

THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE IRISH REVOLUTION

1916-1923

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PHD UNDER
THE SUPERVISION OF DOCTORS BRIAN HUGHES AND
CLODAGH TAIT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK,
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE

JUNE 2023

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Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benjamin Ragan', written in a cursive style.

Benjamin Ragan

This thesis is dedicated to the dead of Ireland, to my loving friends James Guinan, Mayumi Villarroel, Jesika Westmond, Eric Fenno, Jordan Painter, the Christensen family, and all the good people dwelling in the Birdhouse, and to my mother Alicia, my father Leslie, and my brother Theodore. Without all these people, this project would have been impossible; here is to keeping magic alive.

Table of Contents

Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Abbreviations	vii
Table of Figures	viii
Abstract	ix
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Methodology.....	51
Chapter Two: Extra-Sensory Perception: A Seventh Sense	95
Chapter Three: Apparitions and Visions	145
Chapter Four: Hauntings.....	189
Chapter Five: Prophecies, Omens, and Divination.....	223
Conclusion	291
Bibliography	299
Appendices.....	330
Appendix 1: Paranormal Phenomena in Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements ..	330
Appendix 2: Precognition, Apparitions, and Hauntings in the SFC.....	331
Appendix 3: Gender and Premonitions in Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements	331
Appendix 4: Premonitions in BMH Witness Statements by Combat Proximity.....	332
Appendix 5A: Precognition Memorates in BMH Witness Statements	334
Appendix 5B: Precognition Memorates in the SFC	338
Appendix 5C: Precognition Memorates in Memoirs, Diaries, and other sources. ...	341
Appendix 6: List of Keywords for BMH Search.....	344
Appendix 7A: Hauntings and Apparitions in BMH Witness Statements	351
Appendix 7B: Hauntings and Apparitions in Memoirs	353
Appendix 7C: Hauntings and Apparitions in Ghost Story Compilations.....	355
Appendix 7D: Hauntings and Apparitions in the SFC	356
Appendix 8: Memorates involving Fairy Forts & the Irish Revolution in the SFC.	362
Appendix 9: Hauntings in the SFC attributed to Irish Revolutionary Violence.....	365
Appendix 10: BMH Investigators and Paranormal Memorates	367
Appendix 11: Irish Newsprint Concerning the Black Pig of Kiltrustan.....	368
Appendix 12A: Omens in the SFC.....	370
Appendix 12B: Omens in Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements.....	371
Appendix 13A: Curses in Bureau of Military History Witness Statements	372
Appendix 13B: Curses in Revolutionary Memoirs	373
Appendix 14: Premonitions in Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements	374
Appendix 15A: Heptagrammatic Rankings of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis from Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements.....	376
Appendix 15B: Heptagrammatic Rankings of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis from the SFC	378
Appendix 16A: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis From Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements Part 1	380
Appendix 16B: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis From Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements Part 2	382
Appendix 16C: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis from SFC Part 1.....	384

Appendix 16D: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis from SFC Part 2.....	387
Appendix 17: Informant names and locations of Prophecies in the SFC.....	390
Appendix 18A: Visions and visionaries in BMH Witness statements	392
Appendix 18B: Memorates concerning visions and visionaries in Memoirs.....	393
Appendix 18C: Aspect of Morale Effect in Vision Memorates.....	394
Appendix 19: Irish newsprint articles using prophetic language, 1916-1923	395
Appendix 20: List of Fifty-Five Analytical Metrics Used in Phase 3	397
Appendix 21: List of Keywords Used for SFC Search	399

Acknowledgments

This project was funded in part by the 2019 government of Ireland International Education Scholarship, the 2019 Universities Ireland History Bursary, and by the Departmental Assistantship program of Mary Immaculate College. To these institutions and programs, I offer my sincere thanks; without this greatly appreciated funding this project would not have been possible. A special thanks is given to professors Nancy Koppelman and Sean Williams of The Evergreen State College for inspiring my efforts to pursue History and Irish Studies. A special thanks is also given to doctors Clodagh Tait and Brian Hughes of Mary Immaculate College for supervising, facilitating, and inspiring my postgraduate work. Without the steadfast support and encouragement of these mentors this project would not have been possible. To the organizations such as the American Conference of Irish Studies and the UCC Irish Civil War National Conference who aided in the dissemination of this research, I also offer my gratitude.

Abbreviations

Active Service Unit	ASU
Bureau of Military History	BMH
Dublin Metropolitan Police	DMP
Extra-Sensory Perception	ESP
Irish Republican Army	IRA
Military Archives of Ireland	MAI
Irish Military Service Pensions Collection	IMSPC
National Folklore Collection	NFC
National Archives of Ireland	NAI
Near Death Experience	NDE
Royal Irish Constabulary	RIC
School's Folklore Collection	SFC

Table of Figures

Figure 1: The Old Mill at Collooney, Co. Sligo.....	1
Figure 2: Religious and Paranormal Memorates as Percentages of Total Identified.....	8
Figure 3: Distribution of Religious Memorate Subcategories in BMH, Memoirs, and SFC...	10
Figure 4: Distribution of Paranormal Memorate Subcategories in BMH, Memoirs and SFC	11
Figure 5: Illustration of Relationships Between Definitions of Supernatural Phenomena	72
Figure 6: Composition of ESP & Precognitive Memorate Categories	139
Figure 7: ESP & Precognitive Memorates of Overlapping Categories	140
Figure 8: Map of the Locations of Identified Fairy Fort Memorates by County.....	197
Figure 9: Keith Phelan’s map of the distribution of ringforts in the Republic of Ireland.....	198
Figure 10: Father Bonaventure Pictured Near Michael Collins.....	216
Figure 11: Pat Garrahy’s Illustration of a Spectral British Soldier in SFC.....	218
Figure 12: Satellite Image of Fairy Forts Nearby Kiltrustan National School	235
Figure 13: Photo of Wheatley, 6 August 1919, The Irish Independent.....	245
Figure 14: Heptagrammatic Spider Chart Base Format.....	257
Figure 15: Rankings of Michael Kilroy's Brian Ruaidh Prophecy	259
Figure 16: Average Values of Prophecy Memorates	261
Figure 17: Heptagrammatic Chart #1 of Prophecies by Subject Matter	262
Figure 18: Heptagrammatic Chart #2 of Prophecies by Subject Matter	262
Figure 19: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Source of Inspiration.....	263
Figure 20: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Prophet Occupation.....	264
Figure 21: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Gender of Prophet	264
Figure 22: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Gender of Memorate Author	265
Figure 23: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies Uttered Publicly and Privately	265
Figure 24: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Method of Delivery.....	266
Figure 25: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Prophetic Self-Attribution.....	267
Figure 26: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Contingency	268
Figure 27: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Primary Source Type.....	270
Figure 28: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Subversiveness.....	270

Abstract

This project's goal is to investigate the supernatural beliefs, practices, and anomalous experiences of Irish revolutionaries and their opponents during the period of 1916-1923. More specifically, along with providing a broad overview of their phenomenological characteristics, this project aims to determine the impact that supernatural beliefs, practices, and anomalies had on the way the revolution was fought and how it was remembered in the decades afterwards. Through a systematic identification and close reading of 15,000 pages of primary source documents from military and folklore archives, a database of supernatural memorates has been built comprising 4,416 entries tabulated and categorized on a wide range of demographic, phenomenological, parapsychological, and historiographical metrics. The following chapters provide a summative analysis of this data through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. This wealth of data suggests that the supernatural side of the Irish Revolution was far more diverse, impactful, and historically rich than has previously been supposed, and that it merits further concentrated research. Of the varieties of supernatural phenomena identified, this thesis will analyse in greatest detail extra-sensory perception, hauntings, apparitions, prophecies, and omens. This study contends that the supernatural shaped how the Irish Revolution was remembered and experienced, and furthermore, that these supernatural remembrances and experiences were often catalysed by trauma and had a significant and formative presence in the ideology of Irish revolutionaries.

Introduction



Figure 1: The Old Mill at Collooney, Co. Sligo¹

Remembrances concerning the supernatural in the Irish Revolution are numerous. One chilling example was provided by Martin Madden to the School's Folklore Collection and concerns the aftermath of Seán Mac Eoin's retaking of Collooney, county Sligo, on behalf of the newly formed Irish Free State on 14 July 1922:

Situated along the River Owenmore beside Collooney town is an old disused mill. A lot of Irish Free State soldiers were stationed in Collooney. Wounded in the shoulder an officer was taken to the mill for safety. The bed was made of ropes suspended from the walls, he was that bad that a doctor had to stay with him day and night. At twelve o'clock P.M. the door of the small room opened, and a gust of wind came in. The wounded man screamed. The doctor rushed to him, but he was already dead. The door reopened, a gust of wind rushed past him, and the door closed. With trembling hands, he lit a candle and sprinkled Holy Water and then looked at his patient and what he saw made his blood curl, there were ghastly marks on the officer's throat where he had been strangled.²

¹ Wikipedia, 'Collooney', (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collooney>) (Accessed 30 5 2023).

² 'A Local Happening', Martin Madden, Collooney, Co. Sligo, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0175, pp 99-100). The phrase 'made his blood curl' is reproduced here as written in the original.

This peculiar passage raises questions. Who was this officer and who was the doctor, are these even real people, and if they are real, why did the officer die? What motivated Martin Madden tell this story? How should this story and other stories like it be interpreted by historians; why were they told, how many there are, are there any patterns to be found among them, and what do they tell us about how the Irish Revolution was experienced and remembered? This thesis explores these and other issues through an examination of manifestations of the supernatural concerning the Irish revolutionary period from 1916 to 1923. Through a meticulous and thorough search of a variety of retrospective and contemporary source materials, thousands of stories which illustrate the supernatural side of the Irish Revolution have been identified, analysed, and catalogued; a robust selection of these are presented and explored here. These stories are primarily drawn from the Bureau of Military History's (BMH) witness statement collection, the National Folklore Collection of Ireland's School's Folklore Collection (SFC), memoirs and autobiographies of participants in the conflict, and both Irish and British Newspaper archives. The supernatural phenomena analysed in this thesis in greatest depth include extra-sensory perception (especially precognition), haunted places and objects, visions, apparitions, prophecies, omens, and divination. Both qualitative and quantitative perspectives on these stories are offered to reveal how the supernatural affected the way the Irish Revolution was both remembered and experienced.

