The Aesthetics of Interest and the Irish Question: William Carleton's and Anthony Trollope's Famine Novels

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HENRY Morley's "The Irish Use of the Globe, in One Lesson," a short story published in *Household Words* in 1850, reflects on taking an interest in events happening at a distance—in this case, the Great Irish Famine of 1845–52. In this story, a world-weary traveler encounters a hermit in the woods who is doomed to look at unfolding historical events through a magic globe without intervening in these events. Excited to finally be able to inspire "hearty action" by sharing his knowledge of the world with someone else, the hermit takes the traveler to the magic globe and focuses his attention on Ireland.[1] But when the globe shows starving people threatened by eviction, the traveler is unimpressed and declares this disastrous scene to be old news. The misery that haunts the hermit is "tiresome" to the traveler: he already knows all about it from newspapers, statistics, and speeches (53). In fact, the traveler begins to teach the hermit about the famine and the proper solution to Irish poverty, insisting that the magic globe is no better than an illustrated newspaper. When the hermit realizes that he can teach the traveler nothing, he declares, "I only wonder that you, feeling thus and knowing so much, take no interest in home affairs" (54). The traveler suggests that he lacks interest in the unfolding events in Ireland because the visual scenes are all too familiar. He then reassures the hermit that the Irish people will be all right if they are able to labor on waste lands and thus acquire "a conservative interest in the maintenance of law and order" (55). The traveler argues that he does not need to be interested in Ireland; Irish people need to acquire the distinct forms of public interest that result from a "sense of property" (55).[2] Although the hermit imagines that knowledge

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about the Irish famine will lead to action, the story suggests that the traveler feels unmoved to act precisely because of extensive coverage of the famine by the British press. Instead, the traveler offers a solution that requires Irish people to become more like the English, or at least more integrated into English economic interests.

I argue that this story is more than a narrative about famine fatigue or the powers of the periodical press to convey world events; it is about the "interesting" as an aesthetic category and the colonial politics of public interest. By 1847, British people were increasingly exhausted with ongoing requests for charity and impatient with Irish migrants in England, convinced by premature declarations by the British government that the famine was over.[3] As a result, the British public debated how to make Irish people more responsible and self-sufficient rather than how best to aid them. This story exhibits such fatigue by representing the famine as old news. But it does more than that; it shows how interest simultaneously functions as a set of "concerns, aspirations, and advantage," often with an economic connotation, that connect and often delimit a public and the aesthetics that make something interesting to a public.[4] The story initially questions why the traveler is not more curious about Irish misery but quickly shifts to explaining how Irish people can acquire shared interests with English people who view them from a distance: they, too, must learn to respect property and develop an attachment to law and order. "The Irish Use of the Globe" demonstrates how public interest manages racial and colonial difference by determining who is included in a vision of a shared public. According to this story, Ireland can become interesting to the British public—for a brief time at least—because of colonial catastrophes like the famine, but in order to be included in the idea of a public, Irish people need to integrate themselves into imperial interests.

I suggest that this oscillation between interesting as an aesthetic category and interests as a set of "concerns, aspirations, and advantage" that define a public help us understand the politics and aesthetics of interest in English and Irish novels about the Irish famine written both during and after the event—specifically William Carleton's *The Black Prophet* (1846) and Anthony Trollope's *Castle Richmond* (1860). Written in the midst of the Great Irish Famine, *The Black Prophet* describes the devastating effects of hunger on the Irish peasant community and the greed of the mealmongers during a more local famine of 1817 while solving the mystery of a murder that occurred years before. Carleton, Ireland's peasant novelist, addresses Irish and British readers, and his novel features

Irish idiom, cultural practices, and beliefs as it depicts sentimental and harrowing scenes. In turn, *Castle Richmond* is a marriage-plot novel that primarily focuses on the landed class and addresses an English reading audience. Two cousins, the staid Herbert Fitzgerald and more rollicking Owen Fitzgerald, compete for the hand of Clara Desmond as the Irish famine unfolds. Published nearly a decade after the famine, the novel revisits material from Trollope's six letters about the famine published in the *Examiner* in 1850, where he sought to assert his authority as a long-time resident of Ireland and defend government relief efforts. Like *The Black Prophet,* this novel contains scenes of hunger, but the plot seems to be more about the importance of personal virtue and honesty than about a community facing starvation. It demonstrates how debates about Ireland and the public interest continue in the aftermath of the famine.

Ultimately, I contend that Trollope's and Carleton's famine novels qualify Sianne Ngai's account of interesting as an aesthetic category by revealing the limits of liberal publics and constructions of public interest in nineteenth-century Ireland. I turn to Trollope's and Carleton's famine novels to question how interesting as an aesthetic category accommodates cultural difference and distance, on one hand, and to demonstrate how material interests shape and delimit the expansion of the public sphere, on the other. While Ngai connects interesting as an aesthetic category to "the liberal form of the novel," suggesting that the "merely interesting" expands the public sphere, these novels demonstrate that the very act of encouraging readers to take an interest in Ireland can also direct their attention away from the experience of the people who inhabit this place.[5] I claim that a liberal vision of shared public interest cannot account for the ongoing devastation of the famine: this colonial catastrophe appears outside the bounds of shared interest. Instead, the concept of public interest manages colonial difference through a dynamic of inclusion and exclusion: it assimilates Irish people into liberal publics and excludes them by defining them as either unruly populations—aggregate groups rather than individuals—or dehumanized subjects.

Ireland and the Aesthetics of Interest

For Ngai, the temporal openness and indeterminate meaning of interesting as an aesthetic category corresponds to the liberal politics of the public sphere and the "liberal form" of the novel.[6] Drawing upon Friedrich Schlegel, Henry James, and Mikhail Bakhtin, she suggests that the novel's

discursivity, generic instability, and "stylistic hybridity"—its aesthetic openness and mutability—prompt reflection and debate rather than more certain aesthetic judgments like the beautiful or good.[7] Thus, deciding that something is interesting is an aesthetic claim that opens the object up to deliberation over time. As an aesthetic category, interesting is defined through ambivalence and duration: an aesthetic object is interesting for as long as it prompts discussion and curiosity.[8] If interest fails to endure over time, the object becomes tiresome.

