

Bodies in Contact

Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History

Edited by Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton

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This book is dedicated to EYIE AND OLIVIA:
women of the future, women of the world

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43. The incident involving Willingdon is mentioned in Humphrey Trevelyan, *The India We Left: Charles Trevelyan, 1826–1865, Humphrey Trevelyan, 1929–1947* (London, 1972), 112–113.
44. Quoted in Masani, *Indian Tales*, 52.
45. Cited in N. B. Bonnerjee, *Under Two Masters* (Calcutta, 1970), 117–118.
46. Ibid.
47. Quoted in Masani, *Indian Tales*, 16. Editors' note: "infra dig" means "beneath one's dignity."
48. Masani, *Indian Tales*, 25.
49. Ibid., 55.
50. See Dhanvanthi Rama Rau, *An Inheritance: The Memoirs of Dhanvanthi Rama Rau* (London, 1977), 99–100, 119.
51. See letter from Sorabji to Elena [Alice Bruce] Richmond, dated 24 February 1926, in "Cornelia Sorabji Papers: Correspondence and Private Papers," January–April 1926, India Office Library and Records, London, folder no. 40.
52. See report of the incident in Renford, *Non-Official British*, 309–311.
53. See the recollection of this episode in Kalpana Dutt, *Chittagong Armoury Raider's Reminiscences* (1945; reprint, New Delhi, 1979), 40–44.
54. Varindra Tarzie Vittachi, *The Brown Sahib* (London, 1962), 10.

Patrick F. McDevitt

Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, Masculinity, and Gaelic Team Sports, 1884–1916

The Gaelic Athletic Association brought Irish men's bodies into rough, though disciplined, contact through the games of hurling and football in ways that created community and helped to challenge British cultural, if not political, dominance in Ireland. Both games had histories before the nineteenth century, when they became symbols of a certain kind of Irish manliness in the face of claims that the (Catholic) Irish should be subject to British (colonial) rule because of Irish men's incapacity for self-governance. Part of a general end-of-the-century Gaelic renaissance, these activities sponsored new playing fields and arenas of competition and accomplishment that had more than symbolic value; the collision of bodies helped to produce and sustain a form of Irish nationalism that could not find expression in other spaces of Irish life. Though not totally gender-segregated, Irish sports did underscore the separate-sphere ideology that undergirded Irish society and even progressive Irish nationalism.

Spanning four decades from the 1880s through the 1910s, a diverse movement that came to be called the "Gaelic Renaissance" sought to create an Irish nation by emphasizing a living Irish language, a national theater, and a native Irish culture. This movement gained particular prominence in the twenty-five years between the death of home rule leader Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891 and the Easter Rebellion of 1916. During this period there seemed to be a retreat from explicitly political agitation in favor of the ideological work of building a nation from the bottom up. The period after 1891 was characterized by a "shift of interest from Westminster to Ireland, from the source of constitutional

reform to the breeding-ground of rebellion.”¹ The revival of the Gaelic games was a hallmark of the Gaelic Renaissance and a strong pronouncement of Irish nationalism, but the highly gendered nature of this experience has been largely ignored by scholars.

Two such games, hurling and Gaelic football, produced an image of Irish masculinity of which the nationalist community could be proud. The random violence of the earlier games was nominally replaced with order and virtuous manliness. Although it may seem commonsensical that sports are related to masculinity, the connection should not be taken as a given. The means through which sports have come to be instantly associated with manhood and the manner in which this connection works in colonial and gender discourses must be probed. To a greater degree than commentary on many other games, the everyday coverage of Gaelic sports was couched in gendered language, and the issues surrounding Irish “manhood” implicitly and explicitly dominated the commentary. Gaelic games, while culturally importing much of their foundation from the British, provided the Irish with a novel form of self-expression through which they were able to foreground the differences between themselves and the British and to fashion a masculine identity that they viewed as uniquely “Irish.”² Founded by Michael Cusack in 1884, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and its supporters could be said to have fashioned a philosophy of “muscular Catholicism” to counter the doctrine of “muscular Christianity” that was the driving motivation behind the development of modern sport in England.

IRISH MEN SOUGHT to distinguish themselves from the British through anti-imperialism, Catholicism, Irish culture, egalitarianism, and fraternal solidarity; these marks of distinction coexisted with an emphasis on morality, codification, and competition that was shared with the British. Distinct images of manhood were created: a British version based on Protestant elitism and class, and an Irish version dominated by Catholic communalism.³ For men, one of the most readily accessible manners of defying the British and celebrating one’s Irishness was participation in Gaelic games. Sport can be viewed as a medium for self-expression in many ways; impressions of the self and the other are linked inextricably in the evolution of sport in a given locality and society.⁴ For the men of the nationalist community, the concepts of manhood, patriotism, and resistance were so interconnected as to be almost conflated, and these three

ideals of nationalist philosophy are drawn together most dramatically by the national pastimes.