On the broadest level, the purpose of this investigation is to contribute to the historiography of two major areas of interest. Firstly, this research aims to provide an original perspective on the history of the Irish Revolution. The rich and complex historiography of this period is markedly (and understandably) dominated by discussion of themes such as violence, ideology, identity, politics, place, and more recently, gender. Though this thesis will touch on these themes throughout, its focus on the supernatural provides both a useful and hitherto unexplored perspective. Examining the supernatural beliefs of historical figures helps us to

gain a deeper understanding of the cultural context that influenced their worldview; revealing how they interpreted and responded to the world around them, providing insights into their motivations and reasoning, and helping us to understand how they perceived the world and their place in it. By understanding their supernatural beliefs, we can gain a deeper appreciation for their contributions to history and the manifold factors that influenced their lives. This supernatural perspective on the history of the Irish Revolution will therefore provide fresh insights to the historiography.

Beyond developing the historiography of the Irish Revolution, the second broad purpose of this thesis is to expand the historiography of the supernatural. Supernatural beliefs are both a deeply mysterious and near universal aspect of the human condition throughout history and across the world. They are studied in various ways by a wide variety of different academic disciplines, and individual writers are often tempted to offer broad, generalized theories about what they consist of and why they exist. This thesis resists this temptation and takes a pluralistic and agnostic position on the causes of supernatural phenomena, inviting the reader to suspend their judgment and consider a multiplicity of possible explanations for the extraordinary phenomena explored here, and to hold those explanations in abstract superposition. Furthermore, by investigating a specific historical context in which these supernatural beliefs manifested as opposed to taking a general view, a greater depth of understanding with a more thorough evidentiary basis can be achieved. This work, though primarily historical in method, aims to be of use to other scholars researching the supernatural from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, as part of a broader collective effort to understand supernatural beliefs. As has been done in recent years for early modern European history, this research aims to re-enchant the Irish Revolution by exploring the supernatural beliefs of those who experienced it, showing

that Max Weber's trajectory of disenchantment and loss of the credibility of supernatural beliefs in modern societies is not cleanly applicable to the Irish Revolution.³

Additionally, this thesis by necessity grapples with questions of memory, as most (though not all) of the sources investigated here were written decades after the events which they describe took place. Furthermore, the period being investigated has been heavily mythologized (not least by many of the authors of the primary sources investigated by this thesis) and made a near ceaseless subject of hotly-contested commemorative efforts for the past century.⁴ In 2016 Fearghal McGarry noted that the legacy of the Easter Rising of 1916 was 'shaped by not remembering, by generational memory, and by the differences between public and private forms of remembering', a statement which certainly also applies to the Irish Revolution as a whole.⁵ This thesis both engages with and takes account of the myriad ways in which remembrance of this period was created and transformed over the past 107 years, be it through the lens of generational memory and oral tradition, the publicity or privacy of the mediums through which it was transmitted, and indeed, through consideration of the silences left through omission and forgetting. Furthermore, the intersection of these considerations of historical remembrance with the peculiar features of supernatural phenomena are accounted for and explored here. Few kinds of memories are more vulnerable to historical circumspection (even erasure) and narrative distortion than memories of the supernatural; their inherent nature of being ostensibly outside of nature invites critically minded thinkers to categorize them as hyperbolic anecdotes, manifestations of psychopathologies both benign and malignant, or even outright fabrications. These issues are explored throughout this thesis.

³ Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe : Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250-1750* (Oxford, 2010), pp 10-11; Peter Marshall, 'Disenchantment and re-enchantment in Europe, 1250-1920' in *The Historical Journal*, liv, no. 2 (2011), pp 599-606.

⁴ John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, and Mike Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2019), pp 826-923; Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: History and Memory, 1923-2000* (Cambridge, 2003), pp 1-5; Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising: Ireland Easter 1916* (Oxford, 2016), pp vii-xi.

⁵ McGarry, *The Rising*, p. vi.

Most specifically, this thesis is aimed to answer a set of research questions. These questions were created to focus the project into more thoroughly defined parameters and consist of the following; firstly, how did supernatural phenomena affect the Irish Revolution? Secondly, what kind of supernatural phenomena were most prevalent? Thirdly, did supernatural phenomena have a role in shaping the remembrance of the Irish Revolution? Fourthly, was revolutionary trauma a catalyst for supernatural phenomena? Finally, what was the significance of supernatural phenomena in the ideology of those who were involved in the Irish Revolution? Due to the exceptional complexity and wide variety of disciplinary perspectives on these issues, the key terms used in these questions will be defined and discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapter on methodology.

If their own words are to be believed, Irish revolutionaries, their opponents, and the communities in which they fought, experienced the supernatural on a regular basis. They experienced it as inexplicable anomalies, as abstract belief, and through the performance of rituals. These experiences are both numerous and detailed enough to merit concerted and concentrated study. The consideration of supernatural beliefs and ritual practices reveals emotional and psychological experiences which remain under-appreciated by most historians of the revolutionary period. This research demonstrates that those who experienced the revolution most directly had worldviews more substantially coloured with interlocking supernatural belief systems (religious, paranormal, and political) than has previously been understood, and that these systems had functional relevance to their psychology. Irish revolutionaries were affected by supernatural beliefs, practices, and anomalous experiences in a wide variety of ways, both in their immediate experience and later remembrance and commemoration of that experience.

There are several core arguments to this thesis; firstly, that there is a substantial and statistically significant volume of supernatural material to be found in operationally focused

personal narratives of the Irish Revolution like the Bureau of Military History witness statements and revolutionary memoirs, narratives which were not intended to cover supernatural topics, and therefore, the supernatural must have played an integral role in the remembered experience of the conflict. Another core argument is that these remembered supernatural experiences were often, though not exclusively, catalysed by trauma because many of the supernatural memorates explored here are proximate to or intimately intertwined with traumatic experiences like the loss of loved ones, close encounters with death, and enacting, witnessing, or suffering extreme violence. Another core argument is that the experience of precognition (namely prophecies and premonitions) should be foregrounded in any study of the paranormal in the Irish Revolution because the data gathered by this research shows that it was the most common variety of paranormal phenomena. Finally, an additional core argument is that the supernatural in the Irish Revolution was both informed by and would become informative to Irish folklore; this is because a substantial volume of supernatural material related to the Irish Revolution was identified in the School's Folklore Collection, and furthermore, the supernatural material identified from non-folkloric sources analysed in this thesis is clearly influenced by Irish folklore in a wide variety of ways.

For most people who grew up in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Ireland, the supernatural was understood to be ubiquitous, in both its religious and folkloric forms. Unlike in England and France, in Ireland, folklore was a central element of national identity, its cultivation and study acting as a nation-building project that represented a rejection of modernity in favour of tradition.⁶ Indeed, were it not for the Irish Revolution, it is doubtful that the institutional framework and funding for Ireland's rigorous folklore collection schemes would have materialized. Additionally, from the post-famine period onward through the twentieth century, Ireland was experiencing an ongoing tightening of religious orthodoxy and

⁶ Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity* (Cork, 2000), p. 4.

ritual practice on the part of the Catholic Church, though how and to what extent this affected beliefs in fairies or magic is still debated.⁷ In any case, during the early twentieth century in Ireland, attendance at religious services was high, clergy were numerous, and the Catholic Church was unquestionably one of the most formidably powerful influences in almost every aspect of Irish society.⁸ The supernatural was a ubiquitous aspect of Irish life during the Irish Revolution, and so in some ways it should not be surprising that it appears so frequently in accounts of the period. The more surprising insight this study provides is that the supernatural was weaved into the experience and memory of the Irish Revolution itself and was not merely a backdrop to the conflict.

The supernatural material explored in this research is organised chiefly using the concept of the memorate. Memorates are defined here as narratives relating purported personal experiences at first or second hand. The supernatural stories investigated here were quantified using memorates as a kind of baseline unit; doing this allowed more readily for comparing the prevalence of different kinds of supernatural material in order to answer the question of what kinds of supernatural phenomena were most prevalent. Over the course of this research in BMH witness statements, memoirs, and the SFC, it became clear that supernatural memorates of a religious nature were the most prevalent by far among the available testimonies. Performance of the sacraments, acts of contrition, sectarian conflict, remembrances of the role of clergy in the conflict, and other phenomena of a religious nature made up roughly two-thirds of all supernatural discussion in primary source materials investigated by this study. However, the question of where the boundary should be drawn (if at all) between religious and irreligious

⁷ Síle de Cléir, *Popular Catholicism in 20th-Century Ireland: Locality, Identity and Culture* (London, 2017), pp 75-87; Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850-75' in *The American Historical Review*, lxxvii, no. 3 (1972), *passim*; James H. Murphy, 'Catholics and fiction during the Union, 1801-1922' in John Wilson Foster (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel* (Cambridge, 2006), pp 97-98; Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, pp 16-17; Jodie Shevlin, 'The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland in the Long Nineteenth-century, 1821-1921', (PhD Thesis, Ulster University, Colerain, 2020), pp 13-19.

