction of antibiotics in the 1950s. According to the theory, the availability of fresh air and fresh country air, in particular, was held as a valuable disinfectant, which is why many hospitals, particularly those dealing with lung diseases were situated in the country. The influence of the miasmatic theory can still to be observed today, and it had a commanding influence over the architecture of many buildings. It was not just hospitals, workhouses and infirmaries that were designed to allow the free movement of air, the design of entire towns and cities took account of miasmas. The grid system of New York, for example, was considered the best design for the free movement of disinfecting fresh air. Sunlight was also important in medical treatment that many hospitals had large windows designed to let in disinfecting sunlight and were opened every day to allow fresh air to circulate. Even in the 1950s, patients of sanatoria were wheeled out, bed and all, onto the hospital veranda to absorb the curative properties of sunshine and fresh air. In the pre-antibiotic era, many diseases were incurable, and the world-class medical treatments of the time centred almost entirely on hygiene. In the past, a clean building was a structure that facilitated the flow of fresh air and allowed plenty of sunlight in. Galway University Hospital is built on the old workhouse site, and its old infirmary building still stands. The building is raised up from the ground to allow air to circulate underneath and features an open-but roofed two-story corridor which leads to the entrance. The purpose was to disinfect people leaving and entering the building with fresh air.

Fortunately, despite not knowing about germs, the theory worked because removing a bad smell from the air involved removing the cause, which was mostly bacteria. Accordingly, the theory was not without its benefits, but



more importantly, even though we now know that the fundamentals of the theory were wrong; its benefits could be proven using the science of the time. However, there were many negative consequences, the theory was founded on bad odours, and thus removing the odour was of prime importance. Note the attire of the plague doctor pictured on the previous page. While the beak masks might look to perform a function similar to modern respirators, they were not filters. Worn mostly by plague doctors in medieval and early modern Europe, their purpose was to remove bad smells by replacing them with nice ones. So contained within the beak were pleasant smelling flowers and herbs. Combined with a cloak and a cane to avoid touching plague victims, they were strikingly similar to today's biohazard protection suit. However, unlike today not knowing anything about germs and the concentration on removing the bad smell, especially from rotting food had dire consequences due to the adulteration of food was. One way to remove the bad smell was to use formaldehyde, which is better known as an embalming fluid. It has a slightly sweet taste and became so widely used in food adulteration that when its use was discovered, and the story hit the newspapers, it was called it 'embalmed meat' or 'embalmed milk'.

*Scientists in the 19th century
thought that obesity was caused
by inhaling the odour of food.*

Milk bought to feed infants was often contaminated, sometimes by accident, but fraud was common as quite a few producers, and vendors had little or no qualms about adulterating milk. Watered down milk was common, so too was chalk or plaster, which acted as volume fillers. It became so much of a problem that more and more consumer protection laws were brought in internationally, but the lack of reliable, independent tests to prove the existence of contaminants hampered enforcement. Improved testing became imperative, and it revealed there was a lot more 'goodness' in the milk than the aforementioned ingredients, for example:

The [Indianapolis] health department's official bulletin, published that same summer, [1900] also noted the discovery of sticks, hairs, insects, blood and pus in milk; in addition, the department tracked such a steady diet of manure in dairy products that it estimated that the citizens of Indianapolis consumed more than 2,000 pounds of manure in a given year.¹⁹⁵

On top of all that, refrigerators were available since the 1920s in America, but only the wealthy could afford them and were distrusted machines due to several fatal accidents. With the result, milk was produced, distributed and

¹⁹⁵ Bloom, 'The 19th-Century Fight Against Bacteria-Ridden Milk Preserved With Embalming Fluid'.

consumed without the benefit of a commonplace, present-day technology. On top of that, when pasteurisation gradually became popular, many people preferred raw or unpasteurised milk, as it was believed to be better than the pasteurised stuff. Although creameries which participated in the 'national brand' initiative were forced to pasteurise their milk, it was not until 1957 that all creameries in Ireland were compulsorily required to pasteurise their milk. It is no surprise to us nowadays with our knowledge of how weak neonatal immune systems are to see that dirty milk as they called it, was responsible for the deaths of millions of infants. It may be surprising to learn that even in the 21st century, 800,000 infants die each year due to bottle-feeding. The breast is best movement is not a recent phenomenon, it gathered significant momentum at the end of the 19th century, as a direct result of the multitude of milk scandals, and its success waxed and waned over the early part of the 20th century but only gained traction in the latter part.

The biggest baby killer of all time →

When it comes to high infant mortality rates, humanity has not been immune from using excitable and dramatic language, even if they did not fully understand the causes as this extract demonstrates from The Evening World, New York City 1906 (image below)



Sacrificed on the Altar - Baby Massacre in New York



An extract of the text of the newspaper article reads...

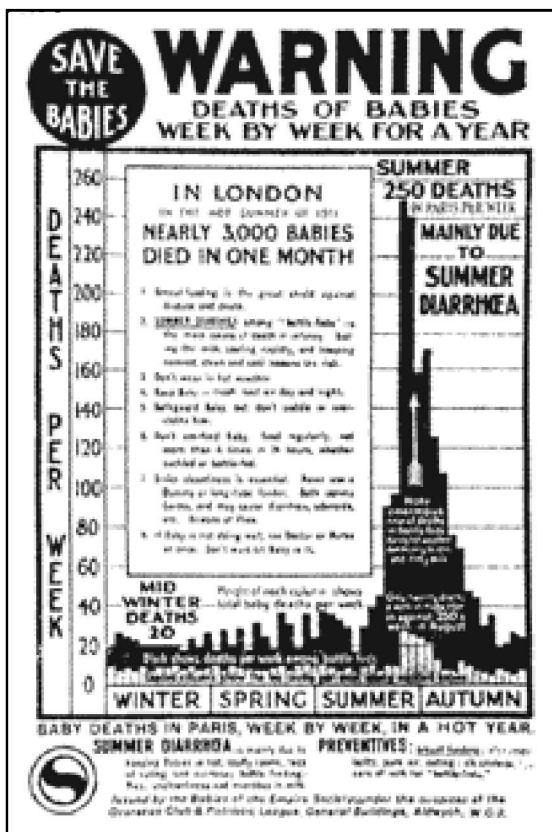
People have read of the hundreds of children sacrificed at the altar of

cruelly hot summer months and bowed their heads to Providence and divine law.

But the fearful rate of infant mortality that confronts us – a record for last July of 3,000 dead babies under one year old – is not a matter for, resignation but for the most vigorous thought and action. If these 3,000 odd babies died in this month a year ago it was not by divine will but through human negligence.

And it is the duty of the citizens of New York to prevent as far as in them lies the annual summer massacre of babies.

Baby massacres in London and Paris



Low-res image (text transcribed)

Nearly 3,000 babies died in one month in London during the summer. Paris suffers about a quarter of that figure, with 250 infant deaths per week.

Save the Babies - Text of the advertisement

Brest feeding is a great shield against disease and death.

Sumer diarrhoea among 'bottle-feds' is the main cause of death in infancy. Boil the milk, cooling rapidly and keeping it covered, clean and cool lessens the risk.

Don't wean in hot weather.

Keep baby in fresh cool air day and night..

Safeguard baby don't over coddle or over clothe him.

Don't over feed the baby, feed regularly no more than 6 times in 24

hours whether suckled or bottle-fed.

Strict cleanliness is essential. Never use a dummy or a long-tube feeder. Both carry germs and may cause diarrhoea, adenoids etc. Beware of flies.

If baby is not doing well see a Doctor or Nurse at once. Don't wait until the baby is ill.

It might seem a little obvious to state but feeding infants food which nature

designed to sustain and grow animals from a completely different species is unsuited to humans. In emergency situations where it was not possible to provide infants with breast milk, there was little alternative until relatively recently. Taking milk from another animal, transporting and storing it brings its own problems. Even today, it is recommended that when pasteurised milk is purchased, it should be re-refrigerated within two hours. Unpasteurised milk will begin to spoil (grow pathogenic bacteria) within one hour and will become increasingly deadly to an infant with each passing hour.

As the previous examples show, it took nothing more than hot weather to kill babies in their thousands. A problem as simple as that was enough to despatch infants with underdeveloped immune systems to the next life. It was of course due to the acceleration of bacterial growth in hot weather in the milk. From the 19th century up until quite recently, a number of charities were formed to give clean fresh milk to the poor for infant feeding. The scourge of dirty milk has been forgotten because most of us grew up on clean milk.

Dr Rees said the infant mortality rate since the society was founded in 1911 had decreased from one in 11 to one in 40.

Sister Frances Mary, Little Sisters of the Assumption, Ballyfermot, said few working-class families could claim not to be in need of the society. The plight of the poor families with the free milk scheme was beyond imagination. She praised in particular the work of the sewing guild which provided infant clothing.

Infant Aid Society Dublin - free milk – Irish Independent 1963

The Nuns, Doctors and the public knew the IMR was high

There was no secret about the high mortality rates in Tuam, none whatsoever. It was reported in the newspapers and was attributed to the difficulty of rearing motherless children. This claim has a basis in science. Infant formula (made from powdered milk) is the biggest killer of children even in the 21st century. Today the infant formula makers make all sorts of claims about the nutritional value of their product, and while baby formula has significantly improved over recent decades, it remains a poor substitute for breast milk. It was a vastly inferior substitute in times past but how bad was not then known. While breast is best, a wet nurse's breast milk is second best to the mother's milk, especially in the first two weeks of life. The first fluid produced by the mammary glands is called colostrum, a sticky, yellow fluid that is significantly different from breast milk. Infants who are not fed colostrum are at a significant biological disadvantage and for weaker infants or preterm infants; the disadvantage can

make the difference between life and death.

'Rate of Mortality, - The death in the home since it was opened has been very high, and the committee are inquiring into the matter.

Local newspaper report from the first year of the Home in Glenamaddy 1924

The mortality has been low : a few of the older children died from whooping cough, but, the death rate amongst the infants has been higher than it ought to have been because of the difficulties in rearing motherless babies. Whenever possible, mothers should be sent with their charges. It is a negation of justice that nameless little ones should be sent to a home, whilst the parents go free of responsibility.

High IMR due to the difficulties of rearing motherless babies Local newspaper article 1924

Neonates have very small digestive systems, and colostrum delivers its nutrients in a highly concentrated low-volume form. Most new mothers only produce a mere 40 to 50ml (1.4-1.8 fl oz) in 24 hours. That amount is perfectly matched to the small neonatal stomach and is easily digested. So astoundingly good is colostrum that it has been nicknamed as natural vaccination or liquid gold, but colostrum contains far more than just antibodies. Cytokines are small messenger peptides that control the functioning of the immune system and are found in colostrum they include interleukins, tumour necrosis factor, chemokines and others. Minerals and vitamins like A, E and K are found in higher concentrations than of the later produced breast milk. Growth factors are also present, which stimulate growth or kick start a number of body systems alongside the immune system. Growth factors include insulin-like growth factors, epidermal growth factor, transforming growth factors, fibroblast growth factors, granulocyte-macrophage-stimulating growth factor, platelet-derived growth factor, vascular endothelial growth factor, colony-stimulating factor.

Recent studies have shown that other colostrum components, immunoglobulin and growth factor have a beneficial role in the treatment of autoimmune disorders. These components are now used for the treatment of a wide variety of gastrointestinal conditions, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug-induced gut injury, H pylori infection, immune deficiency related diarrhoea as well as infective diarrhoea. What this adds up to is that our present-day scientific evidence supports the medics of the past, in their conclusion that high

IMRs were due to the difficulties in raising motherless children.

Given what we now know, one might also be astonished to learn that colostrum was once thought to be poisonous to the infant. This was partially due to the high mortality rates of neonates and its yellowish appearance, which caused many to associate it with pus.¹⁹⁶

Stomach/intestinal diseases were a big killer of infants; the terms gastritis, gastroenteritis and enteritis are to be found on many infant death certificates as the cause of death. It seems patently obvious to us that even mildly infected cow's milk or baby formula can have dire consequences for infants but not only was barely known to the medics, but there were also significant arguments and disagreements as to the nature and transmission route of the disease.

In the past, it was not just infants who were at risk of death from what we now consider relatively harmless diseases. It is only in recent times that world medicine has entered the modern era, post-WWII with the entry on to the market of antibiotics. Before antibiotics, the simplest of infections could kill, even the smallest cut, if it became infected could become fatal. Surgery carried an abnormally high risk because there was nothing to treat an infection but hygiene and time. Our sophisticated medical system we enjoy today will go back to the dark ages if antibiotics become outsmarted by ever-evolving bacteria. We seem to be heading back there as the Irish government declared in 2017 a public health emergency to tackle CPE – Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) also described as (CRE) – bacteria which become resistant to all conventionally used antimicrobials. Irish healthcare turned a very significant corner post-WWII, but it was not because of antibiotics as the plans had been made during the war and enacted in 1947, a significant year in the history of Irish health care.

We have encountered Dr James Deeny earlier in this book, the chief medical advisor to the Irish Government from 1944 to 1948 and from 1953 to 1962, (the sojourn was caused by Deeny's relatively mild criticism but entirely warranted, of the new Minister for Health, Dr Noel Browne). Deeny was the team leader who helped guide the revolution in the Irish healthcare sector. There were many good doctors with many good intentions, and many politicians keen to support their work to rid the country of the menace of disease, once and for all. Almost all knowledge of their work has been forgotten. For example, the decision to open regional sanatoria, the design, the locations and treatment regimens had all been taken before Noel Browne arrived at the department, but Ireland being Ireland, and academic history keener on fallacies than truth, has allowed Browne to be credited with achievements which were not his to claim. Irish medical history is deeply indebted to Deeny for writing and publishing his memoir in 1989. It acts as a significant counterbalance to the bad history circulating and tells the real story behind Ireland's high infant mortality rates.

¹⁹⁶ Hinde, 'Colostrum Through a Cultural Lens'.

The Noel Brown story is one of Ireland's most enduring conspiracy theories in a land prone to believing in conspiracy theories.

The Dublin Baby Holocaust

Before Deeny arrived at the department, Dr Con Ward had taken over the old Claremont Protestant Deaf and Dumb Training School and renamed it St. Clare's Hospital. It was exclusively for use as an isolation hospital for children with enteritis. Despite the term isolation hospital, many medics did not believe that enteritis was an infectious disease, and the matter was the subject of considerable and sometimes acrimonious debate. Deeny believed that enteritis was infectious and set about convincing the paediatricians that this was the case, but he had little success. Many factors were at play, and it was difficult to prove its infectious nature conclusively. Also, beliefs based on training and years of experience are not easily changed, and the medical profession held an extraordinary animosity towards government health officials. Dr Bob Collis who had an international reputation as a paediatrician set out to prove the Deeny was wrong, so he removed a child from St. Clare's and admitted it to Harcourt St. He then invited Deeny to attend a meeting at Harcourt St. Hospital and told him what he had done. Deeny said he lost his temper and recollected, 'I called him irresponsible and a potential murderer'. Deeny was great friends with Bob Collis, and in those days, people could have big arguments and remain friends. On another occasion shortly after, Collis told Deeny that the Regina Coeli hostel was in a terrible state, that babies dying there, and the conditions were abominable. It was run by the Legion of Mary, which was founded by a man who was described as a living saint, Frank Duff. The hostel was for unmarried mothers, ex-prostitutes and their children. Unlike many other organisations, the legion had a very progressive view and did not separate mothers from their children. They were not only accommodated by the Legion; it found employment for mothers and educated their children, all in an effort to break the cycle of poverty. Deeny went to inspect the hostel found that the place was clean and in good order. However, he noted that several children were suffering from enteritis. He got Frank Duff to agree to give him a small room where new arrivals were to be kept in quarantine for five days. After that and only if they showed no symptoms of the disease, they were to be allowed to join the hostel's population. The room was equipped with donations from the staff of the Department thanks to a fundraising effort by Miss Howett, Dr Deeny's 'wonderful secretary'. While an eye was being kept on the quarantine, it was noted that most of the girls with children infected with enteritis had come from the Rotunda maternity hospital, Bob Collis' hospital. Deeny went to visit his friend and master of the Rotunda, Ninian Faulkner whom he found in bed suffering from the flu. 'Standing at the end of his bed I denounced him and his paediatrician Collis for spreading disease all over the city and demanded that no child be discharged until it had been examined and that he should clean up the place.'¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Deeny, *To Cure & to Care: Memoirs of a Chief Medical Officer*.

Dublin Corporation was yet another obstacle, which was comprised of the old, and the wise, 'know it alls', West British in outlook, and resentful of any interference from an 'upstart' 'Free State' government department. The Corporation was charged with Public Health, or disease prevention it had appointed the first City Medical Officer in Ireland or Britain, while the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland in Dublin claimed to have awarded the first Diploma in State Medicine in the world. They believed that they were masters of the universe in public health, but the public health record showed it to be terrible. At the turn of the century, under British rule, Dublin had the biggest slums in Europe. The poverty was so bad that many historians contend that had there not been a Rising in 1916, there would have been a socialist rebellion shortly thereafter. In any case, WWII hit the poor of Dublin particularly hard. On several occasions, Deeny visited Dublin City hall and was told not to mince his words by superiors at the department and later recounted he 'tried to cajole, to bully or persuade them into action without success'. In the end, the Minister of Health, Sean McEntee called the Public Health Committee of Dublin Corporation to a meeting and threatened that he would go to the parliament (Dáil) and have them dissolved if they would not carry out the measures indicated by the department. It took a lot of effort and argument to get it into their 'thick heads' that the department officials were not trying to play politics but save the lives of babies. Eventually, they agreed to set up a special unit within the Dublin Corporation Health Department. Staffed round the clock, it provided for the reporting and immediate isolation of an infected child to St. Clare's Hospital and disinfection of the patients, homes. The department paid particular attention to the milk supplied to poor families overseen by the Infant Aid society. The following year deaths were down from 600 to 200 and decreased every year after that.

The first paper on enteritis was published in the Journal of the Irish Medical Association in October 1946. The editor wrote an editorial entitled 'The Lost Town' holocaust of baby deaths from this one disease to the loss of population of an average Irish town.¹⁹⁸

Ireland and the world had many a 'baby holocaust' before Tuam and the world of the 21st century continues to create its very own 'baby holocaust' every year. As we can see here when writing and commenting about infant deaths, the recourse to emotive language is unscientific but irresistible to all including academic writers.

Even with our advanced medicine and scientific knowledge, infants continue to die in frightening numbers. One study in 2010 revealed that 'each year 3.6 million infants are estimated to die in the first 4 weeks of life (neonatal period)—but the majority continue to die at home, uncounted. [...] Three major causes of neonatal deaths (infections, complications of

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

preterm birth and intrapartum-related neonatal deaths or ‘birth asphyxia’) account for more than 80% of all neonatal deaths globally.’¹⁹⁹ The World Health Organisation estimates that for the year 2017, 4.1 million children died under the age of five and that 75% of deaths occurred in the first year of life.²⁰⁰

It must be noted that consultants like Bob Collis and his fellow male and female paediatricians had the best interests of their patients at heart, were brilliant doctors and took no payment from the poor. They lived off their earnings from private patients, and they genuinely believed that enteritis was not infectious because their training and medicine taught them that its classification lay elsewhere. Every scientific debate in history has its winners and losers, and we BIRG and CORF alongside the winners and losers. The upshot is that we have a tendency to turn history into a Hollywood type of a battle between good and evil. The good are the ones who got it right and, in our minds, will promote them to god-like status, and stand beside them deluding ourselves into believing that we share their glory. It writes an awful lot of good people out of history and is a major contributor to false history.

Zero grasp of aetiology and epidemiology

In March 2019, Rockland County, New York banned all children who were unvaccinated against measles from public spaces.²⁰¹ A similar set of events occurred in Italy²⁰² while in May 2019 the ‘German Health Minister Jens Spahn proposed a new law that would see parents fined up to €2,500 (\$2,800) for failing to vaccinate their children against measles. Unvaccinated kids would also be banned from attending kindergartens because they might come in contact with babies who are still too young to receive their first measles shot.’²⁰³ Nineteen years previous, measles was declared eliminated (absence of continuous disease transmission for greater than 12 months) from the United States in 2000.²⁰⁴ The cause of the return of measles is the anti-vaccination movement that gained momentum in what is now called the ‘Lancet MMR autism fraud’ of 1989. An article in the medical journal claimed that there was a link between the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine, colitis and autism spectrum disorders. The paper was authored by Dr Andrew Wakefield and eleven co-authors. The upshot is that a deadly disease, which was nearly eliminated, has made a comeback and is waiting to kill children in the hundreds of thousands. In 2017, the WHO estimated that there were 110,000 measles deaths globally, mainly children under the age of five. In the period from 2000 to 2017, measles vaccines saved an estimated 21.1 million lives.²⁰⁵ These

199 Lawn et al., ‘3.6 Million Neonatal Deaths—What Is Progressing and What Is Not?’

200 ‘Global Health Observatory (GHO) Data’.

201 Alexander, ‘Unvaccinated Children Face Public Ban to Stop Measles’.

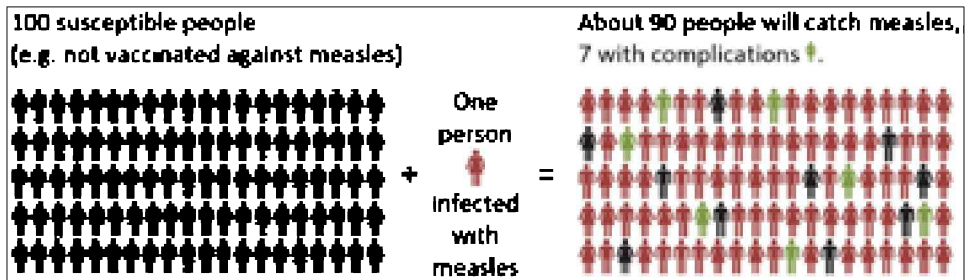
202 Wilson, ‘Italy Bans Unvaccinated Children from Schools after Measles Outbreaks’.

203 Meyer, ‘Heavy Fines and Kindergarten Bans: Measles Vaccination Campaigns Are Escalating in Europe’.

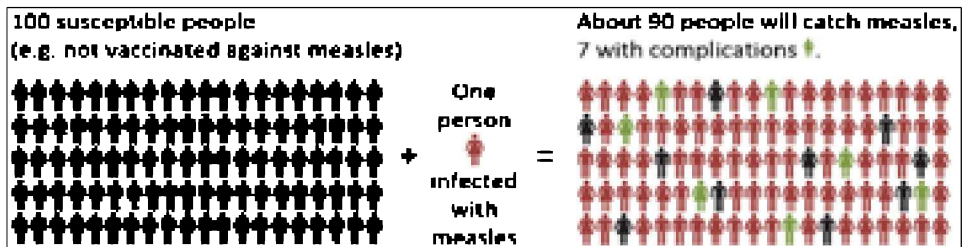
204 ‘Measles | History of Measles | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’.

205 ‘Measles - Key Facts - WHO’.

statistics are essential and highly relevant to the mother and baby home scandal for they expose ineptitude of the various commentators when interpreting medico-statistical data. Out of the 795 death certificates issued to the Tuam Home a mere 14 mention marasmus (1.8%) as a cause of death while measles accounted for 92 deaths (11.56%) while another 56 (7.04%) were due to pertussis or whooping cough. ‘There were 72 deaths from measles in Europe in 2018, compared with 42 in 2017. UNICEF says the disease is more contagious than Ebola, tuberculosis or influenza’.²⁰⁶ While it might appear that isolation/quarantine a solution to stop its spread, it is not as effective as one might be inclined to think.



If one person with measles enters a room of 100 unprotected persons, 90 will catch the measles.²⁰⁷ Unprotected persons are unvaccinated persons. The virus can stay in a room for up to two hours after an infected person has left. Not only that, but its most infectious period is also four days before the skin rash onset and for four days after. A person can have measles and not know it, and the only effective prevention method is vaccination. Measles 90% infection rate



Pertussis is also a highly infectious disease. If an infant who is not immunised and comes into contact with someone who has pertussis, it is very likely that they will catch the disease, as this diagram shows:²⁰⁸ Many babies who get pertussis today are infected by older siblings, parents, or caregivers who might not even know they have the disease.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Burnhill, ‘Number of Measles Deaths in EU on the Rise’.

²⁰⁷ ‘Measels | Vaccine Knowledge’.

²⁰⁸ ‘Pertussis (Whooping Cough) | Vaccine Knowledge’.

²⁰⁹ ‘Content Source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, Division of Bacterial Diseases’.

‘Before a [pertussis] vaccine was introduced in the 1950s, the average number of suspected cases in England and Wales was over 100,000 each year, and in some years over 2000 people died from pertussis. By 1972, when over 80% of children were vaccinated, this had fallen to 2069 suspected cases and 2 deaths.’ *Source: Centre for Clinical Vaccinology and Tropical Medicine, Churchill Hospital, University of Oxford, OX3 7LE*

Because diseases can be passed on to others before the person suffering from it can know they are sick, isolation is not effective as a preventive measure against the spread of the diseases like measles. The present-day policies attempting to isolate unvaccinated persons has more to do with getting a message across to the public about the necessity to vaccinate than disease prevention. The only sure-fire way to prevent children from dying from measles is to vaccinate the entire population.

According to Prof Denis Gill, a consultant paediatric nephrologist and chairperson of the [Irish] National Immunisation Advisory Committee 2010 - 2011, the facts are simple.

‘If you have 100% vaccine uptake, you get disease eradication. If you have 90-95% uptake, you get disease elimination. Greater than 80% uptake gives you disease control, but less than 70% uptake means that outbreaks and mini-epidemics are possible,’ he tells Irishhealth.com.

He points out that in the mid-1940s in Ireland, about 500 children died every year of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, tuberculosis and polio. Today’s death rate figure for these illnesses is zero.

The table below outlines when vaccines were introduced into the Irish Schedule.

Vaccine	Date introduced in Ireland
BCG	1937
Diphtheria and Tetanus (2 in 1)	1930s
Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (whooping cough) (3 in 1)	1952
Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV)	1957
Rubella	1971
Measles	1985
Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)	1988

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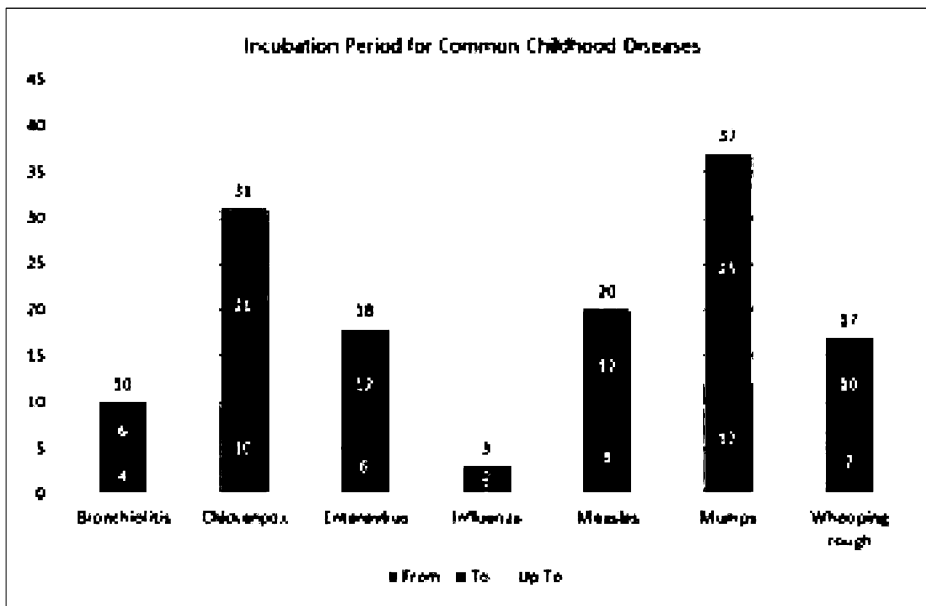
According to the Irish Health Service executive they only started using a

210 ‘Previous Vaccine Schedules’.

measles vaccine in 1985.

There is one other important point to make. The Tuam Children's Home was a refuge for women and their families, and many people transited through the home. As the next chart shows many women and children could be asymptomatic. The incubation period for many diseases can be over 30 days like chickenpox and mumps. Accordingly, five days in isolation is insufficient time for the symptoms of most diseases apart from influenza to appear.

Notably, the final report of the commission of investigation into mother and baby homes was made public in January 2021. It was at a time when the country was in full lockdown to an effort to try and halt the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Schools, shops, business, factories, construction and all non-essential business, were closed. People were told to work from home, and those who could not work were put on a pandemic unemployment payment. Despite the implementation of a full-blown emergency, the virus continued to spread.



*Time in days from becoming infected to showing symptoms of disease.
It can take as long as 37 days for the symptoms
of Mumps to show after infection.*

Earlier, we looked at the events and debate surrounding enteritis in Dublin to find that most paediatricians and the public health authorities, did not believe that the disease was infectious. Even though some physicians thought it was, the evidence supporting their position had not yet been proven conclusively. The net result was that infants continued to die in high numbers, which did not end until someone either proved it beyond all doubt or had the gumption, political skill to force people to try something new. Unfortunately, inaction

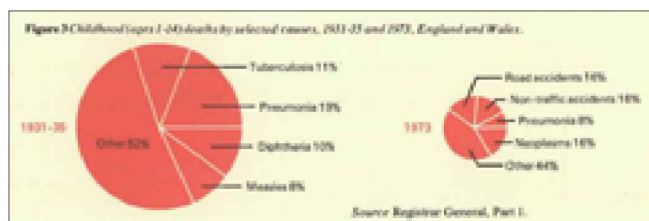
or paralysis by analysis as it has become known remains a significant feature of intellectual discourse and happens worldwide. I cannot emphasize enough how quick we are to judge the medics of the past, magically thinking that once a theory has been posited, everyone should have switched to it because it subsequently turned out to be correct. We today are no better; the people of the future will judge us as backward with a lot more justification than we can muster. For today, we have unprecedented easy access to quality information through the internet, yet we chose not to bother looking it up. The human mind is a natural cognitive miser, and it is far easier to follow the flock and take the flock's opinion for one's own.

We have been here before, we have had lockdowns, including forcible confinement of disease sufferers, and yet, despite the enormous advances in medicine over the last 70 years, we are forced to use the exact same disease control strategy that was used a century ago.

Despite our natural tendency to misinterpret the past, it nonetheless begs the question; is it morally justified for us, resplendent in the benefit of hindsight, to accuse the medics of the past of murder for being unable to cure incurable diseases and for not being able to go against their training and intuition?