The games provided Irish nationalists with a symbolically defiant act broad enough to encompass aspects of ritual, nostalgia for a legendary Irish past of united independence, physicality (with its attendant discipline and ordered violence), and strict differentiation of gender roles. The athlete’s beautiful, healthy, and vigorous Irish male body counteracted the Victorian English characterizations of the Irish as either simian, drunken ruffians or effeminate and feckless, childlike inferiors in need of Anglo-Saxon domination.⁵ The athletic bodies produced and displayed in hurling and Gaelic football also provided muscular counterimages to the memory of weak and emaciated Irish Famine (1845–1847) victims. This was a profound moment of self-definition: first and foremost, the English and Anglo-Irish were excluded and thereby deemed “un-Irish”; second, Irish men were distinguished from Irish boys; third, Irish women were excluded from the centers of action and power. If communities, whether nations or fraternities of sportsmen, are symbolic constructs created via cultural imaginings, then the example of hurling and Gaelic football allows us to see this cultural imagining in its making and in its most naked and powerful form.⁶

The history of hurling stretches back into the time of Irish legend and was intimately connected to warfare and warriors. While infinitely safer in its modern form than in its folk and ancient forms, hurling is still perhaps the most hazardous game in the Western world and has been described as “the nearest approach to warfare consistent with peace.”⁷ The modern game entails thirty men running around swinging heavy wooden clubs at a small hard ball flying through the air at distances up to one hundred yards. Cusack argued that “the game was invented by the most sublimely energetic and warlike race that the world has ever known. . . . It teaches the use of arms at close quarters . . . [and] it gives its votaries that courage which comes from a consciousness of having in one’s hand a weapon which may be used with deadly effect.”⁸ Neither hurling nor Gaelic football allows tackling in either the rugby or soccer sense; however, both incorporate a large amount of physical contact, and hurling allows for vast “incidental” contact between one player’s caman (the stick used in hurling) and another’s body. The games required a certain degree of fearlessness in the men who played them.

This vigorous image of Irish games and men was constantly held up in

contrast to the weakened and stunned apathy of the country between the Great Famine of 1845 and the founding of the GAA in 1884. It is estimated that, out of a pre-Famine population of just over 8 million, nearly 1.5 million people emigrated and over 1 million died of famine-related disease and starvation between 1845 and 1850. The effects of the Famine were felt for decades after the restoration of the potato crop. The *Celtic Times* reported in 1887 that "it would be idle to deny that a considerable section of Irishmen is thoroughly demoralized."⁹ In addition to drawing together the Irish present with a Golden Age of united independence, the promoters of the games sought to regain the pre-Famine confidence and optimism associated with Daniel O'Connell's movement in the 1840s to repeal the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland. The banishment of the image of weak Irish men produced by the Famine was a prerequisite for national autonomy, and the advent of the GAA was the first step in this process for many nationalists. Cusack, it was said, "was content to re-endow his compatriots with the qualities of Strong-men, [and] assumed that in God's good time they would reach the status of Freemen."¹⁰ In this way, the revival of ancient traditions was in fact part of a modernizing mission to bring Ireland into the community of independent nations.

By creating the GAA, Irish men were performing a deliberate act of heresy in the face of the cultural imperialism and political domination of Great Britain. Rather than standing as an institution against orthodoxy, Gaelic team games came to represent a new orthodoxy. One observer, criticizing half-hearted support of hurling and football, stated that the true Gael "cannot be orthodox today and unfaithful tomorrow: Non-Gaelic on Saturday and Ultra-Gaelic on Sunday."¹¹ Other peoples in the British empire subverted English sports by beating the British at their own games; the Irish blasphemed in a different manner. By repudiating the central rituals of the British imperial religion, they rejected the tenet that team games were symbolic of the superiority of British manhood. The creation of the "antirituals" of their own games became the most visible, viable, and successful pillar of the Irish cultural renaissance.

Gaelic sports were not isolated from the rest of the revival movement; rather, GAA promoters surrounded the games with festivals, music, and oratory that explicitly rejected the imperial creed implied in the "foreign" games. During the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the Irish Catholic Church underwent a "devotional revolution" characterized by a dra-

matic increase in the number of vocations and the resurrection, accentuation, and reestablishment of many long-forgotten and half-remembered rituals. In the period from 1850 to 1875, the upper clergy of Ireland transformed the casual, personal Catholicism of the pre-Famine era into a highly codified, ritualistic, and institutionally centered religion.¹² The centralization of the Church in these years helped to enable the population of Ireland to conceive of themselves in national rather than parochial terms.¹³ In a similar manner, Gaelic games and the Irish language, which had fallen into disuse, were revived and propagated on a national and centralized level. These cultural artifacts were not simply recovered but reconstructed. Both hurling and football needed to be organized and standardized in order to coexist with the self-perception of Irish men as civilized counterparts to their Anglo-Saxon overlords, despite British claims to the contrary.