⁸ de Cléir, *Popular Catholicism in 20th-Century Ireland*, pp 1-2, 14-15, 18.

supernatural phenomena is complex; many of the supernatural phenomena identified by this study comprise a blend of more doctrinally orthodox religious beliefs and paranormal activity, popular folklore, or magical practice. Substantial discussion as to how these boundaries are drawn for the purpose of this study can be found in the methodology chapter. There are numerous other subcategories of religious phenomena which were counted in this study, and categories and subcategories of paranormal phenomena as well. The relative quantities of the various categories and subcategories are shown in the figures below.⁹

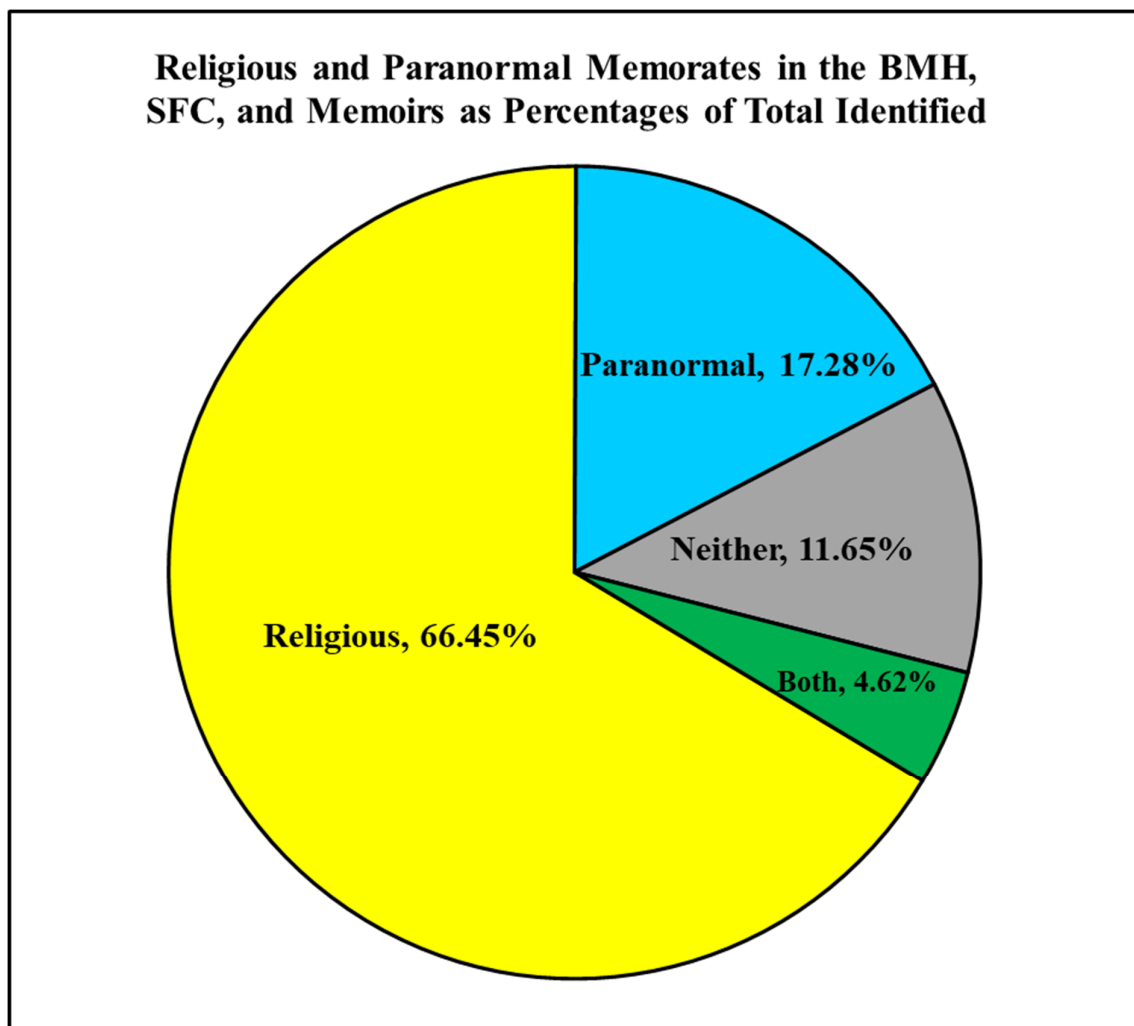


Figure 2: Religious and Paranormal Memorates as Percentages of Total Identified

⁹ Data for the following figures was gathered from the databases created over the course of this project, which can be freely accessed using this link: (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1V2fvZCnJgbNtar6ZpDu5hbseINfxpM9T?usp=sharing>).

The section of the chart marked ‘Neither’ refers to supernatural phenomena that are neither religious nor paranormal, including various spiritual and mystical phenomena that are not explicitly endorsed or condemned by religious institutions or the scientific establishment. Most of these consisted of passages referring to a kind of racial or national spirit; for example, in his witness statement to the BMH, Michael O’Leary attributed the sudden profusion of ‘Self-determination Branches’ in Liverpool in 1919 to ‘the latent spirit of the Celt...springing into activity again.’¹⁰ The section marked ‘Both’ refers to material that is both religious and paranormal; for example, these phenomena might include Marian or Angelic apparitions without sanction from the Catholic Church.¹¹ A further breakdown of the subcategories of religious phenomena can be seen below in figure 3. Many of the religious memorates fell into overlapping subcategories; for example, many memorates describing prayers often simultaneously described the use of devotional objects like rosary beads, or attendance of mass. The most common subcategories of religious memorates were prayers, sacraments, the activities of clergy, and funerals.

¹⁰ Michael O’Leary statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS797), p. 27.

¹¹ John Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles: Jimmy Walsh, Ceasefires and Moving Statues* (Gloucestershire, 2019), pp 53-55.

Distribution of Religious Memorata Subcategories in The BMH, Memoirs, and SFC

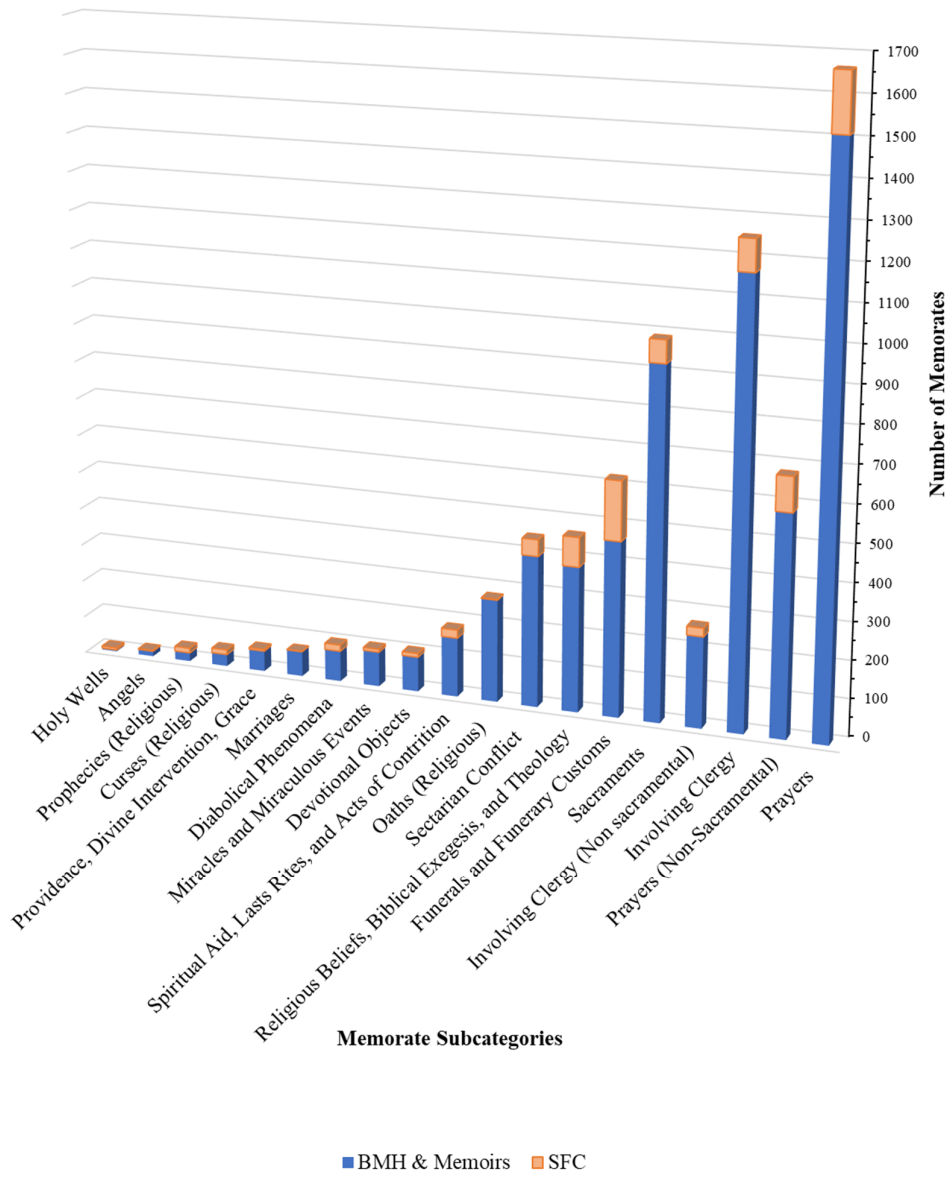


Figure 3: Distribution of Religious Memorata Subcategories in the BMH, Memoirs, and SFC

Paranormal phenomena made up roughly one fifth of the supernatural material identified by this study. ‘Paranormal’ phenomena are defined here as phenomena whose existence is rejected by the laws of both science and mainstream religion.¹² A breakdown of the distribution of the various subcategories can be seen in Figure 4 below:

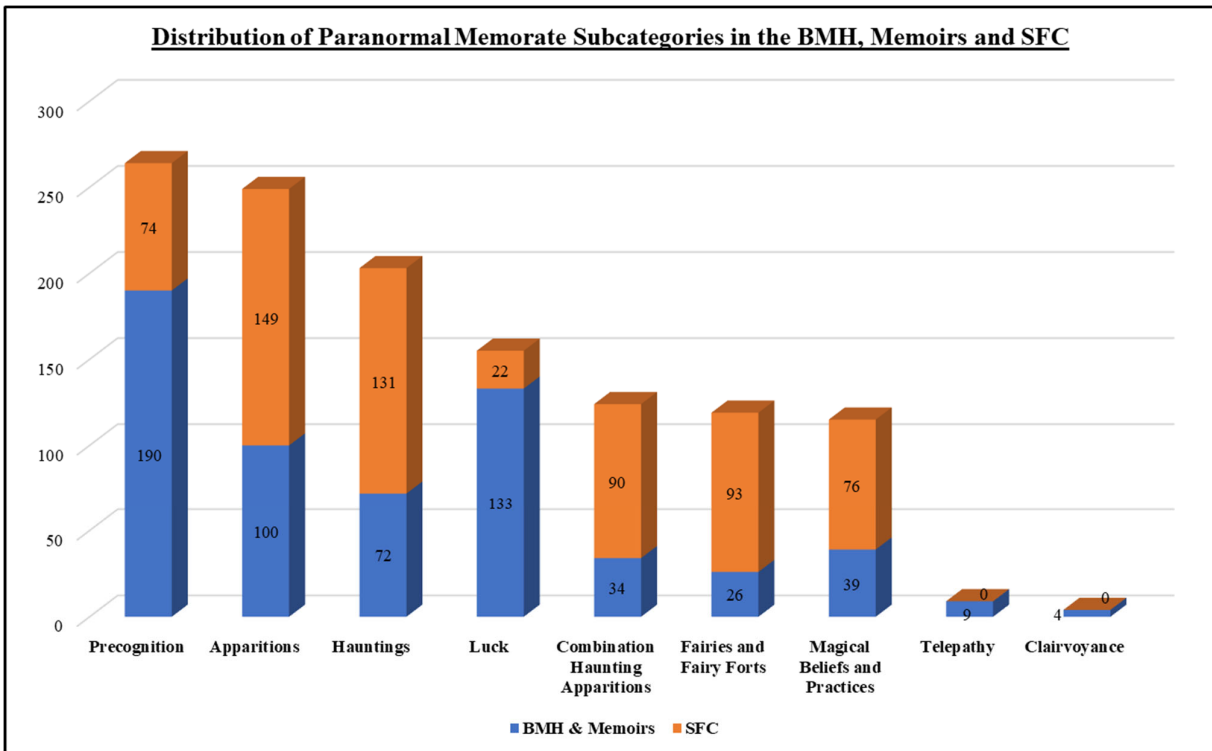


Figure 4: Distribution of Paranormal Memorate Subcategories in the BMH, Memoirs and SFC