According to Ngai, the temporal nature of this aesthetic category ultimately expands the public sphere. As Ngai puts it, "this aesthetic of and about circulation is actually aimed at enfranchising outsiders and thus expanding the boundaries of the original interest group."[9] Lucy Hartley agrees, arguing that interest does not just suggest individual curiosity but rather "has strong economic and social resonances in suggesting a reward for investment in a common concern."[10] Focusing on beauty, theories of art, and public life, Hartley celebrates interest as a democratizing force that merges aesthetics and politics in nineteenth-century Britain, becoming "a means of enlarging and also regulating the sociopolitical body of the public."[11] In turn, Ruth Livesey explains how this democratic expansion occurs through nineteenth-century provincial novels. Arguing that these novels replace the developmental trajectory of the bildungsroman with dull, elongated sketches of rural life, she claims that these novels ask, "Can we agree—despite our different experiences—that this is interesting?"[12] Livesey contends that by encouraging such questions, these novels dislodge "an authoritative centre"—which she associates with Matthew Arnold's disinterested liberal criticism—in favor of an interested community of everyday readers.[13]

Building on this work, I argue that nineteenth-century thinkers connect interesting as an aesthetic category to the form of the novel by defining the genre through "sustained interest." In "The Art of Fiction," which Ngai draws upon to make her case, Henry James declares: "the only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel without incurring the accusation of being arbitrary, is that it be interesting. That general responsibility rests upon it, but it is the only one I can think of."[14] James suggests that the novel achieves this responsibility not by following prescriptive advice or by employing particular forms but by accepting the freedom that the capacious category of the interesting allows. Moreover, many nineteenth-century novel critics specifically emphasize "sustained interest"—reviews and advertisements of novels use the term "sustained interest" from the 1810s onward.[15] As an 1897 article on novelistic craft

suggests, "The chief point of a novelist's endeavors should be to give his story *sustained interest*."[16] Given that the form of the novel distinguishes itself partly through length, defining the novel through sustained interest seems quite simple: novelists need to ensure that readers keep reading—that they get to the end of the narrative.

Because readers have limited attention spans, "sustained interest" can be difficult to produce in long novels with multiple narrative threads.[17] Nicholas Dames argues that nineteenth-century novels create "a rhythmic alternation of heightened attention and distracted inattention locking into ever smaller units of comprehension."[18] His work suggests that sustained interest does not necessarily mean sustained attention: it means ongoing engagement and deliberation despite an oscillation of attention. Indeed, Mikhail Epstein argues that the interesting as an aesthetic category requires such oscillation, suggesting that it "emerges as the measure of tension between wonder and understanding or, in other words, between the alterity of the object and reason's capacity to integrate it."[19] Epstein's understanding of the interesting suggests that in order to sustain interest, novels have to be original but not too original, full of imagination but realistic, unfamiliar and yet still familiar enough. As Epstein contends, interesting plots thus paradoxically appear both "unpredictable" and "inevitable"—their narrative is surprising and yet nevertheless appears as the only possible narrative.[20]

Yet how does interesting as an aesthetic category work in nineteenth-century Ireland and Irish realist novels and national tales? Like the provincial novels that Livesey studies, they are set at a distance from the metropolitan center. But these novels do not encourage readers to take an interest through dull repetition, or what Livesey calls an aesthetic of "middleness."[21] Instead, they tend to emphasize Ireland's strangeness, peculiarity, unpredictability, often defining Ireland through political division, excessive emotions, and competing interests rather than middleness or consensus.[22] For instance, the fictional editor of Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800) prefaces the story by saying it will be "interesting to all the world" before suggesting that those readers unacquainted with Ireland will find it "scarcely intelligible."[23] Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians* (1829) similarly draws attention to Irish difference, doubting whether English readers will understand the concept of an Irish "Middleman," writing: "the word is ill adapted to convey to an English reader an idea of the class of persons whom it is intended to designate."[24] Novels like Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), Anna Maria Hall's *The Whiteboy: A Story of Ireland* (1845), and Charles Kickham's

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Knocknagow; or, The Homes of Tipperary (1873) open with an Englishman traveling to Ireland to find it more strange—and more interesting—than they expected it would be.

While Irish peculiarity makes Ireland aesthetically interesting, including Ireland in a vision of a shared British public tends to require the opposite: the assimilation of Ireland into British political and economic interests. Thus, many novels set in Ireland imply that the very cultural practices and national characteristics that make Ireland interesting will disappear because its integration with England is inevitable.[25] In *Castle Rackrent*, the editor concludes the preface by declaring, "When Ireland loses her identity by an union with Great Britain, she will look back with a smile of good-humored complacency on the Sir Kits and Sir Condys of her former existence."[26] In other words, the characters that make Ireland interesting in this novel will no longer exist. Anna Maria Hall introduces *The Whiteboy* with a vision of Ireland's "vast natural resources" cultivated by "the fertilizing capital of the English people" and thus making "the people of the two countries . . . truly and emphatically one."[27] Like *Castle Rackrent*'s editor, this introduction looks forward to a union that relegates the peculiarities of Irish character to the past. But Hall is more explicit about how this will occur: shared economic interests will replace political and sectarian differences. Hall's novel anticipates a time when "employment has superseded politics."[28] In both novels, the strangeness or novelty that makes Ireland aesthetically interesting is the very thing that prevents the Irish population from being incorporated into the liberal idea of a public or a vision of British public interest.

Considering how nineteenth-century Irish novels encourage interest and imagine public interest teaches us as much about liberal publics and their limits as it does about the form of the novel. As Ronjaunee Chatterjee suggests, nineteenth-century liberalism as both a political theory and practice emphasizes individuals and thus is partly defined through its "oppositional stance toward the collective."[29] Even when imagining a community, liberal publics focus on the interests and actions of individuals. Liberalism defines publics as the aggregation of individuals rather than as a distinct collective form. As Jeremy Bentham puts it when arguing that the concept of a community is a fiction: "The interest of the community then is, what?—the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it."[30] In turn, Jürgen Habermas's influential account of the public sphere posits "a public composed of critically debating private persons."[31] For him, such debates amongst individuals produce "*consensus about what was practically necessary in the interest for all.*"[32]