The nationalist community was not monolithic, and images of masculinity were not limited to the participants in the Gaelic games. The nationalist movement ranged from radical republicans who sought complete independence to moderate home rulers who advocated remaining part of the British empire with local self-governance. However, the nationalist movement was, through the sheer number of adherents, the dominant force in Irish life in this period, and it was from this community that Gaelic games drew their support.¹⁴ In addition to the many shades of independent nationalism, other political ideologies existed, and different groups had contrasting conceptions of manhood that were not affected by Gaelic sports, including masculinities molded by English sports then being played in Ireland. Irish members of the Crown Forces offer one example of Irish men who did not hold that participation in Gaelic games was a central requirement for Irish manhood. Soon after its founding, the GAA instituted a policy known as "The Ban," which forbade the participation of soldiers, sailors, and members of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) in Gaelic games. This policy was in actuality enforced with varying degrees of strictness throughout the period. The RIC's organ, the *Constabulary Gazette*, decried The Ban as "outrageous" and "narrow-minded, unsportsmanlike, un-Irish, unmanly. . . . The R.I.C. embraces the finest specimens of muscular manhood in or out of Ireland, and they are to a man the product of this country."¹⁵ Despite the fact that the RIC was at this point still made up overwhelmingly of Irishmen, the GAA would argue that it contained not a single Gael, and thereby offered nothing to

Gaelic games. On the other hand, although the article rejected The Ban and the authority of the GAA to define Irish manhood, its purpose was to encourage the removal of The Ban and allow the participation of Crown Force members in Gaelic games.

Masculinity is connected to Gaelic games in several significant ways. First, there were "civilizing" tendencies which sought to remove the violence and brutishness inherent in earlier versions of the games. Repeatedly, discipline and control of violent impulses were praised in participants and upheld as a benefit of the games. Here we see that although Gaelic games were a reaction to the British, there were also many areas of overlap between British and Irish games philosophy. Irishmen wanted to demonstrate that they were not naturally unruly and that organized team games did not correspond to British superiority. Simultaneously, they incorporated similar civilizing goals as British games and relied on the imposition of a formal set of rules and regulations to order and enforce these notions of civilization. Second, in opposition to the civilizing trends and creating a running tension for the games, hurling and football were tied to militarism through descriptive metaphors and the organization of training and tactics, and through a huge overlap in membership between the GAA and the various sectarian militias. Third, the games helped to define separate spheres for men and women within the nationalist movement, reserving the most active and prominent duties for the men. According to the GAA's *Annual* for 1907–1908, "The ideal Gael is a matchless athlete, sober, pure of mind, speech and deed, self-possessed, self-reliant, self-respecting, loving his religion and his country with a deep restless love, earnest in thought and effective in action."¹⁶ Hurling and Gaelic football required dedicated men motivated by a republican brotherhood. The games inculcated and cultivated these coveted values, whose presence was proven by success. Victorious team members were the pride of Gael-dom and role models for younger men and boys, and thus perpetuated the games, their political ideology, and a Gaelic conception of masculinity.

THE PROPAGATION OF the highly gendered English sporting philosophy to the empire was to some degree an attempt to control the minds of colonials *through* their bodies rather than simply in addition to them. English games, most notably cricket, rugby, and soccer, were actively disseminated throughout the empire by the hundreds of public school-educated teachers, missionaries, and administrators; these games were

seen as one of the best ways to transmit the values of British society to the collaborating colonial classes.¹⁷ Once hurling and Gaelic football were enlisted to combat that corporeal colonialism, the body became the battle ground for an imperial confrontation. It was not by any means predetermined that the Irish would choose to propagate these "native" games as a means of national reinvigoration. In addition to the British sports, which some Irishmen favored adopting as a means of literally beating the English at their own games, there were other options as well, including German-style gymnastics, cycling, baseball, and Australian rules football. However, it was Gaelic football and hurling that were chosen and that excited massive participation nearly instantaneously; other sports then being played in Ireland did not. Both the games themselves and their accompanying rhetoric welded them to Irish notions of manhood, of the body, of the community, and of their relation to the land. These aspects of Gaelic games made them unique for the Irish.