The single largest subcategory of paranormal phenomena identified was precognition, especially when considering the large number of prophecies found in the newsprint that were not tabulated during this study (reasons for which will be discussed in the forthcoming methodology chapter). A breakdown of the various types of precognition can be seen on Figure 6 in chapter two; there, one can see that the largest subcategories of precognition were prophecies and premonitions. Though hauntings and apparitions will be analysed separately in this thesis, there was a significant degree of overlap in these subcategories, illustrated by a

¹² A more detailed justification and explanation of my definitions of key terms such as this will be provided in the forthcoming methodology chapter.

separate column on Figure 4 above. Similarly, many of the narratives concerning fairies and fairy forts were simultaneously classified as hauntings, apparitions, or both, but they have been given a separate column here. Two noteworthy subcategories that have not received substantial discussion in this thesis are the subcategories of luck and magic, which it is suggested here ought to be a focus for future research efforts. Likewise, the supernatural phenomena marked as being neither religious nor paranormal will receive scant discussion in this thesis. The most common of these were memorates referencing the ‘national spirit’ or ‘national soul’ of Ireland, along with other manifestations of civic religion such as oath-taking and ideological sermonizing on the destiny of Ireland.

The sheer volume and variety of supernatural memorates in retrospective source materials like BMH witness statements, memoirs, and the autobiographies of Irish revolutionaries identified and explored by this study provide ample evidence that supernatural phenomena had an important and nuanced role in how the Irish revolution was remembered. A variety of possible ways in which the supernatural affected or was an effect of the remembrance process as evidenced in these memorates are explored in this thesis, though none are posited as being universal or even predominant, as one of the most striking features of these supernatural stories is their qualitative and circumstantial diversity. Whether or not one views these remembrances as hyperbolic, artifacts of old memories, or perhaps something altogether more eerie, they undoubtedly appeared with great frequency in the sources investigated by this thesis. The diverse array of supernatural experiences closely associated with traumatic events clearly shows that in many cases trauma catalysed supernatural experiences, both retrospectively, and in the immediate experience of the conflict. The psychological function of retrospective accounts of the Irish Revolution was in part to process traumatic experiences, and in many cases, this involved the integration of the supernatural into narratives of the conflict.

Discussions of supernatural phenomena both in contemporaneous accounts and retrospective narratives of the conflict were relevant to Irish revolutionary ideology for four main reasons. They emphasized the unique character of Irish national identity through expounding on supernatural beliefs particular to the Irish people; they elevated and idolized various prominent revolutionary leaders and martyrs by attributing supernatural qualities to their character or exploits; they portrayed the revolutionary struggle as a whole as a divinely ordained and predestined struggle; and they emphasized the spiritual dimension of Irish identity in contrast to the perceived diabolically materialistic character of British identity. The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that Irish revolutionaries were substantially engaged with the supernatural in diverse ways that drew on both Irish tradition and newer systems of supernatural belief like spiritualism. This data and the analysis of that data presented by this study suggests that the supernatural side of the Irish Revolution was far more diverse, impactful, and historically rich than has previously been supposed, and that it merits further concentrated research.

The main repositories of primary source materials used for this thesis were the Bureau of Military History (BMH), revolutionary memoirs, and the School's Folklore Collection (SFC). Newsprint was also consulted, though to a lesser degree. The BMH was officially launched on 1 January 1947 by the Fianna Fáil government in conjunction with veterans of the separatist movement under the auspices of the Irish Department of Defence with the objective of gathering first-hand accounts and documents from veterans of the Easter Rising and War of Independence, with the general aim of creating an accurate and authoritative history of the conflict told from an Irish point of view.¹³ Between 1947 and 1957 the BMH collected 1,773 witness statements from mostly former members of the Irish Volunteers and Irish Republican

¹³ Eve Morrison, 'The Bureau of Military History: separatist veterans' narratives of the Irish Revolution', (PhD Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2011), p. 11.

Army, along with a much smaller number of statements from former members of Cumann na mBan, Fianna Éireann, and the Irish Citizen Army, along with the occasional political activist or supporter, and witnesses to noteworthy events.¹⁴ These statements were created by BMH investigators based closely off conversations and interviews those investigators held with witnesses.¹⁵ According to Eve Morrison, ‘in its entirety, the collection provides a unique record of a national independence struggle, and contains more information about the organisation and conduct of the military wing of the separatist movement in the early twentieth century than any other source currently available to historians.’¹⁶ In addition to the efforts of the BMH, in the aftermath of the revolution many Irish revolutionaries would write lengthy memoirs and autobiographies describing their experiences of the conflict from their own personal perspective. Siobhra Aiken has convincingly argued for both the historical importance and psychic richness of ‘popular testimonial narratives’ in the form of autobiographical writings.¹⁷ The psychological depth of autobiographical writings and their limited presence in the historiography thus could not be ignored, and this study was obliged to conduct a survey of them.

In addition to the BMH and memoirs, the National Folklore Collection (NFC) was a key source for this project. It was decided early on to consult the NFC for this project, as it was founded in the early 1930’s, roughly a decade after the Irish Civil War ended and it was certain to contain supernatural source material created by people who had lived through the Irish Revolution.¹⁸ However, this was not guaranteed to result in supernatural materials *concerning* the Irish Revolution, as the questions recommended for use by the folklore collectors were not

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁷ Siobhra Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony & The Irish Civil War* (Newbridge, 2022), pp 10-12.

¹⁸ Mícheál Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935-1970: History, ideology, methodology* (Helsinki, 2007), pp 103-149; Mary E. Daly, ‘The state papers of a forgotten and neglected people: the National Folklore Collection and the writing of Irish history’ in *Béaloides*, lviii (2010), pp 63-64.

aimed toward collecting material on recent military history (for example, in the ‘historical tradition’ section of Seán Ó Súilleabháin’s *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* no important twentieth century historical figures like Michael Collins were listed as topics for investigation), and many informants would likely have been reluctant to discuss sensitive political issues.¹⁹ This would necessitate identifying relevant material from across the entire collection as there was no dedicated category for material related to the Irish Revolution. This would be impractical as most of the millions of pages of material in the main collection are in manuscript form, undigitized, organized with a system of index cards, and only available for consultation on a very limited basis. Furthermore, most of the research for this thesis was conducted during heavy COVID-19 lockdowns, which militated against working in the folklore archive in person. Therefore, collection efforts were limited to the parts of the NFC which were digitized and word-searchable; these primarily consisted of the School’s Folklore Collection (SFC) which at the outset of this project had been entirely indexed, digitized, almost entirely transcribed, and made available online to the public as part of The Dúchas Project launched in 2013.²⁰ In order to maintain some consistency across folkloric source materials for the purposes of quantitative analyses, it was decided to exclusively draw folkloric source materials from the SFC. The use of folkloric materials to study the Irish Revolution is relatively rare in the historiography, and this perspective is one of the main insights this thesis offers.

Another important collection of source materials to this thesis were Irish and British newspaper archives. According to their website, the Irish Newspaper Archive is ‘the world’s largest and oldest online database of Irish newspapers’ which contains ‘over 6 million pages of newspaper content from titles North and South of the Irish border ... from over 279 years’

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Kindle Edition, Dublin, 1942), locations 238-287, 11577-12112.

²⁰ ‘Phases of the project’, National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin, (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/info/steps>) (Accessed 23 May 2023).

worth of Irish publications.²¹ The archive contains substantial material from 130 different publications.²² Despite its considerable size and good mix of local and national newspapers, this archive is not a completely comprehensive database of all the newsprint written about Irish affairs between 1916 and 1923, and therefore the British Newspaper Archive was also consulted to help fill in gaps. The British Newspaper Archive is considerably more comprehensive and provides access to ‘over 40 million fully searchable pages, featuring more than 1,000 newspaper titles from every part of the UK and Ireland, and some overseas titles.’²³ By using a combination of both sources, a greater degree of comprehensiveness was attained during the conduct of this research.

Literature Review

The existing literature on the topic of the supernatural in the Irish Revolution is simultaneously extensive and scant. When taken in isolation, both central themes of this project (i.e., the supernatural and the Irish Revolution) are associated with significant bodies of academic literature internationally. However, the specific combination of themes and subject matter presented in this project has only very rarely been investigated by scholars, and even then, not using the same methods or conceptual frameworks. For example, Eve Morrison has identified a ‘survival of the supernatural’ in veterans’ accounts of the revolution, giving examples from a variety of sources in a chapter titled ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution: Veterans and Memory of the Independence Struggle and Civil War’.²⁴ Though she did not define ‘supernatural’ or any of the related terms, she cited a broad variety of different supernatural phenomena, including

²¹ ‘About Irish Newspaper Archives’, Irish Newspaper Archives, (<https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/about-us>) (Accessed 29 May 2023).

²² ‘Irish Newspaper Archives - Currently Online’, Irish Newspaper Archives, (<https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/publication-list>) (Accessed 29 May 2023).

²³ ‘British Newspaper Archive’, The British Library, (<https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/british-newspaper-archive>) (Accessed 29 May 2023).