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But as scholars like Elaine Hadley, Saidiya Hartman, and Lisa Lowe demonstrate, liberalism distinguishes between individual subjects and populations that it deems too backward for individual rights and liberties.[33] Such populations are understood in the aggregate because national or racial character seemingly trumps claims to individuality.[34] The British press thus often represented nineteenth-century Irish people as swarms, masses, crowds; depicted them as making noise rather than contributing to rational debate; or described their inability to think in self-interested ways, on one hand, and in disinterested ways, on the other.[35] This refusal to see Irish people as individuals demonstrated English prejudice but also reflected the difficulty of constructing what Duncan Bell calls "Greater Britain" through liberalism.[36] As Hadley puts it, there was a "struggle between certain Liberal ideals and the intransigent facts of Ireland": Ireland unsettles many of liberalism's claims to universality.[37] David P. Nally suggests that because Irish people resisted assimilation into Britain, they were understood as "*human encumbrances*"—a population that thwarted "the civilizing currents of capitalist modernity" rather than liberal subjects in their own right.[38] While liberalism emphasizes individuals, rational debate, progressive becoming, universal rights, and free trade, nineteenth-century Ireland draws attention to the disposable populations liberalism depends upon but disavows.

Irish Novels and the Irish Question

The 1801 Act of Union formally integrated Ireland into the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland, but Ireland often appeared as a problem or difficulty to address rather than as a public in its own right. Ireland was understood through the "Irish Question"—a single, recurring question that collapsed distinct historical events, movements, and social problems like Catholic Emancipation, famine, land tenure, Fenianism, poverty, Home Rule, and agrarian violence. Ireland was a public question in part because Irish people fought for structural changes—the repeal of the Union, independence, tenant rights—that many English people thought would undermine the "unity of the empire" as well as British law and order.[39] As one writer declares in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1844: "When Irish questions, or rather the *Irish Question,* for there is but one, has been forced on our attention, we have felt like a dreamer in a nightmare, oppressed by the consciousness that some great evil was rapidly advancing."[40] This "great evil" was in part Irish public opinion and the embodied way it expressed itself through

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monster meetings, agrarian violence, secret societies, open rebellion.[41] I suggest that the rhetorical framing of the Irish Question encouraged English people to view Ireland as interesting and tiresome in turn while managing how Ireland was integrated into and demarcated from a vision of shared public interest. The Irish Question directs attention away from Irish public opinion and Irish experience toward assumptions about Irish national character and strategies of population management.

Holly Case argues that public questions were framed with an eye toward encouraging previously conceived answers. As she puts it, people "defined a question so as to make their preferred solution seem the more attractive and obvious."[42] In the case of Ireland, this solution was often quelling Irish agitation by further integrating Irish people into British material interests. As Leslie Williams contends in her study of representations of the Irish famine in the British press, "the British press rarely discussed Ireland in terms of itself. Instead it was British political and economic interests, as well as British stereotypes of the Irish, that shaped the press responses to the gathering crises in Ireland."[43] The famine was thus understood by many British people as a problem of Irish overpopulation and of Irish national character rather than a British concern that should be addressed by the British state.[44] In fact, some British people viewed the famine as an act of providence that would answer the Irish Question once and for all.[45] Charles Trevelyan, the permanent secretary to the treasury who was responsible for administering famine relief, for instance, was one of many English people who thought that the famine would produce "permanent good out of transient evil."[46] After explaining why the British government could not support the "multitude" of Irish people facing starvation, he celebrates the fact that this great calamity has finally taught Irish people that they have shared interests with England and the British Empire. Trevelyan's optimistic account demonstrates how many British public figures viewed Irish people as an alien population and yet maintained faith that Ireland could transform into a liberal public through assimilation into British political and economic interests.

Ireland was an open question for British people to debate and, ultimately, answer, but the prevalence of such debates and proximity of Ireland sometimes made Ireland seem tiresome. As early as 1834, a review of George Poulett Scrope's *How Is Ireland to Be Governed?* in the *Dublin University Magazine* argues that the Irish Question has encouraged more debate than any other social question.[47] An 1846 *Times* editorial declares that "We have purposely abstained of late from directing the

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attention of the public to Ireland" because descriptions of Irish misery and proposed remedies to it "have become as tedious and wearisome as a ten times told tale."[48] Many British writers emphasized the recurrent nature of famine and the never-ending debates about Ireland to downplay the devastation of the Great Irish Famine of 1845–52. As Michael de Nie argues, "some newspapers initially posited that their condition was not, after all, much different than in 'normal years.'"[49] Instead of viewing the famine as a distinct colonial catastrophe or an unprecedented historical event, these responses to the famine encouraged people to see it as a dull repetition of the Irish Question.

Because of well-worn stereotypes about Irish people's seemingly innate capacity to tell interesting stories in interested ways, discussions of the Irish Question in Britain often begin with an English author positioning themselves as a disinterested observer in a divisive place—what Case calls "disputed terrain."[50] For example, writing for the London *Times* in 1846, Thomas Campbell Foster authorizes his account of Ireland by noting his distance from it. He presents himself as "a stranger to Ireland, and wholly devoid of Irish prejudices: with no motive whatever save an earnest desire to ascertain the truth, and to state it with strict impartiality."[51] Not surprisingly, the truth he ascertains is that Irish people cannot be trusted: they are criminals who are responsible for their own distress.[52] Similarly, William Henry Smith, an engineer on public works projects during the famine, begins his reflection on his yearlong residence in Ireland by explaining how hard it is to understand Ireland. Irish people are not reliable, not least because they mediate their accounts to serve their own interests. In his words, "that power of misleading, so essentially Irish, and likewise to the violence of party feeling, which, deceiving the well-intentioned, causes facts to be distorted and theories to be built up, to suit individual views and interests."[53] After setting this scene, though, he positions himself outside of these competing interests. He suggests his remarks are from "the unbiased view of an impartial spectator."[54] English writers associate disinterested writing on the Irish Question with distance from the competing interests that shape the country: the less a writer knows about Ireland, the more they can intervene in public debates as an authority because they are free of prior attachments.