Medical section – conclusion - the big question...

Is it morally justified or is it fair to accuse people of murder for being unable to cure diseases, which at that time were incurable and their spread unpreventable?



Medical advances have caused not only reduced the amount of child deaths but the causes of death in childhood have also change²¹¹

²¹¹ 'OHE Briefing No. 3 Infant and Child Health'.

Economics and Poverty – influence on health

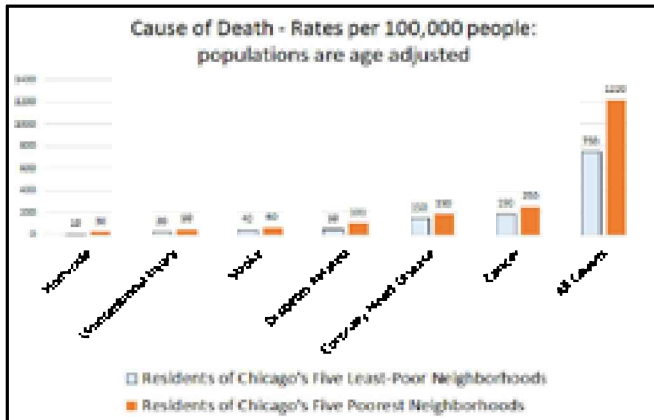
WASHINGTON'S POOREST INFANTS ARE TEN TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DIE THAN RICHEST.

Headline from Newsweek magazine 4 May 2015

How much of an effect would you think poverty has even today on life expectancy, infant mortality rates? An article in the American Newsweek magazine from 2015 reports that Washington's poorest infants are 10 times more likely to die than infants born to the richest parents. What is surprising about this article is that even today, it seems to come as a shock to learn that poverty still impacts the lives of people.

Comparison of life expectancy rates in present-day Chicago →

All over the world where poverty is present, it is comorbid with high infant mortality rates and maternal mortality rates and low life expectancy. It is not just infants who are at risk from poverty. Research into the causes and number of deaths in Chicago shows a significant divide between its five richest and five poorest neighbourhoods as can be seen on the next graphic.



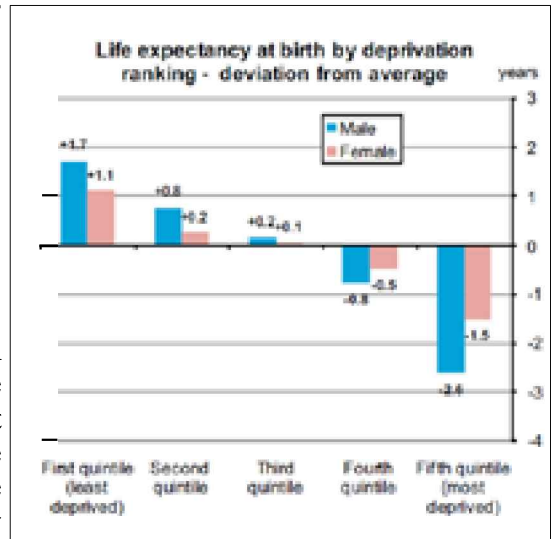
I cite these American examples to demonstrate that there is a poverty health penalty even in the world's wealthiest country. The same penalty can be found in present-day affluent Ireland. This graph at the start of the next page is from the government's Central Statistics Office shows that life expectancy is highest amongst the most affluent, declining proportionally by social status. In comparison to the wealthiest, poor men live on average 4.3 years less, while women live 2.6 years less.

Henrietta H Fore, UNICEF's executive director in 2018 tells us that looking 12 years forward, 56 million poor children will die:

'While we have more than halved the number of deaths among children under the age of five in the last quarter century, we have not made similar progress in ending deaths among children less than one month old [...] Given that the majority of these deaths are preventable, clearly, we are

failing the world's poorest babies.' Saving the lives of children under one year remains challenging, particularly in the developing world. A UNICEF study report released in 2018 stated that 'improving the survival chances of new-borns, children and young adolescents remains an urgent challenge. On current trends, 56 million children under age 5 will die from 2018 to 2030, half of them newborns. [...] while children from poorer households in low-and-middle-income countries remain disproportionately vulnerable to early death – under-five mortality rates are, on average, twice as high for the poorest households compared to the richest.'²¹²

*Mortality Differentials in Ireland.
Analysis based on the census
characteristics of persons
who died in the twelve-month
period after Census Day 23
April 2006 -Source CSO →*



As we see in the next graph from present-day Ireland, 72.5% of the net wealth is held by 20% (last two deciles added together) of the people while the bottom 20% have a meagre 0.4%.²¹³ As Ireland now enjoys one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world, it might appear at first glance that poverty has little to do with high IMRs. The Irish poor are extremely poor compared to the rich, but 60% of the people share a mere 10% of the country's net wealth. However, as we have seen, even in very wealthy countries when the poor are studied separately on the health outcomes, the data is unambiguous. There is, however, an argument founded more on political ideologies and racial prejudices than science, which holds that poverty is not the cause of poor health outcomes or high IMRs. Such arguments are particularly common in America where the high IMRs are prevalent in the non-white population, and some argue that genetic factors are at play. Thus, nature rather than nurture is at fault.

For the last century and a half, thanks to our incremental and increasing knowledge of disease aetiology, the relationship between high IMR and poverty has long been studied and debated. Studying poverty involves diving into the dismal science realm, and we find that some economists are not behind the bush when making reckless claims about mother and baby homes.

²¹² UNICEF, 'Levels and Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2018'.

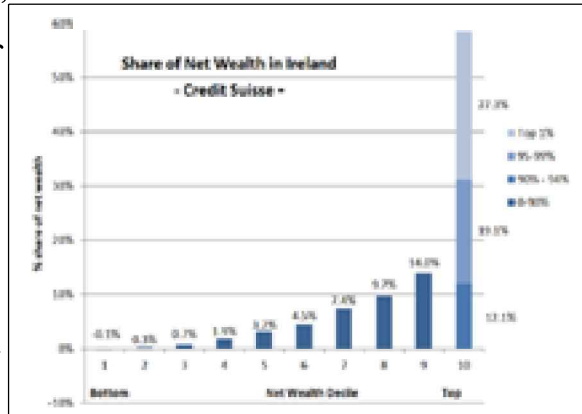
²¹³ Staunton, 'The Distribution of Wealth in Ireland'.

The most Dismal of Academic Disciplines

Economics is known to one and all as the dismal science because it uses mathematical calculations to predict human behaviour concerning finances. Therein lies its fundamental flaw which accounts for the plethora of failures of economic theory. When an economic theory fails, academia simply moves on to another as quickly as fashion changes. All theories are required to have some ability to predict the future, and we have witnessed over time the failure of economic theory in this regard, has not only failed but failed dismally, hence the moniker of ‘the dismal science’.

*Credit Suisse Global
Wealth Report 2014* →

One paper from 2009 entitled, the Financial Crisis and the Systemic Failure of Academic Economics stated: ‘in our hour of greatest need societies around the world are left to grope in the dark without a theory. That, to us, is a systemic failure of the economics profession.’²¹⁴ While that is true, its failure was much more severe than not being able to guide society out of the recession, for the profession’s dismal failures were a significant contributor to the financial meltdown. David X. Li wrote a mathematical formula that was called Gaussian Copula. It was described by Felix Salmon thus:



...an unambiguously positive breakthrough, a piece of financial technology that allowed hugely complex risks to be modelled with more ease and accuracy than ever before. With his brilliant spark of mathematical legerdemain, Li made it possible for traders to sell vast quantities of new securities, expanding financial markets to unimaginable levels.²¹⁵

Salmon’s article is entitled ‘Recipe for Disaster: The Formula That Killed Wall Street’. That says it all; most economists are mere number crunchers guided by the latest fad in mathematical formulas. That is the key; they are mathematicians or people with a quixotic view of the power of maths and are unwilling to countenance that mathematics is absolutely useless in certain areas of human endeavour mathematics. Furthermore, the discipline promotes a very narrow blinkered worldview, which is necessary to simplify reality’s complexity. The result is that significant variables are often missed alongside the supporting theory’s flaws, which tend to be ignored completely. Economics is littered with theories and models that have gone out of fashion. When the theories and

²¹⁴ Colander et al., ‘The Financial Crisis and the Systemic Failure of Academic Economics’.

²¹⁵ Salmon, ‘Recipe for Disaster’.

models fail, the academics move on to new theories and sell governments the same pup dressed up in a new doggy suit. In the aftermath of the international financial meltdown, economists were left with very little to do, so the dismal science has put its grubby claws on history. One could take the cynical view that they saw it as a vehicle to deflect attention away from their own deficiencies. In Ireland, the clurichauns dominate, even in the dismal sciences and we have to endure some pretty outrageous claims like the one that in the early part of the 20th century we were all wealthy. Irish GDP per capita was indeed higher than France and Italy but some Irish economists, like David McWilliams, have decided to announce that the country was a wealthy country, especially around the time of independence. (A major fallacy of clurichaun syndrome.) Not only is this argument missing a number of important variables, but it is also reliant on several false assumptions, which oddly enough, economics students are taught are valid assumptions. The most egregious of all false assumptions in economics is that mistaken belief that GDP per capita is a measure of individual financial wellbeing. We can easily extrapolate from this newspaper headline below, that economists appear to be the slowest of slow learners, for it has taken the economics profession, from its foundation to now, to realise that much of their work has been based on a fundamental mistake. It was only in 2016, at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland that the International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagard, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and MIT professor Erik Brynjolfsson, agreed that **GDP is not a measure of welfare**, it is not a measure of how well we are all doing. Stiglitz said: ‘What we measure informs what we do and if we’re measuring the wrong thing, we’re going to do the wrong thing.’

WHY GDP FAILS AS A MEASURE OF WELL-BEING

CBS News - Moneywatch

Headline by Mark Thoma - January 27th, 2016

The three economists decreed that we urgently need to find a new measure. However, we have yet to witness the rush. The upshot is that we can safely discard any academic papers/articles, which claim that Irish people were relatively wealthy using GDP Per capita or GNP per capita for that matter. There is a way that seems to have escaped even the minds of Nobel Prize-winning economists, which is to factor in wealth distribution.

Some of you may have heard of the Pareto principle, otherwise known as the 80 – 20 rule. It holds that approximately 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. It arises from the work of a 19th-century Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto who showed that 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the people. Most economies show a similar tendency, with 80% of the wealth being controlled by 20% of the people. Recently in the UK, often attributed to

quantitative easing (printing of extra money), that figure had gone to 90-10, so now 90% of the wealth is controlled by a mere 10% of the people.

In 1931 a staggering 81% of the population of Ireland had no measurable wealth.

1% controlled 59% of the nation's wealth

The legacy of colonial rule did not disappear overnight.

Income per Person in 1938 Dollars				
Country	1938	Country	1938	Country
United Kingdom	376	Switzerland	453	Sweden
Switzerland	367	Sweden	413	United Kingdom
Sweden	367	United Kingdom	363	Switzerland
Germany	367	Denmark	276	Norway
Netherlands	328	Belgium	275	France
Denmark	319	Norway	248	Ireland
Belgium	275	Ireland	247	Netherlands
Norway	275	Netherlands	219	Belgium
Ireland	252	France	207	Czechoslovakia
France	236	Czechoslovakia	165	Poland
Austria	179	Finland	153	Germany
Finland	178	Germany	125	Denmark
Czechoslovakia	176	Poland	114	Hungary
Italy	177	Italy	100	Finland
Hungary	112	Austria	96	Italy
Poland	104	Hungary	82	Austria
Greece	30	Other	79	Greece
Other	72	Greece	58	Bulgaria
Bulgaria	60	Bulgaria	51	Other

Source: United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, Research and Planning Division, Economic Survey of Europe 1948 (Geneva); United Nations Department of Economic Affairs 1949.

Source: United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, Research and Planning Division, Economic Survey of Europe 1948 (Geneva: United Nations Department of Economic Affairs, 1948).

GDP per capita figures can be misleading. Ireland ranks well on this chart but it shows the effect of war on various economies but is not an indicator of the citizen's well being.

Figures I found for 1931 show that a staggering 81% of the Irish population had no measurable wealth, i.e., no assets. Perhaps even more astonishing is that a mere 1% of the population had 59% of the wealth, leaving 41% divided out between 18% of the people. I would particularly like to take our TV economist David McWilliams aside, as an ordinary Joe soap, and teach him some basic economics. He might reassess his claim that Ireland was a wealthy country before independence. McWilliams believes and promotes the fallacy that the Irish were not able to run the country as well as the British, a common credo of the Union Jackeens. McWilliams has been unable to rise above the prejudices of the society in which he grew up. Consequently, his writings, broadcasts, and pronouncements from the most dismal academic discipline's pulpit were all born as flatulence on a Dublin Jackeen barstool.

The opinion of another economist, Prof Delaney who stuck his nose into the mother and baby homes scandal appeared under the headline: 'Tuam deaths need further investigation, says academic expert'.

Delaney said the significantly higher infant mortality rate could not explain the rate of death at the mother and baby home in Tuam among children born out of wedlock.

‘This points to something serious within these institutions,’ he said. ‘Catherine Corless’s work points to the need for further investigation of these homes.’

He cited a statement made in the Oireachtas [Houses of Parliament] by Dr Conn Ward in 1934 who was parliamentary secretary to the minister for local government and public health, equivalent of a minister of State today.

‘These arrangements are often made or connived at by those who carry on the poorer class of maternity homes and the results to the child can be read in the mortality rates.’

‘If a lump sum is paid or if the periodical payment lapses, the child becomes an encumbrance on the foster mother, who has no interest in keeping it alive.’²¹⁶

Prof Delaney is an economist and is quite obviously no expert on history. Delaney does not even bother with paltering but goes straight to take a historic quote out of context. Dr Ward was not referring to institutional mother and baby homes; he was talking about baby farmers. The women who took a baby or babies into their own homes and looked after it/them for a fee, usually paid by the biological mother or her family and sometimes the father. These baby farmers could be ruthless, and if the fees were not paid, the child would often be neglected, left to starve or be murdered.

Delaney went on to state that the rate of death cannot be explained, but he and others do not have the figures to explain the rate of death. Every social historian knows that the 1947 Health Act was a game-changer in Irish healthcare history except Delaney. Perhaps he decided to call himself an expert because of a bit of number crunching he did with historical Irish financial data and married it with social suppositions rather than evidence in a paper he co-authored entitled: *From Angela’s Ashes to the Celtic Tiger: Early Life Conditions and Adult Health in Ireland*

One of the paper’s conclusions finds that poverty was a contributing factor

There is also evidence that individuals from lower socioeconomic groups are more at risk from poor early life conditions, with marginal effects twice as large for those at the bottom of the education distribution compared to the top.

A few paragraphs further into the conclusion lies an apparent contradiction of

216 McGreevy, ‘Tuam Deaths Need Further Investigation, Says Academic Expert’.

the above.

Some other competing explanations are unlikely to be the real mechanism behind improvements in Irish infant health in the 1940s. A time series analysis suggests that there is no evidence of a relationship between either national gross domestic product per capita or real wages and infant mortality. At a regional level, Table 2 demonstrates that there was no relationship between county unemployment rates and infant mortality in 1946. Furthermore, environmental factors such as rainfall did not exhibit any permanent change and do not match well the regional-temporal features of the mortality reductions. Birth rates did increase slightly during WWII, in part due to changes in registration legislation. However, this occurred too early to explain the fall in infant mortality after 1947²¹⁷

Astounding as it may seem and to prove, or at least posit a big hint, they are saying that the high infant mortality rate for illegitimate children cannot be explained by economics; accordingly, something clandestine must be causing it, like murder, etc. Deciphering the above paragraph into more understandable language: what they are saying is that there is no mathematical relationship between GDP per capita, real wages, unemployment and Infant Mortality Rates. They use the assumption, without any challenge, that GDP per capita is a measure of individual wealth and wellbeing. Moreover, they performed no test to see how inadequate the wages were and did not realise that unemployment statistics provide next to useless figures in a non-industrialised society. Even more significant is their investigation's narrow focus, which caused the authors to leave unexamined other critical social factors like emigration, which was stagnant during the war years but resumed with vigour after the war due to rebuilding in Britain. The high-risk classes, mainly the poor, left in droves seeking work abroad and were not factored into the analysis of declining mortality and instances of disease. In high demand was unskilled labour and Ireland was able to supply it in abundance but also there were many other factors coincident with the 1947 Health Act, which was not factored in either. There was no mention, even in passing, of wealth distribution thus, proving beyond all reasonable doubt in my mind, that economists should not be let near history and that the entire discipline should be confined to the on campus funny farm.

The leading cause of high Infant Mortality Rates

There is no doubt whatsoever, proven in the statistics for well over a century, that infants are extremely vulnerable to death and that the risk is vastly increased in the neonatal period. In countries where similar conditions of poverty prevail, which once existed in Ireland until the second half of the 20th century, we find similarly high infant mortality rates. The Tuam Children's Home was tasked

²¹⁷ Delaney, McGovern, and Smith, 'From Angela's Ashes to the Celtic Tiger: Early Life Conditions and Adult Health in Ireland'.

with the almost impossible task of caring for the poorest of the poor, in the most impoverished region of the country.

Economists like the rest of us are not immune from a buffoonish interpretation of statistics. We seem to have a natural tendency to equate high mortality rates with poor quality care. Thus, when we discover a particular institution with high mortality rates, we assume that it is a poor-quality facility. The corollary is that we perceive private hospitals with lower mortality rates of being of superior quality. Those who can afford it are willing to spend large sums on health insurance to ensure that they get the best care possible care. However, in reality, the standard of care in some private hospitals is much worse than in public hospitals, and it varies from institution to institution. This British study shows one aspect of what is behind the mortality rates.

Unexpected deaths and serious injuries in private hospitals

- Between October 2010 and April 2014, 802 unexpected deaths and 921 serious injuries were reported by private hospitals. Because of the limited reporting requirements for private hospitals we are unable to state whether these deaths and injuries should be a cause for concern. We do know that compared to NHS hospitals, private hospitals mainly treat patients who are 'low risk' patients – those who are less likely to develop complications following surgery.

Source: Prof Colin Leys and Prof Brian Toft. Safety in private hospitals—the known and the unknown risks. - Centre for Health and the Public Interest. Patient August 2014

Private health care facilities deal with low-risk individuals while the public hospitals deal with all risk categories and the institutions dealing with the poor, care for the highest risk individuals in the entire system. All such health care institutions have higher mortality rates and there is nothing unusual about that. The objective of medico-statistical research is to highlight and categorise problem areas to stimulate debate and thinking concerning finding and proposing possible solutions. For this very reason, a separate classification was created to report the number of deaths of illegitimate infants. That precept underlies research to this very day, so a comparison between today's figures with those of yesteryear makes for interesting reading, especially concerning what has improved and what continues to be resistant to change.

Comparing the past with the present

It may come as a surprise to learn that in one seven-year period from 2010-2016, thirty-nine children in the care of the Irish state took their own lives, six others were murdered and sixteen died in road traffic accidents. Even in

this day and age, looking after children is not as easy as we are inclined to think. Certainly, perfection does not exist, and yet we expect perfection to have existed in the past even though we know that times were very different economically, medically and socially.

Cause of Death Summary 2010-2016									
Cause of Death	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total All years Cause of Death	% of Total
Natural Causes	6	8	7	7	8	11	10	57	38.26%
Suicide	4	3	9	4	8	6	5	39	26.17%
Road Traffic Accident	4	1	2	0	5	1	9	16	10.74%
Other Accident	2	1	4	1	1	1	4	14	9.40%
Drug Overdose	4	2	0	1	1	0	2	10	6.71%
Homicide	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	6	4.03%
Unknown	0	0	0	4	1	2	0	7	4.70%
Totals	22	15	23	17	26	21	25	149	100.00%

Statistical overview of all deaths notified of children in care between 2010 and 2016 - National Review Panel, Annual Report 2016

Today and despite having an advanced free healthcare system, the UK has one of the world's worst child mortality rates. Six thousand children and young people die every year, of which two-thirds are under the age of five, and the majority under the age of one year. The death rate for under-fives is 25% higher than in most of Europe. One research project published in 2014 by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health published entitled - 'Why Children Die' concluded that risk of child death disproportionately affects poorer families.²¹⁸

Northern Europe's 5 poorest areas all are within Britain – BBC Newsnight May 8th, 2019 →



The richest area in Northern Europe is inner London, but the five poorest regions of northern Europe are all within Britain. British society is one of the most unequal societies in the world, and the gap between the rich and poor continues to grow. Comparing child mortality rates of today with the past reveals that a significant improvement has occurred, which is entirely due to improvements in medical treatments. In terms of child deaths, a higher

²¹⁸ Wolfe, 'Why the UK Has a High Child Death Rate'.

proportion of deaths was borne by the infants (under one-year-old), which was also the case in the past. However, the underlying cause of needless child deaths, poverty, remains a problem even in the advanced economies, and because that problem remains unsolved today, it could not have been solved in the past. That is a crucial point which any competent statistician could have used to question the current reinterpretation of historical Irish health statistics. The critical ingredient causing high mortality rates has been ignored. The wealth inequalities, which skew the statistics, have been allowed to stand without any correction to promote a clurichaun agenda. Unbiased researchers, interested in humanity's good, make allowances for extraneous factors, which can influence datasets and factor them into their analysis before drawing conclusions. Joined up thinking appears to be another problem for economists and academics.

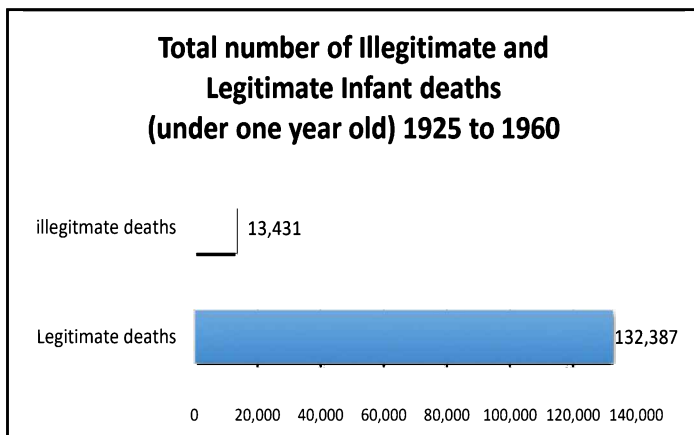
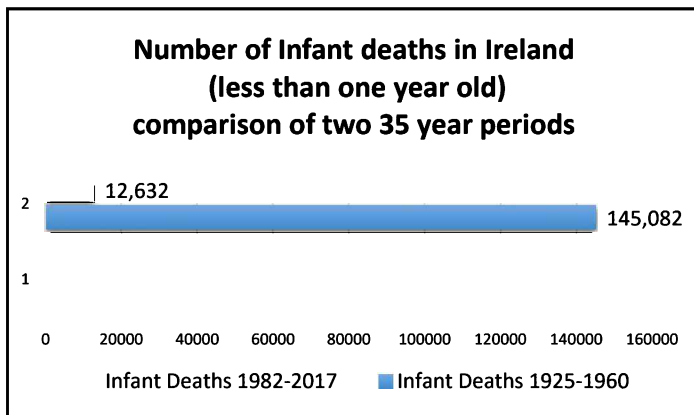
In comparing today with the past, I have a simple test, a question that I put in conversation to people, including academics, which is 'how was the problem of unwanted children solved?' It is a much more difficult question than one might think, and invariably no one can answer it. Not surprisingly, even though it is the fundamental question in the history of child protection, it is a question that does not appear in the Irish academic literature nor indeed in the media and elsewhere.

The answer to the question reveals the hypocrisy, fraudulence and ignorance of a generation, which seeks to validate its illusory superiority by sneering at and casting slurs on the people of the past. Unlike their predecessors, today's generations have produced unprecedented quantities of unwanted children that were hidden in plain sight using statistical classification.

To reveal the answer let us compare the statistics for the 36-year period from 1925 to 1960 (inclusive) when the Tuam Children's Home was open to a recent 36-year period from 1982 to 2017 (inclusive).

Pause and have a look at these four graphs.





The number of births between the two 36-year similar periods is remarkably similar with a figure of close to 2.2 million. Points of note, a mere 12,632 infants died in the 1982 to 2017 period representing a massive drop from the

145,818 infant deaths in the earlier period. This means that 4,166 babies died on average each year in which the Tuam Children's Home was open. That figure has dropped in recent decades to an average of 361 infant deaths per year or to put it another way, a drop of 1154%. This is in line with the decrease in infant mortality, which has taken place over the developed world. Still, it should be noted that the drop in infant mortality rates in Ireland lagged behind the rest due by a few years due to the continuing economic deprivation. Thankfully, the issues have been reversed, and now Ireland enjoys one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world.

There were 64,290 illegitimate children born in Ireland between 1925 and 1960 of which 13,431 children died. They were joined in death by 132,387 legitimate children bringing the total to 145,818. The pie chart shows how tiny the proportion of illegitimate children's deaths were compared to legitimate children. Nearly all of these infants and children died from congenital disabilities and diseases, which could not be inoculated against and/or were then incurable at that time. It can be seen that proportionality in the infant mortality rate has been seized by the clurichauns but fails to show the true picture.

It is difficult to put a figure on the 1925-60 statistics, but it is fair to say about one third to a half of the 64,290 illegitimate births, which belong in this period, can be categorised as unwanted children. In contrast, we can put a minimum figure for the 1982-2017 period, which is 181,434, an increase of 282%. This total figure includes 15,094 adoptions. That figure might be surprising in light of the rising use of contraceptives, but studies from all over the world report similar findings to this one in Finland. It found that only 25% of the women seeking abortions were not using contraception.

Furthermore, 93% claimed to have adequate knowledge of contraception.²¹⁹ It comes as a surprise to me to learn that three-quarters of abortions are due to contraception failure. Interestingly, the study claimed that only 11.5% of women used a 'reliable' method of contraception, which the authors define as the pill and the IUD. For all the talk about safe sex and condoms, it turns out an unreliable method of fertility control due to 'breakages' and 'slipping off'. The corollary is to ask how effective are they as a disease control device.

At last, we have arrived at the big reveal; the clurichauns have the audacity and temerity to accuse women who did their best to look after unwanted children of perpetrating a holocaust, while the latest generations of Irish women sent at least 173,263 unwanted children up the abortion clinic chimney, from 1980 to 2017. The abortion figure for 1982-2017 is 166,340, compare the staggering number of deaths to the loss of 13,431 souls for the 1925-60 period. Statistical proof that there is no question as to what period the 'baby holocaust' belongs. Furthermore, the problem of unwanted children was solved by abortion, and safe abortions were not available to women until the 1960s—even today c.

219 Savonius et al., 'Reasons for Pregnancy Termination'.

500,000 women die each year in pregnancy and childbirth worldwide, of which 100,000-200,000 are estimated to result from a poorly performed abortion.²²⁰ Accordingly, any sensible woman before the 1960s in a crisis pregnancy had no option but to go ahead and have her baby. She could do that in comfort and safety in a properly licensed maternity home, free of charge and emerged with her reputation intact, to start a new life. That was the intention, and that is the reality of Ireland's mother and baby homes.

Classifying unwanted children as an abortion allows the propagandists to pull a stunt on the statisticians. If we were to count the numbers of abortions and include them under the category of 'unwanted children', we would be better equipped to compare and contrast our time with times past and draw valid conclusions.

If the c. 200k Irish children who were aborted had been born and then killed after birth it would be classified as a crime against humanity. Nowadays aborting a child is classified in some circles as a human right. There are merits and demerits on both sides in this most divisive and emotive of debates. Still, I have no desire to go into it here, other than to say both the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches not only accept the principle of the inviolability of human life but have it at their core. Accordingly, not one abortion clinic or baby disposal service was run by any Christian church in history. That belongs to the imagination of the excitable and gullible Irish. Moreover, in Ireland's first year of legal abortion, we know that Irish women disposed of a minimum of 6,666 unwanted children. If abortion was not available, there would still be a need for mother and baby homes.

Finally, I would like to present succinctly the definitive evidence demonstrating that Irish universities and other education establishments are incapable of teaching or using critical thinking skills. The evidence is also robust in declaring that those involved in the attacks on Christianity are ignorant of science, medicine, sociology, history ad inf, and are incapable of joined-up thinking. The commission of investigation has also fallen into this trap which we will see in the final chapter.

All the scandal propagators and the gullible, who think that high infant mortality rates are evidence of substandard care, and when statistics show that mortality rates are multiples of other statistical rates, they are taken to be even more substantial evidence of abuse. Suppose that is the case, and today's statistics show that the 'infant mortality rates for Traveller children are multiples (3.6 times) that of the general population'.²²¹ We are forced to accuse the Travellers of providing poor quality care to their children. Hold on a minute, if the travellers are guilty, so too are unmarried mothers in England. Their health statistics show that high infant mortality rates still exist for illegitimate children

²²⁰ Kwast, 'Abortion'.

²²¹ The Children's Rights Alliance, Dublin, 25th February 2014

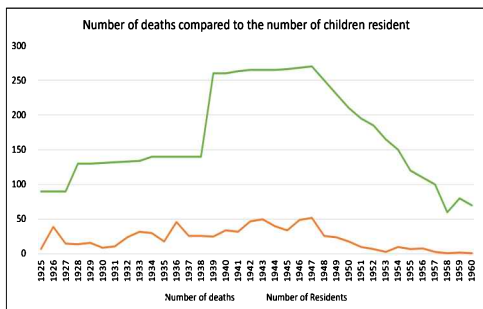
in the 21st century and are therefore bound by their logic to accuse unmarried mothers of providing poor quality care to their infants. Such thinking dictates that every woman in the world stands accused of abuse, where high infant mortality rates are found.

While there can be a causal relationship between high infant mortality rates and poor-quality care, it cannot be inferred without investigating other possible causes. They teach students at university that ‘correlation does not imply causation’, but that language apparently is too fancy for Irish students to be able to learn or their lecturers to understand.