²⁴ Eve Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution: veterans and memory of the Independence Struggle and Civil War’ in Marguerite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack, & Ruud van den Beuken (eds), *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations* (Bern, 2017), p. 85.

ghosts, faith healing, miracles, and more generally what she terms ‘a mix of pre-Christian and Christian supernatural beliefs’.²⁵ This broad perspective includes paranormal and religious phenomena under the same overarching category, but Morrison does not include an analysis of the relationships between different categories of supernatural belief in a significant way, or engage with the substantial differences in the function and cultural significance of different supernatural phenomena. Studies have demonstrated that cultural conditions affect the occurrence, characteristics, and interpretation of different supernatural phenomena in different ways, and that lumping them all together can have a distorting effect.²⁶ Nevertheless, this chapter is one of the most focused attempts thus far to study the paranormal in the historiography and is without a doubt a central inspiration for this project. Morrison rightfully criticizes positivist tendencies in revolutionary historiography and emphasizes the importance of studying memories on their own terms, though not uncritically, and with great care and subtlety. The work comes to several broad conclusions about the relationship of Irish revolutionaries to the supernatural, namely, that ghost stories and fairy tales were generally regarded with cynicism; that ghost stories were the most common type of ‘fantastical folklore’; and that ‘...supernatural explanations were a means of expressing anxiety, fear and trauma for both perpetrators and victims.’²⁷ Most of these conclusions are contestable to greater or lesser extent.

This thesis will construct a more subtle picture, showing that, though apparitions were indeed numerous, the most common type of paranormal phenomena across all the various

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Joseph O. Baker and Scott Draper, ‘Diverse Supernatural Portfolios: Certitude, Exclusivity, and the Curvilinear Relationship Between Religiosity and Paranormal Beliefs’ in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, xlix, no. 3 (2010), p. 413; Julia L. Cassaniti and Tanya Marie Luhrmann, ‘The cultural kindling of spiritual experiences’ in *Current Anthropology*, lv, no. S10 (2014), p. s333; William L. MacDonald, ‘The effects of religiosity and structural strain on reported paranormal experiences’ in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, xxxiv, no. 3 (1995), p. 366; Nicolette D. Manglos, ‘Faith pinnacle moments: stress, miraculous experiences, and life satisfaction in young adulthood’ in *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 74, no. 2 (2013), p. 176.

²⁷ Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution’, pp. 93, 94, 101.

source materials examined in this study was Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP), chiefly the subcategory of precognition. The degree of cynicism about different types of paranormal phenomena varied greatly: for example, in his memoir Dan Breen takes a very cynical view of the alleged miracles at Templemore, but where it concerned a vision of the spirit of his close friend Seán Treacy in October 1920, he was happy to attest to premonitions, the whisperings of angels, and an apparition.²⁸ Different kinds of paranormal phenomena were clearly compartmentalized and allocated different degrees of tolerance. Supernatural explanations were undoubtedly connected to anxiety and trauma, but they were not exclusively so; in some cases, they were used as cultural markers, or propagandistically to emphasize the prescience or heroism of prominent figures in the movement. Morrison's conclusions about the character of Revolutionary paranormality merit more expansion but her final point is undoubtedly accurate; that the 'oral tapestry of revolutionary memory' is 'haunted terrain'.²⁹ The following research will build on this work constructively as an endeavour to map this terrain.

Morrison identified the key issue in Irish historiography which prevents proper analysis of this topic: 'The narrowing confines of the "revisionist" debate tend to lock historical analysis of memory and oral testimony into the most limiting kind of positivism.'³⁰ This positivism stifles sophisticated analysis of the subtleties of supernatural beliefs, as such beliefs are by their very nature antithetical to an empirical understanding of reality. From this limited positivist perspective, such beliefs prove to only obfuscate what 'really' happened. This so-called 'revisionist' trend in Irish historiography arose in the 1970s and 1980s in the context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and was preoccupied with the deconstruction and critique of what was perceived by many prominent Irish historians as an overabundance of overly mythologized

²⁸ Dan Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom* (Cork, 2010), p. 154.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106

³⁰ Morrison, 'Hauntings of the Irish Revolution', p. 86.

histories of the Irish Revolution.³¹ The violence in the north, which was in large part inspired by heavily mythologized historical and religious grievances, compelled many Irish historians to take more sceptical positivist views that recognized only that which could be scientifically or logically proved, and rejecting anything that smacked of metaphysics or theism.³² Where this historiographical trend fails is in the appraisal of the beliefs themselves as historical subjects. As many Irish historians are coming to realize lately, subjective memories and beliefs themselves are valid objects of study regardless of whether they correspond directly to an objective reality. The subjective experiences are parts of objective reality, not just filters which distort that reality. In this way, historians such as Morrison, Fearghal McGarry, Síobhra Aiken, Tomás Mac Conmara, and Guy Beiner embody a new trend toward analysing the memory of Irish history on its own terms.³³

Nevertheless, though this trend represents a huge leap in how the Irish Revolution has been studied, it is a young trend. Few historians of the Irish Revolution have utilized interdisciplinary understandings of supernatural phenomena to inform their analysis, and as a result, these historians are vulnerable to being categorically limited by outdated terminology, inhibiting holistic understanding. For example, Fearghal McGarry identified the importance of popular Catholic piety in the Easter Rising: ‘Volunteers were armed not only with guns but rosary beads, scapulars, and holy water. Confessions were heard, conditional absolution was granted, and the rosary was endlessly recited.’³⁴ His analysis of the rising gives an admirable

³¹ Ciaran Brady, ‘“Constructive and instrumental”: the dilemma of Ireland’s first ‘New Historians’ in Ciaran Brady (ed.) *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism* (Dublin, 1994), pp 7-9; Ronan Fanning, ‘The Great Enchantment’: uses and abuses of modern Irish history’ in Brady (ed.) *Interpreting Irish History*, pp 146-147; Roy Foster, ‘History and the Irish question’ in Brady (ed.) *Interpreting Irish History*, pp 122-124; T.W. Moody, ‘Irish history and Irish mythology’ in Brady (ed.) *Interpreting Irish History*, pp 71-86.

³² D. George Boyce, ‘Past and present revisionism and the Northern Ireland Troubles’ in D. George Boyce & Alan O’Day (eds) *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (Abingdon, 1996), pp 216-218; Desmond Fennell, ‘Against revisionism’ in Brady, (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History*, pp 183-90.

³³ Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds*, pp 1-20; Guy Beiner and Joep Leerssen, ‘Why Irish history starved: a virtual historiography’ in *Field Day Review*, iii, (2007), *passim*; Tomás Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans: An Oral History of the War of Independence in County Clare* (Cork, 2019), pp 15-28; McGarry, *The Rising*, pp vi-13; Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution’, pp 83-86.

³⁴ McGarry, *The Rising*, p. 157.

treatment of ‘piety’,³⁵ but in his attempt to analyse its significance, makes no reference to any of the substantial sociological literature about religion’s relationship to armed conflict and nationalism.³⁶ In addition, McGarry does not discuss the relationship between Catholic piety and other types of supernatural phenomena which occur commonly in the BMH witness statements. McGarry’s analysis of the significance of all these demonstrations of piety is brief:

Accounts of the piety of the rebels, particularly the executed leaders, formed an important aspect of the transformation of public opinion after the Rising. As a result, the non-sectarian (if deeply religious) ethos of the Proclamation was overshadowed by the popular perception of the Rising as an event steeped in Catholicism—which, in many respects, it was.³⁷

McGarry identifies that the rising became intertwined with Catholicism much to the chagrin of more secular Republicans.³⁸ He does not offer a great deal of analysis as to why that occurred, or any substantive response to the revisionist literature which accuses Pearse and his ilk of cultish religious fanaticism.³⁹ It should be said however, that the relationship between the rebels and religion was not intended to be the subject of his book, which was more generally concerned with using the BMH records to understand the subjective experiences and motivations of the 1916 rebels; religious ideas did not make any appearance in his central questions, so it is hardly fair to criticize him for their omission.⁴⁰ *The Rising* on the whole does an admirable job of ‘describing the events of this period from the perspective of those who

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 157-165.

³⁶ Philip S. Gorski and Gülay Türkmen-Derviřođlu, ‘Religion, nationalism, and violence: an integrated approach’ in *Annual Review of Sociology*, xxxix (2013), pp 194-195; Mălina Voicu, ‘Effect of nationalism on religiosity in 30 European countries’ in *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 28, no. 3 (2012), *passim*; Tali Stolovy, Rachel Lev-Wiesel and Eliezer Witztum, ‘Dissociation: adjustment or distress? dissociative phenomena, absorption and quality of life among Israeli women who practice channelling compared to women with similar traumatic history’ in *Journal of Religion and Health*, liv, no. 3 (2015), *passim*.

³⁷ McGarry, *The Rising*, p. 159.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³⁹ Sean Kinsella, ‘The cult of violence and the revolutionary tradition in Ireland’ in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, lxxxiii, no. 329 (1994), *passim*; John Newsinger, ‘I bring not peace but a sword’: the religious motif in the Irish War of Independence’ in *Journal of Contemporary History*, xiii, no. 3 (1978), *passim*; Conor Cruise O’Brien and Martin Dillon ‘Irish Republicanism’s holy war: Conor Cruise O’Brien interviewed’ in *Fortnight*, no. 216 (1985), *passim*; David Stevens, ‘Nationalism as Religion’ in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, lxxxvi, no. 343 (1997), pp. 253-257; Patrick Grant and H. L. Seneviratne, ‘When Religion goes wrong’ in *Fortnight*, no. 418 (2003), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁰ McGarry, *The Rising*, p. 4.

lived through it, particularly the men and women from ordinary backgrounds who have remained unknown figures',⁴¹ but it nevertheless serves as an example of how the supernatural outside of its religious dimensions is generally ignored by mainstream treatments of the Irish Revolution.