This emphasis on disinterestedness in public debates about the Irish Question shapes the form of novels set in Ireland. According to Terry Eagleton, political instability in nineteenth-century Ireland made "disinterested representation" impossible.[55] Unable to represent Ireland in a

disinterested way, Irish novelists either blatantly expose their interests at the cost of aesthetics—they make novels tiresome—or they cater to the interests of the outsider—that is, an English reading public—in order to keep English readers' attentions, according to Eagleton.[56] Irish novels are thus caught between functioning as aesthetic objects and contributing to public debates about Ireland. Joep Leerssen suggests that Irish novels ultimately resolve this tension between aesthetic and public interest, arguing that they provide "readers with descriptions of matters of public interest whose divisiveness is deflected by the fictional coating."[57] I argue instead that novels set in Ireland reflect the difficulty of Irish publics speaking on behalf of their own interests: given the structure of the Irish Question, it is hard to avoid either becoming dull to English readers or being dismissed for intensifying the Irish Question rather than answering it.

The Black Prophet and Castle Richmond

Carleton's *The Black Prophet* and Trollope's *Castle Richmond* show the difficulty of using the aesthetics of interest to enlarge a liberal vision of the public to include Ireland. These novels toggle between trying to make Ireland aesthetically interesting to a British public by emphasizing Irish difference and making the case that Irish people should be included in a shared public by claiming similarity. Although they suggest that Ireland is interesting in its own right, they usually end up closing down public deliberation over Ireland by appealing to a sense of shared human interest. In the process, these two novels show the difficulty of sustaining interest in Ireland in a way that integrates Irish people into what Hartley calls "common concern."

I focus on these two novels to highlight their formal similarities despite political, cultural, and historical differences. Carleton and Trollope come from very different backgrounds; their novels have different styles and different relationships to the British reading public. Carleton writes at a time when the famine was still unfolding and not yet understood as the Great Irish Famine.[58] He published his novel in 1846 but represents a more localized famine of 1817. He was most famous for his stories and short sketches of Irish peasant life—nineteenth-century critics wondered if he could manage the novel precisely because it required "sustained interest."[59] He was celebrated for his authenticity as an Irish writer but also criticized for catering to different sectarian interests over the course of his career.[60] Perpetually in debt,

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he wrote for anti-Catholic publications like the *Christian Magazine* as well as *The Nation,* the organ for the nationalist group, Young Ireland. James Murphy suggests that Carleton's shifting affiliations and political positions led to a "deep uncertainty about his audience and about whose outlook, that of the Protestant landlords and their associates, or of the British government, or of the Catholic peasantry, he was endorsing."[61] For example, *The Black Prophet* was published by a Belfast publishing house and circulated widely in Ireland, but the preface directly addresses "English" and "Scotch" readers, showing that Carleton hoped that the novel would reach readers outside of Ireland.[62]

By contrast, Trollope's writing career started in Ireland with Irish novels, but his success as a novelist depended upon writing novels "as English as a beef-steak."[63] As Gordon Bigelow argues, Trollope tried to use the form of the English novels that made him so successful in an Irish context in *Castle Richmond* and, ultimately, created "a deeply shocking book to read, as scenes of love-making, hunting, and legal consultation proceed along conventional lines, with calamity forming the backdrop."[64] *Castle Richmond* represents what he calls "The Famine Year"—1846 and 1847—with the distance of history and the success of several English novels under his belt. Attempting to justify the government's responses to the famine, Trollope intersperses accounts of starving people with praise for the government's "prompt, wise, and beneficent" relief efforts.[65] It alternates between the "middleness" that Livesey associates with English provincial novels and horrifying scenes of hunger and starvation as it tries to make the case that English readers should read novels set in Ireland even after the famine made Ireland seem tiresome.

Both *The Black Prophet* and *Castle Richmond* are formally similar insofar as they struggle to sustain interest while they narrate the unfolding famine and the fictional plot of the novel: a murder plot, in the case of Carleton, and marriage plot, in the case of Trollope. The preface to *The Black Prophet* highlights the tension between the novel's parts while explaining why readers should be interested in the novel. The preface begins by claiming that readers should take an interest in his novel because of the famine but then shifts to emphasizing shared human nature. In Carleton's words,

> "A Tale of Irish Famine," published in a season of such unparalleled scarcity and destitution as the present, when our countrymen are perishing in thousands for want of food, ought, one would imagine, to excite a strong interest in the breasts of all those who can sympathize with them under sufferings so desolating and frightful. (v)

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Carleton begins by emphasizing history—the novel should be of interest to readers because it can represent an utterly unprecedented historical event and thus become a vehicle for sympathy for real people suffering at the time. Yet, by the end of the preface, Carleton changes his tune, insisting that the "principal interest" of the story is not from "so gloomy a topic as famine" but rather the "passions and feelings which usually agitate human life" (vii). Perhaps this shift from emphasizing specific historical circumstances—that which makes Ireland different, peculiar, interesting—to shared human nature—that which allows these Irish characters to be understood as part of "common concerns"—acknowledges that although Carleton imagines the famine would excite interest in his English readers, he knows all too well that it may simply seem tiresome.

Although Carleton was celebrated in England as an accomplished Irish novelist, his writing on Irish famine received mixed reviews. W. B. Yeats later championed Carleton's distinct voice, noting that he uniquely captured "strange, wild Gaelic life" from the perspective of a person "to whom all these things seem natural and inevitable."[66] For Yeats, Carleton successfully toggled between the strange and the familiar, wonder and understanding. He believed that Carleton wrote interesting fiction. But Carleton's contemporaries questioned either Carleton's representation of the famine or the interest of his fictional plot. A telling review of *The Black Prophet* in *The Athenaeum* celebrates "Mr. Carleton's powers" while claiming that his ability to represent Ireland shows that he is "warped by some of its prejudices."[67] The review condemns the novel's contributions to public debates, suggesting that Carleton's critical portrayal of mealmongers will undermine free trade. The review ends by recommending nonfiction books to read on Ireland instead. In turn, a review in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* claims that because *The Black Prophet* awakens sympathy for starving Irish people, the novel's "object must be good, and its influence we trust will be great."[68] And yet, the reviewer laments that characters are "overdrawn" and "scenes and pictures are exaggerated."[69] Implying that Carleton's characters do not evoke shared human interest, the reviewer suggests that the fictional story undermines the interest in Ireland that Carleton's depiction of the famine may awaken.