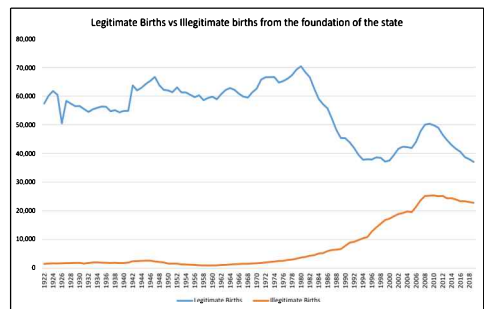
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Mortality Statistics

Visually putting Tuam Children's Home in perspective

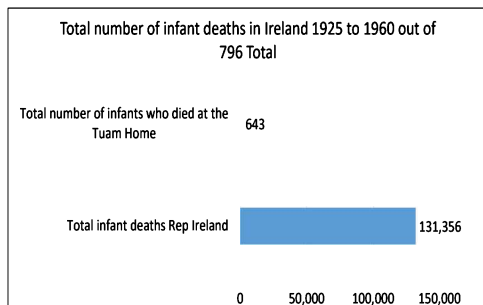


The total number of deaths per year overlaid with Brian Nugent's estimates of the number of residents at the Tuam Children's Home

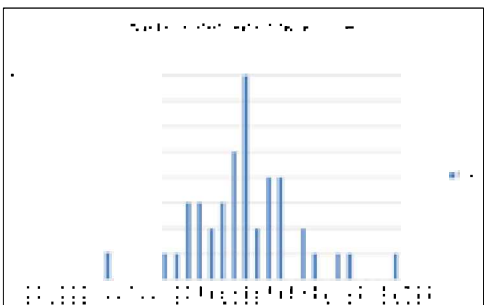


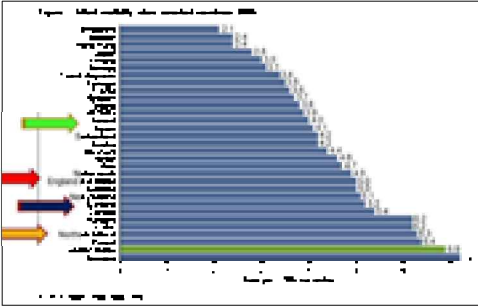
The rising number of births outside marriage compared those within marriage.

In the first graph the rise in the number of deaths during the war corresponds almost directly with the rise in the number of residents. A rise in the number of deaths is not a rise in death rates. Note on the Tuam graph that overcrowding is often cited as the primary reason for high mortality rates but despite a huge rise in the number of residents the number of deaths remained stable. Thus yielding a drop in infant mortality rates.

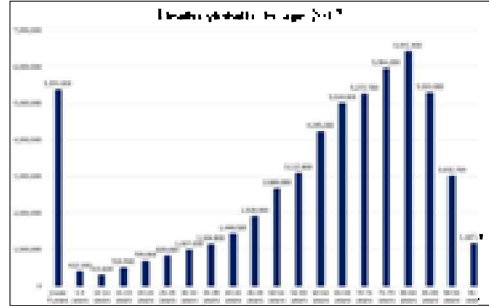


Infant deaths as a proportion of the total infant deaths.





Today, Ireland has moved far ahead of its neighbours

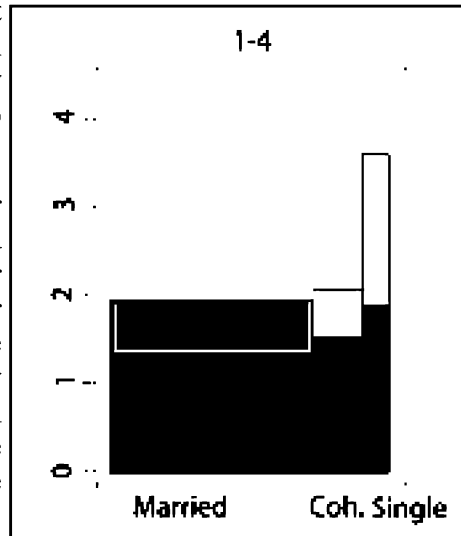


The number of deaths which occur to children under five years old exceeds the total for those who die between the age of 70 and 74.

Above mortality statistics, world total 2017. Note the high mortality of children under five years of age is still with us today. Source: Our World in Data - Child & Infant Mortality by Max Roser, Hannah Ritchie and Bernadeta Dadonaite

This study from Finland shows that the mortality rates for children born unmarried mothers are at significantly higher than for those who were born to married and cohabiting parents.

The graph shows the mortality rates (per 10000 person-years) by family type and age at death, Finland, 1990–2004 for children aged one to four. The lighter area of the bars represents mortality due to diseases and the darker area mortality due to accidents and violence. The width of the bars is directly proportional to the distribution of family type in each age group. (Hanna Remes et al)



7. CONFABULATION, FALSE MEMORIES AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES'

This chapter title is taken from a headline, which appeared in a 2016 broadsheet.ie article summing up Judge Maureen Harding Clarke's words who was the independent assessor for the surgical symphysiotomy ex gratia payment scheme, acting on behalf of the Irish Minister for Health. The scheme was set up to compensate women who underwent the surgical procedure of symphysiotomy, which involved cutting the cartilage of the pubic joint. It was performed by maternity surgeons on women who had suffered a difficult or obstructed birth and was intended to make subsequent deliveries less difficult by effectively widening the birth canal. In recent years, it has been claimed that the procedure could, for some women, leave long-term effects like pain and disability. The government decided to compensate all women who had the procedure performed on them, pricing compensation in terms of severity of symptoms. It turns out that nearly a third of applicants did not have a symphysiotomy at all. Unlike nearly all other tribunals of investigation, Judge Clarke had the advantage of being able to view physical evidence. One section of her report reads:

Very considerable efforts were taken to thoroughly and fairly examine all applications. Particular difficulties arose in a number of cases where the applicants were firmly convinced that they had undergone either symphysiotomy or pubiotomy and were unwilling to accept the truth of the content of their medical records. Conspiracy theories were not uncommon. Usually, the issue was set to rest following gynaecological and radiology examination; sometimes several such examinations were necessary.

Given the climate of mass hysteria Judge Clarke was brave enough to state, what most politicians fear to express in public. Financial compensation was influential as the driver of confabulation, false memories and conspiracy theories.

...After much thought, I concluded that it is very probable that the combination of a traumatic birth experience and exposure to other women's stories has created a self convincing confabulation of personal history. Another inference is that the possibility of financial payment has influenced suggestible women and their family members into self-serving adoption and embracing of the experiences described by others or in the media and created psychosomatic conditions.

And later went to hit the nail on the head.

...As previously mentioned, the history of symphysiotomy in Ireland was very fully explored by Professor [Oonagh] Walsh. To a great extent, her scholarly report has been ignored by sections of the media who appear to prefer the more lurid and unfounded accounts projected by some activists and bloggers. I am therefore not sanguine that there will be any change in the manner of reporting of the subject.

Judge Clarke's report did not go down well with the Marxist feminists and feminists in general. Deputy Ruth Coppinger was beside herself in anger stating in a parliamentary debate 26 January 2017

The Harding Clark report is another injustice to the women who had symphysiotomies against their will. The report is unbalanced, flawed and not objective. It should not be accepted and promoted by the Government. [...] Judge Harding Clark's report came up with the concept of alternative facts before Donald Trump even thought about it. [...] She used language such as that they were 'amenable to ... emotional contagion', subject to 'acquired group memory' and 'self convincing confabulation of personal history'. The women were subjected to symphysiotomy because of patronising and patriarchal views of women.'

Coppinger et al. have left a long trail and are undoubtedly expert at using 'emotional contagion' but will not face the fact that Judge Clarke had medical and scientific proof to back up her conclusions. Relying on unsubstantiated hysterical baloney is not unique to Ireland and Irish politicians, but the Irish feminists prefer to create the illusion of victimhood for reasons of demagoguery, notoriety and self-interest. If the extreme feminists were ever married with logic and reason, we can be sure that it was a marriage never consummated. The excitability, lurid and unfounded claims, however, are not confined to feminists, far from it.

School Teachers - Child Abusers

Almost every teacher who taught in national and secondary schools in Ireland before 1982 is guilty of a criminal offence. I accept that it is some statement, and I want you to think about it. Every teacher no matter if they

were a religious brother or sister, secular or lay, hit their pupils with a variety of 'correctional' devices from sticks, leather straps to face slapping, punches and kicks. Mercifully, since 1993, it is now a criminal offence for a teacher to hit a child in Ireland. However, note well, teachers of the past can only be defined as child abusers using today's standards. That is an important point that has to be lost in obscurity and kept there to promote historical falsehoods, upon which many current agendas are founded. The standards of today could not and did not exist in the past. The reasonable chastisement of children was allowed and was euphemistically called corporal punishment. The Cambridge dictionary defines it as physical punishment, esp. by hitting with the hand or with a stick. Inflicting bodily hurt also brings trauma, and the most sensitive children are more likely to suffer it in a more significant proportion than less sensitive types. As Harding-Clarke indicated, past trauma can play a considerable role in confabulation.

Confabulation is defined as 'the creation of false memories in the absence of intentions of deception. Individuals who confabulate have no recognition that the information being relayed to others is fabricated. Confabulating individuals are not intentionally being deceptive and sincerely believe the information they are communicating to be genuine and accurate. Confabulation ranges from small distortions of actual memories to creation of bizarre and unusual memories, often with elaborate detail.'²²²

It is important to remember that people can genuinely believe that they were abused even though it never happened in reality. It is, therefore, an imperative of justice that corroborating evidence should be found before passing judgement. All too often in the Irish and common law systems, this principle has been ignored, nowhere more so than by the various Irish commissions of investigation.

An article in the British Journal of social work set out to document children's abuse in industrial schools highlighted in the Ryan Commission Report. It states:

Females were also subjected to severe physical abuse in the industrial school system, in which they traditionally constituted the larger gender group. The survivors reported high levels of violence by staff, with 166 female witnesses testifying to being beaten with various objects, including: wooden sticks; black thorn sticks; rulers; pointers; window poles; wooden spoons; chair legs; wooden crutches; hurling sticks; cricket bats; coat hangers; towel rollers; and sally rods. In addition, seventy-seven witnesses reported being beaten with bamboo canes and ninety-nine with leather straps (Ryan Report, 2009, Volume 3, para. 9.14).

²²² Brown et al., 'Confabulation'.

*'They hurt you at home, they hit you at school,
they hate you if you're clever
and they despise a fool.'*

Working Class Hero by John Lennon

I have first-hand experience of school in the 1960s and 70s, and I along with most of my classmates were 'beaten with various objects', and I can add to the list above, as on one occasion, I was slapped with a bicycle pump for messing with it in class. All school children were subject to the same treatment which has been made out to be child abuse, which supposedly only occurred in industrial schools. The net result of the commission's work was that thousands of former industrial school residents were paid hundreds of millions of Euro in compensation. The notion that considerable sums in compensation was known publicly before the Ryan Commission investigation started, which had an undoubted influence on the witness testimonies. Moreover, this compensation influence is borne out by the Harding-Clarke investigation, which found that one-third of the women applying for compensation made fraudulent claims, but compassionately labelled it confabulation. The mother and baby homes commission also found attempted fraud but did not put a number on it.

By the criteria set out in the Ryan Commission investigation and report, practically every adult living today who survived the Irish school system before the 1980s is entitled to compensation. Moreover, as John Lennon and others have pointed out, so are the school system's children/survivors in many other countries. The essence of how brutal teachers were back then was captured brilliantly by Pink Floyd in two powerful protest songs and on film. This first song title is a sarcastic reference to school days *The Happiest Days of our Lives* which first appeared on 'The Wall' album, and it segues into the more famous track 'Another Brick in the Wall, Part II, described as a protest song against rigid schooling. The latter song is so popular that most people of a particular generation will remember the famous refrain 'Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone! '.

The Happiest Days of our Lives (Waters)

When we grew up and went to school
There were certain teachers who would
Hurt the children in any way they could
 'OOF!' [someone being hit]
 By pouring their derision
 Upon anything we did
And exposing every weakness
However carefully hidden by the kids
But in the town, it was well known

When they got home at night, their fat, and
Psychopathic wives would thrash them
Within inches of their lives.

There you have it in the last couple of lines; Roger Waters, the band's vocalist and bassist, views some teachers, especially those who like inflicting punishment as sadomasochists. Note also that 'by pouring their derision upon anything we did', the threshold set out by the Ryan Commission to deem the teacher's actions to be psychological abuse was also exceeded.

The powerful visualisation of school abuse appears in the 1982 film *Pink Floyd – The Wall*, directed by Alan Parker and based on the 1979 Pink Floyd album of the same name. Take a look at the clip on YouTube or Vimeo at 'Pink Floyd - Another Brick in The Wall (HQ)'. Despite the video's title, both songs *The Happiest Days of our Lives* and *Another Brick in the Wall, Part II*, feature together as one song. The film clip starts with the character 'Pink Floyd' as a young boy playing in a railway tunnel; he is surprised by the sudden appearance a train loaded with cattle carriages full of children with putty faces who reach out for help reminiscent of a holocaust transport. As the train passes, flashes of images of a teacher holding a long bamboo cane and shouting appear before the music starts. The classroom scene was similar to scenes I not only witnessed in my school days but lived through. The teacher discovers a notebook in which Pink had written poems, and he proceeds to read them aloud to the class ridiculing the work as 'absolute nonsense'. He then throws down the notebook on the desk, picks up a ruler and hits Pink on one of his hands. Later at the end of the video, Pink is shown blowing air on his hands. For those of you who never lived through it, the significance of this act is easy to miss, we all blew air on our hands after being hit with a ruler or a bamboo cane to cool down the strike site thereby speeding up the easement of the pain. The leather strap is a wider device, so it spreads its load more evenly across the hand, so cooling the entire hand was more effectively done by grasping the desk's cast iron leg. What makes the *Another Brick in the Wall, Part II* so powerful is that children sing it, and when put in context, it emerges as an authentic and authoritative protest against the teachers of the past.

We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!
All in all it's just another brick in the wall.
All in all you're just another brick in the wall.

Powerful imagery also conveys Waters anger with the school system as the

video features schoolgirls sitting at desks on a conveyor belt while the boys in unison march on an elevated platform both boys and girls march toward and fall into a meat grinder. In the end, the children rebel trash and set fire to the school. Note at the very end of the video, and yep, it is indeed Bob Geldof in the photo as he plays the adult Pink Floyd in the film. In the end, the children achieve what most of us dreamed of doing, burning down the school.

School had a detrimental psychological effect on Roger Waters on many more of us as well. Pink is tormented at school by tyrannical, abusive teachers and memories of these traumas become metaphorical 'bricks in the wall'

First-hand experience – understanding the victims of abuse

I was too young to have fought in the Vietnam War, but my school days left me psychologically traumatised like a war veteran suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I have first-hand experience of school in the 1960s and 1970s, and I can confirm that school was a vicious place, and I was, and I am even today, deeply resentful of what I, as a young child was forced to endure at school. Although, I have to say that in my later years, the passage of time has eased the pain of those memories or my bricks in the wall. Upon leaving school and looking back on my time there, I and many of my contemporaries bore much resentment. Mostly, this resentment chose religion and in particular, the Catholic Church as the subject of its ire and its scapegoat.

In my school story, except for second class in primary school, when I had the good fortune to be taught by a gentleman, a young Patrician Brother, I was beaten practically every day by my teachers. The most vicious of my tormentors was a lay teacher who, like most of his colleagues, knew nothing of dyslexia. However, in those days, they had a cure for bad spellers, which involved a dose of pain administered with a bamboo cane, leather strap or several slaps across the face. How severe the punishment depended on how many spellings I got wrong and the teacher's mood. In theory, they had a limit of six slaps of the cane, per offence three on each hand but six of the best, as it was known, was reserved for more severe infractions. I would regularly get two or three slaps with the bamboo for spelling sometimes it was augmented a slap across the face, a knuckle on the head or the rare occasion a kick in the butt as I turned to go back to my seat. I never witnessed a teacher exceeding 'six of the best', but on many occasions, mainly when the teacher was at a high level of anger, punishments were frequently augmented with the aforementioned range of supplementary punishments. Some of us became deliberately defiant, which would draw more severe punishment, but the pain was worth the satisfaction of pushing the teacher's button.

One chap I will call him John, who was caught with a pornographic magazine in school. John was foolish enough to open it and show it to his friends in the schoolyard at break time. Needless to say, it drew a large crowd all eager to get their first glimpse of a nude female (sadly I missed out). Either someone ratted

him out, or the teacher saw the magazine from an upstairs window overlooking the playground. I have managed on more than one occasion to push the teacher's button, but on our return to the classroom, everyone could tell by the expression on the teacher's face and demeanour that he was in a mountainous and building rage. Getting a teacher angry, really angry, was almost like a victory, a victory you achieved by taking the punishment while keeping a smile on your face and staring into the teacher's eyes. It was a stare, to express the sentiment silently, you will never break my spirit. Even though it meant enduring more severe pain, the victory was worth it. It is the same defiance which the pretend prisoners exhibited in the Stanford Prison Experiment. However, this time, John had unwittingly brought a teacher's anger to a frightening level we had never seen before, and we feared that John was about to suffer serious harm. He was called up to the front of the class, his pockets searched, and when the magazine was removed from his inside jacket pocket, any semblance of self-control control over his rage was lost by the teacher. He went for his readied bamboo cane and told John to hold out his hand, he raised the stick high and in an aggressive manner brought it down with all the force a grown man could muster, but as it descended forth from the heavens, the sound of the tortured air molecules scrambling to get out of its way heralded the fury that was about to be unleashed on the unfortunate 10-year-old. Just as it was about to make contact with John's open palm, nature in self-preservation mode, forced his hand to recoil. He was made to put it out again and again until all 'six of the most vicious best' were administered. You could see John's smile, and it hardened with each blow, he looked to be seriously enjoying it, but his eyes betrayed him by welling up with tears. We could tell that he was in significant pain, but he kept the smile on his face for the rest of the morning. An act of defiance which declared to the teacher and the class 'you don't have the right to hit me'. If the punishment's viciousness had caused any trouble for the teacher, we were not aware of it, and things in the classroom carried on as normal, but John never came back after lunch and was moved to another school.

Teachers had pet pupils who were rarely beaten, and they had pupils which they simply did not like and singled those out for extra punishment. I was one of those thanks to my bad spelling, I belonged to a group of children who were always picked on. The one day without any warning, we began to notice that the beatings inflicted on one particular boy in our class stopped suddenly. Not only that, but the teacher had lost total interest in the child and would not ask him any questions, and seemed to care little if learned anything, nor would he bother to correct his homework. Weeks later, the rumour reached us that the child's father, on learning of what his son had been subjected to, came into the school and thumped Mr Teacher. Oh, how I dreamed that my father would do the same, but aggression was not John Jordan's style. If my suffering was to end, I was going to have to find my own solution.

When not being hit with implements and body parts, the sorest and most

damaging slap in the face one could get was humiliation. Often used by teachers as a motivational tool, it was by far the most frequently deployed weapon of even the most benign teachers. Hardly could any child be spared its wrath save the squarest of scholars. We were all dumb, thick and stupid, would not amount to anything, fit only to work only as a dustman (garbage collector). Teachers snobbishly regarded themselves at the pinnacle of society, manifest in another favourite barb that you would wind upcycling a delivery bike. Obviously, in the days before Deliveroo, teachers considered delivering messages by bicycle was the lowest class job of job, alongside dustman. Humiliation is extremely hard to endure when one is singled out for ridicule in front of the whole class. The intention was to turn your schoolmates against one, and most would acquiesce taunting a poor child sometimes for weeks on end using the derision taught to them by a teacher. That point is subtly made in the Pink Floyd video.

In my last year of primary school, I was sent back to the wing of the school where I spent my junior years to collect a younger neighbour and escort him home. While I was waiting for his class to finish, my former teacher emerged from his classroom and upon seeing me uttered, 'Jordan, did ya learn to spell yet?'. That was the very moment in time when I found out I had a problem with spelling. Afterwards, it slowly dawned on me that it was my spelling issue, which caused me to endure more than my fair share of beatings. When I look back on my old school reports the phrase most used to describe my schoolwork was 'intelligent but not working'. Thus, as a young child, I was introduced to Mr Motivator and his best friend pain. In fairness, they knew nothing of dyslexia even though word blindness had been first identified in Germany in 1877, and the term dyslexia was coined 10 years later. It took over a century before most European education systems recognised its existence, evincing that educationalists can be quite retarded.

The terror did not end in the classroom, in the schoolyard bullies roamed free and would pick on the weaklings or those who would not fight back. I had the misfortune to fall into both these categories, and I was beaten up regularly, had my possessions were stolen, and my clothes were torn. The latter had severe consequences, which led lead to further beatings when I got home. Clothes are dirt-cheap nowadays, but that is a very recent phenomenon so expensive was clothing in the past, epically before the 1950s, many poor children were forced to wear flour sacks or rags.

Children were beaten not just for misbehaviour but also for educational reasons. It did not matter to the teachers whether they had the right culprit when it came to punishing misbehaviour instances; they would just pick out some unfortunate child and beat him as an example for everyone else. This type of behaviour is commonly found in prisons when the prison guards exceed their authority. As the famous Stanford Prison experiment revealed that when people are placed in positions of authority, they will abuse their authority unless sufficient controls are in place to mitigate against these effects. Stanford also revealed

that humiliating and degrading treatment of prisoners caused them to become defiant. I saw exactly that happen in school, and the severest punishment would always be used to quash defiance. In the Stanford Experiment also revealed an abuse and defiance response cycle. The more abuse suffered by the prisoners, the stronger their defiance became, which led the guards to become more abusive, and it becomes an ever-increasing cycle of abuse. When this happened, the experiment was stopped; unfortunately, we were stuck in the reality of a cycle of abuse. In my case, the abuse cycle became so bad that I could not bear it, and I attempted suicide at a mere 10 years of age, not once but twice. I ended up in the hospital on the second attempt and told no one what I had done. I had not the knowledge back then to know that it took more than a swig out of a bottle of sherry and a lot more pills to do the job right.

At school not only were the teachers violent so too were one's schoolmates and of course the obligatory schoolyard bullies and then there were beatings at home, all of which combined to leave me a traumatised young man and one with a chip on my shoulder. I am not going to bore you with a catalogue of events, but just to give you an idea what went on, there were times I thought I was going to die at the hands of the bullies. Like the time when I was hung over a bridge held by my legs while they threatened to let go. It sounds like nothing, but for a young boy, I was especially traumatised I was about seven years old when a group of bullies grabbed me and held me down while one of them urinated on my head.

Did ya ever get the pole? A favourite pastime of the bullies in my school, it involved several of them grabbing an adolescent boy, lifting and carrying him with his legs astride, running at speed to ram his scrotum into a pole. The intention was to inflict horrible pain and as a bonus to destroy his reproductive organs. It was a great laugh for the bullies, and I showed no one my black and blue scrotum. I suffered several attacks, and for many years, I felt that my chances at fatherhood were permanently damaged. Thankfully, three events in my life proved that my fatherhood fears mercifully unfounded.

For much of my early life and right through my 20s, I had frequent and vivid nightmares where I would re-live each and every instance of abuse night after night. I could fill a barrel full of cold sweat, scream silent screams, cry tears that no one could see, fear the paralysing shiver of absolute zero as it hunted to find my spine, and yet I could function and live a normal life. Psychologically, I now know what was going on, but I had no idea back then.

The daemons did not visit every night sometimes gaps of weeks and months elapsed but suddenly and for seemingly no reason, it would seem that the toll barrier on the road to hell was left ajar. The visitors could appear during the day, but darkness was their preferred visiting hours. Eventually, I taught myself the technique of disassociation where I would try to think of something else, anything else just to get my mind to detach from these thoughts. As the years

went by, I got better and better at it, always keeping busy not to let my mind wallow in self-pity. I use the phrase self-pity because I would occasionally allow myself to feel sorry for me. The tears were a catharsis, it was like letting my bad memories out for a walk before chasing them down and whipping them back to their coral. By the time, I reached 30 years of age I had full control and only on a very rare occasion would the blackguard emotions get out of the coral, but I had got better and was able to chase the blighters down quickly. Just when I thought I had it licked it once and for all, from the blindside, out of skinny air, the walls of the coral collapsed, and no one around me knew or understood or what was going on. I had some idea that it had to do with the abuse I had suffered, decades previous, and I knew I had to deal with it as a matter of urgency. Night terrors started shortly after my first child was born, they started as the usual flashbacks, they returned quite gradually at first but grew in speed, frequency and terror. What made my memory of abuse even more terrifying was that the vision in my mind's eye of me as a child was replaced with that of my infant son. No fuckers were ever going to that to my son, so my fear was replaced by extreme anger, complete with violent but defensive intent. Flashbacks do not cause actual physical pain, but the psychological memory of physical pain when not coupled with real pain causes its own problems. The mind, it would appear expects balance so when there is an imbalance where the memory circuits are sounding the severe pain alarm that bamboozles the sensory parts of the brain, which have no matching reports of physical pain. This is why many people in such a situation inflict upon themselves physical pain, through self-harm. I contend that although it appears irrational, there is a certain rationality in it for the mind. The presence of physical pain brings balance to a conflicted mind. It is as if saying to the mind; now there ya go mind, there is some real pain for ya to deal with, so stop annoying me all yer other auld guff. I was not a big fan of self-harm, but unlike most of our mental health professionals, even today, at least I understand its purpose.

You might be surprised that I am writing this book to defend the nuns and the religious and teachers for what they did to others and me, but I am not defending them. I am defending the truth and the discipline of history from false history and malevolence.

The nuns and brothers were not solely responsible for the abuse, the blame lies entirely with the teaching profession. It was the teachers who carried out the abuse and nuns and brothers who were teachers behaved like all other lay teachers. The teaching profession has never apologised for all the child abuse it committed against innocent children. They do not need to apologise when the people who devoted their lives in the service of others and set out to do good works have been scapegoated.

As the Ryan Commission report points out, it was against the law to punish a child corporally in the classroom. They were supposed to be sent to the headteacher and then only for a serious transgression of the rules. I wish I had

known that my teachers were acting illegally. Now armed with that knowledge if you have ever experienced corporal punishment in the classroom, you were abused unlawfully, and you are entitled to compensation.

I open up and reveal part of my story because not only do I deeply empathise with the people who were subjected to corporal & psychological punishment as children, I know through first-hand experience the psychological effects are real and long-lasting. I know that many children like me were traumatised by their school experience. I seek no sympathy, I have dealt with the trauma a long time ago, but it should be remembered that no one needed to have been in an industrial school to be a victim of child abuse.

Having said that, I contend that many of the testimonies in the Ryan Report could not be substantiated if they were ever to be subjected to even a minimal burden of proof, in a court of law. I suspect of many people, it was a chance to get back at their former teachers and carers, and in some senses, it was hard to blame them. Boys were genuinely abused in industrial schools both by religious and lay teachers, even by yesterday's standards. However, there have been a great many people making false allegations, but for fear of upsetting those with a genuine case, and dismissing genuine claims, all testimonies were accepted as true, no matter how far they stretched credulity, and no tests were conducted for confabulation. If that gets out, the government's compo bill will be massive, hence the attempted cover-up.

The Story of the Rapist Nun

When it comes to the burden of proof, the Irish courts would probably have done no better than the various commissions of investigations. The following is an extract from a newspaper report about the trial of a nun for rape in 1999:

Ms Regina Walsh, now 21, described how she was twice raped in her bed in the home by McCabe while [a nun named Nora] Wall held her legs and ankles.

She said she was nine when first raped and that it happened again at the time of her 12th birthday. She also alleged the nun indecently assaulted her when she brought her to sleep in her bed because of a bed-wetting problem. The victim told [prosecuting counsel] Mr Buckley that she was taken into care when six years old and was very happy there at first.

The Irish justice system convicted (the then ex-nun) Nora Wall and sentenced her to imprisonment for life. She became the first woman to be convicted of rape in the state's history and the first person to be given a life sentence for rape. Pablo McCabe, the rapist who carried out the sexual penetration of a nine-year-old girl, got a 12-year sentence. 'Welcoming the imposition of a maximum sentence, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre director Olive Braiden said it would ensure Nora Wall would be monitored for the rest of her life to prevent

any recurrence.’²²³ The sentencing judge Mr Justice Paul Carney called it a ‘gang rape’.²²⁴ The Sunday World added in some more information.

Evil nun Nora Wall, convicted for helping to rape a ten-year-old child, also secretly provided children for sick paedophile priest Father Brendan Smyth. The Sunday World has learned that depraved cleric regularly visited St. Michael’s Childcare Centre in County Waterford where Wall – then known as Sister Dominic – was working.²²⁵

Without fear of contradiction and backed up by events, it can be stated that the Irish justice system has far more compassion for rapists than for a dehumanised woman.

Well, lo, and behold after a few days there were red faces all around. Nora and Pablo were released from prison. Nora served only four days of her life sentence. The whole sordid affair resulted from bias, prejudice, fantasy, legal tomfoolery, police buffoonery, mass hysteria and the full gamut of biases and behaviours that define clurichaun syndrome. There was only one small problem with the conviction; it was based on a story, which was a complete falsehood. There was no basis in truth whatsoever, and there was no supporting evidence other than the witness testimony.

Luckily for Nora Wall, a man who had previously been falsely accused of rape recognised his accuser, Patricia Phelan, a witness in the Wall case. He read her name in an interview, which Regina Walsh had given to The Star, post-conviction but pre-sentence hearing. The man contacted the defence team, but at the sentencing hearing, the Director of Public Prosecutions refused to allow an application for adjournment denying that the newly discovered evidence was relevant. The sentence was duly passed, but after only four days, they were released on bail pending a retrial.

Later it transpired, that both the accuser and the witness had a history of psychiatric illness and of making false rape claims and that, this information was withheld from the defence. Furthermore, if you believe in god or luck, he/she or it was undoubtedly on Wall’s side because in the Irish legal system rape victims have a right to anonymity, which they can waive and allow their name to become publicly known. Regina Walsh did not waive her right to anonymity, but because she had given the interview to The Star newspaper naming names, the judge deemed that she had waived her right. If she had kept quiet, the man would never have read the name of Patricia Phelan in the newspaper, and there is no doubt that Wall and McCabe would have spent a much longer time in prison.

²²³ Sheean, ‘Life for the Nun Who Raped a Child’.

²²⁴ Dodd, ‘Nun Who Led Gang Rape Finds Little Mercy in Court’.

²²⁵ Williams, ‘Rape Nuns Abuse Pact with Smyth’.