Tomás Mac Conmara briefly treated the supernatural in his book *The Time of the Tans*, in a section titled 'The Spirits of the Black and Tans: The Supernatural'.⁴² Published in 2020, *The Time of the Tans* is an oral history of the War of Independence in county Clare. Out of a 265-page book only a small five-page section is devoted to the supernatural.⁴³ In it he shares a handful of ghost stories, but like McGarry, his analysis of these stories is categorically limited, and lacking in interdisciplinary considerations, save to say that Arensberg's team of anthropologists in the 1930s found integration with the community to be eased after one of the team admitted to seeing a ghost in a local tavern.⁴⁴ Like Eve Morrison, Mac Conmara's idea of the supernatural foregrounds ghosts and he recounts several ghost stories related by his informants. Mac Conmara largely refrains from making any conclusions about the supernatural in the revolution as a whole, other than to remark on how unsurprising it is 'that stories of the War of Independence intersect with aspects of folk belief, including the supernatural.'⁴⁵ This is in alignment not only with the conclusions of this study, but also with Morrison's conceptualization of these war memorates as 'quasi-folkloric hybrids'.⁴⁶ Mac Conmara provides several colourful ghost stories, one of which makes the case that belief in a ghost story could be a kind of in-group signifier for certain veterans by demonstrating a common

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans*, p. 187.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp 187-191.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁴⁶ Morrison, 'Hauntings of the Irish Revolution', p. 84.

knowledge of and belief in ghost stories tied to a particular place and time, which is the point where he parts from Morrison.⁴⁷

Mac Conmara and Morrison both point out that folk beliefs intersect with stories of the War of Independence, and as a result consider the appearance of supernatural stories in war reminiscences to be the result of folklore's influence.⁴⁸ This perspective seems to suggest that folklore is a separate realm from the historical War of Independence in popular memory. This separation is artificial; it is a product both of a division between history and folklore that would occur later, and terminological distinctions which obscure the functional similarities between religious and paranormal types of supernatural phenomena and their interpenetration. The lived experience of the Irish Revolution was one in which supernatural phenomena blended seamlessly into the overall narrative. Outside of his little section devoted to the supernatural, there are a variety of other examples of supernatural phenomena scattered throughout the stories which Mac Conmara relates, including several instances where prayers were believed to have resulted in deliverance from danger, or where religious locations became literal battlegrounds.⁴⁹ This indicates that Mac Conmara's understanding of the term 'supernatural' is, like Morrison, limited to the paranormal, and he either does not realize or chooses not to acknowledge that prayers themselves are petitions to supernatural powers, and when those prayers are perceived as being answered, it amounts to the perceived direct influence of the supernatural in mortal affairs. The Holy Ghost, though holy, is nevertheless at its core a supernatural phenomenon.⁵⁰

Probably the most thorough and direct case study of a specific set of supernatural phenomena in the Irish Revolution to date is John Reynolds' book *The Templemore Miracles:*

⁴⁷ Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans*, pp 188-189.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 187; Morrison, 'Hauntings of the Irish Revolution', p. 84.

⁴⁹ Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans*, pp 44-45, 48, 60, 76-77, 92-93.

⁵⁰ Most Rev. M. Sheehan, D.D., *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine: A Course of Religious Instruction for Schools and Colleges: Part II. Catholic Doctrine*, 2nd revised ed., (Dublin, 1961), pp 1-20.

Jimmy Walsh, Ceasefires, and Moving Statues.⁵¹ In it, Reynolds gives a history of the alleged miracles in Templemore in 1920, how they came about, how they were received, and their involvement in the Irish Revolution. This slim book is commendable in its detail and vividness, weaving together a variety of sources on both sides of the conflict to create a subjectively nuanced narrative of events that is both highly engaging and historically robust. As the book is largely isolated to the Templemore miracles it does not discuss or draw connections with other supernatural experiences reported during the revolution, even ones with similar characteristics, such as the numerous requiem masses following the Easter Rising, and the frenzy surrounding the apparition of the Black Pig in Kiltrustan.⁵² This thesis will discuss some new insights gained about the Templemore Miracles during the research process briefly in chapter three (particularly in their relation to apparitions of the Irish Revolution more broadly considered), but as Reynolds' work has already covered the Templemore Miracles in great and admirable detail, this thesis will prioritize other similar incidents, notably the 1918 apparitions of the Black Pig of Kiltrustan. Nevertheless, some critique of Reynold's approach will be offered here chiefly to illustrate how the neglect of interdisciplinary insights can result in missed opportunities.

Reynolds' conclusions concerning the implications of the Templemore miracles rarely extend beyond their immediate consequences, and there is little discussion about how the book fits into the broader historiography of the Irish Revolution, or of the potential insight these miracles might provide to scholars in other disciplines. He claims that the book is 'not about religion as such' even though it almost entirely concerns reported miracles, and its conclusion states that 'a lack of endorsement by the Catholic church would have ensured that the religious

⁵¹ John Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles: Jimmy Walsh, Ceasefires and Moving Statues*, (Gloucestershire, 2019).

⁵² McGarry, *The Rising*, pp 157-159; The Roscommon Herald, *The Prophecies of Columbkille and the Story of the Black Pig* (Boyle, 1918), pp 2-3.

fervour surrounding the Templemore miracles would eventually peter out, but the IRA took pre-emptive action instead. In doing so they crossed a boundary between religion and politics.⁵³ Perhaps Reynolds sees the book as being purely a work of military or political history by virtue of the likely fraudulence of the miracles, but the subject is a far too manifestly profound integration of religion and politics for historical methodology alone to suffice. What little Reynolds attempts of religious analysis amounts to a few sentences in his final paragraph where, citing Pope Paul VI, he describes the Templemore miracles as a manifestation of ‘popular piety ... fraught with danger.’⁵⁴ There is no attempt to place the ‘miracles’ in the context of the literature on the subject of ‘popular piety’ in Ireland, or consider what implications his research might have on that literature.⁵⁵

The Templemore Miracles clearly does have such implications. By identifying the demographic and circumstantial characteristics of those who participated in the alleged miracles, he is making statements that have relevance to contemporary research concerning the common characteristics of those who have anomalous experiences, and the relationship of religion and trauma with such experiences. For example, when Reynolds describes Jimmy Walsh (the alleged visionary who first witnessed the bleeding statues of Templemore) he states: ‘Walsh shares many characteristics of others over the centuries who have alleged that they experienced Marian apparitions or that icons or statues wept tears of blood. They are generally young people from humble rural backgrounds who have shown religious devotion prior to claiming they were experiencing visions.’⁵⁶ Though it should be acknowledged that Reynold’s statement here likely was intended only to apply to the Irish context, it is nevertheless essentially a statement that some of the common characteristics of the percipients of anomalous

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁵⁵ de Cléir, *Popular Catholicism in 20th-Century Ireland*, *passim*; John Shovlin, ‘Pilgrimage and the construction of Irish national identity’ in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, xi, (1991), *passim*.

⁵⁶ Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles*, p. 138.

experiences are young, poor, religious, and rural. This statement is largely in disagreement with the position of researchers such as Cardeña, Krippner, and Lynn, who in 2015 concluded that ‘generally speaking, disparities in age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, education, and intelligence do not reliably predict differences in the propensity to experience AEs [anomalous experiences].’⁵⁷ If Reynolds had clarified more precisely what was meant by those ‘others over the centuries’ perhaps some valuable insights could have been gained about the peculiarities of the Irish context, but as it stands that opportunity was lost, and his statement is at odds with some of the scientific literature on the demographics of such experiences.⁵⁸ Reynolds’ book is overall a strong support for the position of researchers such as Richard P. Bentall and Nicolette D. Manglos that bereavement and stress are often triggers for hallucinations, miracles, and ‘faith pinnacle moments’, as Reynolds repeatedly emphasizes the danger and trauma rife in Templemore leading up to the miraculous episode.⁵⁹

The religious aspect of the Irish Revolution has been studied, particularly the liturgical and theological character of the ideology of the Easter Rising leadership, and the sectarian dimensions of the conflict.⁶⁰ Some treatments of Anglo-Irish relations even suggest that religious tension is in fact the most central element of the conflict.⁶¹ Several articles concerning the role of religion in the Easter Rising have been published, some such as Fr Francis Shaw

⁵⁷ Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn, & Stanley Krippner, (eds), *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence* (2nd ed., Washington DC, 2014) p. 416.

⁵⁸ Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles*, p. 138.

⁵⁹ Cardeña, Lynn, & Krippner, (eds), *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, p. 114; Nicolette D. Manglos, ‘Faith pinnacle moments: stress, miraculous experiences, and life satisfaction in young adulthood’ in *Sociology of Religion*, lxxiv, no. 2 (2013), p. 176; Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles*, pp 8, 11-36, 133.

⁶⁰ Richard Bourke, ‘Political and religious ideas during the Irish Revolution’ in *History of European Ideas*, xlvi, no. 7 (2020), pp 997-1008; David Fitzpatrick, ‘Protestant depopulation and the Irish Revolution’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxviii, no. 152 (2013), pp 643-670; John Marsden, ‘Religion and the Nationalist cause in the thought of Patrick Pearse’ in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, lxxxiv, no. 333 (1995), pp 28-37; Séamus Murphy, ‘Dark liturgy, bloody praxis: the 1916 rising’ in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, cv, no. 417 (2016), p. 13; Brian P. Murphy, ‘Telling the story of 1916: the "Catholic Bulletin" and "Studies"’ in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, ci, no. 401 (2012), pp. 47-56; Maciej Ruczaj, ‘Liturgy of nation-formation: Patrick Pearse and the theological background of the Easter Rising of 1916’ in *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, xiii, no. 3 (2013), pp 412-425; T. Jack Thompson, ‘Religion and mythology in the Chilembwe Rising of 1915 in Nyasaland and the Easter Rising of 1916 in Ireland: preparing for the end times?’ in *Studies in World Christianity*, xxiii, no. 1 (2017), pp 51–66.