With a founding motive of improving the musculature of Irish manhood, a nationwide movement was born which, by the eve of the First World War, was rivaled only by the Catholic Church as the most powerful organization in the country.¹⁸ As with nearly every modern sport, the spectacle of physical strength, grace, and beauty was central to the success and popularity of Gaelic games. However, a mind/body symbiosis was still held to be of cardinal importance. Watching a game on a typically cold Irish winter day, one priest observed "two or three dozen young fellows with naked arms, naked heads, naked feet, and clad only in a light silken jersey and drawers. . . . Our young men stripped and fought fiercely for victory, utterly heedless of cold or danger."¹⁹ The weekly display of healthy, muscular, and vigorous male bodies provided by hurling and football worked not only to define masculinity but also to illustrate Irish attitudes toward the male body and to act as propaganda for the Irish-Ireland movement which sought to "de-Anglicize" Ireland. First, the strength and dominance of rural teams underscored the enduring image of the manly and virile Gaelic body as rooted in a flourishing and fertile rural landscape. Second, the active Gaelic athletes were a reproach to those who were not participating because of their alleged sloth. Third, the will to continue playing despite physical hardships highlighted the manner in which mental and spiritual qualities allowed the men to convert physical ability into victory. Fourth, the triumph of the Gaelic athletic movement was viewed as a resounding rebuttal to the anguish caused by

the Famine and British policies that protected financial interests of landlords at the cost of suffering among the Irish people. The spiritual aspects of Gaelic games were considered partial compensation for lack of Irish independence in the present, and the physical benefits were viewed as guarantors of that independence in the future.

The GAA produced nothing less than a social revolution in parts of rural Ireland. Many areas had not held games or festivals in over fifty years, nor witnessed large crowd gatherings since O'Connell's mass repeal meetings in the 1840s. T. F. O'Sullivan, the first historian of the GAA, believed that the "dull monotony of Irish rural life [had been] dispelled forever [with the advent of the GAA]. A new spirit had been created in the country."²⁰ Whether this social revolution was bona fide or not, it was portrayed at the time as genuine, and the GAA did create strong rural networks of likeminded Irishmen. The *Democrat* reported in 1893 that before the GAA had revitalized the area, the men spent their time drinking and gambling, while "their physique in general had deteriorated and . . . the young men walked with stooped shoulders and a shambling gait. A couple of years of hurling and football soon changed this and the athleticism which permeated every nook and corner of the South Midlands and the West of Ireland during the years 1886 to 1890 brought forth myriads of athletes."²¹ In this way, Gaelic sports fortified the belief that the true Ireland of past greatness was waiting to be resurrected and that the nation would rise and take its independence once the men of Ireland recovered their lost physical prowess.

Gaelic games were also intimately tied to Irish Catholicism, both philosophically and through the one-parish-one-club organizational ethos. Gaelic sports complemented their Catholic environment when contrasted with Protestant English games. Unlike many Protestant churches, which had been stripped of representations of the body, Catholic churches were full of images of embodied religious figures in paintings, statues, and stained glass, suggesting less of a mind/body separation in Irish Catholic culture than in Protestant cultures. The overemphasis on physicality allegedly propagated by "foreign" games was held up in contrast to the mutuality of mind and body in the Irish case. P. J. Devlin wrote: "The exultation of mere bodily grace and virility is fundamentally pagan, basically carnal and foreign to all our historical conceptions of perfect manhood . . . spiritual qualities long survived the memories of their bodily vigor."²² Thus, cleverness of play evidenced spiritual advancement by ex-

hibiting the ability of Irishmen to transcend the purely physical and leave the realm of the grossly material behind.

Despite a wariness of overt brutishness, participants in Irish games still came to equate muscularity with manly action and slenderness with neutered apathy. In a scathing attack leveled by the *Celtic Times* at some of the citizenry of Kilkenny, where the GAA had not taken off with the same vigor as in other parts of the country, Cusack contrasted the "fine, strapping men" of the GAA to "a score of pale, emaciated figures, seeming engaged in criticizing the dress and motions of everybody moving past them. . . . Another crowd of persons, who probably call themselves men, was slothfully reclining with their faces towards the sun."²³ The notion that males who are not part of the movement cannot legitimately be considered "men" is emphasized here, as is the contrast between the ideal bodies of the Gaels and the undernourished bodies of nonparticipants. In a land haunted by memories of the Famine, laziness and inactivity led, in the Irish symbolic universe, to emaciation and thinness, not slovenly corpulence, as in more affluent societies. The athletic physiques of the GAA men also offered a vivid contrast to the fleshy image of John Bull, who had grown corpulent feasting on profits reaped from the misery of Ireland's poorest. Moreover, in addition to a lack of strength and industry, the highly gendered pastimes of catty gossip-mongering and concern with fashion are ascribed to the non-GAA men.

Gaelic games were seen by large numbers of Irishmen as antidotes to the sickly national body. In the article that officially called for the formation of the GAA, Cusack argued that a "rot" which began in urban centers and had spread across the country could be remedied only by Gaelic games.²⁴ The organic imagery of a rot spreading visibly across the land clearly equates British culture with the blight that was responsible for the failure of the potato crop in the 1840s. It was not enough that the games promoted healthy, muscular men, as nearly any sport would have done that. By standing in opposition to Anglican games, Irish nationalists could further nationalist as well as sectarian agendas while creating sports that more closely resembled their concerns and views. The success of hurling and Gaelic football rests in part on their ability to speak to national memories of the pre-Famine era as well as hopes of a post-British future.