This struggle to sustain interest across both parts of the novel demonstrates the difficulty of opening up a space for deliberation that expands the boundaries of "common concern" to include starving Irish people. In particular, Carleton suggests that it is difficult to generate

interest in Ireland that endures long enough to move people to intervene to end famine. Carleton suggests that famine has been "almost perennial in the country" as he explains why he writes about a famine from 1817 (vi). But instead of attributing this fact to something inherently wrong in Irish national character or using it to downplay the unfolding famine, Carleton explains that British people forget what Irish people remember. He notes that the government has neglected and forgotten prior instances of famine in Ireland, writing, "the memory of our Legislature is as faithless on such a subject as that of the most heartless individual among us" (vi). In other words, British interest in Ireland—more specifically, famine in Ireland—does not create a space for ongoing deliberation and attention. Interest emerges in distinct moments but then is quickly forgotten. Carleton dedicates the novel to Lord John Russell "as a public exponent of those principles of Government which have brought our country to her present calamitous condition," hoping that "your Lordship's enlarged and enlightened policy will put it out of the power of any succeeding author to ever write another" (ii). He hopes that interest in Ireland will endure long enough to prevent the recurrence of famine: perhaps this time, with this novel, the British government will remember.

Trollope's *Castle Richmond* similarly moves between drawing attention to that which makes Ireland aesthetically interesting and that which makes it a site of common concerns. He opens his novel by making the case that although English editors may be reluctant to publish Irish novels, Irish settings do not fundamentally change the form of these novels. Acknowledging that "there is a strong feeling against things Irish" in the novel-reading world (1), he then claims, "The readability of a story should depend, one would say, on its intrinsic merit rather than on the site of its adventures. No one will think that Hampshire is better for such a purpose than Cumberland, or Essex than Leicestershire. What abstract objection can there be to the county Cork?" (2). Equating Cork and Cumberland and including Ireland in a vision of Great Britain, Trollope implies that enjoying Irish novels does not depend on taking an interest in Ireland. He suggests instead that, as is the case with novels set in England, story rather than setting should attract readers. And yet, in the very next line as Trollope shifts from preface to plot, he remarks that this novel is set in "perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the most beautiful part of Ireland" (2). Cork may function like Essex in the world of the novel, but in the real world it distinguishes itself

through its stunning landscape that attracts tourists from near and far: it is aesthetically interesting because of its peculiar beauty.

Trollope's introduction to the novel's characters also moves between Irish difference from and similarity to England. He discusses "those interesting picturesque faults which are so generally attributed to Irish landlords and Irish castles"—perhaps alluding to Maria Edgeworth's Irish novel, *Castle Rackrent*, which the title of his novel echoes—only to conclude that Castle Richmond and its owner, Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, possess none of these faults. Despite the distinctions of the surrounding landscape, Castle Richmond appears indistinguishable from an English estate, according to Trollope (3). He directs readers' attention to peculiar Irish landlords only to imply that his Irish story will focus on more middling and mundane characters and estates. As Trollope's narrator puts it, Castle Richmond "was a good, substantial, modern family residence," and "as regards to his property, Sir Thomas Fitzgerald might have been a Leicestershire baronet" (3). Thus, even as he notes Irish cultural difference, he implies that this novel, like his English novels, cultivates what Livesey calls an aesthetic of "middleness."

Reviewers suggest that Trollope did not entirely succeed in creating a community of interested readers and instead often celebrated Trollope's account of the famine because of its disinterestedness—its distance from Irish attachments and sectarianism—while criticizing the novel's plot. One review indicates that "the remarks on the Irish famine are, on the whole, true and judicious" but suggests that the story and character sketches are lacking.[70] Another review is more blunt, declaring, "The chief portion of the plot is not good, and not original" before praising the novel for looking at Ireland "with the clear eyes of a stranger, and the unembarrassed judgment of a critical spectator who had no 'side' in the social, political, and religious questions which distracted Ireland."[71] Echoing debates about the Irish Question that challenge Irish people's accounts of their own experience, this review suggests that the strength of Trollope's representation of the famine lies in its distance and seeming objectivity. Instead of integrating Ireland into a set of "common concerns," it reinforces the gulf between English capacity for disinterested accounts and Irish immersion in their own interests.

While reviewers often praise Trollope's account of the famine, Trollope's narrator suggests that recounting such historical events and public debates risks becoming tiresome. The chapter "The Famine Year" interrupts the progress of the story to provide historical background on the famine and weigh in on public debates about

governmental relief efforts, the poor law, or whether God caused the potato blight. The chapter begins by emphasizing the lasting effects of the famine, stating, "They who were in the south of Ireland during the winter of 1846–7 will not readily forget the agony of that period" (65). But after a few pages of explaining the devastation, he interrupts himself again, suggesting that "this question of the famine" could generate infinite responses and debates (68). He asserts, "But seeing that this book of mine is a novel, I have perhaps already written more on a dry subject than many will read" (68). This somewhat intrusive narrative voice is familiar to readers of Trollope but nevertheless feels strange and politically suspect in this context as he self-consciously directs readers' interest away from Irish history to fictional characters in the novel. By characterizing the famine as "a dry subject," Trollope suggests that although witnesses will not forget their experiences, perhaps the public—at least the readers of this novel—will find recounting this experience dull.

Ultimately, Carleton's and Trollope's novels both show that toggling between the interesting and the tiresome, Irish difference from and Irish similarity to England, does not necessarily encourage interest in the famine and Ireland or enlarge the public sphere to include the victims of the famine: in some cases, it even directs attention away from them. Carleton shows that famine is quickly forgotten in England, Trollope calls the famine a "dry subject," and both novelists locate the interest of their story in fictional characters who suggest shared human nature or English values rather than Irish culture. In doing so, they reveal the limits of the "liberal form of the novel" as well as the limits of liberal publics by suggesting that cultural difference and colonial politics can make it more difficult for people to take an interest in Ireland on its own terms.

Indeed, I suggest that the oscillation in these novels highlights a division between publics and populations upon which liberalism depends. For liberal thinkers, interest is universal and thus democratizing. Making the case for organizing publics through the concept of "universal self-interest," Stephen Holmes argues: "To focus on self-interest is to emphasize a motivation that all human beings equally share."[72] But what Holmes and other liberal thinkers consistently ignore, and what scholars of critical race theory and colonial studies constantly remind us of, is that although all human beings have self-interest, not all people are understood to be human beings by liberal thinkers.[73] Indeed, *The Black Prophet*'s and *Castle Richmond*'s work to sustain interest through a dynamic of similarity and difference, middleness and peculiarity shows that many Irish people remain outside of interest's democratizing

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force. They appear as dehumanized populations—beings without interest—rather than liberal subjects.