Recovered Repressed memories

The Nora Wall trial also marked the first time in Irish legal history of a case based entirely on repressed memories. These are defined as 'memories that have been unconsciously blocked due to the memory being associated with a high level of stress or trauma.'²²⁶ Recovered repressed memories are highly controversial and have been behind many miscarriages of justice in America. In 1996 a church in Missouri agreed to pay \$1million in compensation to a woman who under the guidance of a church councillor recovered a repressed memory of her father raping her, getting her pregnant and then performing a coat hanger abortion on her. It turned out that the church councillor had implanted these false memories, she was still a virgin and her father had a vasectomy long before the alleged rape.²²⁷ Recovered memories became a craze in America starting in 1990 with the conviction of George Franklin for the murder of an eight-year-old girl, 20 years previous. His conviction was based entirely on the evidence of his daughter Eileen who was also eight years old at the time of the murder. Eileen had no memory of the murder but said that she suddenly remembered fragmentary details while playing with her two-year-old daughter. Over the course of a few months, more fragments of the memories returned, and she could recall the victim being sexually assaulted in the back of her father's van, the victim struggling and saying stop. She also remembered her father taking the victim outside his van, raising a rock and smashing it into the little child. She remembered screaming when she saw the girl covered in blood and the silver ring on her finger. So vivid and detailed were her memories that her therapist believed her, family members and the San Mateo County district attorney's office, went on to prosecute her father. The jury was also impressed by Eileen's detailed and confident memory and found her father guilty of murder in the first degree.

Sentencing him to life in prison, the judge condemned the former firefighter as 'wicked and depraved'. In the trial's aftermath, Eileen recovered more repressed memories accusing her father of being involved in two more rapes and murders. DNA tests revealed that the same male DNA profile was present in both cases, but it was not George Franklin's. Franklin's conviction was overturned in 1995 after he had spent six and a half years in prison. While awaiting retrial, Eileen's sister Janice revealed that her sister's recovered memories were revealed through hypnosis even though both of them denied it was the case during the trial. The consequence was that no retrial was possible as the state Supreme Court had ruled that memories recovered through hypnosis were unreliable.²²⁸ Whether hypnosis is involved or not, Professor Elizabeth Loftus, who testified on Franklin's behalf, argued that there was no scientific evidence to support these 'memories'. The American Psychological Association agrees, stating that there is 'little or no empirical support' for the concept of repressed or

²²⁶ Shires, 'Repressed Memory'.

²²⁷ Belluck, "'Memory' Therapy Leads to a Lawsuit And Big Settlement".

²²⁸ Loftus and Ketcham, 'Case Study: George Franklin'.

dissociated memories of sexual abuse. People who were sexually abused as children usually remember some or all of the event, although they may not talk about it or see it clearly.²²⁹ Despite all the controversy and the miscarriages of justice, some psychologists still believe that repressed memories are real and keen to bludgeon their view on an unsuspecting public. According to Prof Loftus, ‘These people – the repressed memory therapists some of them and the patients that they persuaded – they fight dirty’.²³⁰

It does not take a legal genius to work out that convictions based entirely on recovered memories, without corroborating evidence, will always result in a miscarriage of justice.

In Ireland’s first recovered memory case, both Pablo McCabe’s and Wall’s convictions were declared miscarriages of justice in December 2005. McCabe died in 2002, and Nora Wall received over €500,000 in compensation plus a further €175,000 from the Sunday World newspaper for making up the false story about Nora Wall procuring children for a notorious paedophile priest. Not only that, but the article was not based on any evidence proffered during the trial, there was nothing he could have taken and exaggerated, it was entirely made up. It will not come as a shock to many people to find a tabloid newspaper making up stories and made-up stories are very much a feature of the whole child abuse scandal. While some of these stories are undoubtedly due to confabulation, others have a powerful incentive to magnify the abuse to increase any potential financial compensation payment. It is also not untrue to say that many people were egged on by the legal profession, which has made hundreds of millions of Euro from such cases.

Figures from the Comptroller and Auditor General Special Report dated to December 2016 named the ‘Cost of Child Abuse Inquiry and Redress’ show:

By the end of 2015, awards totalling €970 million had been made to 15,579 claimants – an average award of €62,250. 85% of the awards were at or below €100,000. The highest award made was €300,000.

An estimated 98% of applicants relied on legal advice when making an application for redress. By 31 December 2015, the Redress Board had approved legal cost payments of €192.9 million to 991 legal firms in respect of 15,345 applications. Nine hundred sixty-seven legal firms were paid total amounts that were less than €1 million. Seventeen were paid between €1 million and €5 million and seven firms were paid amounts between €5 million and €19 million.²³¹

Outside of the redress scheme, other supports have been put in place to assist

²²⁹ Ehrenfeld, ‘We Don’t Repress Painful Childhood Memories’.

²³⁰ Watt, “‘Some Days I Think I Was Molested and Others I’m Sure It Didn’t Happen’”.

²³¹ ‘Press Release - Cost of Child Abuse Inquiry and Redress’.

the institutions' former residents. The overall spend on health, housing, educational and counselling services is estimated at €176 million.

The Ryan Commission's final cost is estimated to be €82 million – the Department of Education and Skills initially forecast the cost to be €2.5 million. That says it all; the politicians opened a can of worms and thought that they could blame it all on the religious orders. The tribunals ran riot, as Irish tribunals always do. Add up the costs above, and it yields a total far higher than the Mahon Tribunal, which is frequently cited as the most expensive tribunal ever in Ireland's history. It was established in 1997 to look into corrupt payments to politicians; it took 14 years and four months and cost the state c. €150 million.

There are genuine cases of abuse, and these people are entitled to compassion and compensation. As is always the case in life, the honest people are likely to get less in compensation than the clurichauns, those recovering repressed memories and the fraudulent exaggerators who face no test for credibility.

If there is one conclusion we can safely arrive at, it is the fact that the British did not leave Ireland with a functioning system of justice, common law was never really designed to deliver justice. It is and will always be one of the world's most efficient lawyer enrichment systems.

Confabulation

Another definition of confabulation...

A distortion of memory, or paramnesia, in which gaps in recall are filled by fictional events and experiences. Confabulations can be differentiated from delusions by the fact that the fictional material refers to specific times, places, and people, whereas delusions tend to be more generalized. Though sometimes these fabrications are palpably fictitious and absurdly simple, they may also be elaborate, detailed, and plausible-sounding. In any case, the patient himself accepts them as fact.²³²

Judge Harding Clarke reasoned that a traumatic birth experience was the reason for confabulation taking hold. As a direct result, the claimants were convinced that their imagined story was true under its grip. When people are so convinced it would be hard for anyone to dismiss their claim without risking being labelled insensitive, as unsympathetic or as a victim blamer. Taking convinced and convincing people at their word, without corroborative independent evidence remains a significant challenge for the justice system, not just in Ireland but elsewhere. It has been behind a great many miscarriages of justice over the globe. It is a challenge that has yet to be tackled, but some progress has been made especially in the new procedures used by police to interview witnesses and suspects, called the 'cognitive interview'.

232 M.S., 'What Is CONFABULATION (Pseudoreminiscence)?'

It might seem too obvious to state, but children have an entirely different mentality to adults, interpret the world through the eyes of a child, and lay down memories without understanding the adult world.

I came across this story told by a woman who suffered from polio, spent a long time in a hospital, and recalled her childhood experience:

‘Nurses were the enemy, they scared us. They would tell us that the bogeyman would come and get us or we’d be put into a big black hole if we cried. One day, one of the nurses, realising that I couldn’t sleep because I was so scared, said ‘don’t worry, the bogeyman only takes red-haired boys’. Soon after a red-haired boy joined our ward, but one day he just disappeared. I don’t know if he died or was moved. A nurse later said he had gone to another ward, but I didn’t believe her.’²³³

Scaring the living daylight out of children with tales of the bogeyman was common and was used by everyone and anyone who dealt with children but purely as a motivational device. Sometimes, sensitive children were genuinely scared, which is why the woman above held in her memory that the nurses were the enemy. People who scare children, particularly strangers, are seldom remembered with fondness, but most likely, the memories held upon reaching adulthood will have attached negative emotions. In cases where a child perceives himself/herself to have suffered trauma, it is more likely that they will experience confabulation. Trauma in a child’s case can be as simple as separation for parents and home through illness or placement in a hospital or an institution. What appears as small disruptions to a child’s life to adults, can be remembered as highly emotionally traumatic by a child who has little understanding of the world. This phenomenon is behind many historical claims of abuse. Judge Clarke attributed the presence of ‘confabulation’ to the trauma of an obstructed or difficult childbirth experience, but confabulation’ has many causes, which are not fully understood. Filling gaps in childhood memory with adult understandings is one such cause.

Similarities to McCarthyism

There are so many uncanny similarities between the Clurichaun Ascendency machinations and the McCarthyism of 1950s America that I am surprised that no one has yet used that label. McCarthyism was a mass hysteria, which took advantage of the Cold War anti-communist sentiment accusing many individual Americans and organisations of being communist sympathisers. The resulting un-Americanism purge was pursued with vigour using the legislature itself and its governmental machinery. The list included the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee. A total of 109 investigations for un-American activities were carried out by these committees and more between

²³³ Condon, ‘Pre-Immunisation - Ireland in the Bad Old Days’.

1949 and 1954.²³⁴ The Department of Justice and the FBI investigated thousands of government employees who were accused by informants whose identities were kept secret. Thousands lost their jobs, and in many cases, they were never told of what they stood accused. The FBI went outside the government employees' realm and instigated a programme, which gave reports about individuals to state governors and civic leaders. Many people were fired without any further process. Without going into the whole sordid history, in short, the FBI acted outside the law, and many innocent Americans were subjected to the most appalling treatment. At that time in America, to be accused of being a communist evoked a similar backlash to be accused of being a paedophile in our present day. Consequently, it was hard to get any lawyer to represent those accused of being un-American.

Women's groups like the American Public Relations Forum, the Minute Women of the U.S.A. organised patriotic clubs, coordinated efforts to identify and report 'commies' to eradicate they perceived as subversion. The American Civil Liberties Union ejected founding member Elizabeth Gurley Flynn due to her membership of the Communist Party.

Back to present-day Ireland, the Irish Council of Civil Liberties decided to involve itself in the Tuam controversy in recent years taking the side of the excitable clurichauns. In a country with an enormous degree of civil liberty, the council has nothing to do other than to go back in history and pick a fight with women who cannot defend themselves. To the best of my knowledge, the Irish Council of Civil Liberties remained silent on Nora Wall case. I contend that they would rather pick a fight with the dead and engage in McCarthyism than protect anyone's 'civil liberty'. Picking a fight with the dead to change our interpretation of the past, but not actually change the past, cannot give civil liberty to anyone.

In 1953, the former president Truman criticising the then incumbent Eisenhower administration summed up McCarthyism pretty well:

It is now evident that the present Administration has fully embraced, for political advantage, McCarthyism. I am not referring to the Senator from Wisconsin. He is only important in that his name has taken on the dictionary meaning of the word. It is the corruption of truth, the abandonment of the due process law. It is the use of the big lie and the unfounded accusation against any citizen in the name of Americanism or security. It is the rise to power of the demagogue who lives on untruth; it is the spreading of fear and the destruction of faith in every level of society.²³⁵

In the Clurichaun Ascendency, many demagogues live on untruth, who use the 'big lie', 'the unfounded accusation', iteratively embellished with every

²³⁴ Fried, *Nightmare in Red*.

²³⁵ Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture*.

expression to build a much bigger untruth. It is an ultimate pleasure palace where small minds go to feel big.

McCarthyism was built on a tumulus of hysteria, and everybody caught up in it believed that their delusions were real. The power, which gave the movement credibility, and sustained it for so long, is its ability to create personal illusions of elevated social status. Accordingly, it conferred upon individuals the right to look down their nose at others, even those higher up on the social scale and denigration, not only create illusory superiority but also turn it into supremacism.

Each and every human holds beliefs which they believe to be superior to the beliefs of others, there is nothing wrong with that per se, and it could be argued that the primary purpose of erudite discourse is to change minds or undermine the superiority of one belief and exchange it with another. However, when opposing views are absent, or groupthink is present, the forces that keep illusory superiority in check, decline and disappear, allowing it to creep towards supremacism. Illusory superiority is a form of snobbery, although it can cause harm to others, it is mainly an internal psychological condition which causes its holders to display their superiority thought outward display, and/or material possessions like driving a big car they can't really afford, joining a golf club to hobnob with the big knobs or a wine snob looking down their nose at us all drinking cheap plonk.

Society has its controls, which keeps snobbish behaviour at bay through social isolation, and so snobs are forced to seek out other snobs to hobnob with, which is not much of a problem for society. On the other hand, Supremacism is highly dangerous as it puts into action or gives practical effect to the forces of domination and subjugation. In its extreme form, it dehumanises individuals and groups. It sanctions the right of superior beings to mistreat the inferior classes. Since they are not human, are therefore not worthy of existence, the supremacist retains in their mind, all options right up to and including extermination.

As we have witnessed, the Irish justice system can convict people of crimes on the flimsiest of claims and uncorroborated evidence. Were it not for sheer luck, Nora Wall would still be serving her life sentence. Many others did not have such luck; the same situation now exists in Ireland, which bears similarities to McCarthyism's era; they are not likely to get justice. Lawyers and justice organisations are reluctant to take on cases of people who were convicted of child abuse, even where it appears that flimsy evidence was used to procure the conviction. There is no doubt that when mass hysteria is present, many innocent people become its victim.

The court of public opinion has no binding obligation to have even an elementary standard of burden of proof. It is, therefore, willing to convict even in the total absence of evidence. It is this very phenomenon, which necessitated

the establishment of a formal justice system many centuries ago, but at times, it too is subject to the same human frailties as the rest of us. The formal justice system's primary mitigation method for human failings is that hearings must be held in public. The primary purpose is to instil fear in judges if they do a terrible job in public, they might be perceived publicly, to be a fool, and as no one in their right mind wants to carry the label, consequently, they will work hard to avoid acquiring it. However, the court of public opinion is a collective. As experiments involving the illusory truth effect reveal, the more a lie is repeated, the more believable it becomes and the more people who believe it. Accordingly, when everyone believes the same lie, there is less chance of being singled out as a solitary fool. There is safety in numbers, and this is the very oxygen of mass hysteria.

Atheism

The Tuam Children's Home scandal occurred at a time in Irish history when a wave of anti-Catholic sentiment swept the country. It had been going on for many years before Catherine Corless made her claims about children buried in a septic tank. Nor did not start with the Ryan Commission Report, it only managed to send anti-Catholic sentiment into overdrive, its genesis was many decades previous. I like many of my cohort, left school as a confirmed atheist. The church and others have seemingly never asked themselves why so many Catholic and Protestant schools produce generation after generation of atheists and apostates. (a question looked at in the next chapter) For the record, I no longer apply the label 'atheist' to myself, I am a fallibilist, particularly on God's existence. That is one who believes that humanity lacks the intellectual capability to figure out the answer to life's biggest questions.

In the early stages of apostasy, anger with the old religion is a common characteristic, but some people never get over the rage, and consequently are subconsciously driven seek out evidence to validate their newly acquired beliefs. Some turn to false beliefs in science, ascribing to it supernatural powers believe in and propagate the atheists' myths. Others adopt new neo-paganism, Buddhism, Islam and more but apostate Catholics are not jumping over to Protestantism, evincing that the most prevalent sentiment expressed is nearly always anti-Christian. It is more than a bit ironic, as the Catholic Christian Church is the founder of child protection and has saved countless lives over two millennia. Atheism and apostasy are the most significant drivers of the mass hysteria, and its effects have gone unmitigated for decades. It permeates through every level of Irish society from the top to the very bottom, even within organisations like the state broadcaster.

Clurichaun state broadcaster

Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) has set itself up as one of the chief purveyors of anti-Catholic sentiment for the better part of the last two decades. Since its inception as 2RN, Clurichaun syndrome has been evident through pretentious fake upper-class English accents of many of its presenters. BBC English as it is

sometimes referred evinces that the creative intellectual capacity of its workers continues to be declined in favour of the apathy of imitation. The station's pro-English bias is not surprising given that the organisation is located in the home territory of Union Jackeenism. It has been the subject of comment for decades as was once labelled Radio Telefís Éireann by Irish language activists in the 1960s. When Catholicism became associated with Irishness, RTÉ had no difficulty incorporating it into its organisational clurichaunism.

Surprisingly journalists and broadcasters do not seem to be taught how to avoid the black hole of innuendo and remain unaware that it can be used to posit 'the big lie and the unfounded accusation'. As the name implies, 'innuendo' cajoles people psychologically to jump to the prescribed conclusion without directly stating it to avoid being sued and the court case. Occasionally, bias and prejudice get the better of journalists, and the big joker, Murphy, gets to create his/her biggest laugh. After years of years repeating the same old lies, the illusory truth effect kicks in, and journalists mistake the lies they created, for truth.

In May 2011, RTÉ over a Prime Time Investigates television programme claimed that Fr Kevin Reynolds, the parish priest of Ahascragh in Co. Galway, he had sexually abused a teenage girl in Kenya in 1982, fathered a child by her and abandoned both.²³⁶ The allegations were repeated the next morning on the station's most popular radio programme, Morning Ireland. Before the broadcast, the investigative team approached Fr. Reynolds and put the allegations to him. He denied that the allegations were true and even offered to undergo a paternity test, but RTÉ refused his offer. The reporter Aoife Kavanagh had previously travelled to Kenya and interviewed Veneranda, the woman he impregnated as a minor and her and his child was called Sheila. Both of them corroborated the story. The programme was welcomed and supported by none other than the never miss jumping a passing bandwagon, Minister of Justice, Alan Shatter.²³⁷ It was an amazing statement from a minister of justice who was also a trained lawyer and should have known about the presumption of innocence before the law. He just could not resist the notoriety of been seen to be riding on the pig's back. Well, guess what, Murphy of Murphy's Law fame had done his best, and in the weeks after the programmes aired, the number of red faces at RTÉ and in government exceeded the amount of Primetime's red herrings.

In the aftermath of the programme, Fr. Reynolds underwent two independent DNA tests, which proved he was not the father. Fr. Reynolds sued the station and received an undisclosed sum and a grovelling apology from RTÉ, which then suspended the following season of its Primetime Investigates programme. Fr. Reynolds suffered immensely due to the false allegations, an avoidable debacle that tarnished an unblemished wonderful career from which he will never recover. The sheer unprofessionalism of RTÉ is almost hard to fathom

²³⁶ Duggan, Hillard, and Heffernan, 'Fr Reynolds: I Forgive Accusers but I Expect Justice at RTE - Independent.Ie'.

²³⁷ Hillard and Sheahan, 'Shatter Row over Priest Libel Drags On'.

and why top journalists are so prone to believing in obviously false information cannot be comprehended without a good understanding of the social and psychosocial process affecting Irish society in the early 21st century.

RTÉ promoted many scurrilous anti-Catholic allegations too numerous to mention but here is a small sample easily dismissed as with a couple of lines.

An RTÉ documentary about a fire at an orphanage in County Cavan in 1943, attributed the deaths of children to the nuns, who did not want them to be seen in their nightgowns, in public.

There were no nuns in the orphanage. They were in the adjacent convent next door. No nun stopped any child from escaping or nor had any nun delayed the exit of any child. The children slept in two dormitories with a lay teacher sleeping with the children in each dormitory. The first lay teacher evacuated all the children in her dormitory, while the second teacher in a panic moved her children from her dormitory into the evacuated dormitory, which was mostly free of smoke. She then went downstairs and got out. Shortly after, the corridor filled with thick smoke which the rescuers did not know how to cross. The fire's inquiry found that this teacher had 'lost her head' and panicked because she awoke in a room filled with smoke, in complete darkness.

Dismiss RTÉ's malicious claim with the simple fact that there were no nuns in the orphanage.

RTÉ and others were behind the false allegation that a pregnant woman died at a Galway hospital because she was denied a life-saving abortion. She died of sepsis due to an infection which had earlier caused her to naturally abort her baby. Between the year 2000 to 2008, 63 women died in Ireland due to pregnancy sepsis. Sepsis is a leading cause of many deaths of pregnant women in the UK, but the British are not stupid enough to advocate the use of abortion to cure sepsis.

Only in Ireland do people believe that abortion can be used to treat infections. Every other country uses antibiotics for the treatment of bacterial infections. The same treatment was tried in Galway, but the doctors missed the first lab report results showing a high white blood cell count and were late in starting the treatment.

Extreme Feminism

The #MeToo movement is a misogynist's dream. The protests are hysterical; half-naked, disheveled women shrieking nonsensical slogans while slamming into objects, innocent bystanders, and each other. They cast themselves as perpetual victims in need of coddling and protection. They demand censorship. They are, in short, the living, breathing, screeching embodiment of every negative stereotype ever conceived of

women. - Elena Caban 2018²³⁸

Perhaps the most dangerous pursuit anyone can engage in today is the criticism of feminism as it is likely to provoke an emotion and irrational response. Yet feminism, particularly militant feminism – like those who insist on taking the men out of women by spelling it wimmin and refuse to write history because they think it is written ‘his story’ – has played a significant role in the promotion of a range of falsehoods right up to mass hysterias, not just in Ireland but worldwide. We have encountered pendulum swings in the past, and now the swing is towards feminism and the crazy notion that gender can be removed. It is currently not uncommon to encounter lunatic stuff like this:

To chronicle her adventures in gender-neutral parenting, Arwyn Daemyir writes a blog called Raising My Boychick. She describes herself as ‘a walking contradiction: knitting feminist fulltime parent, Wiccan science-minded woowoo massage therapist, queer-identified male-partnered monogamist, body-loving healthy-eating fat chick, unmedicated mostly-stable bipolar.’

She describes her boychick, born in March 2007, as a ‘male-assigned at birth — and so far apparently comfortable with that assignment, white, currently able-bodied, congenitally hypothyroid, cosleeper, former breastfed toddler, elimination communication graduate, sling baby and early walker, trial and terror, cliched light of our life, and impetus for the blog. Odds are good he will be the most privileged of persons: a middle class, able bodied, cisgender, straight, white male.’²³⁹

I do not take to criticising feminism easily as I’m a lifelong egalitarian, feminist and philogynist; it is an anathema. However, I have to take issue with the lunatic fringe that has risen to prominence in recent times drowning out the voice of reason, fooling young women and men into believing that their emotional diatribes are based on fact indeed reason. Feminism, has over the decades, been building on a corpus of falsehoods founded on reinterpreting women’s history and viewing it through the prism of a misogynistic society. The emotional response to criticism of even the mildest feminist claims prevents reasoned debate, and when dissent is absent, be assured buffoonery is present. Consequent of the histrionics is that the literature produced by Irish women’s studies has gotten a free reign with no valid peer review. By that, I mean where peer reviews have been done, they are written by similarly minded individuals who are more likely to agree with mistaken/false statements than to challenge them. The upshot is that Irish feminism has worked itself into a frenzy and as one emotional claim begets another emotional claim, mass hysteria ensues.

238 Caban, ‘Audre Lorde, #MeToo, and The Cult of Feminist Hysteria’.

239 Weeks, ‘The End Of Gender?’

The reality evinced through impartial history demonstrates that what is now regarded as discrimination was, in fact, concern for the welfare of women. Women always played a significant role in Irish society were highly influential and were very much valued. The women of the revolution who founded Cumann na mBan (the league of women) played a vital role in the fight for Irish independence, and it is no exaggeration to say that independence at that time would not have been achieved without them. Ireland had the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons, appointed the first woman university professor in Britain or Ireland, the first female to qualify with a degree in engineering, the first female government minister and many more. Outside Ireland, the first woman to get a university degree was in 1608. The first woman to get a university doctorate was in 1678. The first woman university professor of physics was appointed in 1732, and many more. All achieved at catholic institutions. These achievements have gone entirely unnoticed by the feminists because it does not fit with their agenda, partly because females do not commemorate female achievements. The commemoration failures are always blamed on some external forces, but when I ask women and men simple questions about women firsts like those above, I have, so far, found no feminist who could give correct answers. Even a simple question like who was the first woman in space? The answer is nearly always Sally Ride and not Valentina Tereshkova, who was in space 20 years before her in 1963. That surely points to deficiencies within the education system, but many people are put off commemorating women's achievements, including women, due to the extreme version of feminism and its use of misinformation to generate a raft of falsehoods.

In chapter five, we saw the effects of toxic feminism even on academic historians who have repeated the falsehoods, which Irish women's studies, void of quality control, bears much responsibility. This toxic feminism achieved its zenith in the mother and baby homes scandal as evinced through the emotional, excitable, overzealous and ultimately false media headlines and articles. Ironically, for the feminists, the whole saga is reliant on women's viciousness, thus dispelling the philogynous notion of 'the fair sex' and exposing its misandry.

Chapter Conclusion

There are many reasons why people create, promote and believe in falsehoods. Some are deliberate, but most would appear due to a plethora of subconscious processes. However, at the very foundation stone of this phenomenon, illusions are created, promoted and believed for the primary purpose of creating a perception of psychological benefit for the holder. For example, in the world of politics, political claims, and counter-claims care little for the truth; the aim and objectives are to make one side look good and the opposing side terrible. It is like an artillery battle with both sides' guns loaded with a mixture of truth and balderdash. In partisan politics, supporters on either side care little for authenticity, with the result that any information which can be misconstrued,

interpreted, misinterpreted or bent and twisted to make the opposition look inadequate, incompetent or foolish will find favour over genuine representation. The core objective is always the same, the creation of internal notions of superiority. To wrap all that type of behaviour into one easy to understand term, I have come up with the acronym SPUD, Social Pretension Using Denigration.

SPUD/SPUDing

At a fundamental level, the psychological process which underpins the full gamut of discriminatory behaviours including racism, supremacism, white supremacism, hate and hate speech, sectarianism, minority discrimination, misogyny, misandry, body shaming, disability shaming, mental health shaming, homophobia, bullying, including school bullying and many more, comes down to one natural process which is vital to our mental health, which is known to science by two related terms as 'self-esteem' and self-worth. The problem is not so much self-esteem/worth itself but how we maintain it and boost its level at times when there is a disconnect between our actual real-world success and our imaged level of success. As we encountered earlier in chapter three, the normal functioning human mind will not allow us to see ourselves as bringing little or no value to society, and so it will create illusions or delusions of grandeur, rating our social standing much higher than it may be in reality.

SPUDing is putting other people down, and nowhere on planet earth are SPUDs planted so densely or is SPUDing practised with such enthusiasm. The more bitter the SPUD, the more likely it will turn into PUS, Pretension Using Supremacism.

SPUD can be divided into many subcategories

SPUV	Social Pretension Using Violence	Bullying etc. - Hitting others to assert one's superiority.
SPUB	Social Pretension Using Boasting	We're the best in the world!
SPUP	Social Pretension Using Possessions	Fashion, expensive car, obsession with labels, talk a lot about money, brag about their choices etc
SPUS	Social Pretension Using Sympathy	Claiming to be a victim
SPUFA	Social Pretension Using Fake Accent	Upper class English accent or American accents are popular in Ireland currently.
SPUSS	Social Pretension Using Servile Submissiveness	Claiming social standing from being the servant of an important person!
SPU	Social Pretension Using Association	It can be formal like joining a club or informal affiliation hanging out with a certain cohort, becoming a fan of famous people, sports teams etc.
SPU	...and many more.	Add your own in here!

SPUE Social Pretension Using Exaltation (p. spew) is similar to SPUV and at

first, looks to be the opposite of SPUD.

By exalting a person, a thing, or a place claim prestige through association. A prime example is the current British view of Winston Churchill as a hero and a great leader. In reality, he was one of the most incompetent military and political leaders of all time. He cost millions of people their lives. Churchill was personally responsible for the disastrous Gallipoli campaign. He also came up with the idea of sending the notorious Black and Tans and Auxiliaries to Ireland. The atrocities they committed against civilians brought about the event they were trying to prevent, Irish independence. Men within these British forces considered themselves superior to the Irish, so SPUD escalated to PUS (supremacism), and the results were almost inevitable.

SPUD maintains SPUE, challenge any supporter of the Churchill myths, and you are more likely to encounter denigration than a valid argument.

Pretention is not real-world achievement despite the displays of artefacts associated with achievement and status. It can be all imaginary, built on borrowed money, debt slavery and perhaps eventual bankruptcy. I don't want to dive too deeply into this but being able to spot when people are SPUDing or pretending to be something they are not is the key to defending against their benighted claims.

8. THE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION AND CONCLUSION

The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation's final report dated 30th October 2020 was made public on the 12th of January 2021. It is nearly 3,000 pages long and took seven long years, but at last, the report has rejected many of the scurrilous falsehoods which found favour with politicians and the media. The analysis of nearly every false claim is appended with the phrase there is 'no evidence to support' the assertion. Simultaneously, the report contains several serious errors, and the commission has based many of their assumptions on these errors; the implications are significant.

As you have made it this far into the book and have read Chapter 5 & 6 you will be able to see these errors for yourself. Before that, however, we will have a quick look at some of its significant findings.

First, the charge that babies were starved to death in mother and baby homes is dismissed with a straightforward explanation.

238. Public attention has focused on marasmus, suggesting that it indicated that many children in mother and baby homes died because of wilful (sic) neglect. The term marasmus is best seen as indicating that a child was failing to thrive, but medical experts suggest that this was due to an underlying, undiagnosed medical condition.²⁴⁰

Three questions: Why did our politicians not check with 'medical experts' before they queued up in the Dáil and Seanad to shout about babies being starved to death. Why were they so keen to abuse Christianity and their nation as a whole? Do we only elect people without wit and integrity as public representatives, or is it only the empty vessels who make the most noise?

The commission also noted in a footnote on p.36 of the Tuam Chapter

²⁴⁰ All paragraphs starting with a number are from the commission of investigation's final report and correspond to the relevant paragraph in the report

Some commentators have asserted that deaths notified as marasmus point to some level of neglect. It should be noted that 8 of 18 such deaths relating to Tuam occurred in the Central Hospital, Galway, and that 10 of the 18 deaths notified as marasmus occurred among children who were accompanied by their mother at the time of death.

The commentators in question were professional journalists who equally did not consult with ‘medical experts’ and ran riot using their own false interpretation of medical terminology. Why? The answer to that is simple, telling the truth makes a living only for a tiny number of journalists in the Irish media. Those who have a strong commitment to reporting information as honestly as possible are frequently attacked and ridiculed by the likes of the Twitter mob and the gutter press, places where small minds go to feel big.