Male supporters of Gaelic games often connected images of British men with those of women or neutered men. The effeminization of the enemy here displays male Irish attitudes not only toward British men

but also toward women and themselves. If the most pejorative label one man can place on another is that he is emasculated, that is, "made like a woman," the level of equality available to women in that society is necessarily low. Likewise, compliments that stress manhood by definition demean women and feminize those who do not succeed, thus associating failure with the feminine. The phrase "worked like men" was often used to describe a particularly diligent side.²⁵ At times, this was in reference to schoolboys, who, though male, were not adult men; at other times, it was applied to men's teams. In this context, all males (even all adult males) are not "men" unless they follow certain preordained behavior patterns. Messner and Sabo argue that "sports suppress natural (sex) similarities, construct differences, and then . . . weave a structure of symbol and interpretation around the differences which naturalizes them."²⁶ In this case, the physicality and brutality of the games accentuated differences in favor of men and then claimed that artificial advantage as evidence of male superiority.

The concept that men are not always men allowed players to step outside their socially dictated roles and behave otherwise at other times. Although they may "work like men" on the field, perhaps they get to "play like boys" at the pub afterward. The increase in traveling and use of the railroads precipitated by the games made many matches holidays in themselves. Although spectators traveled to games, often on specially chartered trains, expenses dictated that usually only the players and perhaps the male supporters would go.²⁷ The camaraderie generated on trips "with the lads," away from the stresses of work and families, included restaurants and pubs with their attendant drunkenness, singing, and gaiety. The games reinforced the image of political unity, namely a brotherhood of Gaels which, with their women in concomitant subordination, would reclaim their lost nation from a feminized oppressor.

Participants and administrators of the game had little difficulty reconciling the incredible violence involved in hurling with their desire to portray the Irish man as peaceable. The *Gaelic Athletic Annual* stated that "the hurler who would raise a caman to strike another player is unworthy to use it. The caman is not a weapon of offense—amongst Gaels at least. . . . [Those who] decry hurling as a dangerous brutal game . . . have acquired the instinctive dread of the 'Anglo-Saxon' for manly vigor."²⁸ Statements of civilizing nonviolence notwithstanding, the practitioners of the Gaelic games, especially hurling, clearly associated them with vio-

lence and violence with manhood. Any fear of bodily harm was deemed a sign either of encroaching British influence or of effeminacy.

The connection between English males and unmanliness dates to the very inauguration of the association. In a letter accepting the invitation to become a patron of the GAA, Archbishop Croke of Cashel penned what was for many years considered the charter of the association. Urging the public to support the new organization, he derided the manner in which, along with importing England's manufactured goods, the Irish had taken to imitating English fashions, mannerisms, accents, and "such other effeminate follies as she may recommend."²⁹ Croke was not alone in equating English activities and fashions with dandyism and other womanly affectations. Cusack argued in 1887 "that as the courage and honesty and spirit of manhood grow, the hurling steadily advances on the domains of football."³⁰ That is, as the number of Irish males who are truly masculine grows, the unmanly British games will naturally wither away because of lack of participation. Cusack argued that by joining a Gaelic sports team an Irish man not only became more manly but also contributed to the removal of British domination.

Cultural awareness, anti-Britishness, and fluency in the Irish language were highly regarded nationalist credentials for both sexes in Ireland. As mothers, women played an active role in the propagation of a nationalist ideology within the household.³¹ In 1902, female members of the Gaelic League devised a less violent version of hurling and called it camogie.³² The efforts of these nationalistic women who took to the playing fields with camans in hand were not warmly received by the sporting community and were largely ignored by the press and the GAA. The perceived newsworthiness of sports furthered the gendering of sports and national identity.

Even before the invention of camogie, women were not excluded from the carnival of Gaelic games, and their presence was often noted. Before the mid-nineteenth century, folk games of any sort throughout Europe were not events in themselves, but rather were part of festivals and fairs in which whole communities participated. This inclusiveness had changed by the late nineteenth century for most of the world, as games became reasons in themselves to gather. For at least their first two decades, however, Gaelic games were often surrounded by Gaelic festivals (formal or informal), which included contests or exhibitions of Irish music, dance, and speech making, all of which involved women in pivotal roles. In

describing the spectacle of one day's matches, which were preceded by a Mass and a parade, a newspaper praised the young women of the town as "typical Irish cailini, fine Irish speakers, and Irish singers and dancers, and able helpers of the boys, [who] are well worthy of their country too."³³ Although female participation was welcome and widespread, the gender hierarchy remained firmly in place. Men held center stage while the women were assigned supporting roles of muse-like encouragement. When discussing the sorry state of traditional pastimes in his inaugural letter, Archbishop Croke referred to the "sour humiliation . . . of every genuine son and daughter of the old land." He went on to discuss the "ball-playing, hurling, football-kicking . . . and all such favorite exercises and amusements amongst men and boys."³⁴ So, although the shame of national subjugation was felt by all, only the males were able to avenge this directly. Although there were Gaels of both sexes, their paths to that status were defined by the larger bifurcation of Irish society into spheres of activity that overlapped but were viewed as largely distinct.