These novels are not simply divided between the one and the many, as Alex Woloch argues nineteenth-century realist novels are, but between different visions of the many: the minor characters who are part of a liberal public, the masses who represent surplus populations. Woloch argues that realist novels face the challenge of "*too many people*" as they try to represent the psychological depth of individual characters and convey an expansive, diverse social world.[74] Woloch explores the different ways that realist novels formalize minor characters but nevertheless maintains that they remain characters as he theorizes the tension between the protagonist and the many minor characters who allegorically evoke a social world. But these two famine novels often articulate an additional tension between minor characters who function as individuals but allegorically represent a social world and characters who appear outside the bounds of the human and only ever represent a population—an undifferentiated mass, a dehumanized body, a social problem. As David P. Nally puts it in his account of the Irish famine, "To valorize the belief that some will have to starve for the benefit of others, a radical distinction between 'people' and 'population' must be introduced."[75] Building on Nally's account, I argue that the interesting can expand liberal publics but does not include everyone. It ultimately distinguishes between liberal subjects—subjects who take an interest—and populations—objects of public questions.

Thus, while Carleton's and Trollope's novels encourage readers to take an interest in Ireland and the Irish famine while noting that they may seem tiresome, they also depict victims of the famine who are outside the aesthetics of interest, evoking terror, horror, the sublime, or disbelief instead. Such aesthetic hybridity is a feature of the novel—as Ngai suggests, this hybridity is one reason why novels are so frequently seen as interesting rather than beautiful or good. And yet, as the novel shifts into these other aesthetic modes, it shapes the novel's engagement with the public sphere and the forms of deliberation it encourages. Specifically, it delimits a public by distinguishing between individual subjects and dehumanized populations. As David Lloyd explains in his account of literary representations of the famine, starvation renders the boundary between human and nonhuman visible in horrifying ways. "The excessive spectacle of these starving bodies," in his words, "forces the viewer to the very threshold of humanity, to the sill that divides the human and the non-human, or, rather, to the boundary that marks the division between

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the human and the non-human within the human."[76] Carleton tracks how hunger transforms characters with human feelings into the living dead. He writes of one couple, "their visages were white and stony as marble, and their eyes, now dead and glassy, were marked by no appearance of distinct consciousness, or the usual expression of reason" (155). Hunger dehumanizes the couple and causes horror rather than interest. As he puts it, "the faces of both were ghastly" (155). This horror marks the limits of an expanding public sphere.

In turn, Trollope highlights what liberal understandings of publics often do: they transform colonial subjects into beings without interest. He often describes starving people in groups, noting the "wretched-looking creatures, half-clad, discontented, with hungry eyes" who labor on public works projects "utterly without interest in the work they were doing" (201, 202). But he also depicts how this dehumanization occurs on an individual level, describing the transformation of individual subjects into dehumanized bodies. Indeed, the novel implies that encountering the people's private misery, their poverty at home, evokes more horror than the people "dyin' by the very road-side" because it forces the witness to reckon with individual people's dehumanization (191).[77] The morally upright Herbert Fitzgerald enters a cabin to escape the rain and encounters a nearly naked woman and her child "squatting in the middle of the cabin, seated on her legs crossed under her, with nothing between her and the wet earth" (369). Looking around the bare cabin, he sees the body of her dead child. In horror, Herbert looks "from the corpse-like woman back to the life-like corpse" (371). The woman and her living child are beyond hope: they wait for the return of her husband, but they do not ask for help. Both the roadside scenes and cabin encounter depend upon seeing victims of the famine as people no longer capable of striving for their own interests—they appear as a population to manage.

I suggest that such scenes show the difficulty of integrating colonial populations into a shared public through an aesthetics of interest precisely because liberalism makes it more difficult to understand colonial catastrophes as a "common concern." As Asenath Nicholson puts it in an oft-cited line that prefaces her firsthand account of the famine, the events of the famine appear "more like a dream than reality, because they appear out of *common course*, and out of the order of even nature itself. But they *are* realities, and many of them fearful ones."[78] In this passage, Nicholson employs a familiar famine-writing trope to highlight the difficulty of capturing her experience: it is too strange to seem real. Or, as

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Epstein might put it, if the interesting oscillates "between the alterity of the object and reason's capacity to integrate it," Irish famine writing conveys an alterity that is not overcome. Nicholson's reflection on the difficulty of representing what she calls "fearful" realities highlights the limits of the expansive or democratizing force of interest: it requires understanding events that "appear out of *common course*," at odds with an aesthetic of "middleness," as shared realities.

I suggest that this inability to overcome alterity is important because it shows what is lost in too easy declarations of shared interest between Ireland and England as a result of the famine. Take Trevelyan's optimistic account of the famine, which celebrates the integration of Ireland into the British Empire that I reference at the beginning of this article. As he puts it, "In the hour of her utmost need, Ireland became sensible of an union of feeling and interest with the rest of empire."[79] His story is not divided—there is a single, integrated plot and an ending that seems inevitable. But the seeming simplicity of this progressive plot makes it more difficult to understand the Irish people and cultural forms lost along the way. Celebrating the incorporation of Ireland into a British public sphere, Trevelyan erases the catastrophic experiences of Irish people.

Like Trevelyan's narrative, Trollope's letters to the *Examiner*, published between 1849 and 1850, tell a relatively unified story of the famine positively integrating Irish people into British public interest. Although Trollope admits that "the subject of Ireland" is "singularly misunderstood by the public in England" in an early letter, he concludes his letters by celebrating the fact that the famine had successfully dampened Irish people's mistaken enthusiasm for politics and public measures.[80] Explaining that "the Irish are a people not naturally prone to political excitement," Trollope laments the unnatural agitation for Catholic Emancipation before the advent of the famine and celebrates the postfamine peace.[81] He declares that there "has hardly been a political wish entertained by the people of Ireland" after the spectacularly failed Young Ireland rebellion of 1848.[82] Abandoning politics, Irish people no longer disrupt the public interest and accept the union with—which in this case means the superior wisdom of—Great Britain. Such a claim highlights why *Castle Richmond* is an important novel to read: it questions Trollope's early triumphalist account of the famine, suggesting that Ireland cannot be so easily assimilated into British visions of public interest.