Children were used in medical experiments, which appeared in many publications and blogs and was shouted loudly from the parliamentary benches about vaccine trials. The commission says there were good reasons for the homes’ participation:

34.18 In 1930, Dr J C Saunders, Chief Medical Officer, Cork City, administered Wellcome’s experimental Alum Precipitated Toxoid (APT) anti-diphtheria vaccine to 142 children in two unidentified orphanages and to 436 children aged between eight months and 14 years among the general child population in Cork city. This was backed by the Department of Local Government and Public Health, the South Cork Board of Public Assistance and the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation. It was regarded as an important public health response to one of the worst diphtheria epidemics ever recorded in Europe.

During the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, the United States President was given an experimental treatment when he contracted the disease. Like the children in Irish orphanages and throughout the world, he was not the subject of a medical experiment. All the experiments are completed by the time a new medicine is ready for clinical trials. Such trials are the last step in an approval process to check for allergic reactions and test the effectiveness of new drugs and treatments. Furthermore, in an emergency situation where many lives have been lost, and in an effort to save as many as possible, giving vaccines that have not fully completed the approval process and paperwork remains acceptable today. None more so when traditional treatment measures fail, which occurred during Ireland’s diphtheria epidemic.

The commission reports that during the 1960s and 70s, Professor Meenan and Dr Irene Hillery, both of the Department of Medical Microbiology, University College, Dublin carried out several vaccine trials at various children’s care homes. These studies, the commission reports, unlike the emergency

vaccination programme of the 1930s, do not appear, on occasions, to have completed the proper paperwork, both for licencing and permission. Both secular and religious authorities were probably not aware that vaccine trials were taking place in their institution. The commission report states that Meenan and Hillery appear to have relied on ‘a loose arrangement with the institutional medical officers who themselves may not have been fully informed about the nature of the work.’²⁴¹ Accordingly, most, if not all, of the responsibility for any irregularities lies entirely with University College Dublin. Similarly, Dr Victoria Coffey of Trinity College Dublin also carried out vaccine trials with the appropriate licence and permissions. It appears to have happened after consultation with Dr Irene Hillery.

Even after the commission’s report was published, biased reporting continued with alacrity. The Irish Examiner published an article on 14 January 2021 where the claimed ‘there were at least 13 vaccine trials carried out on more than 43,000 children, according to the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation.’ The entire article goes on the cherry-pick phrases from the report conflating information from different areas of the report with as many negative facts as the author can find. I cannot find the total number 43,000 mentioned anywhere, and I doubt if the author summed up all the numbers, as the final report is a compilation of a series of individual reports. The report mentions a figure of 47,000 children who took part in a vaccine trial in Britain in 1964/65, and I surmise that the author mistakenly took this paragraph to be about Ireland and even then, manage to get the figure wrong.

The author fails to mention that the early vaccination trials were done with the authorities’ support due to ‘one of the worst diphtheria epidemics ever recorded in Europe’. Instead, he continues to weave a tangled web, carefully selecting his facts, taken out of context, and conflating comments about the University College, Dublin studies of the 1960s/70s with earlier studies.

The author also fails to mention the commission’s conclusions to each trial: ‘there is no evidence of injury to the children involved as a result of the vaccines.’

Misreporting was not without personal costs; the commission dismissed the claims made in an article written by Conall Ó Fátharta, also for the Irish Examiner.

34.77 On 15 November 2016, the Irish Examiner reported that files relating to children involved in the quadruple vaccine trial in Bessborough had been altered. [...] The Irish Examiner article caused great distress among former Bessborough residents who called for ‘a full criminal investigation’ into the matter. [...] The Commission has concluded that

²⁴¹ Commission of Investigation, ‘Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Final Report’. 34.64

there were no alterations made to any original institutional document.

The commission does not name Conall Ó Fátharta, or the Irish Examiner but has this to say about a number of his articles:

58. A journalist investigating mother and baby homes discussed these claims in several articles in a national newspaper and made the further claim that Bessborough authorities had over-reported infant deaths to the Department of Local Government and Public Health, as the number of deaths reported in the Bessborough Death Register was less than that in the returns to the department. The Commission has established that this was incorrect.

The background to this is that several false claims appeared in two documents circulated among senior HSE staff, described as a file note, and a draft briefing paper, in 2012. The documents contained any sensational claims, and of course, were leaked to the media and politicians. The now customary frenzied debate ensued. The claims included:

- A database of 1,000 names of children existed who were sent abroad for adoption.
- Death records of children were falsified to hide illegal adoptions.
- Children were held in the homes longer than necessary for financial reasons.
- Letters were sent to parents asking for money for children who had died.
- Tuam and Bessborough charged a fee for the upkeep of children to both adoptive parents and the birth parent.
- Women who gave birth were discharged to a Magdalen institution.
- Money was claimed from the government for mothers and children after they had left the home.
- The ‘trafficking’ of babies was facilitated by doctors, social workers and others, some of whom could still be working in the system.

The commission of investigation comment:

‘details of the document were repeated many times including during a Seanad debate of 17 May 2017. It appeared to be accepted by commentators and politicians that the allegations and suppositions made

in these documents were statements of fact.’

The commission interviewed the official who wrote the Tuam elements in the document:

67. With respect to the allegation that there was ‘more than one letter asking for money for an infant who had been discharged or died’ the witness stated that she had no recollection of finding more than one letter if even one letter. The witness stated that she did not come across any evidence of trafficking of babies and in relation to the phrase ‘it must be that it was facilitated by adoptive social workers’ stated that ‘I don’t know what that is alluding to’. The witness had no memory of seeing evidence relating to nuns claiming for a dead baby. The witness had found no evidence of trafficking of babies. The witness did have a memory of reading a letter from a couple who had gone back to America with their adopted child saying that they would send money on to ‘the nuns’. The witness remarked ‘I certainly didn’t see any evidence of vast sums of money being passed over, you know parents being groomed to have children in order to ... for prospective adoptive parents’.
69. The witness believed that the contents of the file note and the draft briefing paper were a consequence of miscommunication and misunderstanding.

That is just extraordinary, is there any other country in the world where officials working in state agencies make up ‘facts’ for their senior management to believe, and where senior management has no means to check such facts. In a safety-critical environment, where attention to detail and quality should be the norm, we have crazy stuff going on, evidence of the level of hysteria and incompetence. Incompetence is prevalent in the Irish public services, but this on a stratospheric level.

When buck-leppin politicians go a buck-leppin, it is usually to smite one’s political foe. Yet, there is a requirement that parliamentary statements contain at least some truth, even if it is bent or twisted. Statements without a grain of truth can land politicians in big trouble, standing accused of ‘misleading parliament’. In this case, the politicians have been active participants in their own deception. They have been too quick to communicate falsehoods to the parliament and public alike, especially anti-Christian fabrications.

Upon publication of the commission’s report, many dolts excitedly took to social media howling about the savage women who murdered 9,000 children. That is the total number of children which the commission has said died in secular County Homes, combined with the number of deaths at mother and baby homes from 1922 to 1998. The claims of murder are, as usual, untrue, but

the commission failed to anticipate the lurid allegations or passively promoted scandalous interpretation by not setting its figures in the context of the total number of deaths. There was a total of 177,024 infant deaths in the same period, on top of an extra 51,040 children who died before reaching the age of five, yielding a grand total of 228,064. High mortality rates were nothing unusual for that time and were not confined to institutions nor were they caused by them.

The commission collated data from 1922-1998 and came up with a total number of 57,000 children in the institutions it investigated were born to 56,000 mothers. It estimated that in other institutions not included in its investigation, a further 25,000 unmarried mothers and a larger number of children were born. Included in this figure are the numbers children born at other hospitals while their mother was under the care of an institution. However, to put that figure in context, the total number of illegitimate births was 257,423 for the same period. Adding on a c. pro-rata sum for the higher number of children than mothers, it adds up to a total of 82,500. Subtract this figure from the overall total, and it leaves a figure of 175,923. That is a 3 to 1 ratio; for everyone illegitimate child born in an institution, three more illegitimate children were born elsewhere.²⁴²

Note the significance of this point: 175,923 illegitimate children were born outside of state institutions, presumably, to a majority of women who kept their babies with the support of their families, the father or through a maintenance court order. Despite not publishing this number, the story of grandmothers and families rearing their daughter's illegitimate child was not entirely missed by the commission. Obviously, its importance could not be emphasised due to the likelihood that it would detract from its predetermined conclusions.

It is a sad fact of life that most of these children born in mother and baby homes were unwanted by their mothers or her family. We have a different way of dealing with unwanted children today, which if it were used in the past, tens of thousands of people would not be alive today. Furthermore, the commission acknowledges from witnesses' statements that they were better off in a mother and baby homes, having escaped from 'difficult or chaotic home lives, poverty, poor housing, beatings, alcoholism and incest.' There is an awful lot of distressing news to come from family history, which has yet to be revealed.

Shocking, appalling, distressing, and the full gamut of overly emotional adjectives are used to preface high infant mortality rates. As we will see, the entire abuse hypothesis rests on high infant mortality rates.

The commission is grossly in error on several issues, but none of their mistakes can be used to boost the scandal propagators' case; instead, the errors place the commission on the same side.

²⁴² All figures quoted outside of the commission's were calculated by Eugene Jordan using data compiled from the relevant Registrar General's reports

The first and most glaring mistake is the elementary error of equating high infant mortality rates with poor quality care, upon which they base many of their assumptions, and the report is full of assumptions and speculations. A second failing was to take academic writers' word at face value without checking it for veracity.

After reading Chapter 6, can you spot the blunder in this paragraph of the commission's report...

12. The very high rate of infant mortality (first year of life) in Irish mother and baby homes is probably the most **disquieting** feature of these institutions. The death rate among 'illegitimate' children was always considerably higher than that among 'legitimate' children but it was higher still in mother and baby homes: in the years 1945-46, the death rate among infants in mother and baby homes was almost twice that of the national average for 'illegitimate' children.

The emphasis above is mine; the statements are unequivocal, revealing what the commission think is the most important or **disquieting** finding in the report. Firstly, disturbing, distressing, disconcerting, unsettling, worrying, frightening are all synonyms of 'disquieting', which adds emotional connotations to cold hard data. Throughout the report, the commission continually interjects using emotionally charged terms to lead readers to interpret information in an unjustified way. For example, they tell us that the first registrar general report of the Irish Free State highlighted the **appalling** excess mortality of children born to unmarried mothers'. Such reports publish the data gathered the previous year when Ireland was part of the UK, and the use of the word 'appalling' is entirely the addition of the commission. I have searched through all the Registrar's reports, and I can only find the term '**appalling**' used only once in 1906 by the Registrar General when describing the number of deaths due to tuberculosis. The truth is that 'the **appalling** excess mortality of children' features in the registrar general's report was present for decades under British rule. The same paragraph praises the British, mentioning that in wartime Britain, the Birmingham local authority took action to reduce high infant mortality rates among illegitimate infants and succeeded. They are of the impression that the Irish government did nothing, which is a significant mistake, reliant entirely on a lack of historical knowledge and a lack of the skills necessary to do joined-up thinking.

Infant mortality in general remained high in Ireland until the late 1940s, especially in the inner cities, yet there was no national outcry about this, except among a small number of medical professionals.²⁴³

One could easily get annoyed with such a sweeping statement built not on

factual evidence but entirely on their prejudices. There were plenty of charities working to reduce the high infant mortality rates, organisations funded through public donations; in other words, members of the public who were concerned about the plight of infants. That is, members of the public, who in large numbers, dug into their own pockets to finance the care of infants born to poor parents. The reference to a small number of medics is equally scurrilous. It completely discounts the central government's efforts and the local authorities to deal with the problem and ignore their successes. Remember, in earlier chapters, we encountered the story of the government's and philanthropic societies' outstanding efforts to reduce deaths from the biggest killer of infants, enteritis, and the success they ultimately enjoyed.

Earlier I praised the commission for seeking expert medical guidance concerning the meaning of 'marasmus' on death certificates, but they did not always seek expert guidance, especially concerning statistics. There is no evidence that they consulted with any experts in the fields of epidemiology or pathology (the study of disease).²⁴⁴

One of Dr James Deeny's successors is Dr Tony Holohan, who was appointed the Chief Medical Officer in 2008 and was in office while the commission was researching and writing its report. It appears that he was not consulted about the difficulty and pitfalls of drawing inferences from medical statistics.

The Irish Independent carried an article about high mortality rates at specific hospitals in 2015, under the headline 'Revealed: Irish hospitals with highest patient death rates from heart attack and stroke'. The article states: 'this is the first-time death rates from any conditions per hospital have been published by the Department of Health.'

When it comes to the interpretation of statistics, the doctor was keen to urge caution:

Chief medical officer Dr Tony Holohan said the publication of the rates do not amount to a league table because it is unclear what the background factors are such as the patient's overall state of health. **He could not say if those with higher rates, for 2011 to 2013, have lower quality of care – however the figures are indicators which signal the need for more investigation.** "It is like an alarm going off – but it does not mean there is a burglar in the house," he added. [...] I want to point out that there is no such thing as perfect data but the indicators presented in this report signal to us that certain services require further analysis and examination in order to identify if a problem exists.²⁴⁵

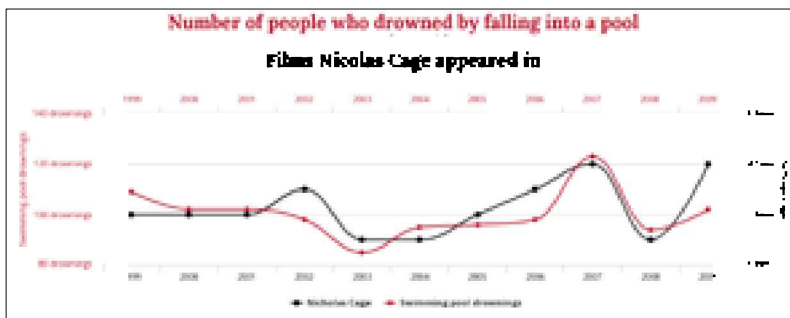
No such cation or expertise concerning how inferences can be validly drawn

²⁴⁴ Epidemiology - the scientific study of diseases and how they are found, spread, and controlled in groups of people
²⁴⁵ O'Regan, 'Revealed'.

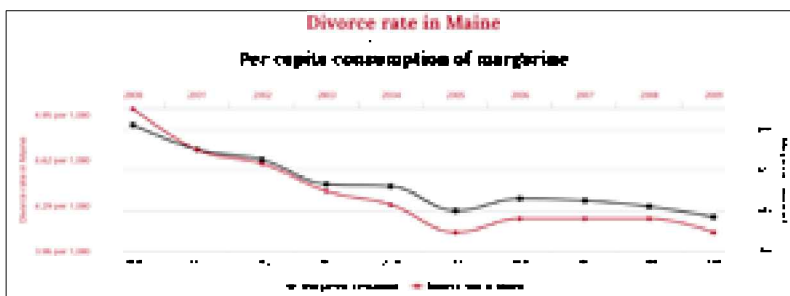
from statistical data is visible throughout the commission's entire report. As we shall now see, they have walked blindly into a statistical fallacy, a significant blunder, which is clear evidence of an absence of relevant knowledge of the most basic fundamentals of statistical analysis, taught to every first-year statistician and data scientist, 'correlation does not imply causation'²⁴⁶. That is exactly what Tony Holohan was saying in 2015.

Correlation in statistics is where one or more variables increase or decrease at the same time as another. A variable is just a number which can vary, up or down. A good example of a statistical correlation is between the number of ice-creams sold and the number of cases of heatstroke. It would be a joke to claim that ice-cream consumption was causing heatstroke, as Tony Holohan indicates 'further analysis' is required to establish the cause, which in this case is a third variable, high temperatures. There are many websites that poke fun at spurious correlations.

As you can see from this graph, the lines showing the number of occurrences in a year of two different phenomena appear to follow the same pattern. The correlation score in this graph is 66.6%, known as a strong correlation. The correlation between divorce in Maine and the per capita consumption of margarine scores 99.26%, a perfect correlation. Correlations can be negative, i.e., when one variable goes up, another goes down.



*Is Nicolas Cage a secret pool murderer? (Graph: TylerVigen.com)
note the correlation score of 66% and the 99.26% below*



²⁴⁶ Leo Varadkar, used this very phrase in response to misuse of correlation by an academic on the Tonight with Vincent Browne show. Her response was to Leo down starting with the phrase 'everyone knows'.

Had the commission been aware of the ‘fundamental problem of causal inference’, I am sure that they would have been more cautious in basing assumptions on false inferences and would have gone in search of the true causes of high infant mortality rates. At no point in the report did the commission manage to join up the dots and analyse the data for correlations with poverty. Poverty is often mentioned in the report, but there is no attempt to factor it in or look for a valid causal relationship.

There can be a correlation between high infant mortality rates and poor-quality care, but no conclusions can be drawn from this statistic without proper analysis.

For a time at the Bessborough Home as we encountered earlier, when Deeny fired the Medical Officer and the Matron, high infant mortality rates caused much concern and were ultimately found to be due to substandard care. Inspectors were worried for years before Deeney discovered the actual causes of the high infant mortality rates. In response to one report, the Mother Superior responded that ‘our doctors are very puzzled and do not understand the cause’. The Department rejected her defence, and in response, the congregation stated that were anxious to solve the problem, but at the same time, it can be seen that they thought the problem was due to the limitations of medical science. The correspondence cited a recent article published in the Irish Times entitled ‘Irish Doctors Baffled’. The article was about the 241 deaths among Dublin infants between January and September 1943 and stated that Irish doctors were baffled in the search for the bacterial cause of the deaths.

The medical officer said that 24 children under two years had died in Dublin in one week alone. He said that no specific bacterial cause had been discovered and advised that the best way to combat the diseases was for mothers to breastfeed their infants.

At Bessborough, reports stated the mothers had no interest in their children, breastfeeding rates were low, and if anyone was encouraging the women to breastfeed, it was of little effect.

All were perplexed by the high infant mortality rates, and no one could find the problem until the Chief Medical Advisor, James Deeny, showed up and inspected the premises. He too found that the institution was spotlessly clean and well run and was perplexed at first about what was causing the problem. Then he did something unusual; he medically examined every child and found that many were suffering from an infection. His report was brutally honest:

(7) Medical attention must be of a most superficial nature. In this respect I regard the M.O. [Medical Officer/Doctor] of the home as distinctly culpable. In view of the death rate he must have known that something was wrong with the care the children were receiving and if he did, he should then have sought the cause which on a simple examination was

immediately revealed. There is no doubt that in this case - and in view of the hundreds of children whose lives have been lost - his complacency or ignorance should be regarded as criminal. I am convinced that a continuation of his services would be detrimental to the home and that he should be dismissed.

(8) The Reverend Mother should be replaced with someone with ability to administer an institution dealing with Maternity and the care of infants and children.

(9) The [woman] in charge of the infant's Dept is both stupid and ignorant.

Deeny had oversight of all mother and baby homes, and at no other time did he make such comments about other mother and baby homes, nor did he take high infant mortality rates as evidence of poor-quality care. Deeney was fearless and would not stand for poor quality care. Like most other competent physicians, he knew that such rates ring alarm bells but are proof of nothing while standing on their own.

Nonetheless, the commission is adamant that high mortality rates stand as evidence of poor-quality care and use this fallacy to establish a 'league table'. Sometimes they show an awareness of other factors and at times, are frustratingly close to establishing causal relationships but miss the opportunity and decide to speculate instead.

243. There is greater cause for concern in the high mortality of women before 1950 from causes that were unrelated to pregnancy, including infectious diseases. *It seems probable that the factors that contributed to the high rate of infant mortality were also responsible for mortality among the mothers from causes that were not related to childbirth.*

So 'it seems probable' that the same contributory factors were at play. Yes, they were, there is no need to speculate, and this unawareness caused the commission not to investigate it further, mistakenly assuming that the causes were unfindable. They were frustratingly close to viewing the 'poverty health penalty', but despite the alarm bells ringing out loudly, they missed it completely. In Chapter 6, I demonstrated comprehensively that poverty is behind high infant mortality rates today and was the biggest single factor behind the same statistics in the past. Nothing has changed; only the proof has got more robust. Not only is there is a strong correlation between rising economic circumstances and a decline in high infant mortality rates, but the causal relationship has also been long established by science.

Even more unforgivably, the commission has been through James Deeny's book and use several quotes from it but manage to miss important evidence. Before Deeny moved to Dublin, he carried out a study into high infant mortality

rates in Belfast. He examined cases and circumstances surrounding the deaths of 554 babies who died in the 12 months between June 1942 and June 1943. Deeny reports:

Babies who died were almost all a preselected group. [...] The babies who died had a lower birth weight. The parents of these babies mainly lived in the poorer areas and had smaller incomes than the rest. [...] The babies who died lived in smaller and more overcrowded houses. [...] The main causes of death were respiratory infections, gastro intestinal conditions, premature births (low birth weights) and a group of miscellaneous disorders. Even in those days I was convinced that seventy percent of those five hundred and fifty babies could have been saved.

The causes of high infant mortality rates that Deeny found in Belfast under British rule were also present in the Free State and in every cohort in every country where poverty was present. The commission, still perplexed, noted that infant mortality rates were particularly high during the war years and began to drop significantly after 1947. The drop coincided with the 1947 Health Act, which had an undoubted significant influence on mortality statistics across the board, but many other factors influenced the high mortality statistics during the Emergency. Even a cursory look at the Health Act would have revealed to the commission that there is a lot more to public health than just medical treatment alone.

The commission dedicates an entire chapter to ‘The War Years’, which demonstrates the adverse effects of poverty on pregnant women comprehensively. However, despite jumping out from the report’s pages, the commission frustratingly misses the opportunity to factor it in as a primary cause of high infant mortality rates. The chapter is presentist, sneering at failures and what it claims was inaction. It is full of assumptions that quixotically expects perfection and never allows for practical possibilities, given its dire economic situation of the country and its people.

WWII had a major impact on the Irish economy; between 1939 and 1947, the price of a dozen herrings rose by 200 per cent, rabbits by 300 per cent, the average price rise for 32 of the most common household food and essential items like clothes and shoes rose by an average of 110 per cent.²⁴⁷ The war hit Ireland hard, but the poor were disproportionality affected. The basic essentials – food, clothing and fuel – became scarce. The government introduced rationing and price controls to keep prices down, but the strategy was ineffective. The Irish Housewives’ Committee, fourth annual report, June 1946, stated that ‘As far as our work is concerned, it will be a very long time before the Emergency is over’.²⁴⁸ Then food prices went up again in the wake of the ‘big freeze’ of

²⁴⁷ Bryan, ‘Rationing in Emergency Ireland, 1939-48’.

²⁴⁸ Bryan.

1946-47.

Rationing was introduced to ensure equitable distribution of essentials. Voucher and food welfare schemes existed in Ireland before the war, but these were greatly expanded from early 1941. Poor people living in the towns were worse off than those in rural areas, which is reflected in high infant mortality rates, termed by statisticians 'an urban penalty'.

Catholic Social Services Conference CSSC was set up in 1941 in Dublin city by Archbishop John McQuaid as an umbrella organisation intended to coordinate the relief efforts of multiple catholic charities serving the city's poor. It successfully provided a wide variety of services, including meals, clothing and services to pregnant women. Seven hundred expectant mothers on average attended the CSSC maternity welfare centres each month. Figures show that over the course of 12 months, it had served 200,000 meals along with 200,000 pints of milk to expectant and nursing mothers. To use a phrase from the commission, there is no evidence that unmarried mothers were excluded from receiving relief. But without any evidence, the commission says that there is no evidence the unmarried mothers were fed because they were considered a class apart—an extraordinary assumption. The CSSC provided to the poor of Dublin with between six and eight million meals per year, but that fact gets no mention.

The commission is happy to praise the British and sneer at the Irish:

5.11 During the war years, Britain adopted an interventionist food policy with extensive rationing and price controls and nutrients were added to basic food products such as bread and flour. This ensured that all sections of the population were adequately fed and, indeed, the nutritional standards of poorer people improved with obvious benefits for health and well-being. Ireland adopted a more laissezfaire approach. Rationing was limited - mainly to tea, sugar and butter. Bread rationing was not introduced until 1947. There is evidence that nutritional standards deteriorated during the Emergency

There is no need to wear spearfishing goggles to see what the author is implying; the British were brilliant while d'Irish sat on their lazy, laissez-faire ass.

The science of nutrition was relatively new, and the British had conducted a ground-breaking survey based on new advances in nutritional science. Its first report in 1937 indicated that the country was not importing enough food to adequately feed its population. Britain took action to ensure it had an adequate supply of food and later acted to ensure that Ireland did not.

In April 1939, Irish health officials travelled to London to attend the 'National conference on the wider aspects of nutrition' held in British Medical Association

(BMA) House, Tavistock Square, London

In October 1941, at the urgings of Seán Lemas, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, an expert committee was set up under the Medical Association of Eire who appointed a Dietetic Council. Their aim was to pool their knowledge and experiment in ways of aiding people's nutrition.

The Catholic Church was also very keen to promote the new science of nutrition. Ciarán Bryan puts it like this:

An invaluable aspect of the work conducted by the CSSC was in the area of human nutrition and the way in which it made practical use of the science of dietetics.

In October 1941 a booklet which was sponsored by the CSSC – Food supplies – food and dietetics – was published. Its author was Professor Edmund J. Sheehy who was first and foremost an agricultural scientist who specialised in animal nutrition, but had obviously kept pace with developments in the field of human nutrition. Evidence of this lies in the booklet itself and in an appendix (which he also authored) to William Fearon's important article, *The National problem of nutrition*.²⁴⁹ [1938]

Commenting on the 'inadequate and incomplete diet' of the poor, the booklet noted:

Examination of the food budgets of these families, aided by our numerous charitable organisations, reveals an alarming state of affairs. Bread, tea or cocoa, sugar, and margarine constitute the principle items of their daily food. Vegetables and eggs are practically unknown quantities in these households.

Tea and bread were the staple diet in poor urban households, not a single potato in sight. The commission is significantly mistaken to suggest laziness was the cause of malnutrition. Malnutrition amongst the poor remained a problem throughout the war years, but without great efforts of the church and state, there would have been mass starvation, as we will see.

Significant information has been left out of the report, as I have eluded in earlier chapters; it remains highly problematic for modern Irish history writing. All the quality issues which currently afflict Irish historical interpretation are abundantly evident throughout the report. It is bad enough to completely ignore one of the primary causes of high infant mortality rates, but then, the commission continually forms opinions without looking for evidence that might disconfirm their beliefs. This lack of a scientific approach is behind several major faux pas, including this one. The commission thinks that no one cared and that there

²⁴⁹ William R. Fearon was professor of biochemistry at Dublin University,

was no public outcry about high mortality rates. There was a huge outcry, but the commission was looking the other way. If they had gone in search of the fundamental causes of the problem, they would have found many serious attempts to solve the plight of the poor. Efforts were ongoing to move people from slums into new local authority estates, free health care, free clothing etc. The Irish nation funded a wide range of charities, including infant aid societies who sourced 'clean milk' and gave it free of charge and at a reduced cost to mothers. Reports about their work and the number of families which received milk and clothing were regularly reported in the newspapers. The state worked hard to develop maternity and child welfare schemes; to suggest that it did nothing, while not taking into account the significant difficulties faced by the state and society, is merely poor-quality analysis.

Comparing the situation in one of the world's poorest countries, Ireland, to the richest, Britain, (only fell behind America during World War II), is a false comparison. Using a false comparison to attack the Irish, is all too common in Ireland. On many occasions, the commission falls into this trap, comparing the drop in infant mortality rates in Birmingham, England during WWII, to insinuate that the Irish should have followed their lead and were incompetent for not doing so. It indicates that such writers have taken many lazy intellectual shortcuts. In 1939 Britain assigned 50 per cent of its national budget to defence, causing a massive drop in unemployment, while in Ireland, at the same time, unemployment rose.

In the pre-war years, Irish politicians were hopeful that a trade deal with Britain would end the Economic War of 1932-38 and allow for new economic opportunities. James Dillon TD, in a speech to the Irish parliament in 1937, saw an opening for Irish exports.

If the health of the British people is to be maintained, and their physique developed, greatly increased quantities of butter, eggs, milk products, and proteins in the form of fresh meat or bacon must be made available to the masses of the people.²⁵⁰

Economic benefits from supplying food to wartime Britain did not materialise. Things got worse, much worse, as Bryce Evans of Liverpool University points out:

The "phoney war" following Britain's declaration of war on Germany in September 1939 ended in June 1940 with the fall of France. British prime minister Winston Churchill made Taoiseach Éamon de Valera a deal: end neutrality and Britain would end partition. De Valera's refusal prompted a bitter Churchill to respond by subjecting Ireland to a crippling supply squeeze.

250 Dáil Debate, 21 Apr. 1937

Although diplomacy dominates popular understanding of the Emergency, the use of hunger as a weapon of war deserves much greater emphasis. When Churchill turned off the tap, Ireland's agricultural economy, perilously reliant on British supplies, was devastated. In 1940, the State was importing six million tons of animal feed from Britain, but the figure was zero by 1942. It was the same with fertiliser: 74,000 tons in 1940, zero by 1942. Other vital modern productive aids, from pesticides to tractors, all but disappeared too.²⁵¹

Britain used 'hunger used as a weapon of war' against neutral Ireland. You will not find that phrase in much use by Irish academic historians, nor could the country have met many Irish historians' magical expectations of becoming a wealthy society overnight, especially after emerging in 1922 from centuries of British economic tyranny. Britain's economic tyranny continued long after independence, draining the post-independence Irish economy of financial resources, with the land annuity payments/RIC pensions. They fought a trade war with Ireland for most of the 1930s and then, during the early 1940s, refused to supply the country with goods necessary for food production and transport. It should come as no surprise to anyone that the government and business's efforts to progress economically could not have happened until after the war. The Irish attempts at economic development were thwarted through a series of misfortunate global happenings, the 1920s economic recession, the 1930s economic depression, the Second World, and not forgetting the wealthy Irish who squirrelled their money away and invested it in Britain.

When it takes British historians to tell us our own history, we know that we have been badly let down by Irish academia.

When used as a weapon of war, hunger has a disproportionate impact on the poor, reflected through high infant mortality rates and other statistical data of the wartime era. The fact that there was no mass starvation, particularly among Dublin's poor, is a testament to the trojan efforts of a great many people, to whom the population of urban Ireland owes a debt of gratitude.

Throughout the commission's report, the number of assumptions and speculation based thereupon is astonishing. Almost every assumption is loaded with presentism, assuming that people of the past should have known what we know today and acted accordingly. Those who did not act as we now think they should have done is taken as evidence of poor-quality care. They attribute the rise in infant mortality rate to overcrowding in institutions, the closeness of cots etc. All of the opinions they expressed on mortality are based on amateur assumptions without any knowledge of the time's historical epidemiology.