Both Gaelic masculinity and femininity had the stereotypes of their British and Anglo-Irish counterparts against which to define themselves. Criticizing the rigid qualifications for amateurism for Irish athletes as governed by loyalists, Cusack stated, "For years . . . clubs excluded . . . people who are vulgar enough to be muscular and would give a daddy-long-legs . . . no chance in the presence of his wasp-waisted sweetheart."³⁵ Archbishop Croke echoed the popular dichotomy between virile, poor Irishmen and effete, well-off Anglo-Irish when he contrasted the "youthful athletes . . . bereft of shoes and coat, and thus prepared to play" to the "degenerate dandies . . . arrayed in light attire . . . and racket in hand."³⁶ The repetitious labeling of the British as effeminate spoke as much to the Irish fear of themselves becoming effeminate as it did to a concern over the status of British men. Distinctions between manly Irish and effeminate British reassured Irish men that political and economic subjugation did not mean a loss of sexual power. The conception of a feminized oppressor was unusual, and represented an inversion of the more common representation of a feminized colonial subject.

Class cannot be separated from the anti-British and antiloyalist sentiment and perceptions of gender. The gentry of Ireland and the absentee landlords in England were forever tied to Ireland's greatest tragedies, Cromwell's brutal conquest of Ireland in the seventeenth century and the Famine, which together were seen as completely robbing the Irish of their

own land. The influence and involvement of aristocracy, who previously had sponsored almost all nineteenth-century athletic contests in Ireland in the form of estate cricket and gentlemanly races, were vigorously opposed in Gaelic games.³⁷ The strict financial and social requirements of much Anglo-Irish sporting activity also contributed to Irish resentment. For example, the Cork Drapers Association was denied affiliation with the Irish Rugby Union because of their profession.³⁸ In an editorial deriding upper-class women who participated in that most English of sports, fox hunting, a writer asked, "Can anyone even pretend to imagine that such a woman [could] possibly be a good wife or mother, or have sympathy with sorrows and the sufferings of others. . . . How many ladies of rank and leisure and means, either in the city or country, help to teach catechism in our churches on Sunday?"³⁹ The Gaelic woman was above all a working- or middle-class mate and nurturer who was actively religious and morally unquestionable. Here once again, the valued status of Irish women's reproductive ability is highlighted. Men were consistently defined as independent actors, while women were most often defined as relational objects, as the mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives of men.

Upper-class women also represented independence of action for women. Women who possessed the free time to go on fox hunts were not working from early morning to late at night running a household. In the same vein, Irish women who strayed beyond the boundaries of the domestic sphere received little encouragement from the sporting community. At one match there were "several ladies with collecting boxes in aid of the rifle fund for the Irish Volunteers [who] reaped a rich harvest; a strong contrast to the cold reception given to the few ladies soliciting support for the Women's Suffrage cause."⁴⁰ This discouragement of women as equal partners by spectators of Gaelic games mirrored women's relegation to the background by the games themselves, through both the physicality of the games and the symbolism surrounding them that demarcated the proper roles of the sexes.

DISCIPLINE WAS OF primary importance to the promoters of the games. In fact, one prominent writer stated his belief that "the creation of proper control was the first and most important task" of the GAA.⁴¹ Few reports passed up the opportunity to comment on the exemplary behavior of the players and crowds. One team was described as having "Celtic faces [which] were the faces of well-schooled, well-disciplined men, full of

enthusiasm but also full of self-control. Enthusiasm dominated by self-control!⁴² The unending parade of compliments and emphasis on good behavior would seem almost comic were it not so seriously offered. Rhetoric aside, it seems that, as the winning of games became more closely tied to the honor of the parish or county, tempers often did flare. The rough play of one man was blamed for the early termination of a game in 1906, when his use of foul language and deliberate kicking of opponents were described as "ungaelic."⁴³ Likewise, the employment of questionable tactics in a game in 1889 was termed "unmanly."⁴⁴ While the ethics of the games revolution in both Britain and Ireland demanded sportsmanlike conduct, Gaelic games produced an atmosphere where infractions of rules, or even the spirit of the rules, were interpreted as betrayal of one's race, nation, and gender, not simply of a mechanistic code.