⁶¹ Patrick O’Farrell, *Ireland’s English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations, 1534-1970* (Batsford, 1971), *passim*.

have even suggested that it constituted a blasphemous act.⁶² The main shortcomings of this scholarship are that it largely fails to holistically consider all the different types of supernatural phenomena (primarily due to its uncritical attitude toward terminology), and its focus on elites. Where the discussion is not focused on the Irish Revolution, studies of religion during this time period are notably broader in subject matter and the demographics of the historical actors under investigation; some welcome and noteworthy examples include Jodie Shevlin's recent dissertation 'The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland in the Long Nineteenth-century, 1821-1921', and Síle de Cléir's *Popular Catholicism in 20th Century Ireland: Locality, Identity and Culture*, both of which make a point of engaging with popular Catholic beliefs more broadly.⁶³

Síobhra Aiken's recent *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony & The Irish Civil War* only obliquely addresses the questions posed by this study and is limited to the Irish Civil War. However, it contains a variety of useful insights for this project. Aiken is one of the few authors who deals substantively with the paranormal in her analysis of Irish history, chiefly through the concept of 'spiritual wounds'. For example, she asserts that, in their testimonies concerning the Irish Civil War, 'revolutionaries approached psychological wounding from various – often competing – secular, spiritual, religious, or even paranormal perspectives.'⁶⁴ Flatly acknowledging that the paranormal was a part of how veterans of the conflict processed their experiences is exceedingly rare in the historiography. A good example of her engagement with the paranormal in Irish revolutionary memory is her analysis of Dorothy Macardle's *Earth-Bound: Nine Stories of Ireland*, a collection of fictional ghost stories written by Macardle while interned in Kilmainham Gaol.⁶⁵ Aiken contends that the Gothic style of Macardle's writing

⁶²Patrick Maume, 'Fr Francis Shaw and the historiography of Easter 1916' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, ciii, no. 412 (2015), pp 530-551; Francis Shaw, 'The canon of Irish history: a challenge' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, lxi, no. 242 (1972), pp 113-153; Gearoid O Tuathaigh, in David Bracken (ed.), *The end of all things earthly: faith profiles of the 1916 leaders* (Dublin, 2016), p. 19.

⁶³ de Cléir, *Popular Catholicism in 20th Century Ireland*, pp xiii-viv; Shevlin, 'The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland', p. 5.

⁶⁴ Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds*, p. 22.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 95-101.

was emblematic of a popular interest in Gothic literature, particularly among women; she further asserts that this popularity reflects a ‘wide interest in parapsychology among the revolutionary generation.’⁶⁶ Though the collection of stories is ostensibly fictional, Aiken suggests that the orality and palimpsestic manner of their presentation implies that they were heavily influenced by, or that they possibly even originated as, the oral testimonies of both Macardle herself and her fellow Republican prisoners.⁶⁷ Though if this were the case it would obviously be of enormous relevance to this study, this intriguing idea is very difficult to convincingly prove and Aiken can only suggest it as a strong possibility. Aiken is not the first to analyse *Earth-Bound*; Irina Rupp Malone’s 2011 article ‘Spectral History: The Ghost Stories of Dorothy Macardle’ argues that the Gothic elements of *Earth-Bound* are chiefly employed to deal with ideological conflicts, particularly ‘to navigate between different approaches to nationalism.’⁶⁸ Though Aiken cites Malone’s work in her analysis, Aiken’s approach contrasts from Malone’s in that it highlights the psychological implications of *Earth-Bound* more than the ideological ones.⁶⁹

Though historians of the twentieth century have been relatively reluctant to incorporate studies of supernatural belief and ritual practice in their work, historians such as Raymond Gillespie and J.H. Elliott have noted a ‘massive’ increase in concentrated studies of the history of witchcraft in Europe over the past several decades, especially in the early modern context.⁷⁰ The categories of witchcraft and magic in Irish history particularly have been investigated by several historians during this period including Andrew Sneddon, Ronald Hutton, John Fulton, and Jenny Butler, but Andrew Sneddon stands out as the current preeminent specialist in Irish

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 95-96.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 97-101.

⁶⁸ Irina Rupp Malone, ‘Spectral history: the ghost stories of Dorothy Macardle’ in *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, ix, no. 1 (2011), p. 96.

⁶⁹ Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds*, p. 99.

⁷⁰ Raymond Gillespie, ‘Witchcraft and magic in Ireland, by Andrew Sneddon’ in *The English Historical Review*, cxxxii, no. 558 (2017), p. 1328.

witchcraft history.⁷¹ Similarly to those who have studied the role of religion in Irish history, those who study witchcraft and magic are categorically limited by their choice of terminology and their limited exploration of connections between different types of supernatural phenomena, and treatments of the subject outside the historical discipline. For example, in his book *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland*, Andrew Sneddon explicitly concerns himself with magic, witchcraft, and ‘the non-Christian supernatural’ (without any substantial discussion of the definitions of these terms), and claims that ‘magical healers should not be confused with faith or miraculous healers who transmitted God’s power in order to heal or cure sickness.’⁷² This exclusion of anything connected to Christianity seems inconsistent in light of his endeavours to distinguish between the malefic and the demonic (decidedly Christian concepts), and also his claim to be a forerunner in the ‘growing body of research’ which regards witchcraft and magic ‘not as ‘survivals’ of older traditions but as an evolving, protean corpus of beliefs, able to adapt in order to remain culturally relevant.’⁷³ Drawing a sharp line between everything that is Christian, and everything that is not, is both limiting and inconsistent with the perception of such beliefs as a continuously ‘evolving protean corpus’.⁷⁴ Thus, for example, he limits himself to fortune-tellers and non-Christian magical healers in the early twentieth century, when he could discuss miracles and the widespread unorthodox uses of holy water and the rosary. Also, interestingly enough, he only rarely touches upon ghosts, in spite of their only tenuous connection with Christianity, their prominence in folklore, and the numerous public

⁷¹ Jenny Butler, ‘Entering the magic mists: Irish contemporary Paganism, Celticity, and indigeneity’ in *International Journal for the Study of New Religions*, ix, no. 2 (2018), pp 177-194; Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted people: belief and Religion in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), *passim*; Ronald Hutton, ‘Witch-hunting in Celtic Societies’ in *Past & Present*, ccxii, no. 212 (2011), *passim*; Andrew Sneddon, ‘Select document: Florence Newton’s trial for witchcraft, Cork, 1661: Sir William Aston’s transcript.’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xliii, no. 164 (2019), pp 298-319; Andrew Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland* (London, 2015), *passim*; Andrew Sneddon and John Fulton, ‘Witchcraft, the press, and crime in Ireland, 1822–1922’ in *The Historical Journal*, lxii, no. 3 (2019), pp 741-764.

⁷² Sneddon, *Witchcraft and Magic in Ireland*, pp. 3, 197.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp 2-3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

discussions concerning their veracity in early twentieth century Irish newsprint.⁷⁵ Despite these criticisms it should be acknowledged that authors like Sneddon are pioneers in the study of the supernatural in Ireland, and this study is in many ways inspired by their excellent work, which has opened the door for further investigations into the topic of the supernatural. Over the past several years historians of the supernatural in Ireland are beginning to step outside of the ‘witchcraft’ framework. For example, Jodie Shevlin has recently completed a dissertation on the supernatural more broadly considered in Catholic Ireland in the long nineteenth century. This work discusses a wide range of supernatural phenomena including ‘demonic possession, fairies, miraculous cures, fortune-telling, folk-healing and ghosts’.⁷⁶ She draws attention to the ubiquity and variety of supernatural beliefs that existed in nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland.⁷⁷ The worldview of the generation that would participate in the Irish Revolution was informed by these beliefs.

Historians such as Owen Davies and Shane McCorristine have written books on the supernatural in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, surveying in impressive detail the social and intellectual histories of ghosts, hauntings, spiritualism, and psychical research in European history. Both authors conclude that the early twentieth century marked a turning point where academic and literary conceptions of ghosts transformed; ghosts changed from external forces acting on their percipients into internal forces, manifestations of pathologies in the human mind: ghosts became a ‘soporific psychic reality’.⁷⁸ This is reflected in the memorates identified in this study, where manifestations of extra-sensory perception (ESP) were similarly if not more prevalent than apparitions or hauntings. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth

⁷⁵ Among many others to be discussed in the following chapters: *The Irish Times*, Jan. 15th 1917, Jan. 16th 1917; *Belfast Newsletter*; Apr. 10th 1916, Feb. 5th 1918, Jan. 31st 1920, May 6th 1920, Jul. 2nd 1920; *The Irish Independent*, Jan. 27th 1919, Feb. 3rd 1919.

⁷⁶ Shevlin, ‘The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland’, p. 5.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

⁷⁸ Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (New York, 2007), pp 131-162; Shane McCorristine, *Spectres of the Self: Thinking about Ghosts and Ghost-Seeing in England, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, 2010), pp 220-227.

centuries, several new academic and religious movements were forming including psychology, folkloristics, theosophy, and psychical research (which would later become parapsychology). Though these trends had an enormous impact in the English-speaking world generally, in the Irish revolutionary context their effect was somewhat muted and delayed by the formidable influence of the Catholic church, This is reflected in the supernatural material identified by this study which heavily skews towards Catholic religious phenomena and where it does concern more psychically oriented phenomena, it tends not to contemplate them in great detail (with some exceptions, as the foregoing chapters will illustrate). In general, social histories of paranormal belief like those conducted by Davies and McCorristine have provided some much-needed broader historical context for this study.

In recent years, several histories of the supernatural in the context of other wars have been written.⁷⁹ Authors including Owen Davies and Leo Ruickbie have written on the history of the supernatural in the context of the First World War, and their efforts have been especially influential to this work due chiefly to the First World War's temporal and physical proximity to the Irish Revolution. Furthermore, some of the Irish revolutionaries discussed in this thesis were also veterans of the First World War, most famously Tom Barry, and many others were likely trained by veterans of the conflict.⁸⁰ Aspects of the way Ruickbie's book *Angels in the Trenches: Spiritualism, Superstition and the Supernatural During the First World War* was organized, namely the use of a series of discussions centred around key examples, influenced the structure of this thesis in its early stages of writing, but unlike Ruickbie, the examples cited here are broadly grouped phenomenologically rather than chronologically.⁸¹ Both Davies and

⁷⁹ Ignatius Frederick Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1763–3749* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1992), *passim*; Owen Davies, *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith during the First World War* (Oxford, 2018), *passim*; Heonik Kwan, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (Cambridge, 2008), *passim*; Dr. Leo Ruickbie, *Angels in the Trenches: Spiritualism, Superstition and the Supernatural During the First World War* (Croydon, 2018), *passim*.

⁸⁰ Emmanuel Destenay, Raidió Teilifís Éireann, 'How Great War Veterans helped the Irish Revolution', (<https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/how-great-war-veterans-helped-the-irish-revolution>), (Accessed 26 May 2023); M.A. Hopkinson, Dictionary of Irish Biography, 'Barry, Thomas Bernadine ('Tom')', (<https://www.dib.ie/biography/barry-thomas-bernadine-tom-a0472>), (Accessed 26 May 2023).

⁸¹ Ruickbie, *Angels in the Trenches*, pp vii-ix.