Remember Dr Bob Collis, who took an infant suffering from enteritis from one hospital to another to prove the disease was not infectious, and Deeny's

²⁵¹ Evans, 'What Ireland Ate and Drank during the Second World War'.

dysphemistic accusation of attempted murder against his friend. ‘Doctors differ, and patients die’ is the old saying. The commission knows how it should have been done:

240. There was an absence of infection control; a failure to isolate mothers and children who were being admitted, until they were proven not to carry an infectious disease. The risks of infection were exceptionally high in Tuam, which admitted older children, who might be homeless. The practice of isolating new admissions became more widespread during the 1940s, in response to mortality spikes.

As we saw in Chapter 6, incubation periods vary for different diseases and even quarantining people before admission would have limited effect. Moreover, certain diseases like measles and whooping cough are so highly infectious that they frequently render even the most stringent disease control strategies, next to useless. Ironically, the commission finalised its report in 2020, during a disease emergency, which required a major military-type lockdown of the population. Had they connected the dots and compared 21st-century attempts at disease control to that of the previous century, they would have been forced to moderate their opinion, and perhaps even alter it substantially. Despite all the infection control procedures in place, in an age of advanced medical knowledge, enormous financial resources, antibiotics, computers, advanced knowledge of sterilisation *ad inf.*, COVID-19 spread in hospitals through staff and patients alike. In the UK, research showed that up to twenty-five per cent of all COVID cases were hospital-acquired.²⁵² In the immediate years before COVID-19 struck, hospital-acquired infections forced the Irish health authorities to declare a Carbapenemase emergency. Despite a century of medical progress, hospital-acquired infections are nothing new, and neither is our inability to deal with the problem. It is tempting to remark, that in the battle with disease, it evolves for the sole reason to challenge our arrogance.

Over the course of the last century, as the knowledge of disease aetiology improved, medical procedures improved in response. Could they have improved earlier, yes, but only with the benefit of hindsight. The hindsight bias has no place in quality historical analysis. The inference that things should have been better is counterfactual history, and that is not history.

The commission acknowledges that progress took place:

242. The sharp decline in the incidence of infant mortality - nationally, and in urban areas - from the late 1940s was due to a variety of factors: antibiotics, immunisation programmes, improved quality of milk, isolation, and better sanitation and housing.

²⁵² ‘The Ongoing Problem of UK Hospital Acquired Infections’.

If no one cared, there would be no progress, and progress is clear evidence of a commitment to improving both on behalf of the health authorities and government. However, we see how central the issue of high mortality rates is to a whole range of assumptions. Moreover, while there is a small allusion to the phrase ‘better sanitation and housing’, the influence of the economic situation, poverty and food shortages on high infant mortality rates was never properly evaluated by the commission despite making many comments on the subject.

Moreover, the commission’s knowledge of medical statistics and infant diseases is highly deficient and contains no expertise. They are convinced that overcrowding was the primary cause of disease spread and therefore responsible for the high infant mortality rates.

They do not understand the meaning of the word ‘congenital’. Congenital means that a condition existed from birth. For example, congenital syphilis means that the mother had the disease, and the child was born with it, it did not catch the disease through contact with other persons. The statistics show that congenital weakness was exceptionally high, indicating a high level of poor maternal health. Had they checked the data against maternity hospitals’ statistics for well off women, this might have become apparent.

Tuberculosis was rampant in Ireland at the time and can also be congenital. The incubation period for the disease is two to twelve weeks, that is, the number of days between when a person becomes infected with a disease and when symptoms might be seen. Symptoms are not always evident, and it may be up to two years before a person becomes sick with TB. Infant deaths due to TB are likely to have been contracted in utero.

The Commission states:

6.28 Despite significant advances, infant mortality in mother and baby homes remained much higher than the national rate. In 1950, the main causes of death listed in Pelletstown included prematurity, syphilis, cardiac failure, pneumonia, congenital debility and inanition.

Of all these conditions, only pneumonia can be spread through the air, but a more likely explanation is that pneumonia spread through blood, a common problem occurring during and shortly after birth. Worldwide, pneumonia killed 808,694 children under the age of 5 in 2017, accounting for 15% of all deaths of children under five years old.²⁵³ Medical science acknowledges that much more research needs to be done to understand the causes and transmission more fully. The commission, however, has no medical justification for assumptions.

The commission also blames high infant mortality rates on a lack of ante-natal care but never compare and contrast that to ante-natal care, which was afforded

²⁵³ ‘Pneumonia’.

to married mothers. The ante-natal medical care women enjoy today was not even though of during the first half of the twentieth century. However, the commission is wrong; thousands of poor pregnant women were given special treatment and fed nutritious food by the catholic church and other philanthropic organisations.

During the 1840s famine, most of the victims died not of starvation but from diseases associated with starvation. Similarly, many diseases are associated with the poor and are known colloquially as ‘diseases of the poor’. Present-day statisticians will factor in ‘diseases of the poor’ to provide better quality or risk-adjusted analysis, which would allow inferences not to be drawn, but for a clearer picture to be seen. This clear picture would set the high infant mortality rates in an infinitely more valuable analytical context.

Most of the homes in the commission’s report were not exclusively homes for unmarried mothers and their children; they provided shelter for a whole range of high-risk children, including both physically and mentally disabled children, foundlings, neglected and abandoned children who were often too young to be sent to other institutions. Often, institutions had to take back children who became sick who were previously boarded out to foster mothers either by their institutions or mothers. If they happen to die, their deaths are recorded at the institution, driving up the mortality statistics even though the events which contributed to the cause of death occurred externally.

Women child abusers

The commission was very keen to attack women who agreed to foster infants, stating emphatically that ‘many of these nurse children were neglected, even abused’—another unfair use of false assumptions.²⁵⁴ The commission imagines that most, if not all, of the women who took care of infants, were abusing them without ever taking into account the difficulties of rearing infants. Infants are much more fragile than we are inclined to think and across the globe, in every society, infants in the care of foster mothers suffer from high infant mortality rates. As a result, historians have not been kind to foster mothers and have overstated the numbers of deaths due to abuse and neglect. Many fostered out infants started life with a biological disadvantage, missing out on colostrum, born to an unhealthy mother, sometimes with undiscovered birth defects. On top of all, they were unwanted by their mother. The effects of poor maternal health and/or poor nutrition during pregnancy could not be reversed at that time. No matter how good the care given to the infants by the foster mother was, deaths could still occur. The very point is made by a medical officer reporting on deaths which occurred at the Bessborough maternity hospital in 1942-43:

... Marasmus. In this latter condition no matter what feeding or medical treatment was given they did not thrive. This is not due to insufficient or

²⁵⁴ Commission of Investigation, ‘Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Final Report’. 11.122

defective food, as the most scrupulous attention is paid to the diet, and in every case, unless there is some indication to the contrary, breast feeding is insisted on.²⁵⁵

The medical knowledge was insufficient to know what was causing the deaths of babies at the time. In 1939, a government inspector reported to the departmental secretary that in the institutions, 'in theory, every advantage should lie on the side of a child institutionally born', but it didn't, and that was reflected in the high infant mortality rates. She was puzzled about causes of the high rates and recommended that patients not be sent there 'so long as no attempt is made to explore the causes of this abnormally high death rate.'²⁵⁶

The evidence speaks for itself, the medical profession, department inspectors or the health department itself were perplexed, but the commission expects them not to have been perplexed and to have known what they could not know. It uses the excuse that 'Ireland was seriously out of line with neighbouring countries'. That is simply presentism and evidence of an uninformed opinion on matters medical and historical.

On top of that, the commission conflates 'private nursing homes' with baby farms and fails to adequately distinguish between the two, confusing their readers. They never investigated the nature and extent of baby farming as illustrated through their speculation that baby farming went on in Ireland, but there were fewer mentions in the press and medical journals because 'the Irish authorities and journalists may have shown less interest in the matter'.²⁵⁷ Nothing could be further from the truth. As I demonstrated earlier, instances of baby farming were reported in the press, laws enacted, and prosecutions pursued to stamp out the practice. The lower instances were due to societal differences between a largely protestant society and a largely catholic society, and these social forces were also completely missed. The competition between the two main religious denominations in Ireland kept the number of baby farmers low and saved many lives.

Private institutions and private nursing homes were not the same. The term 'private nursing homes' included personal residences, not purpose-built homes or buildings converted into an institution. The portion of these homes where care may have been substandard was often referred to by commentators as 'a lower class of maternity home'. It is easy to get confused with the archaic terminology, especially as these terms have different meanings today.

Women who were found to have infants in their care who were not registered with the authorities were in breach of the law and were baby farmers. As the name suggests, baby farming women were skilled in the art of deception and represented themselves to mothers and the authorities as capable and caring.

²⁵⁵ Commission of Investigation. 18.101

²⁵⁶ Commission of Investigation. 4.116

²⁵⁷ Commission of Investigation. 3.45

When the inspectors found unregistered babies at a home it set off alarm bells; the action was swift, children were removed, and the baby farmer prosecuted. That happened in most cases when evidence of dishonesty was found. Some organisations placed infants with women of dubious character, even after inspection reports marked them out as unsuitable. This points to a lack of communication in an age where communication was nowhere as easy as it is today, but the commission uses it insinuate incompetence. Infant mortality rates at baby farms were high the world over, partially due to the difficulty of rearing infants, ignorance of competent infant care, and sometimes wilful neglect and murder. The commission could easily have distinguished between the women who were engaged in criminal acts and those who were genuine and competent foster mothers to yield the true extent of the problem of baby farming in Ireland. Most children were fortunate to be reared by competent women, and the commission has no right to disparage and sneer at all foster women and lob them all in the same category as criminal women.

Glossed over throughout the commission's report is the fact that many children were unwanted by the mothers. Instances are reported of women attempting to kill their baby while was in the womb by taking hot baths, throwing themselves down a flight of stairs, drinking 'sheep dip compound' and more. High numbers of mothers had no interest in their baby, no interest in breastfeeding it and just wanted to leave it there and get on with their lives. It is a simple fact of life that many, if not most, unmarried mothers did not care if the child lived or died; they never wanted to see it again.

Economic Reasons

At times, the commission alludes to economics but do it in a one-dimensional manner, viewing economic evidence in terms of money-saving, the need to reduce taxes without looking at the prevailing economic factors affecting the country, and the impossibility of an economic cure. The primary factor driving a reduction in mortality rates post WWII was the improving economy. A secondary reason, also wholly ignored in their statistical analysis, was emigration. In the aftermath of the war, Britain enjoyed a golden economic age with a mere two per cent unemployment. The poor Irish left in their droves, out of a population of just under three million, 500,00 are estimated to have emigrated to Britain between 1945 and 1960. In effect, Ireland exported a significant quantity of its poor people along with their high infant mortality rates.

The commission comments regularly on emigration, but it does not view it as a factor causing improvements in infant mortality rates; they concentrate on PFI, Pregnant From Ireland to give the impression that pregnant women were coerced or almost forcibly repatriated to Ireland. Pregnant women from Ireland would often land in Britain poverty-stricken, innocent and provided easy pickings for pimps and people traffickers. Anti-Irish racism was shocking and pregnant women were not entitled to free health care under the British

National Health Service, NHS. Entry to British mother and baby homes was also restricted as places had to be pre-booked. Various charities set out to help such women, including the Catholic Rescue Society, which helped to repatriate and secure places at home in Ireland for many of these unfortunate women. Quite a few Irish women got pregnant within a short time after arrival in Britain, but again the British refused to deal with Irish women. Many returned to Ireland to give birth, left and went back to England, and so the burden of providing 16-years of assistance fell on Ireland.

The situation regarding high infant mortality rates has now been entirely reversed between Ireland and Britain in recent times. Looking at the causes might give us a clue as to the causes of high infant mortality rates. Reports continue to be published in UK medical journals about Britain having one of the worst infant mortality rates in Europe, ranking mere 22nd out of 27 nations. By these measures, Ireland is far ahead, but the problem is much worse than mere raw statics can reveal. Accordingly, the British hunt for causes by using categorisation. Reports continuously show that infant mortality rates are 'twice as high in the most deprived areas (5 per 1000) compared with the least deprived areas (2.7 per 1000)'.²⁵⁸

Lies, damn lies, the inability to understand statistics

There is a hospital close to where I live, which has a shocking annual mortality rate above 90%. I am using the word shocking to add emotion to this cold statistic in imitation of the many journalists who in desperation to earn a living or through lack of basic knowledge, use emotion to make their article stand above the rest and is, therefore, more likely to get published. It would appear that humans have an innate tendency to equate high mortality rates with poor quality care, but this is fallacious thinking. It has been the cause of many misleading articles, so finally, in 2019 the health gurus have been moved to correct the public misunderstanding. For example, the National Healthcare Quality Reporting System Annual Report 2019 stated,

It cannot be concluded that a high mortality rate is indicative of poor quality care. Rather it provides an indication that a further evaluation should be carried out to determine the reasons for the identified variation in mortality rates.

Even so, many newspapers carried headlines extrapolated from the report:

Risk of heart attack death higher in some hospitals, study finds – *Irish Times* May 28, 2019

Kilkenny hospital shows high mortality rate from strokes, but heart attack sufferers fare better – *Kilkenny People* 8th July 2019

²⁵⁸ Mahase, 'UK Born Children Are Often Worse off than Those in Other Rich Countries, Report Finds'.

A patient's chance of dying from a heart attack or stroke can vary depending on what hospital they attend – thejournal.ie 8th July 2019

It cannot be concluded that a high mortality rate is indicative of poor quality care.

The Committee of the National Healthcare Quality Reporting System

These headline writers have all drawn inferences from the statistics which at first glance to be true but are misleading. The latter from thejournal.ie while seeming innocuous but is a sensationalist claim, which completely contradicts what the report stated about further evaluation. Nowhere in the Commission's report are the chances of dying from an ailment measured or reported. Yet when we read of higher mortality statistics in a particular institution for a specific disease, we are inclined to agree with such writers. The fact of the matter is that raw statistics reveal little on their own and need to be interpreted, and how even basic statistics are interpreted creates many problems. It usually takes a measure of expertise to draw inferences from data, which must be corroborated using other evidence. It is often impossible to reach valid inferences, so the problem is left hanging in the air until more work can be done on it. In this vacuum, fools rush in where angels fear to tread reaching all sorts of conclusions across the full gamut ranging from worthy only of ridicule to it might be plausible. At a fundamental level, however, the most significant problem afflicting statistics is human interpretation. We know that human interpretation is flawed, and science has developed strategies to cope with these flaws, but while the systems are not fool proof, they have never been deployed in writings of those who are unfamiliar with statistical analysis. That is the very essence is at the heart of the mother and baby homes scandal where writers, broadcasters, bloggers and more have rushed to reinterpret the historical statistical data and have leapt to conclusions, which are not only invalid but stretch credulity to astronomical levels.

Ironically, if 'the church and state [had] colluded to get rid of an embarrassment to Catholic Ireland' they would have hidden the statistics, but the deaths of illegitimate children were recorded, and detailed statistics were published in the annual report of the Registrar General. Furthermore, mother and baby homes were subjected to inspections and statistics were recorded to improve outcomes, which is precisely the same process provided by The National Healthcare Quality Reporting System today. None of the inspectors nor the statisticians working at that time interpreted the statistics as abuse or murder. Inspectors at times used emotive language in reports to emphasise their calls for urgent action. Using today's knowledge, we can see how easy it was to solve the problem and side with those who got right and CORF at those who got it wrong.

Remember the hospital near me with a mortality rate of over 90 per cent? It's a special hospital called a hospice, a place where terminally ill patients are sent to die, that is why its mortality rate is so high.

Time compression

Numbers on their own can be misleading and high numbers of bad things lead us to jump to conclusions. However, when the events of any past period are examined, a time compression occurs, leading us to believe that occurrences were closer together than they were in reality. When we look back at the Tuam Children's Home, the events are told in a story that appears sequential and rapid, even though it took place over a 35-year period.

The commission relies heavily on inspector's reports, and keenly fill in knowledge gaps with assumptions. An inspection regime exists to find faults, not positives. Positives are largely ignored unless the result from the correction of faults. Accordingly, most inspector's reports are biased in the negative. Many hospitals today have been found by inspectors to have many problems, even concerning basic hygiene. Inspectors frequently report that poor hygiene at certain hospitals has put its patients at significant risk. One would reasonably expect hand hygiene would be an easy sell to healthcare staff, but not so. In the pre COVID-19 era, inspectors reported finding significant levels of non-compliance with standards both with hygiene and with care in general. If we were to look back over all the inspector's reports, for a particular hospital, we would find the same negativity in its inspection reports. Thus, care has to be taken when using such reports that we seek to balance, viewing reports under the light of human failings rather than the quixotic expectation of perfection. Remembering that the primary purpose of an inspection regime is not to lay the blame on people but to improve the system.

Deaths occurred at the Tuam Children's Home at an average rate of under two a month, which was not unusual for an institution of its size at that time. Infants died at the same rate in two British NHS hospitals in Northern Ireland recently.

Murder of the innocence in 21st Century UK.

'Four innocent infants murdered by plumbers in hospitals of the United Kingdom'. Taking a leaf out of the book of today's journalists, I write this possible hysterical future headline, imagining journalists of the future practising as they do today, but writing about our times.

In December of 2011, one baby died at Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry followed by the deaths of three more infants at the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital in Belfast in January 2012.²⁵⁹ The neonates died at these hospitals from a *Pseudomonas Aeruginosa* infection. They were the victims of progress, plumbing progress.

When a manual water tap/faucet is operated, at least one hand is away from

²⁵⁹ 'Timeline'.

the tap orifice, turning on the tap with the result that whatever biology that was growing around the tap orifice gets flushed away before a hand goes under it. In older design taps, the spout faces downward so that water drains away after use, but in some designs with an upward spout, a measure of water remains after use where it can become contaminated. With an automatic tap, hands have to be placed under the tap for it to operate, and therefore, this increases the risk of infection due to contaminants not getting flushed away before use. It was an upgrade from manual to automatic taps at the two hospitals, which led to the hands of staff becoming contaminated with a bacterium leading to the deaths of four infants.

Today we are familiar with the concept of a compromised immune system, and the high mortality risk infection poses to such individuals. All infants have an undeveloped immune system; accordingly, even healthy infants are automatically in a high-risk category.

Even in the 21st century with hospitals path labs, consultant microbiologists, antibiotics, tons of money and vastly superior medical knowledge, four babies' lives could not be saved. If we cannot save babies today, why is it that we think they could have been saved a century or half a century ago when the conditions were far worse than today? The blame for that faulty thinking lies with the hindsight bias, which decrees that once a problem has been solved, the people should have known how to solve it before it was.

Opinion Manipulation Using Statistics

Did you know that fifty per cent of doctors qualify in their final exam with marks which are below their class average? I imagine that they must all have gotten jobs at hospitals with high mortality rates! How many times have you come across reports in the media about something above or below average? Below average is bad, above average is good. Average is a measure of what mathematicians call 'central tendency'. It is always in the middle. Accordingly, if 50% of doctors qualified with scores below average, then the other 50% qualified with scores above average. It is probably one of the easiest and most common ways to manipulate opinions using statistics. So, the number of hospitals that are above average is always balanced by the same number of hospitals which are below average.

However, there is a much more intelligent way to manipulate public opinion with regard to hospital statistics. If you ever become the manager of a hospital or health care facility, you do not have to improve treatments or conditions to reduce mortality rates. A very simple but brilliant strategy will suffice. It takes advantage of the public's poor understanding of mortality statistics. Whenever a patient or resident is about to die, get rid of them! Send them home to die, or to the hospice. That is it, very simple. All that remains to do is to claim that the drop in mortality rates at your hospital or institution, was due to your genius and good management skills. You can spend your whole career looking out for

dying patients, to keep your mortality statistics low without ever bothering to increase patient care quality.

In the healthcare sector, this is a regular occurrence, and is so popular in America that they have coined a term for it, ‘hospice flipping’. Despite our natural inclination to equate high mortality rates with poor quality care, the reality is that a very good hospital providing the best quality healthcare can have quite high mortality rates. In its second report in 2017, the National Audit of Hospital Mortality (NAHM) found that a higher mortality rate was recorded at Cork University Hospital (CUH) for ischaemic stroke than anywhere else in the country. At first glance, it might appear that if you were suffering from a stroke, CUH is the last place you would want to be, but the high mortality rate is due to it having a specialist stroke unit. Similarly, hospitals with a specialist cardiac unit have a higher number of deaths than non-specialist hospitals because cardiac patients are transferred to a specialist unit. For that reason, statisticians use a standardised mortality ratio to see if the number of deaths is higher than can be explained by chance. Even with standardised mortality ratios and risk-adjusted statistics, invalid inferences of poor-quality care are continually drawn. In 2008, the Stafford Hospital, in England, was subjected to a series of investigations after hospital standardised mortality ratios revelled ‘apparently high mortality rates in patients admitted as emergencies’.

Without going into all the details, there was much controversy over the validity of assumptions underlying the statistical methods. An independent study into hospital standardised mortality ratios found that the mortality measure developed by the Foster Unit at Imperial College was prone to methodological bias and that it was not credible to claim that variation in mortality ratios reflects differences in quality of care.²⁶⁰

One group of medical experts wrote:

Using the HSMR [hospital standardised mortality ratios] to identify ‘good/bad’ hospitals is analogous to the practice of dowsing—the search for water without scientific apparatus—it is time to abandon this screening test and search for a better one.²⁶¹

For decades, it has been known that inferences of poor-quality care cannot be drawn from raw statistics. Consequently, statistics are collated these days using methods which adjust for risk. For example, a hospital with a high number of cancer patients will have a higher mortality rate than a private surgical hospital due to dealing with lower risk patients. The number of expected deaths at each type of hospital is taken into account when calculating the ratios. Even with all the brains, in all of Britain, they still cannot use statistics to infer poor quality

²⁶⁰ Mohammed et al., ‘Evidence of Methodological Bias in Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratios: Retrospective Database Study of English Hospitals’.

²⁶¹ Mohammed et al., ‘The Findings of the Mid-Staffordshire Inquiry Do Not Uphold the Use of Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratios as a Screening Test for ‘Bad’ Hospitals’.

care. The Irish medics are acutely aware of these limitations, but the voice of reason will never be allowed to stop the party and the dead cannot defend themselves.

If you are of a mind to look up the Stafford Hospital scandal, and the investigation, you will be astonished at the uncanny resemblance to the mother and baby homes scandals. It was farcical at times, complete with fantastical claims of abuse, and has triggered a debate which rages to this day in British medical circles and literature. There is however, one big difference, significantly less excitability and hysteria.

The mother and baby homes commission were utterly unaware of the debate within present-day medicine over the use of risk-adjusted mortality statistics. The never bothered with risk adjustments nor looked for valid causal relationships influencing the statistics. Without expertise, or access to experts, the commission jumped to the same conclusions as everyone else. Any eejit can do that and are far less expensive to hire. Note for the future.

The big mistake was to view health care entirely from a medical perspective and expect today's standards and knowledge to have applied to the past.

Here the commission implies that nobody gave a damn about high infant mortality rates due to enteritis. The report states:

In 1941 a total of 1,293 infants died from the disease in the Dublin County Borough. The epidemic continued until 1944, 'before anyone kicked up a row about it'.

Deeny's wrote about 1943, the year before he arrived at the Department:

Dr. Ward had taken over the old Claremont Protestant Deaf and Dumb Training School and renamed it St. Clare's Hospital. It was established as an isolation unit admitting only babies with enteritis. Later the significance of the advance was recognised.

Doctors had no evidence that the disease was contagious but in desperation, acted on mere suspicion. The following year, 1944, Deeny conducted a research study which revealed that enteritis was contagious.

I analysed 1604 cases of children admitted to this hospital [St Clare's]. I was fortunate that the resident medical officer was Dr Dan O'Brien, a very bright young man. He had been sickened by the never ending stream of babies turning up for admission and so many dying that he was even then experimenting with rehydration methods, years ahead of his time.

Every new medical discovery takes time before it becomes normal practice. Medics, like all other professions, find it hard to go against their medical

training and it takes a certain amount of time to convince the majority. Medical discoveries which solve one problem also create two more, like the Hydra in Greek mythology, cut off one head and two more grow in its place. The new knowledge that enteritis was infectious, raised the question was it caused by a bacterium or a virus. Deeny again writes about the reality of the medical situation:

We carried out other studies. For instance Dr Fanning studied the transmission of a possible virus cause. [...] We were not able to determine a virus cause, which was not surprising considering the scanty knowledge of virology forty years ago. [1949 -Memoir published in 1989]

Outside the commission's terms of reference were other maternity hospitals and therefore no comparison was made with these. Deeny's wrote:

Places like the Rotunda Hospital were the foci of infection and the hospital out-patient departments, where sick children gathered, were deadly. A mother might bring a healthy child to an out-patient's department to seek help for something like a hernia and the next day the child have enteritis, picked up at the hospital.

It is all too easy for us today to blame the doctors at the Rotunda maternity hospital for being so backwards and to accuse them of killing children, obviously through poor quality care. We expect our antecessors to have our knowledge when it is was impossible. This hindsight bias is rife through the commission's report and the lack of controls to mitigate its effects is yet another major failing. Moreover, they miss a major point, how is it that maternity hospitals, with high infant mortality rates, complete with deaths from marasmus do not stand accused of providing poor quality care by the scandal propagators. Why is it only the Christians who are under attack? How did the scandal propagators miss high infant mortality rates at children's hospitals like St Ultan's, which suffered a mortality rate of 43 per cent in its first year of operation, and for 1934 it stood 35.5 per cent, comparable or lower than the rates as some mother and baby homes. Why has the hospital's founder Dr Kathleen Lynn not been accused of murder?

The presentism, disjointed articulation and contradictions run throughout the report. I suspect it was due to the work of many authors stitched together without regard to previous statements and or a rather unhealthy groupthink. For example, the commission states quite rightly:

212. The living conditions in the institutions must be seen in the context of the living conditions in private homes.

The authors then go on to articulate what the living conditions were like. Many private houses did not have running water and used outside toilets. In 1961, only

12 per cent of rural houses had indoor toilets. In poor households, bedrooms were not heated, coats were often used for blankets, and two or more children shared the same bed. Houses, especially in rural areas did not have electricity until the 1950s and 1960s. While people living in the tenements in the big cities were grossly overcrowded and shared a toilet in the backyard. The commission competently cautions its readers, that ‘many unmarried mothers came from such homes, and the conditions in mother and baby homes should be evaluated with this in mind’.

Almost instantly the author or another author forgets this caution and evaluates the living conditions through the eyes of someone who grew up in a household with all the modern conveniences, a single bedroom with only one person to a bed, and who did not have to go to the toilet in front of the other occupants.

The available evidence suggests that, while living conditions in the mother and baby homes were basic, there is no indication that they were inadequate by the standards of the time, except in Kilrush and Tuam. [Both were former workhouses]

The inadequacies included:

- Women slept in dormitories that might not be heated women had no privacy. These dormitories were large with no curtains between beds.
- The Tuam maternity unit toilet had running water and sanitary facilities, and the laundry.
- Outside of this unit toilets appear to have been outdoors and they were probably dry closets
- The children’s rooms – which were almost devoid of toys - were heated either by open fires or portable radiators that were filled with hot water.
- Mothers and children slept in traditional workhouse dormitories, and the building was at high risk of fire.

Many poor families slept with four or five to a bed, often children and parents in the same bed arranged head to toe. While poor households might have many more people in a bed, multiple sleepers in the same bed was a common occurrence and perfectly acceptable. In every household, under every bed was a chamber pot, a toilet facility, which was used in the room in front of all the occupants of the room. High-status homes, hotels and guest accommodation did not have running water supplied to rooms. Washing facilities were provided using a jug and bowl. Most hotels had a shared toilet and shared bathing facilities. Many high-status homes did not have central heating; they were heated with open fireplaces in each room.

Men, women and children slept in dormitories with ‘no privacy’. Soldiers in

the armies all over the world, students in private boarding schools, university students, travellers staying in hostels and cheap accommodation, who even to this day, voluntarily give up their privacy to save money. Many hospitals today have multiple occupancy wards with curtains which can be pulled around every bed. The same wards did not previously have curtains, there was a folding screen in every ward which was wheeled to a bed and unfolded when an occupant needed privacy. I have slept in Youth Hostel dormitories with 15 to 20 other people with no curtains too. Most people thought nothing of it, and it is only exceptional to those who are without adequate knowledge. It is disappointing to observe that more care was not taken to avoid the malignant influences of presentism.

In another example, the commission castigates the Department of Health:

‘In 1951 officials in the Department of Health rejected the Regina Coeli model of enabling unmarried mothers to raise their child(ren)’. The members of a departmental committee on the reconstruction of county homes, agreed, fearing that as children reached adolescence and were confined to poor housing, the net effect would be to create a slum. The authorities were making great progress on clearing slums and did not need to create any more. However, the commission attacks this decision with presentist condescension:

This report reveals an incapacity to think creatively about alternative arrangements for unmarried mothers and their children.²⁶²

To add a personal opinion in the form of a sneer is anathema to quality history, and sneers such as these are common throughout the report. In historical writing, the use of sneering indicates the presence of pseudo-history, a false narrative written to look like genuine history, but it is propaganda to cast aspersions on the opposing sides, to sway the jury and garner praise for the author. However, to the trained eye, it always looks like the work of an amateur.

There are plenty more examples of these types of comments littered throughout the report. The commission is firmly on the unmarried mother’s side and has no problem in suggesting that things should have been different; people should have acted the way the writer thinks was appropriate. People did not act and could not have acted in such compliance because the circumstances of the past are not the circumstances of today. You cannot validly judge people and sneer at them for not adhering to current standards. It is presentism in history but in life, it is as C.S. Lewis described, ‘chronological snobbery’.

The word misogyny is mentioned only once in the report; however, there is a sniff of a misogynist spin being applied inappropriately throughout the report. It is especially noticeable when the historical record reveals comments from people who express concern regarding the endless production of illegitimate infants, and their positive attitudes and concerns are often twisted into negative

²⁶² Commission of Investigation, ‘Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Final Report’. 5.118

attitudes.