Ultimately, thinking about the aesthetics of interest in relation to these two famine novels shows that while the interesting as an aesthetic category encourages deliberation and duration, the distinction between

liberal subjects and populations ultimately delimits the expansion of the public sphere. *The Black Prophet* and *Castle Richmond* toggle between the interesting and the tiresome, universal or human interests and particular histories, to show how what makes Ireland interesting also makes it more difficult to assimilate Irish people into British public interest. Moreover, these two famine novels suggest that such inclusion is not always desirable. Ireland's inclusion in a vision of a British public comes at the cost of disavowing the "fearful" realities that colonialism produces. The failure to integrate Irish people into a shared public and recognize their distinct interests—the insistence on either assimilating Irish people into British interests or seeing them as a population addressed through social questions instead—shows that inclusion within liberal publics without transforming how we understand the public is itself the problem that we, as scholars, must address.

Notes

1. Morley, "The Irish Use of the Globe," 53. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
2. This story echoes John Stuart Mill's solutions to Irish poverty in the *Morning Chronicle*. As he puts it: "There is no known means of working that change but by creating peasant proprietors" (Mill, "The Condition of Ireland, 4).
3. Boylan, "Famine," 416. On the topic of famine fatigue, also see Elizabeth Coggin Womack, who considers famine fatigue in relation to compassion fatigue ("Nineteenth-Century Auction Narratives," 239). It is worth noting that this famine fatigue resulted after a period of intense interest in narratives and visual representations of the famine. As Melissa Fegan puts it, "The interest was obsessive, partly because such a catastrophe was deemed out of sync with an age of advanced industry and civilization, partly from a feeling of responsibility for past injustices, partly from a fear that misery would spread" (*Literature and the Irish Famine*, 35).
4. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, 32.
5. Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories,* 136.
6. Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories,* 136. While Ngai focuses on "interesting" as a contemporary aesthetic category, her account begins in the eighteenth century and historicizes its meaning over time. For Amanda

Anderson in *Bleak Liberalism*, realist and political novels demonstrate "the formal dimensions of the liberal aesthetic" (78).

7. Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories,* 139.
8. Reinforcing the connection between the interesting and duration, Mikhail Epstein suggests in "The Interesting" that the word interesting "derives from the Latin *inter esse,* 'to be between; in the interval'" (82). Jacob Sider Jost makes much of this etymology in *Interest and Connection in the Eighteenth Century,* considering how interest functions as a "go between" and forges connections in the eighteenth century (6).
9. Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories,* 172.
10. Hartley, *Democratizing Beauty,* 3.
11. Hartley, *Democratizing Beauty,* 4.
12. Livesey, "Middleness," 9.
13. Livesey, "Middleness," 12.
14. James, "The Art of Fiction," 60. Walter Besant, whom James is responding to in his piece, agrees insofar as he suggests that "the human interest in Fiction, then, must come before aught else" ("The Art of Fiction," 12).
15. In an 1834 review of *Dacre: A Novel,* for instance, the author acknowledges that insofar as novels are forms of sustained interest, single excerpts cannot capture their nuances, stating: "As regards its execution, we must make the book speak for itself, though no single passages from any novel of sustained interest can do such work justice" ("*Dacre: A Novel*," 497). Similarly, the author of an 1836 review of Walter Scott's novels declares, "Scott's great merit, and, at the same time, his *felicity,* and the true solution of the long-sustained *interest* novel after novel excited, lie in the nature of the subject" ("New Books," 138). The author of an 1812 review of Maria Edgeworth's *Tales of Fashionable Life* writes, "We are satisfied that a more genuine and sustained interest is preserved by this attention to probability, than could have been excited by those more amazing incidents and transactions with which Miss Edgeworth has sometimes endeavored to captivate our attention" ("*Tales of Fashionable Life*," 329).
16. Payn, "The Compleat Novelist," 639; emphasis in original.
17. See, for instance, Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel,* 3. Catherine Gallagher's reflection on the difficulty of understanding length from a formalist perspective in "Formalism and Time" implicitly considers sustained interest insofar as it suggests that the modernist

novel enables formalist analysis because it shifts to ephemeral formalist moments that disrupt temporal sequence and duration.

18. Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel*, 7.
19. Epstein, "The Interesting," 76.
20. Epstein, "The Interesting," 80.
21. Livesey, "Middleness," 2.
22. David Lloyd suggests in *Anomalous States* that nineteenth-century Irish novels fail to achieve consensus in part because in Irish agrarian movements there was no "transcendent community of interest constituting the 'middle ground' of the nation or people," and the middle class was a site of instability rather than stability (140). Joe Cleary argues in "The Nineteenth-Century Irish Novel" that Irish novels are "*constantly negotiating between two distinct cultures* (the local and the metropolitan)" (212). Studying Irish fiction by Catholic authors, Emer Nolan writes, "one underlying assumption is that Catholic nationalist authors were adherents of a religion and supporters of a political ideology that were both profoundly at odds with the Protestantism and the liberalism that had fostered the English realist novel" (*Catholic Emancipations*, x).
23. Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent,* 62, 63.
24. Griffin, *The Collegians,* 40.
25. Here, I build upon Ian Duncan's account of regional writing in Scotland and Ireland and his analysis of *Castle Rackrent* (Duncan, *Scott's Shadow,* 72).
26. Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent,* 63. For a more extended reflection on this passage, see Mullen, *Novel Institutions,* 46–49.
27. Hall, *The Whiteboy*, i.
28. Hall, *The Whiteboy*, 312.
29. Chatterjee, *Feminine Singularity,* 7. Also see Amanda Anderson, *Bleak Liberalism*, who considers John Stuart Mill's "sociological assessment of the dangers associated with mass opinion" (3).
30. Bentham, "Introduction," 113.
31. Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* 82.
32. Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 83; emphasis in original.
33. Hadley suggests "the situated and habituated bodies of the 'futile hubbub'"—classed and gendered bodies—are "liberalism's object of reform" (*Living Liberalism*, 13). When considering the abolition of slavery, Hartman questions "whether the rights of man and citizen are realizable or whether the appellation 'human' can be borne equally by all" (*Scenes of Subjection*, 6). Lisa Lowe argues in *The*

Intimacies of Four Continents that "liberal universalism effects principles of inclusion and exclusion; in the very claim to define humanity, as a species or as a condition, its gestures of definition divide the human and the nonhuman, to classify the normative and pathologize deviance" (6).