Despite the emphasis on skill on the field, neither the physicality of the players nor the military benefits of disciplined men were ignored. The highly integrated and open playing style forced teams to train more. In this way, the move away from preeminent physicality made ties between the games and military potential paradoxically closer. P. J. Devlin observed that GAA patron and Fenian leader John O'Leary "knew that it was manpower that fought battles, and that only disciplined manpower could win them."⁴⁵ As the games evolved, the image of an ideal Gael as a prepared Gael became more axiomatic. However, it was incessantly reiterated that this manly and military vigor must be kept under control. The ritualization of violence surrounding modern Gaelic games was aimed at promoting a martial image. The *Freeman's Journal* described how, after one match in 1888, the teams "were marshaled . . . in military fashion [and] ordered to fall into lines." The team "captain" gave the order "Right About!" and the men, victors and vanquished together, paraded through the town.⁴⁶ Even though a martial, and therefore inherently violent, performance was enacted, the imitation of the military kept that violence within disciplined ranks. Because controlled and organized violence was, in fact, much more powerful than its disorganized counterpart, the advent of the GAA and modern Gaelic games increased the potential for violence in Irish society. The greater number of men participating in these games enlarged the portion of the population that was directly involved in activities requiring physical force. Here, then, we see that a transformation rather than reduction of violence characterized the evolution of modern Irish sport.

The connection between training for sport and training for revolt was not left unstated, but was continually enunciated by players, administrators, and commentators. For example, the caman has long held symbolic value as a substitute for a rifle. The men of the GAA marched at the funerals of prominent statesmen and association figures with camans draped in black and carried on the shoulder in a rifle-like manner, thereby doing little to ease the minds of Dublin Castle, the administrative headquarters of the British government in Ireland, that they were not an army in training.⁴⁷ Although the GAA as an organization maintained strict neutrality during the Home Rule Crisis of 1913, the pro-Sinn Féin views of most GAA members were easily discernible, and a marked decrease in the number participating in the games ensued as militia ranks swelled.⁴⁸ One writer proclaimed that "the Gaelic body, be it club or council, that puts camans into the hands of boys can do as much for a future Ireland of ideal dreams as those who would arm a battalion in the same area."⁴⁹ A rally speaker stated, "When the time comes, the hurlers will cast away the caman for the sharp bright steel that will drive the Saxon from our land."⁵⁰ The conflation of sport and militarism seemed to suggest that, if Gaelic athletes could conquer and defend the borders of the playing fields of Ireland from the imposition of British institutions, surely it was only a matter of time before the same was done for the nation.

The growth of hurling and Gaelic football as propagated by the GAA was instrumental in the restructuring of an Irish nationalist manhood. The power to oppose British games and reclaim independence of action one sphere at a time marked the first dramatic steps toward greater freedom from English control. Because these endeavors took place within the highly gendered and male-dominated world of sports, they affected the construction of gender roles in the wider community. While masculinity is never a static entity and its characteristics evolve over time, the period from 1884 to 1916 is clearly distinguished by the development of a distinct conception of masculinity in the Gaelic community that bound together manhood and nationalism in the context of active participation in Gaelic sports. Being born male in Ireland was not equivalent to being an Irish man; Gaelic masculinity was the product of a dynamic cultivation of physical and mental qualities that distinguished the Irish man from both women and British men.

The games' dynamic was in large part dominated by tensions that molded and distorted the meanings of the games and their relations to

Irish society. The games were characterized by dichotomous conflicts between civilizing tendencies and violent content; between a desire to be viewed as peaceable and disciplined and a determination to present an impression of incipient revolution; and between the paramountcy of muscular stature and the ascendancy of intellectual control. Like their British counterparts that sought to reconcile Christianity with social Darwinism, Gaelic sports fed on the tensions produced by these varying objectives competing for dominance. In this way, the games reflect the fortunes of the Irish nationalist movement itself, which wavered between parliamentarianism and military defiance and between conciliatory home rule and republican separatism. Through the process of revamping the games, new sports were born that shared ideals and goals with the community's conceptions of a nationalist manhood and that came to symbolize the Irish struggle with the English while simultaneously participating in that struggle.

Notes

1. Nicholas Mansergh, *The Irish Question 1840-1921* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975), 243-246.
2. Ashis Nandy examined similar issues in an Indian context in *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1988), xi, 1-4.
3. Although Roman Catholicism and the GAA were intimately tied, the association's relationship with the clergy was often stormy in its first decade because of clerical opposition to the Irish Republican Brotherhood. See James O'Shea, *Priest, Politics and Society in Post-Famine Ireland: A Study of County Tipperary 1850-1891* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1983), 150, 171-176.
4. Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket*, 1-4.
5. See L. Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971).
6. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).
7. *The Gaelic Athletic Annual and County Directory 1910-1911*, no. 3 (Dublin: Cahill and Co., 1911), "Compiled and Edited by Gaels for Gaels," 58.
8. *Celtic Times*, 26 February 1887.
9. Ibid.
10. P. J. Devlin, *Our Native Games* (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1935), 14.
11. Ibid., 48.
12. Emmet Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-1875," *American Historical Review* 77 (1972): 625-652.