The production of unwanted children all countries left the taxpayers with a bill lasting at least sixteen years. It was prudent of politicians and social commentators to identify the problem and recommend finding ways of reducing this bill, not just in terms of the financial cost, but more importantly, to reduce the human cost, both to the mother and baby. However, it is very easy for present-day people to misinterpret comments regarding the prudent use of public money as prejudice against unmarried mothers. It was a time when social commentators from all sides, secular and religious, spoke of the need to reduce illegitimacy rates with the clear philogynous intent to protect women from sexual predators, which are the men who would leave them literally holding the baby. Not one single commentator argued that the father be let off his obligation to his child. He too, had sinned, and he had to pay the price. Many of the fathers were too poor to pay, and many pregnant women did not want to name the father. It was often their free choice to apply for entry to an institution, and at least some religious mother and baby homes charged fees to women who could afford to pay for their care. Other women were forced in through circumstances, but none of them was incarcerated as has been incompetently claimed by the scandal propagators.

However, historical comments on illegitimacy must always be viewed in the context that in countries worldwide, the numbers of unwanted children produced nearly always exceeded a society's capacity to accommodate such infants. Today's bloggers and some historians are overly keen to anachronistically interpret expressions arguing for a reduction or prevention of the production of unwanted children's as expressions of prejudice.

Wherever the commission uses social commentators' antiquated comments, it is overly keen to interpret such comments and archaic language as expressions of the stigma attached to unmarried mothers. There was an undoubted stigma, but it has to be viewed in the correct historical context as overstatement can reveal a lack of impartiality.

The commission also insinuates that there was a stigma attached to illegitimate children. Again, this is overstated, and many people grew up in Ireland without ever knowing the circumstances of their birth. So, what was the attitude of official Ireland to illegitimate children? Here is a newspaper report of the summing up at the sentencing hearing of a woman who pleaded guilty to the murder of her baby. She appeared before Mr Justice Kenny. K.C. at Cork Circuit Court in 1928: (emphasis below is mine)

The last time I was holding a criminal sitting, I stated that in future I would deal with cases of infanticide with some severity. Infanticide has become a national industry in parts of this country the number of newly-born illegitimate children murdered is very great; their bodies are disposed

of with a great deal of skill, so much so, that the people guilty are not often brought to justice. **An illegitimate child is entitled to the protection of the law just, ns much as one born in lawful wedlock.** It is in no extenuation of illegitimacy that I say that **some of the most distinguished people who ever lived were illegitimate.** I have no doubt that, young girl that you are, that your murder of this child was deliberate. It must be brought home to all girls in this country that they are amenable to the law and must suffer this crime. No doubt there is another person in each case who should suffer too, but he cannot be got. But somebody must pay the penalty —**not the penalty for being immoral, but the penalty for taking human life.** The life of this child might have been valuable: it was of some value at least, and that child was entitled to the protection of the law of this land. I will take into account all the circumstances in this case —the fact that you have been betrayed: that you suffer, have suffered, and must continue to suffer: hut at the same time it must be brought home to all young girls in this country that it is their duty to preserve the lives of the unhappy children they give birth to— **that their lives are just as sacred as the lives of any other children, and that the State is prepared and has always been prepared to support and maintain them until they reach an age when they can work for themselves.** It is to prevent other people doing what you have done that I impose a sentence on you of some severity. You must go to prison for 12 months, in the second division.

The prisoner on hearing the sentence, burst into tears and was removed from the dock weeping.

Justice Kenny sums up perfectly the attitude of the state and of social commentators of the time. The first point, the most significant danger to the life of an illegitimate child, came from the child's mother and sometimes her family. The state stepped in to save the lives of these children and took care of them when their mother and her family were not willing to do so. These women were outnumbered more than three to one by women and their families who were seemingly not troubled by damage to their 'respectability' but have been whitewashed from memory. The commission to be fair, mentions the grannies who took care of their daughter's child but other than a few mentions, no effort was made to quantify the number nor to ascertain if these illegitimate children were subject to stigma within their society.

If there was a stigma attached to unmarried mothers, then mother and baby homes were about ensuring that unmarried mothers would not suffer from stigma. In reality, they provided an excellent service for expectant mothers and their families. In this paragraph, the commission dismisses the lie of Ireland as a brutal carceral state:

4.109 The state and the local authority did not coerce women to enter these homes, and neither did the Catholic church. However it is not surprising that many families or single women, faced with a crisis pregnancy and the cost of ensuring their daughter's privacy and care, resorted to mother and baby homes. They provided accommodation, which was undoubtedly superior to what was available in a county home or some private nursing homes, and maternity care, free of charge, without the stigma associated with the poor law. This was a considerable financial saving for the women and their families.

Scurrilous charge of Misogyny

On the morning of the 12th of January 2021 details began to slip out of the commission's report, and on the following day the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, apologised. He used the phrase that Ireland had a 'deeply misogynistic culture', use of the word 'misogyny' should always ring alarm bells. It appears only once in the report and points to just how defeated Irish intellectualism has become. The report is peppered with opinions quoted from other historians and academics, which are evidence of the Aithníonn Ciaróg, Ciaróg Eile bias (ACCE). A reminder of its definition:

The repetition of erroneous information without any check of its veracity, especially when it suits a particular purpose. Such information is also likely to have become erroneous having been subjected to an iterative process of embellishment.

The commission does not use the word misogyny directly; instead, they quote a feminist historian, Lindsey Earner-Byrne. However, Earner-Byrne's opinion is not justified in the context of the debate. The commission reports her opinion:

9.96 Earner-Byrne states that the Minister for Justice, James Fitzgerald Kenney, who introduced the legislation 'presented a disturbingly misogynistic approach to welfare', presenting the unmarried mother as 'temptress and blackmailer'.

It is clear from the text of the parliamentary debate that James Fitzgerald Kenney was not labelling all unmarried mothers as Earner-Byrne has described. He was referring to different types of people who might take advantage of the new law as it was then proposed.

The law in question was philogynistic attempt to help unmarried mothers claim maintenance from the putative father.²⁶³ It required the unmarried mother to go to court and name the father, who then would be issued with a court order to pay maintenance for the child. A debate took place on whether it was better

²⁶³ A man who is alleged or who claims to be the biological father of child.

to hold the cases with members of the public present, or with only the press present or completely 'in camera'.

As would be expected when formulating new laws, various types of scenarios were imagined and thrashed out. One concern was that unscrupulous persons might use the courts to blackmail innocent men, especially if the cases were heard in public or if individuals' names were published in the press. In this scenario, a man could find himself deliberately targeted by a 'temptress' whose primary motivation was money and was willing to achieve her aims through blackmail, threatening to have the man's name made public in the newspapers etc.

However, the point James Fitzgerald Kenney was articulating was that he believed that when a man was wrongly charged and the case dismissed by the court, the name of his accuser should be published as a deterrent to making false charges and that the man should have his good name vindicated.

The parliamentary record shows that James Fitzgerald Kenney was replying to a question about amending sub-section 6 (a) of the Act, which dealt with the public naming of individuals in such cases. In the end, the decision was to hold courts with no members of the public present, but press reporters were permitted to attend. Accordingly, the names of the plaintiff, defendant and court officials could appear in public, but the press were prevented from publishing details of the proceedings, other than if significant points of law arose.

James Fitzgerald Kenney was not 'presenting the unmarried mother as "temptress and blackmailer"', but doing his best to help unmarried mothers hold on to their children. The use of the word misogyny, in this case, is the result of excitability, and its use, in general, should be an indication that claims founded upon it, need to be subjected to more rational evaluation.

This acceptance of another person's opinion, particularly historians, without any check for its validity or truthfulness is a problem persistent throughout the report and has a significant malignant effect on the on many of the report's conclusions.

The commission also misses the 'hospital effect' in statistics; for decades most acute hospitals have mortuaries because patients are expected to die, and are in the habit of dying at such institutions. In the days before patients were sent home to die, or to a hospice, hospital mortality statistics were always higher than elsewhere. Hospitals dealing with high-risk patients also have higher mortality rates than those dealing with low-risk patients.

Lies, damned lies, and statistics is a phrase describing the persuasive power of numbers, particularly the use of statistics to bolster weak arguments. The entire abuse hypothesis stands on one pillar and one pillar alone, high infant mortality rates.

In his apology, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said he was ‘distressed at the high mortality rate of infants’. Everyone is distressed about high mortality rates because of a poor grasp of mathematics and statistics. It is mentioned in all commentary on mother and baby homes and is accepted by all as the primary evidence for abuse through poor quality care. Mortality statistics are essential for scandal propagators because there is no other evidence with such a semblance of objectivity.

Despite being a national leader, Micheál Martin has an amateurish grasp on statistics but his deputy leader and medical doctor, Leo Varadkar used the phrase ‘correlation does not imply causation in a debate on the Vincent Brown show on TV3 several years before. It was in response to the claims made by a female academic who then shouted him down. Who is shouting poor Leo down now? Disappointingly, Michael Martin, has a master’s degree in political history, alas it is a qualification of little use, and so he has to rely on *ciarógí eile* to formulate his opinions for him.²⁶⁴

After all the tumult, accusations of abuse and starvation at religious run institutions, lo and behold this paragraph:

244. Until the 1960s or the 1970s, the quality of maternity care in mother and baby homes was probably superior to that available to the majority of Irish women at the time. In the first half of the twentieth century most women gave birth at home, attended by a midwife, and sometimes by an untrained ‘handy woman’. They gave birth in houses without running water or proper sanitation, whereas all the mother and baby homes had newly-built or improved maternity units by the late 1930s, and a qualified midwife

There you have it, religious run, mother and baby homes were the best place for the majority of Irish women to give birth. Everything in that paragraph is true, but it is outweighed massively through the commission’s amateurish misuse of statistical correlation to imply poor quality care and the unforgivable failure to factor in the poverty and social conditions which prevailed at various times.

If the commission and others want to stick to their guns, they should try and explain these findings from UK and Irish researchers:

Illegitimate infants in past times are generally considered to have been among the most vulnerable population groups: in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example, children born out of wedlock were around twice as likely to have died before the age of one year than those born to an official union. The illegitimate penalty decreased as overall infant mortality rates fell in the twentieth century, yet today, in the early

²⁶⁴ *ciarógí eile* – other beetles

years of the twenty-first century, illegitimate infants in England and Wales are still 30 per cent more likely to die during their first year of life than legitimate infants. Even those reported to be illegitimate but registered by both parents living at the same address are 17 per cent more likely to die in infancy.²⁶⁵

Wow, illegitimate children still suffer from high infant mortality rates in 21st century England and the culturally insecure Irish look the other way. They hysterically accuse others of heinous acts, but seemingly not based on evidence but a feeling in their waters. Researchers have found the same high mortality rates amongst children of single mothers in Finland. (see graph in Appendix I)

Ireland still has shocking, appalling, and distressingly high infant mortality rates which are multiples of the normal infant mortality rate and vastly in excess of the historical rates in mother and baby homes, as Judge Catherine McGuinness points out:

‘The Infant mortality rates for Traveller children are 3.6 times that of the general population’²⁶⁶

Suppose the mother and baby homes commission were to interpret these statistics the same way it did in its reports. In that case, traveller women will stand accused of abuse and no doubt that the Irish government will be forced to set up yet another commission of enquiry. Such commissions and tribunals must rank as one of Ireland’s biggest native industries but funded at the taxpayer’s expense.

In its executive summary of its final report, the commission makes an enormous blunder:

12. In the years before 1960 mother and baby homes did not save the lives of ‘illegitimate’ children; in fact, they **appear** to have significantly reduced their prospects of survival. The very high mortality rates were known to local and national authorities at the time and were recorded in official publications.

Note my emphasis on the use of a speculative term and not even a jot at hospital effects on mortality, the concentration of high-risk individuals in one place. The first sentence is untrue, while the second is a counterfactual implying that the medics of the past were incompetent for not being able to solve problems that the commission naively thinks were simple to solve—thus explicit use of hindsight bias. Confirmation bias, prejudice, feminist bias,

²⁶⁵ Reid et al., ‘Vulnerability among illegitimate children in nineteenth century Scotland’. Using figures from the Health Statistics Quarterly, 2004, p. 69, Table 5

²⁶⁶ The Children’s Rights Alliance, Dublin, 25 February 2014

The three people heading the commission were not amateurs, a judge, a historian, and a barrister, but at the same time, they managed to hit the tripwire on all the booby traps, set to catch amateurs. On a few occasions, the commission is bravely honest, confronting and dismissing the lurid allegations of journalists, politicians, bloggers and the full menagerie of clurichauns who have bludgeoned their opinion on the public. The report is written by several authors who seem to conflict with one another, and this may account for the report's failures to join up the dots intellectually. The subject matter is emotive, and it is hard for cold, detached analysis to prevail in such conditions, and it did not survive in the commission's final report. However, despite the massive public pressure to expose murdering misogynists under every bed, the commission did a reasonable job in the circumstances. Still, their amateur blunders overbalance the report's findings in favour of the scandal propagators, and their unjustified use of emotional adjectives evinces the absence of reason. I have just given a small sample of errors, but the report contains considerably more, which are too numerous to mention here.

If we are to learn one thing from the whole sordid debacle, future investigation teams should be split into two groups, one to look for confirming evidence and the other to look for evidence that disproves it. The truth does not lie on one side or the other nor in-between, but when evidence is open to challenge, the emotion is reduced; thus, a better interpretation is empowered.

'There are no facts, only interpretations'

- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Feminist role in conspiracy theories

Feminist excitability and their need to portray themselves as victims to justify feminism is a foundation stone upon which a plethora of Irish conspiracy theories stand. The pressure behind the floodgates had been building years before the mother and baby homes scandal, starting with the rewriting of history, mostly occurring through 'women's studies' which accidentally or deliberately invented notions of a misogynistic society dominated by a misogynistic religion. Unfortunately, for the feminists, it is easy to show that many of their claims are not based on fact. Moreover, believe it or not, there is much evidence of misogyny within Irish feminism itself as evinced through their imagining of groups of women who hated bastards so much that they were not only prepared to abuse infants through neglect but to kill and hide their burial. I have refrained from using the term nun throughout this book, replacing it with phrases like 'the women who managed these homes' to eliminate the dehumanising term nun, which the feminists in turn use to hide their own misogyny. The feminist narrative becomes even more worthy of ridicule by their attacks on the very women who were altruistically helping unmarried mothers and their children. No present-day feminist movement has ever engaged in such mass practical

altruism. They have a selfish preference for sitting on the ditch pouring scorn on the good work and outstanding reputation of true feminist heroines.

Scornful women have been prominent in Irish society for centuries, causing much ink to be spilt. Such characters are a prerequisite to liven up any dull Irish historical play or novel, and Irish society has several pejorative terms to describe the phenomenon. Rising affluence, access to university education and professional careers have not rid Irish society of this pestilence. When we ask why, one of the primary factors is due to 'big feeling', another Irish expression for delusions of grandeur.

However, scientific research has identified what may be another component, 'Female Intrasexual Competition', or 'handbags at dawn', my preferred term. It is defined as is the innate need for females to compete with other females. Females want to make themselves more attractive to potential mates and mostly use self-promotion. Usually manifest through makeup, luxury goods consumption, cosmetic surgery etc. Scientific research has shown that women around the time of ovulation have a higher tendency to choose products that will enhance their attractiveness.²⁶⁷

Consequently, it demonstrates that there is a biological basis to female behaviour regarding fashions and looking good. However, it is a competitive behaviour and denigrating the opposition is a major characteristic of the phenomenon. Researchers have termed it, 'competitor derogation'. It is a form of indirect aggression that includes gossiping, rumour spreading, imperfection shaming, slut shaming etc. to decrease rivals' value insinuating that they will not make good long-term mates. Rivalry in the mating game is also found in males but is mostly manifest in direct or overt aggression. Females are often hostile to other females, especially in outgroups, which is given recognition through the use of the term 'bitchiness' to describe the attitude of one group of females towards another. The love of gossip and the denigration of a group of women, which society holds in high regard, is almost biologically irresistible because it provides a comfortable vehicle to generate feelings of superiority, both social and intellectual.

There have been secular feminist organisations of the past, which have tried to help unmarried mothers, and one such organisation brought the Magdalene Asylums to Ireland. However, history shows that secular feminist philanthropic organisations have problems with sustainability. When they failed, most often than not, it was the greatest philanthropic feminist organisation in the world which took their place. Vocational women dedicated to the service of others, particularly the poor and who often worked for little or no pay.

The false narrative produced by feminists has gained so much traction that it has now become currently accepted as the true narrative of Irish history.

²⁶⁷ Durante et al., 'Ovulation, Female Competition, and Product Choice'.

Naïve history students have become victims of illusory truth effect and ACCE, accepting as fact the mistaken claims of previous feminist academics without even the slightest inclination to engage in fact-checking. At my university, while studying history, we spent a lot of time learning about historiography, which in essence is the study of who wrote what in the past, and how we arrived at our present-day understanding of the past. It is a recognition of the maladies that afflict the writing of history, and it is a quality control mechanism requiring those working within the discipline of history to continually check the work of previous historians for bias, false interpretations, genuine mistakes, paltering, belief supremacism, propaganda and a whole lot more. It is not an easy endeavour for students to get their heads around the concepts involved nor the sheer amount of work involved in deciphering the complex causes of historical events. On top of dealing with complex arguments as, the history student has to decide, which interpretation best represents the accuracy of the story. Consequently, to escape the bondage and the drudgery of hundreds of hours of study and produce some actual work, like an essay or a paper, historians and history students are forced to take short cuts. The result is that many of today's historical writings achieve the opposite of what is intended and are full of interpretations based on logical fallacies. One of the most common is the Appeal to Authority, which uses unsound logic based on the principle that information must be true because it is believed by someone who said to be an 'authority' on the subject. All that glitters is not gold and 'authorities' are as prone to making mistakes as the rest of us. These mistakes have become increasingly abundant in Irish history recently, and the blame lies fairly and squarely with Irish academia. As the mother and baby homes debacle demonstrates, the Irish university system is not suited for purpose and has in effect become the gatekeeper of the latest breakout of the Irish anti-intellectual tradition. In the race to the bottom, it lubricated the slope with an oil mixed from ignorance, lethargy and prejudice.

Atheist belief in myths

The anti-Christian scandals and the unleashing of Irish prejudices began many decades previously. As I mentioned earlier, many of us left school as apostates and atheists, resulting from a cultural shift in Ireland, which started to gather momentum from the 1960s onward. Like most of my fellow pupils, I was inculcated with scientism, which is defined as an 'excessive belief in the power of scientific knowledge and techniques'. I surmise that it was probably due to the space race and moon landings, which captured the young's imagination and wonderment at the power of science. Of course, there were people like Carl Sagan, piggybacking on the space programme to promote atheism. A cause, which he supported using many made up anti-religion myths, half-truths, untruths and innuendo. One of his great achievements was his invention of what he called a baloney detector. He sold his imaginary device as a useful investigative tool for revealing myths. However, had he pointed it at his own work, it would have gone off the scale. Sagan was one of atheisms most

charismatic leaders, and I was certainly taken in by his preaching, only to discover many decades later how full of baloney many of his claims were.

On top of that, the writings of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens have combined into the de facto atheist bible, which accounts for the homogeneity in atheist attacks on religion. Notable in commonly found phrases like ‘flying spaghetti monster’, ‘fairies at the bottom of the garden’, ‘sky god’ etc., and the old ‘ad hominem’ ploy used in defence. Criticise any atheist preacher/writer’s writings on an online forum, and you will find the avenging angels of ad hominem will be called forth from the heavens to smite their foe. It is common to encounter the phrase ‘ad hominem’ attack used as a defence; one could easily imagine atheists being taught it at an atheist Sunday school or ‘Secular Sunday’ as Atheist Ireland calls it.

Apostates are naturally hostile to their old religion and not all, but some atheists engage in sectarian denigration to boost their self-esteem and justify their beliefs. Any online forum where issues concerning religion and atheism are discussed is always peppered with scientism, often labelling religious people backwards. Atheism is a religion, a non-theistic religion that lacks formal organisation but can produce remarkably homogeneous narratives despite its disparate structure. The very foundation stone of sectarianism is illusory superiority. It fulfils a primeval need for higher social status. However, when a mismatch is present between the illusion of status and actual status, it creates an inverse relationship with feelings of superiority, which can then grow to feelings of supremacism. Northern Ireland provides us with the very exemplar, in the late 1960s Protestant supremacism led to attacks on innocent Catholics, starting three decades of ‘The Troubles’. Atheist/religious supremacism, like white supremacism, is a highly dangerous mind-set. However, most of the time, the apostates and atheist engage in belief superiority, a much less dangerous mindset but nonetheless is a powerful and tireless generator, promoter and believer of myths.

The atheist mindset will never subject information, which appears to support its cause, to a baloney detector. Consequently, baloney is one of the prime reasons for instigating the anti-Christian scandals. Atheists have no problem creating and believing in obvious falsehoods, so long as they can be used to attack formal religion. Atheism has no basis in science and has no claim to superiority. This insecurity causes certain atheists to attack people who do not conform to their beliefs.

Atheism, particular Marxist atheism, is a cornerstone of left-wing politics in Europe and Ireland. Marx is regarded as one of the most significant socialist theorists who ever lived and his influence on world politics resonates down to this very day. The left-wing parties in Ireland have remained a small minority since independence, and like all politicians on all sides, they are not averse to using all the forces of balderdash to promote their agenda. The left-wing

agenda is hostile to formal religion and has been behind the many falsehoods spread over recent decades. The right-wing has not been immune either, misled by the absence of dissent from the false narratives, and like many people have little choice but to acquiesce. That is not for one second letting them off the hook as it has many politicians who are firm believers in the many superstitions floating about.

Sociology – not even a dismal science

Karl Marx, along with Emile Durkheim and Max Weber are the founders of the academic discipline of sociology, which still tends to attract left-wingers to study it. Accordingly, it is no surprise to find sociologists, with pro-atheist and anti-Christian views, in great numbers. Sociology is frequently paired with politics in a forlorn effort to make the discipline valuable to its students' career prospects. However, sociology is one of the worst academic disciplines for quality control, and it frequently produces highly dubious work.

Sociology claims that it is a science, the scientific study of society, but nothing could be further from the truth, as it is impossible to experiment on a society. Sociology is a rational discourse and nothing more; it is a talking shop with little practical applications. However, that does not sit well with students nor the university system, which has little hope of attracting students without the prospect of a career reward after years of study. Consequently, sociologists are shoehorned into areas of industry inappropriately, especially into the industry misnamed 'social work', where it reaches its zenith of harmfulness. If there was an area of work misnamed, then it is social work. Social workers do not work with a society; instead, they work with individuals and families in crisis. It is called social work to make sociology appear useful to society, but it has had disastrous consequences for people reliant on such services. On the other hand, psychology fully embraces the scientific method and is in a much better position to help individuals and families. In general, sociology and academics have defence strategy, which can be seen deployed any time an academic theory fails; they always blame it on a lack of resources. When academics fail and are given additional resources, and fail again, they continue to blame a lack of resources. It becomes an interactive process, and I will reveal later the statistics which demonstrates its dysfunction.

All social workers (social care worker is a lower grade) in Ireland are required to have a post-graduate degree in social work, which the sociology department teaches. I have talked to many social workers over the years, and they believe that their academic training was useless. They were forced to learn how to do the job through practical experience for the first two years. This very point about the training of social workers being too academic with little or no practical application was made in an official report for the UK government following a significant failure within the social work system in England. Known as the Baby P. case, later identified as baby Peter Connolly, he was under the care of social workers but died from the abuse and neglect, perpetrated by his mother

and boyfriend in 2007. The case makes for harrowing reading and shows that basic common sense was in short supply in the social worker profession. I can relate to one such story, which is illustrative of the problem.

One of my acquaintances fostered children on behalf of the local health authorities. She took in teenagers, which was unusual for foster parents, as we all know that teenagers can be trouble, big trouble. She had one particular chap who would occasionally become difficult and create a lot of trouble. In anticipation of such circumstances occurring, she was instructed to call the care services, and a social worker would be dispatched to her home to deal with the matter.

Upon trouble occurring, she duly contacted the social worker who attended the house and took the child away to a fast-food restaurant for a chat. It happened again on another two occasions until the foster mother asked the social worker to chat with the child at home and not a fast-food restaurant; she would leave the house and leave them to talk there. Sure enough, the bad behaviour stopped, the social worker was rewarding bad behaviour and had no idea that he was doing so. Most parents are possessed of common sense like my friend, and they know a lot more about child-rearing than academically trained social workers. Every psychology student is taught about behavioural reinforcement but not in sociology, or so it appears.

*Social workers' training too focused on
theory rather than working with children.*
Headline from The Telegraph 13 Feb 2014

Even with our 'highly trained academics', failures continue in the Irish care system and will continue because no one understands the academic problem at the very heart of the failures. The case of Grace, a disabled child placed in a foster home at the age of 10, where she was sexually abused, is a case in point. The social care workers noted the abuse early on but dillied and dallied for eight years before they got around to removing her from the situation. Grace was eventually awarded €6.3 million and a commission set up to investigate similar cases, which also came to light. The commission was estimated to have cost €7 to €8 million in legal fees alone. Here again, the big winners in all the tribunals and commissions of investigation, over the decades, have been the legal profession.

All the government services concerning child and family support were combined into a single state agency named Tusla in 2014. Four years later, in 2018, an investigation by the Health and Information Quality Authority uncovered 'shocking failures and inadequacies'. One of the most prominent failures occurred in a case where a policeman was falsely accused of child sex abuse, all because a Tusla staff member used the wrong report template.

Any allegation of child sex abuse has severe consequences for the accused and has the potential to create lifelong reputational harm and cause suicide. Tusla and previous authorities' failures are beyond comprehension unless the very fundamentals underlying the profession are examined.

To state in emphatically, the profession of social work does not belong in academia and certainly not to the department of sociology, writing essays about what theorist said what about society, produces a parchment with a skillset, which is of no benefit to families and individuals in crisis or suffering deprivation. It is high time that the authorities tuned into the self-serving fallacies promoted by pompous academia and run them out of Dodge City.

Now my big revelation.

It cost the Irish state the astonishing sum of €100k for each child kept in state care in the year 2016 according to an article written by Daniel McConnell and published in the Irish Examiner in 2017.²⁶⁸ Furthermore, he noted that 11 children in state care cost the taxpayer a staggering sum of €1 million per child per year. Far from engaging in sensationalism myself, I contend that the 100k figure is wrong, McConnell simply divided the overall cost to the state of running its childcare agency (Tusla) by the number of children in care. It is not McConnell's fault, as the agency does not provide the required statistics, thereby forcing interested parties to do their own calculations. Tusla spends part of its budget on funding various other child and family-related charities, which would yield accurate figures when subtracted. Tusla has managed to get whopping increases to its budget every year. Since its foundation in 2014 up to 2019, it has got close to €169 million in increases alone.²⁶⁹ In 2018 Tusla's total income as €752.11 million, it paid out €193.437 million in grants to charities leaving a balance of €558.673 million. If we divide that figure by the number of children, 6,353 in the care of Tusla for that year, it shows that it cost the taxpayers a whopping €88,000 per child per year or €1,6191 per child per week. However, I am using O'Connell's methodology, which indicates that further work is necessary, and the overall figures hide several areas where incompetency is rife.

In 2017 an Irish parliamentary group called the Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs reported that it cost the state on average €58k per year to keep a child with private foster care companies and a mere average of €17,900/year to foster a child with foster families.²⁷⁰ The committee is wrong or has been misled in their figures, that is not the cost to the state/taxpayer; it is the cost to the state agency, Tusla. The cost to the state has to take account of the money spent on running the agency and then divide it by the number of children in care. When that exercise is performed, the figures are even more

²⁶⁸ McConnell, 'State Spends €11m Caring for Just 11 Children'.

²⁶⁹ 'Annual Reports Tusla - Child and Family Agency'.

²⁷⁰ 'Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs Report on the Provision of Foster Care Services in Ireland'.

staggering. Hiding incompetency is the most likely reason that the figures are not calculated out and published, and we can clearly see that this particular parliamentary committee was not working with correct figures. Nonetheless, the committee was staggered by the cost of private fostering services and recommended that a ‘value for money (VFM) review’ be carried out.

Even before the foundation of Tusla, two articles appeared in the Irish media alluding to the high cost of looking after children in care. In 2012, Gordon Deegan reported for the Irish Times that a small number of children were in care placements abroad at a cost of €2.5million in 2010.²⁷¹ Catherine Shanahan reporting for the Irish Examiner in 2010 wrote that the cost of keeping a child in care was €14k per child per week quoting a whistle-blower.²⁷² Not only that, but the authorities also continued to use private foster care companies despite plenty of spare capacity in the state’s/Tusla’s own system. Stories have been appearing in the media on and off for years about the high cost of keeping children in care despite the establishment of a dedicated child protection agency, Tusla in 2014, the costs have mushroomed. Its accounts for 2014 show that its income was €617million, which rose year after year to a budgeted €786million, for 2019. If we use the same mythology as the journalists use and divide the total Tusla budget minus what it pays out in grants to other organisations by the number of children in care, we arrive at a figure of €90,344.18 per child per year, not far-off McConnell’s figure of €100k. What is most astonishing is that in the eight or nine years that followed the newspaper reports, one or two politicians huffed and puffed about the tremendous cost, but nothing seems to have happened. The budget continues to rise year after year while at the same time, the quality of the service does not improve with thousands of children on waiting lists for their first appointment with Tusla social worker.

My figure of €90k cost per child in care per year is also wrong because Tusla provides non-residential services, but as it does not bother to show these costs separately in its financial accounts so, we will stick with that figure and wait for Tusla or some industrious politician to get clarification on the real costs. However, we know with a high degree of accuracy, other figures that are even more astounding. The cost for 11 Irish children placed in care facilities abroad is €1million per child per year. That figure has not been disputed and has been reported in the media several times and has not been contradicted by the Minister for Children nor Tusla.

Tusla uses foster families who are paid a grant of €325 per child per week for children under 12 years of age and €352 for children over 12—assuming equal numbers of children in both categories the average payment €338.50 per child per week. Using the figures supplied by the ‘Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs’ report in 2017 we know that the number of children in care for 2017 was 6116 of which 5,690 were fostered out leaving 426 children in

²⁷¹ Deegan, ‘Children in Secure Care Overseas Cost State €2.5m’.

²⁷² Shanahan, ‘€14k a Week to Keep a Child in Care’.

high-cost care. That indicates that foster families are paid an average of €365 per child per week i.e., low-cost care, which totals €2.2million for the year. In contrast, the cost per child in the high-cost care bracket, for 426 children is an astonishing €1,292,194.21 per child per year or €24,849.89 per child per week. The large number of children fostered out at a reasonable cost are used in the dataset to bring the averages down, and the true cost remains hidden from public view and more importantly the decision makers in government.