34. For more about the distinction between publics and populations, see Mullen, "'A Great Public Transaction,'" 451–53.
35. As Michael de Nie explains in *The Eternal Paddy*: "The Irish peasant, who supposedly hated work and preferred to live off the British taxpayer, was also morally impoverished and thus undeserving of public charity. This lack of compunction for receiving public assistance, combined with a propensity for violence and unsanitary living conditions, placed the Irish peasant, and the Irish immigrant in Britain, firmly at the bottom of the dangerous classes" (18). Elaine Hadley demonstrates how nineteenth-century liberalism depended upon "an interest in the land," which nineteenth-century Irish tenants famously did not have (*Living Liberalism*, 236).
36. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain,* passim.
37. Hadley, *Living Liberalism*, 247. Also see Timothy P. Foley, "Public Sphere and Domestic Circle," who argues that "for many people in Ireland the Great Famine seemed to prove definitively that there was no easy coincidence of interests between individuals and the community at large. In any case individualism was held to have been unnatural for the Irish: the manly independence of the English character produced the *homo economicus* and the industrial revolution, while its Irish counterpart was more feminine and associative and seen to be more suited to agricultural pursuits" (24–25).
38. Nally, *Human Encumbrances*, 16; emphasis in original.
39. Gladstone, *Special Aspects,* 12.
40. "Debate in the House of Commons," 189.
41. See, for instance, Ina Ferris on Irish "clamor" and anxiety about the Irish population in *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland,* 127, 142–44.
42. Case, *The Age of Questions*, 4.
43. Williams, *Daniel O'Connell,* 21.
44. Annie Tindley argues in *Lord Dufferin, Ireland and the British Empire* that the British public believed that "emigration, not relief, was the only permanent solution" (56). Michael de Nie contends that "Ireland's misery was presented as ultimately the product of its Celtic identity" (*The Eternal Paddy*, 86).

45. See Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, 102–6.
46. Trevelyan, *The Irish Crisis,* 1. As David P. Nally argues, "the Irish Famine was viewed as an instrument of cure, a form of social prophylaxis, that would finally regenerate what was perceived to be a diseased body politic" (x). Peter Gray in *Famine, Land and Politics* argues: "Their 'optimistic' construction of the crisis was founded on anti-Malthusian premises; moralists believed that Ireland must move rapidly from potato to grain cultivation, and were convinced that Irish resources were adequate to support that transition" (232).
47. "How Is Ireland to Be Governed?" 353.
48. "We have purposely abstained of late," 4.
49. de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, 93.
50. Case, *The Age of Questions*, 5.
51. Foster, *Letters*, 4.
52. For instance, Foster writes: "It is evident that these disturbances originate amongst the body of the people, and that they are not to be attributed to a few worthless individuals. The invariable escape of criminals, who are always sheltered by the community, sufficiently proves this" (*Letters,* 28).
53. Smith, *Twelve Months' Residence,* vi.
54. Smith, *Twelve Months' Residence*, vi–vii. He continues on, writing: "I here take no merit for this impartiality, being by birth an Irishman, and in parentage and descent English; thus connected by ties with both, and forming a type of that real union, which, I hope and believe, we are on the eve of establishing between two nations" (vii).
55. Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, 149.
56. In *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger,* Eagleton suggests that Edgeworth too blatantly exposes interests, writing: "Like the predatory aristocracy, Edgeworth's fictions deploy style and spirit in the service of hard-headed interests, press artifice into the cause of reality" (169). He claims that even disinterested descriptions are mediated by the public they address, writing: "simply to describe Irish popular life is to cater to the anthropological curiosity of the outsider" (207).
57. Leerssen, "'Interesting to all the world,'" 60.
58. For example, W. P. Ryan celebrates Carleton's writing, stating: "We see him living in the heart of a peasant Ireland gone for ever: the awry, joyful, tumultuous Ireland of the days before the Famine" ("The Best Irish Books," 94).

59. See, for instance, the review of *Valentine M'Clutchy* in *Critic*, which questions whether Carleton could handle the form of the novel: "Esteeming thus highly his shorter stories, it was with some curiosity that we turned to his formal regulation-size romance, for nothing is more common than to find the best writers of stories failing entirely when they attempt the novel, with its sustained interest, its intricately woven plot, and its numerous characters, demanding a fertile invention to contrive, and a power of ready adaptation to sustain, them" ("Valentine M'Clutchy," 338). This reviewer contends that Carleton's novel disappoints.
60. As Norman Vance argues in *Irish Literature: A Social History*: "Carleton the comprehensively national writer is in constant tension with Carleton the time-server, pandering to sectional interests as occasion offered" (137).
61. Murphy, *Irish Novelists,* 61.
62. Carleton, *The Black Prophet,* vii. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
63. Trollope, *An Autobiography*, 144.
64. Bigelow, "Trollope and Ireland," 204.
65. Trollope, *Castle Richmond,* 69. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
66. Yeats, "William Carleton," 189, 188.
67. "The Black Prophet," 278, 279.
68. "The Parlour Library, vol. 1," 270.
69. "The Parlour Library, vol. 1," 270.
70. "*Castle Richmond*," 681.
71. "The Novels of Mr. Anthony Trollope," 413, 414.
72. Holmes, *Passions and Constraint*, 4.
73. Hartman argues that "the stipulation of abstract equality produces white entitlement and black subjection in its promulgation of formal equality" (*Scenes of Subjection*, 116). Also see Chuh, *The Difference Aesthetics Makes,* which, following Sylvia Wynter, argues "for the emancipation of the human from liberalism's grasp" (4).
74. Woloch, *The One vs. the Many,* 19; emphasis in original.
75. Nally, *Human Encumbrances,* 16.
76. Lloyd, *Irish Times,* 51.
77. In *The Feminization of Famine*, Margaret Kelleher reads this scene as "the construction of a female spectacle through the operation of a powerful yet anxious male gaze" (55).
78. Nicholson, *Annals of the Famine,* vi.

79. Trevelyan, *The Irish Crisis,* 192.
80. Trollope, *The Irish Famine*, 8.
81. Trollope, *The Irish Famine*, 27.
82. Trollope, *The Irish Famine*, 28.

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