13. Donal McCartney, *The Dawning of Democracy: Ireland 1800-1870* (Dublin: Helicon, 1987), 207-208.
14. This community also comprised the Gaelic League, with its Irish language movement, and the Abbey Theatre of Yeats, Gregory, and Synge. For an interesting reaction by this community to a divergent presentation of Irish gender roles in Synge's play *Playboy of the Western World* in 1907, see James Kilroy, *The "Playboy" Riots* (Dublin: Doleman Press, 1971).
15. Devlin, *Our Native Games*, 20.
16. John Sugden and Alan Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), 29.
17. See J. A. Mangan, ed., "Benefits Bestowed?" *Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
18. W. F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics, 1884-1924*, 221.
19. *The Gaelic Athletic Annual 1910-1911*, 18.
20. Marcus de Búrca, *Michael Cusack* (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1989), 120, and Marcus de Búrca, *The GAA: A History* (Dublin: Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, 1980), 26.
21. Quoted in Fr. Michael Gilson, S.S., C.C., *Hills of Magheraclone 1884-1984* (Monaghan, 1985), 19.
22. Devlin, *Our Native Games*, 62-63.
23. *Celtic Times*, 16 April 1887.
24. *United Ireland and the Irishman*, 11 October 1884, as quoted in de Búrca, *Michael Cusack*, 96.
25. *Irish Daily Independent and Nation*, 7 November 1904.
26. Michael A. Messner and Donald F. Sabo, *Sex, Violence and Power in Sports* (Freedom, Calif.: Crossing Press, 1994), 96.
27. Although women often attended matches, it would more likely be the men alone who would travel to see the games. *The Gaelic Athletic Annual 1910-1911* reported: "Half the male population of the kingdom [Co. Kerry] must have traveled to Tipperary on that day" (14).
28. *The Gaelic Athletic Annual 1908-1909*, 45.
29. Mark Tierney, *Croke of Cashel: The Life of Archbishop Thomas William Cooke* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1976), 195.
30. *Celtic Times*, 26 February 1887.
31. Carol Coulter, *The Hidden Tradition: Feminism, Women and Nationalism in Ireland* (Cork, 1993), 9-18.
32. de Búrca, *The GAA: A History*, 93.
33. *United Irishman*, 29 July 1905.
34. Tierney, *Croke of Cashel*, 195.
35. *Shamrock*, 24 January 1884, as quoted in de Búrca, *Michael Cusack*, 83.
36. Quoted in Padrig Griffin, *The Politics of Irish Athletics* (Ballinamore, Ireland, 1990), 16.
37. See Kevin Whelan, "The Geography of Hurling," *History Ireland* 1 (1993): 28-31.
38. *United Irishman*, 18 March 1899, as cited in Tom Graven, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858-1928* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 67.

39. *United Irishman*, 19 August 1905.
40. *Irish Independent*, 19 October 1914.
41. Devlin, *Our Native Games*, 12.
42. GAA 1915: *Yearbook* (Dublin: Gaelic Press, 1915), 39.
43. Gilsenan, *Hills of Magheracluone*, 127.
44. *Clare Journal*, 14 October 1889, quoted in Tim Moloney, ed., *The Claret and Gold: A History of the Tulla Henley Club, 1887–1987* (Ennis: Clare Champion Printers, 1987), 58.
45. Devlin, *Our Native Games*, 21.
46. *Freeman's Journal*, 3 April 1888.
47. de Búrca, *The GAA: A History*, 62.
48. Editors' note: Sinn Féin ("Ourselves Alone") is an Irish nationalist group founded in 1905.
49. de Búrca, *The GAA: A History*, 124–127.
50. Devlin, *Our Native Games*, 56.

Elisa Camiscioli

Reproducing the "French Race": Immigration and Pronatalism in Early-Twentieth-Century France

As with discourses of travel, nation, and progress, debates about immigration and labor in modern Europe were carried on through reference to female bodies and their reproductive capacities. In turn-of-the-century France, where an influx of all manner of "foreign" bodies was accompanied by a crisis of depopulation among the "native-born," public concern about reproduction was influenced by anxieties about racial purity and the fate of the civilized nation. This essay focuses on the link between productivity and racial order by analyzing the role of the National Alliance for the Increase of the French Population in shaping national discussions of immigration (by both colonial peoples and Poles, Italians, and Spaniards). Made up of doctors, industrialists, and social scientists — and predominantly Catholic — the Alliance offered a number of powerful diagnoses and prognoses about the future of France if it failed to guard its borders, both literal and metaphorical. Its paranoia about infiltration and its emphasis on keeping the body politic racially pure enables us to see connections between depopulation and fascism elsewhere in Europe, as well as to appreciate how constitutively concerns about race and gender helped contribute to the character of reactionary politics in the interwar years.

The immigrant question of early-twentieth-century France was formulated with reference to both the labor power and reproductive value of potential foreigners. Politicians, industrialists, social scientists, and racial theorists agreed that the "demographic crisis" had created a shortage of citizens as well as workers, and thus immigrants who came to work in France must also be assimilable and able to produce