One crucial inference emerges from these figures is that the agency clearly does not have the competence to treat what it regards as a small number (11) of highly disturbed children and the state appears happy to spend €11million a year, the cost of a small mental hospital. For comparison, a new 50 bed psychiatric unit at Galway University Hospital was completed in 2018 at a cost of €20million.²⁷³

*The old adage 'you get what you pay for'
is rendered bogus by the Irish civil and
public service every day of every week.*

What is clearly at play is the 'iterative lack of resources canard'. Failures are blamed on the lack of resources, and when more resources are allocated, but nothing improves, the lack of resources is again blamed. Consequently, more resources, usually in the form of money, are allocated and so goes the merry-go-round until costs spiral to astronomical levels. It is often a recession or a financial crisis, which causes cutbacks and a convenient way to blame the lack of resources for continuing poor service. In the aftermath, when the money supply improves, the lack of resources canard again causes politicians to commit ever-increasing sums to improve service. Nobody has oversight, and no politician has the will or the wit to challenge the tomfoolery, which has its roots in academic training. The ability to write good essays on academic theory does not transfer into practical skill and is not the appropriate training for social workers or those dealing with families in crisis. After the Baby P murder case, the English investigations also arrived at the same conclusion, but nothing seems to have happened there either. It would appear that academia's power is too great to be challenged or the wheels of change in academia and public service grind painfully slow.

Comparing the Irish children in care costs with costs in other countries is also difficult as there is no standardised method for calculating such costs. Even in England, figures vary widely as do the services provided to 'looked after children'. Recent statistics for 2017 show that a budget of £8.6bn was spent on child services including health and education, but at the same time, half the budget was spent on 'looked after children' who numbered 78,000. Thus, the

²⁷³ Bradley, 'Commission Critical of Mental Health Unit at UHG'.

cost to the English taxpayer is £55,128.20 (€60,701.54) per child per year.²⁷⁴ The other half of the budget was divided between 11.7 million children leaving them with a paltry sum of £367.52 (€404.64) per child per year. The English figures are the total spent on a child in the areas like education, health, adoption and children's services and are not directly comparable with the Irish statistics as they are calculated using different criteria. However, if we take Tusla's budget figure and multiply it by a factor of 11.7, which is times greater the population England has over Ireland. It shows that the English would have to spend about twice as much to equal the Irish. In other words, if the English spent the same as the Irish, their annual bill should be €8.8bn instead of the actual figure of €4.5bn (converted to Euro). That figure says it all really; however, all of us, including the professionals, are left to struggle with inaccurate and obfuscated data.

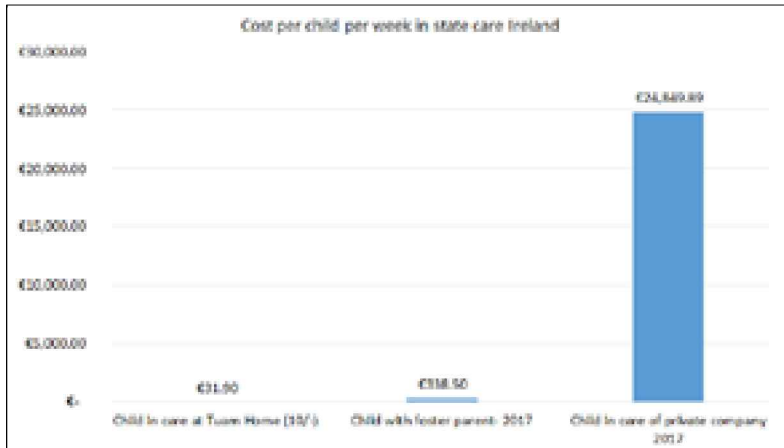
A report by Institute for Fiscal Studies carried out on behalf of the Children's Commissioner for England in 2018, complained about how the relevant statistics were compiled and stated that they were 'only able to produce reasonable estimates for hospital and community spending on children' and point to clear inaccuracies in other parts of their data, going on to state, 'the fact that we are unable to produce good estimates for health spending on children and pensioners in England is worrying'.²⁷⁵ The figures I have presented above suffer from the same maladies but are calculated out to give readers an idea of just how spectacular the figures are and remain stupendous, even in the unlikely event that I have miscalculated by 75%!

These figures are of monumental importance when showing how incompetent and outrageously costly our child services are today. Are historians in 50 years going to look back on us and slight us with charges of murder and neglect and incompetence in our time? What fools we are to go back in time and sneer at people who did their level best getting paid 10 shillings a week per child or €31.60 in today's value. There have been many failures of the current systems. We are scarcely better able to provide a proper service despite advancements in areas like the economy, disease prevention, and medical treatments.

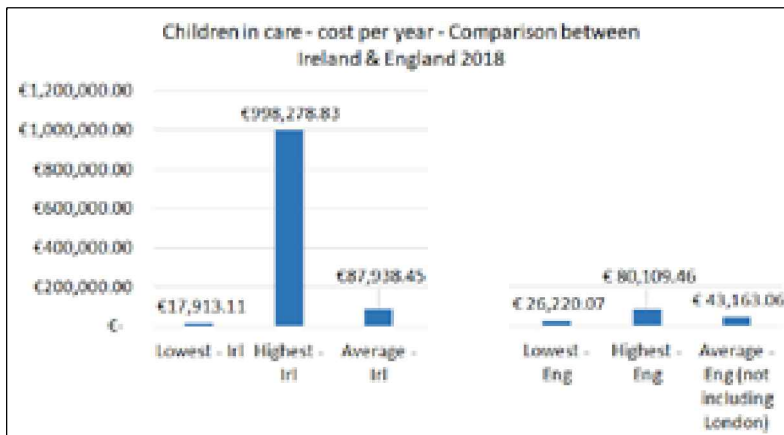
Let us put the figure of 10 shillings/€31.60 cost per child per week in context. Boarded out children cost the state on average of €365 per child per week, almost 10 times what it paid for children in institutions in the 1930s. If we take the average overall cost of €58,000 per child per year, placed with a foster parent, the figures are staggering, working out at 121 times more. If that was not staggering enough the next figure is just incredulous, children in institutions now cost the state €24,849.89 per child per week or a massive 623 times what it paid to keep children in care in institutions in the 1930s. That means that these women worked on a budget of a mere 0.16% of the cost of institutional care today.

²⁷⁴ Richardson, 'Severe Cases "Eat up Child-Services Cash"'.
²⁷⁵ Kelly et al., 'Public Spending on Children in England: 2000 to 2020'.

So, the government spends over 600 times more than it did in the 1930s, and yet today's system of childcare remains full of inadequacies and failures, and yet, we somehow hold the stupendous belief that the old system of child care should have been of today's standard, if not better. What miracles the altruistic religious women of Ireland worked on very little money. Many of them worked for little or no pay.



The story told graphically. 10 shillings converted to today's value and converted Euro. The amount paid as a capitation grant to the Tuam Children's Home from 1925 to 1942. Source Commission of Investigation final report 15.41 and the CSO's, CPI Inflation Calculator for Ireland.



Converted to Euro. The highest the Irish state spends on children in care is €1 million per child per year. In England the highest spend for 2018 was € 80,109.46 per child per year.

Poverty

Poverty and extreme poverty played an undeniable and central role in the high mortality statistics. This causal relationship has been established and is evinced in parts of the world where the same economic deprivation now exists, which once existed in Ireland. In 2006, the Irish government Central Statistics Office looked sections of the Irish population who were still affected by economic deprivation in the 21st century and revealed that poverty remains correlated with reduced life expectancy. Mortality rates among the poor remain stubbornly high despite the 'welfare state' we now enjoy. Yet, Irish historians, continually comparing Ireland with Britain, fail to factor in the enormous economic disparities between the two and the deprivation to which the Irish nation was subjected to by a big economic bully. Health and social welfare reform were impossible, given the conditions.

Everyone who was taught history in school knows the great hardship the war reparations imposed on Germany post-WWI, but not one of Ireland's social historians appears to have the knowledge that Ireland was paying more to the British in land annuities and RIC pensions than the Germans were paying in war reparations. In 1932 when the Irish government refused to pay, the British retaliated by placing high tariffs on Irish goods imported to Britain, sparking what is known as the Economic War 1932-38. The 1920s was a challenging decade to have achieved independence, Ireland was left overly dependent on Britain for trade with 90 per cent of the country's exports going to Britain, while 80% of imports were from Britain.²⁷⁶ In the early 1920s, there was a major slump in the British economy that resonated through the decade with high unemployment, strikes, high-interest rates and inflation.

The great depression hampered efforts to industrialise the country, while further social progression was stalled by the Second World War when hospitals and social reform plans were forced to be put on hold. The failure to factor in essential variables points to the colonial mentality's persistence where everything Irish is bad or faulty, and everything British is good. Not only does the colonial mentality persist, but it was also re-energised by the 2008 global financial crash that unleashed a tidal wave of anti-Irish prejudices, nearly all by instigated by the Irish themselves.

Lack of medical knowledge

Excitability and a clear lack of knowledge of medicine is evident in most writings, which claim that marasmus is evidence of starvation. Even official documents have managed to change the term from marasmus to malnutrition. It will come as a surprise to them to learn that obesity is classified as malnutrition. As the name literally suggests, it can be over-consumption as well as under-consumption. So, lacking the knowledge and know-how, the Irish government and parliament through the Report of the Inter-Departmental Group on mother and baby homes could have been suggesting that infants were overfed. If they

²⁷⁶ Daly, 'The Irish Free State and the Great Depression of the 1930s: The Interaction of the Global and the Local'.

were deliberate, these severe and frequent mistakes would be a sinister and reprehensible attempt to mislead the public. However, while there is evidence at some conscious effort to deliberately put misleading information in reports, these are often genuine mistakes caused by subconscious biases.

Nonetheless, it demonstrates the existence of a serious flaw within the investigation mind-set, which has already predetermined the outcome of an investigation in advance of it being instigated. Only a tiny fraction of deaths recorded in institutions for mothers and illegitimate children were due to marasmus, but that did not stop the journalists from writing screaming headlines falsely accusing women of mass murder. As it was so easy to catch them out; one wonders why the voice of reason has not been heard or asked why it has been silenced.

The historical evidence is abundant and unambiguous. The Catholic Church, for the best part of two thousand years, has been saving unwanted children's lives be they legitimate or illegitimate. They made no distinction between the two categories and facilitated the anonymous donation of infants to protect the mother's identity. Behind all the church policies was a concern for the mother who did not want her child through poverty, embarrassment, or lifestyle choice. Her decision was respected by granting anonymity rather than castigation, for the practical reason that a child's life was at stake. In most circumstances, before the church's intervention, unwanted children were simply murdered, and it was this carnage, which the church tried to end. I contend that this was the first time in the history of religion, that religious people went out into the community to provide a practical service of practical benefit, rather than just provide a spiritual service.

Yes, however, they did castigate people for producing torrents of unwanted babies in an effort to stem the flow and stop the system from becoming overwhelmed. Despite strenuous efforts, humanity continued to produce unwanted infants in such abundance that the care and rescue systems were frequently overwhelmed. Efforts to halt the carnage using the language of yesterday has been construed as prejudice solely against the unmarried mother, but that notion can only stand by ignoring the practical reality and motivations of the care system. When the whole story is told with balance, a different picture emerges, standing in contradiction of all the popular prejudices.

The failures of Irish academic history are by any elementary standard, are astonishing. What makes it extraordinary is not the fact that there are errors in the historical narrative, or that the obscurities of history have been used to twist historical evidence for political or social advantage, all countries have that, but in Ireland, easily provable falsehoods are believed even by those with high qualifications. That renders such qualifications a complete waste of time and demonstrates that history teaching is well below even a rudimentary standard. Alas, there is nothing unusual in that, as the Irish department of education

has been involved in a race to the bottom since the 1970s. The upshot is that near the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, there is no Irish university ranked in the top 100 in the world despite spending nearly two decades chasing higher rankings. What is the reason? A lack of support for innovators, incestuous deference to an antiquated British model, designed to support status and fat-cat salaries over good scholarship. There are many fine and intelligent people working in Irish universities doing great work, but the clurichauns are in the ascendant, dragging the whole system down and who are dependent on others to do their thinking for them.

If we were to time compress the history of the last 35 years of child protection, the rate of progress we would expect to find is not there, and the raft of failures is almost as great as what occurred in earlier periods. Accordingly, and as everything is relative, creating the impression that things were worse in previous periods makes the present time look better than it actually is. The reality is that there exists a difficulty in looking after unwanted, abandoned and destitute children, which we have not yet managed to solve. Some progress has been made at enormous cost to the Irish taxpayer, but child protection remains a challenge. If we are ever going to solve this problem, then a more sensible approach will have to be taken. Too often in Ireland we have let the buffoons run the system, but the Irish nation has the capability to do its own thinking rather than let others do it for them, and then and only when, it achieves that, can the country progress and embrace the true heroines and heroes of the past. Those who gave up their lives in service of the most disadvantaged and deprived people in Irish society.

As history attests through baby farmers and angel makers, private industry had the superb capability to rid Ireland of its 'embarrassment'; it did not need vocational women to solve this problem. The vocational women, out of the goodness of their heart and purity of motivation set out to help the unfortunate women and look after their children so that they could start life anew, and the children could have a good start in life with a level of education, which was not generally available to the children of the poor. Thus, the Catholic Church's express aim was to break the cycle of poverty and mother and baby homes had rehabilitation as their core ethos. Most of the expectant women, who entered homes like Tuam, gave birth there and after a time started their life anew, leaving behind their unwanted child — often hiding it from their new spouse and family for decades. Even today, many mothers refuse to have any contact with their illegitimate children. Those who allow contact are happy to blame external forces for their abandonment of their own child. While some are genuine cases, most are mere excuses, which remains very much in evidence today as the embarrassment of creating an unwanted child has not gone away in Irish society or many other societies. The method of dealing with this embarrassment to post-Catholic Ireland has changed. Mother and baby homes are no longer needed because the perfect solution to unwanted babies

has been found which is to abort or kill the baby before birth, which is now the preferred way to get rid of an ‘embarrassment’ to an atheist Ireland. It has the added benefit that there is no chance of the ‘embarrassment’ showing up in 20 years looking for their mother.

There are many positive stories from the Tuam Children’s Home, and I have evidence of one woman who took her two unmarried daughters out of the Tuam home after they had their babies. She reared one of her daughter’s babies as her own, while the other daughter married her child’s father. Everyone in the rural townland knew the children were illegitimate. The man was reared by his grandmother and only found out his true origins he went to get his birth certificate before getting married. Throughout the whole of his childhood, no one revealed to him his birth status, yet the Clurichauns tell us that Irish society would not accept illegitimate children, but that is not true. Nobody was incarcerated in a mother and baby home against their will, they applied to get in, and some women paid to get in. They were free to leave with their babies provided they could prove that they had the means to look after it properly, and thousands of mothers took their baby home. The statistics are there to prove it.

There is a disturbing commonality within scandals based on high mortality rates, like the Staffordshire hospital scandal in the UK and the Irish mother and baby homes scandal. Once the news gets into the public domain, the chancers, attention seekers, entitled narcissists and compo hunters come out and claim they were abused. Such people are everywhere; even in the aftermath of the horrific events of 911, many fraudsters claimed to have lost relatives in the twin towers. Fraudsters were at work during the mother and baby homes scandal too. The commission remark:

A number of witnesses gave evidence that was clearly incorrect. This contamination probably occurred because of meetings with other residents and inaccurate media coverage.

In Ireland, we tend to be far too kind and gullible, and we believe falsity because we lack the knowledge to discern falsehood from truth. Our compassion for the downtrodden leaves us vulnerable to sob stories and ‘inaccurate media coverage’. The commission does not tell us how many witnesses gave false testimony; they also do not name and shame the media organisations and journalists who carried false information thereby, protecting the fraudsters and encouraging more in the future. Fraudsters are not so lucky in the UK, as Carl Beech’s heavy 18-year jail term stands as testimony, both to the maliciousness of the crime and the British authorities’ resolve to deter future occurrences. Such fraud is not a victimless crime, and fantasists should not be treated, which such kindness and forgiveness.

The great history of many philanthropic organisations from all over the globe, throughout history, is being rewritten to falsely turn the reputation of good

people into that of abusers and murders. The reasons range from whimsical to actual and from notoriety to compensation.

The British view their own history through rose-tinted glasses, and create many historical falsehoods in the process, it aims to boost national pride. The Irish look at their history through cowshight tinted glasses, creating just as many falsehoods as the British, but with the sole intent to make a small mind feel important and aloof above a society of degenerates. It is time to give those dirty goggles a power-wash.

Recent Irish historians have grossly exaggerated the role and influence of the church on the political landscape. Political figures stand accused of paying undue deference to the Catholic hierarchy. That was not always the case, and when they wanted to give a dressing down to a bishop, they were certainly fearless.

In 1933, during a speech, the Most Rev. Bishop O'Doherty, Bishop of Galway, said that Theobald Wolfe Tone had committed suicide. It drew an extremely hostile response from de Valera and his entire cabinet. They accused the bishop of being 'uncharitable', engaging in 'vulgar abuse' and calling him names, 'a seoinín'. It was an extraordinary attack/riposte for those times. The government titled their letter a 'Reply to the Slanders on the Dead':

It is a fact of history – an inspiring fact – that Theobald Wolfe Tone sacrificed himself for the Catholics of Ireland. The English could find no fault with him as a man and a soldier so they killed him secretly in their dungeons and then tried to dishonour him in the eyes of the Catholic people by broadcasting the lie – typical English lie – that he had committed suicide. Every bough English scribe; every unchristian Anglophile; every seoinin Irishman, from Tones day to our own, has echoed that British falsehood, and from the Altar of a house of God the Bishop of Galway is the latest Irishman to repeat it. It would be hard to have patience with such uncharitable people as his lordship did we not know the countless other slanders have striven and have failed to dislodge Wolfe Tone from the place he holds and will always hold in the hearts of the common people of this country who in spite of native slaves and outside enemies have clung to their religious faith and their national faith through all the generations of bribery and persecution. [...]

The executive government of Dáil Eireann consider it their duty to protest most vehemently against vulgar abuse of the patriot dead, who, whatever may be thought of their wisdom by slaves who are unworthy of freedom, sacrificed themselves for the welfare of their persecuted compatriots and laid down their lives unselfishly that the Irish Race Might live.²⁷⁷

I started with a mention of the Catholic Cure for Poverty article and its association

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with the National University of Ireland, Galway. It is symbolic of Ireland's failed intellectual tradition which has allowed and encouraged malignant cultural biases to breed and recreate through schmoozing, SPUDing, arrogance, insecurity, and gullibility. Irish universities have become emasculated, leaving academics without the wit, the gumption and the knowledge to be capable of challenging dishonesty, errors and prejudice, let alone challenge toxic feminism.

Dr Sarah Anne Buckley gave an online talk on the 24th February 2021 on the subject of the commission of investigation's final report. I managed to get the chairwoman to ask her a question on my behalf to test her knowledge of statistical correlation. I asked, 'Children's Rights Alliance reports that 'The Infant mortality rates for Traveller children are 3.6 times that of the general population'. What correlation can we draw from this statistic?' She missed the significance of the statistics and took the question to be one about Travellers/Gypsies in state institutions long ago. Later I rephrased the question and asked, 'what influence did poverty have on the high infant mortality statistics?' My question was ignored at first, and after I posted it a second time, the chairwoman responded in a private message:

'Sarah Anne says that they did not have much of an impact.'

Buckley invited contact through email, and I sent a message asking if this was her opinion. She replied no, but did not answer my question and several replies later, it was evident that she did not aware of the issues surrounding statistical correlation.

There is no doubt that the entire scandal's genesis rests upon medical statistics, and few if any of Ireland's historians or socialists have received a good education in mathematics. Moreover, hearsay and gossip have become acceptable as evidence in what could be called the 'dúirt bean liom go ndúirt bean léi' faculty of Irish academia.²⁷⁸

Even if the Clurichaun Ascendency were to end sometime soon, the mother and baby homes scandal would likely stand for all time as the most significant embarrassment to the Irish intellectual tradition. The attack on Christianity is by far the most scurrilous attack ever perpetrated on a philanthropic organisation and altruistic people.

Finally, and in honour of this age of recycling, I would like to re-render Prof Ferriter's infamous claim and say, this book's author colluded with reason, science and logic to get rid of an embarrassment to Ireland.

²⁷⁸ An old Irish expression directly translating as 'a woman told me that a woman told her'. A term used in Hiberno-English to mean gossip or hearsay, especially of an unreliable nature. It is often used dismissively, (p. doort ban lum guh nu-ort ban lay-he)

APPENDIX 1

Glossary

Term	Definition/explanation
Academic	A person working in a third level institution or the systems used by such institutions.
ACCE (p. Ah Chee)	An ACCE is the phenomena whereby a mistake or misunderstanding written by one author is repeated and or embellished by successive authors in a recursively process which can grow into a full-blown falsehood. The term is an acronym of the Irish phrase Aithníonn Ciaróg Ciaróg Eile.
Altruism	The principle or practice of unselfish concern for or devotion to the welfare of others (opposed to egoism).
Anachronism	Something or someone that is not in its correct historical or chronological time, especially a thing or person that belongs to an earlier time:
Anglophone	The English-speaking world
APA	American Psychiatric Association the leading mental health organisation in the World and author of the main diagnostic tools.
Apologist	A person who makes a defence in speech or writing of a belief, idea, etc.
Archaic	Very old or old-fashioned.
Begrudgery	Chiefly an Irish term for resentment of any person who has achieved success or wealth
Blackball	To exclude (someone) from a group, profession, etc; ostracise
Brephotrophium	A medieval rescue centre for abandoned infants
BS	Bull manure
Cabinet	A Cabinet is a body of high-ranking state officials
Cachexia	general physical wasting and malnutrition usually associated with chronic disease
Canard	A false or baseless, usually derogatory story, report, or rumour.
Cciarógí eile	Other beetles. See ACCE.
Cíaróg	Irish word for beetle
Civic Guards	The Irish police are officially named An Garda Síochána - the guardians of the peace. Often shortened to Garda, plural Gardaí or Guards.
Clurichaun	A spiteful mischievous fairy, always up to no good.
Clurichaun syndrome	A collection of self-hating biases and prejudices arising from the Colonial Mentality many of which are unique to the Irish nation. Begrudgery is its most easily recognised manifestation.
Cognition	The mental process involved in knowing, learning, and understanding things
Cognitive bias	refers to a 'systematic error' in the thinking process
Colonial Mentality	The internalised attitude of ethnic or cultural inferiority felt by people as a result of colonization, i.e., them being colonized by another group. It corresponds with the belief that the cultural values of the colonizer are inherently superior to one's own.
Compo	A slang term for financial compensation awarded by a court.

Confined	In the medical sense disease confines one to bed or to a hospital. It is not a synonym for incarceration.
Congenital	Existing from birth
Corollary	Something which follows from a statement.
Devil's advocate	If you play devil's advocate in a discussion or debate, you express an opinion which you may not agree with but which is very different to what other people have been saying, in order to make the argument more interesting.
Diatrise	An angry speech or article which is extremely critical of someone's ideas or activities.
Diphtheria	An acute and highly contagious bacterial disease.
DLGPH	Department of Local Government and Public Health. The predecessor of the Department of Health.
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – the manual of the American Psychiatric Association, (APA) which lists symptoms of mental diseases and ailments.
Éir	Pronounced air as in Éire air-ah a reference to the Irish
Éir to Éir	Irish attacks on the Irish
Emaciated	Very thin and feeble especially from lack of nutrition or illness
Endeavour	To try hard to do or achieve something.
Epidemiology	The scientific study of diseases and how they are found, spread, and controlled in groups of people.
Equanimity	Calmness and composure.
Equivocation	To speak in a way that is intentionally not clear and confusing to other people, especially to hide the truth – Cambridge Dictionary
Exemplar	A typical example or instance. An original or archetype.
Follicly challenged	A humorous term for a bald headed man.
Foundling	An abandoned baby
Gamut	The entire scale or range.
Garda/Gardaí	Irish police force.
Gregory Clause	One of the clauses in Poor Law Amendment Act of 1847 promoted by Gregory, an MP for Dublin stipulated that anyone with more than a quarter of an acre of land was not entitled relief (assistance). Workhouse accommodation was not remotely sufficient for the huge numbers entitled to relief and because poor-law administrators refused to sanction outdoor relief on the scale necessary, the act was calamitous for the poor.
Head Butt	Strike a person on the head with one's own head.
Hindsight Bias	Once something has been achieved, we have a tendency to see the achievement as easy.
Historian's Fallacy	An informal fallacy that occurs when one assumes that decision makers of the past viewed events from the same perspective and having the same information as those subsequently analysing the decision.
Historical equivocation	Also known as: doublespeak. Using an ambiguous term in more than one sense, thus making an argument misleading.
Historical negationism	or denialism is an illegitimate distortion of the historical record.

Appendix 1

Historiography	The study of how history has been written. The main objective is to find out if history has been written as a true and accurate record of the past.
Homogeneity	composed from like parts, elements, or characteristics
Hypocrisy	Pretending to be something which they are not.
Hystericus	A Latinised form of the Greek word for a womb which is the source of the English word hysterical
Idealised	To regard or represent something as perfect or better than it actually is in reality.
Illusory Superiority	A condition of cognitive bias wherein a person overestimates their own qualities and abilities, in relation to the same qualities and abilities of other persons.
Illusory truth effect	Also known as the reiteration effect, truth effect or the validity effect which occurs subconsciously when people believe the information to be correct after repeated exposure.
Impartial	Treating all rivals or disputants equally.
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate – A statistical number derived by calculating the number of children dying under one year of age, divided by the number of live births during the year, multiplied by 1,000.
incarcerate	Imprison or confine a person
Indolent	Having or showing a disposition to avoid exertion; slothful.
Invective	Vehement or violent denunciation, censure, or reproach.
IRA	Irish Republican Army, it fought for independence but is now an outlawed paramilitary organisation.
Irish independent	A populist national newspaper published in Dublin, originally a broadsheet it has become a tabloid both in shape and content. Slightly above the gutter press but not aloof.
Irish times	A national daily newspaper published in Dublin. It sees itself as the “paper of record” the pre-eminent Irish quality news publication. Misses the mark frequently but remains above all others.
Jackeens	A similar term to Seoneen. It is a contraction of Union Jackeen, a reference to the British Flag. A disparaging term for Irish people particularly from Dublin who are overly enamoured with the English, despising everything Irish.
Logical fallacy	A flaw in reasoning. Logical fallacies are like tricks or illusions of thought, and they’re often very sneakily used by politicians and the media to fool people.
Marasmus	Malnutrition occurring in infants and young children, caused by insufficient intake of calories or protein and characterised by thinness, dry skin, poor muscle development, and irritability.
Maxim	An expression of a general truth or principle
Mental asylum	An archaic term for a mental hospital.
Miasmatic theory	The dominant medical theory before germ theory became established, which held that the cause and spread of disease was due to miasma or bad air.
Misandry	Hatred of men/boys. See also misogyny and philogyny.
Misogyny	Hatred of women/girls. See also misandry and philogyny.
Nirvana fallacy	Comparing actual things with unrealistic, idealised alternatives. Everyone appears faulty when compared to an idealised human.
Nomenclature	A naming system
Obscurantism	A policy of withholding information from the public.

Appendix 1

Oikophobia	In a political and social context, it means a repudiation of one's own culture and the lauding of others. One prominent such usage was by Roger Scruton in his 2004 book <i>England and the Need for Nations</i> .
Paltering	To talk or act insincerely or misleadingly; equivocate.
Pathology	The scientific study of disease
Peer review	A quality control mechanism where works are subjected to reviews, especially by experts within a specialist field.
Pertussis	Also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease, caused by the bacterium <i>Bordetella pertussis</i> .
Phantasmagorical	Having a fantastic or deceptive appearance, as something in a dream or created by the imagination.
Philogyny / philogynous	The love of women
Physician	A person qualified to practise medicine, especially one who specialises in diagnosis and medical treatment as distinct from surgery.
Populist	appealing to the interests or prejudices of ordinary people
Presentism	Uncritical adherence to present-day attitudes, especially the tendency to interpret past events in terms of modern values and concepts.
Primary sources	Primary Sources are immediate, first-hand accounts of a topic, from people who had a direct connection with it. Historians use these records as evidence to support their claims and conclusions. In scholarship, a secondary source is a document or recording that relates or discusses information originally presented elsewhere.
Quango	a semi-public advisory and administrative body supported by the government and having most of its members appointed by the government.
Quixotic	preoccupied with an unrealistically optimistic or chivalrous approach to life; impractically idealistic
Raison d'être	Reason for existing
Relief schemes	Government schemes where destitute people men, women and children would work to earn a small amount of money enough to buy food.
Sarcopenia	reduction in skeletal muscle mass due to aging
Scurrilous	characterised by or using low buffoonery; coarsely jocular or derisive language
Sectarianism	A form of prejudice, discrimination, or hatred arising from attaching relations of inferiority and superiority to differences between subdivisions within a group.
Secular	Not pertaining to or connected with religion
Semantic drift	The evolution of or change in word meanings over time.
Seoneens / seoinín	From the Irish word <i>Sheoirse</i> (p. show-ir-sha) with a diminutive suffix: <i>Seoinín</i> meaning little George. A disparaging term for Irish men who are overly enamoured with the English, despising everything Irish.
Straw man attack	A logical fallacy whereby the opposition's position or pronouncements are deliberately misrepresented making it easier to ridicule and destroy.
Synonym	A word having the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the language.
TD	A member of the lower house of parliament representing a constituency.
The Nirvana Fallacy	the informal fallacy of comparing actual things with unrealistic, idealized alternatives

Tumulus	An ancient burial mound which gives the town of Tuam County Galway its name
Union	Poor Law Union – a geographical territory and local government unit.
Vaccine	A biological preparation that provides active acquired immunity to a particular disease
Wannsee Conference	A meeting which took place on 20 January 1942 at a villa in Wannsee to ensure the cooperation of administrative leaders of various government departments in the implementation of the Final solution to the Jewish question (German: Endlösung der Judenfrage), whereby most of the Jews of German-occupied Europe would be deported to occupied Poland and murdered.
Wet nurse	A woman who breastfeeds an infant who is not her own.
Whooping Cough	See pertussis
Zeitgeist	The defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time.

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