Ruickbie have given substantial attention to the confluence of the spiritualist movement, religious belief, and psychical research societies on the supernatural during the First World War.⁸² One of the key contentions of Davies' book *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith during the First World War* is that the nature of supernatural experience during the First World War changed from large scale phantom spectacles to more personal and psychologically charged hauntings and apparitions, which is consistent with the character of many of the supernatural experiences discussed in this thesis.⁸³ In general, though not directly relevant to the Irish Revolution, these well-wrought works have been a crucial resource to this study.

Outside of the realm of academia, there exists a bountiful literature on the supernatural in Ireland in the form of half-journalistic/half-folkloric compilations of ghost stories, some of them the work of so-called 'ghost-hunters'. These ghost-hunters are like a cross between a gonzo journalist, a psychical researcher, and a folklore collector. In Ireland, one of the earliest and easily most prolific examples was Elliott O'Donnell, who in the first chapter of his book *Twenty Years Experience as a Ghost Hunter* described himself as follows:

To begin with, however, let me state plainly that I lay no claims to being what is termed a scientific psychical researcher. I am not a member of any august society that conducts its investigations of the other world, or worlds, with test tube and weighing apparatus; neither do I pretend to be a medium or consistent clairvoyant.

I am merely a ghost hunter; merely one who honestly believes that he inherits in some degree the faculty of psychic perceptiveness from a long line of Celtic ancestry; and who is, and always has been, deeply and genuinely interested in all questions relative to phantasms and a continuance of individual life after physical dissolution. Moreover, in addition to this psychic faculty, I possess, as I have already hinted, a spirit of adventure...⁸⁴

This combination of self-attributed psychic proclivity and adventurous spirit led O'Donnell, formerly employed with the RIC, to personally investigate, and subsequently publish scores of

⁸² Davies, *A Supernatural War*, pp 54-98; Ruickbie, *Angels in the Trenches*, pp 91-92, 102-105, 122-123.

⁸³ Davies, *A Supernatural War*, pp 70-71.

⁸⁴ Elliott O'Donnell, *Twenty Years Experience As a Ghost Hunter* (London, 1917), p. 12.

novels, short stories, anthologies, and essays on the subject of supernatural phenomena throughout Britain and Ireland between 1904 and his death in 1965.⁸⁵ To what extent this prolific series of publications had an audience in Ireland is unclear, but if Aiken's contention that there was a 'wide interest in parapsychology among the revolutionary generation' is correct, then it seems likely O'Donnell's works were widely read.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, in a journalistic fashion, O'Donnell typically altered or withheld the specific names of the people and places where he encountered his ghosts, and rarely gave specific temporal coordinates for these encounters.⁸⁷ Thus, from a historical perspective, it is difficult to verify whether his accounts are fictional, or to even corroborate them with the writings of other ghost-hunters. O'Donnell's semi-journalistic approach was typical of many who would follow him, an entourage including St. John D. Seymour, Shane Leslie, James Reynolds, Patrick F. Byrne, Hans Holzer, John J. Dunne, Lord Halifax, and numerous others.⁸⁸

These historians, paranormal investigators, and journalists would identify numerous ghost stories which they would hear second-hand. These tales of apparitions dating from the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries suggest that in Ireland belief in ghosts survived continuously well beyond the revolutionary period. This runs somewhat contrary to the opinion expressed in 1937 by the schoolteacher Bríghid Mac Niocaill in her notebook submitted to the National Folklore Collection where she bemoaned what she saw as the death of ghost stories, stating that 'the I.R.A. have killed all belief in the supernatural and people who used to delight

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 11-12; Internet Speculative Fiction Database, 'Summary Bibliography: Elliott O'Donnell', (<https://isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?37736>), (Accessed 20 Jun. 2023).

⁸⁶ Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds*, pp 95-96.

⁸⁷ O'Donnell, *Twenty Years Experience As a Ghost Hunter*, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Patrick F. Byrne, *Irish Ghost Stories*, (Cork, 1969), *passim*; Patrick Byrne, *The Second book of Irish ghost stories*, (Cork, 1971), *passim*; John J. Dunne, *Haunted Ireland: her romantic and mysterious ghosts*, (Belfast, 1977), *passim*; Hans Holzer, *The Lively Ghosts of Ireland*, (London, 1967), *passim*; Shane Leslie, *Shane Leslie's Ghost Book*, (Dublin, 1956), *passim*; James Reynolds, *Ghosts in Irish houses*, (Dublin, 1947), *passim*; St. John D. Seymour and Harry L. Neligan, *True Irish ghost stories : haunted houses, banshees, poltergeists, and other supernatural phenomena*, (Dublin, 1926), *passim*.

in telling ghost stories thirty years ago are ashamed to mention them now.’⁸⁹ According to the evidence presented here, there were numerous researchers of and believers in the supernatural before, during, and after the Irish Revolution, and in their tales and compilations of tales the lingering echoes of the emotional and spiritual impact of the Irish Revolution can be clearly felt.

In the late 1960’s and 1970’s this second group of investigators made their best attempts at surveying Ireland’s paranormal legends. These ghost-hunters would travel to haunted places at the behest of tips or rumours seeking a thrill, and later describe their experiences. In addition to their own experiences, these writers would include stories mailed into them by others in response to public requests for such stories. Often, these writers would include traditional ghost stories in their compilations to supplement these personal experience narratives. Their journalistic engagement with the public, distaste for modernity, and thrill-seeking sensationalism set them apart from the more detached and scientific psychical researchers, who by the mid-twentieth century had largely lost interest in attempting to explain apparitions and hauntings.⁹⁰ In general, the stories given in ghost-hunting compilations have many similarities with folklore when it comes to assessing them as historical sources, particularly in that they are often temporally vague, second or third hand accounts of uncertain and often anonymous provenance. There is far too much variation in the methodology and quality of ghost-hunter compilations to preclude their use entirely in this study, but they should nevertheless be handled with some circumspection, as their tendency toward sensationalism and generous interpretation could quite easily lend itself to hyperbole or even outright fabrication. At a different level, the existence of numerous Irish individuals who were preoccupied with paranormal phenomena

⁸⁹ ‘No Title’, Bríghid Bean Mhic Niocaill, Cill Mháille, Co. Clare, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0776, p. 100); ‘Scéal V’, Bríghid Bean Mhic Niocaill & Séamas Ó Gráda, Cill Mháille, Co. Clare, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0776, p. 197).

⁹⁰ Joanna Timms, ‘Ghost-hunters and psychical research in interwar England’ in *History Workshop Journal*, no. 74 (2012), pp 90-92.

throughout the twentieth century and the readership they subsequently garnered are facts that in themselves evidence that such phenomena were at some level present in the Irish popular consciousness.⁹¹ As a result, the prefatory and methodological material in those compilations contemporary with the Irish Revolution can shed some light onto Irish attitudes towards the paranormal.

One of these ghost hunters was Patrick F. Byrne, an Irish journalist who, in keeping with the methods of Seymour and Neligan fifty years previously, acquired most of his tales through contributions to the Dublin *Evening Herald's* 'Ghosts Column', and would later compile them into a pair of books, *Irish Ghost Stories*, and *The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories*.⁹² The other was Hans Holzer, an Austrian-American parapsychologist and author, who, in part inspired by Byrne's work and in part by Ireland's reputation conducted an expedition to Ireland in 1965 along with the English medium Sybil Leek to investigate; he wrote in a chapter titled 'You Don't Have to be Irish to like Ireland' that 'I had been told that the Irish are just naturally prone to the supernatural, from leprechauns to ghosts, and I would have a field day the moment I set foot on the Ould Sod.'⁹³ Though both authors recount several tales related to the revolutionary period in their publications they had drastically different methods. While Byrne conducted most of his work through correspondence, Holzer's tactics were substantially more hands-on and consisted of a combination of direct interviews and on-site seances using the aid of his medium companion.⁹⁴

Holzer's attempts at direct observation and even interference with the spirits at the Gortnagleanna monument and in other places such as the Olympia Theatre is indicative of his parapsychological methods, and indeed a certain amount of arrogant disregard for folkloric and

⁹¹ Shane McCorry, 'William Fletcher Barrett, spiritualism, and psychical research in Edwardian Dublin' in *Estudios Irlandeses*, no. 6 (2011), pp 48-50.

⁹² Byrne, *Irish Ghost Stories*, *passim*; Byrne, *The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories*, *passim*.

⁹³ Holzer, *The Lively Ghosts of Ireland*, p. 9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 15, 24-31.

anthropological best practice.⁹⁵ For Holzer, the spirits' presence in these locations seemed to be some kind of problem in need of resolution, presuming for some reason that they were not supposed to be there, despite the monolithic edifice constructed in their honour situated directly in front of him. By contrast, Patrick Byrne was, at least publicly, substantially more observational, and less spiritually meddlesome in his paranormal investigations, merely compiling and publishing the stories sent to him and the interviews he conducted. Like St. John D. Seymour who preceded him, Byrne utilized newsprint advertisements to gather sources, asking for weekly submissions and even holding film viewings and contests for contributors.⁹⁶ The ghosts column ran for roughly twenty-five years during the winter months from November to March starting in 1954 and ending sometime in the late '70's.⁹⁷ In the early days of the column it was titled 'Ghost Series' and was run by Aidan Pender, until Pender delegated the work on to Byrne in the winter of 1961.⁹⁸ Byrne would credit Pender for starting the column, and preceding the acknowledgements of his first book, would dedicate the book to Pender.⁹⁹ Though Byrne does not seem to have engaged in seances, he at least obliquely suggests that he is a believer, stating in the foreword to his second book,

I have never understood why so many people run away in fear when they think they have seen a ghost. It would be much better to stand their ground and find out if it were real or just an allusion. Dr MacLiammoir, an authority on the supernatural says, 'It is generally the non-believer in ghosts who is most subject to fear. The real believer feels no fear.' And – 'Disbelief in ghosts is only comprehensible for atheists and agnostics.'¹⁰⁰

Though unfortunately there is not enough space here to delve into the stories published by Byrne and Pender, it should be noted that their efforts were a long lasting and impactful contribution to studies of the paranormal in Ireland.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 28-31, 81-90.

⁹⁶ *Evening Herald*, 27 Feb. 1956, p. 4; 30 Nov. 1960, p. 6; 17 Feb. 1964, p. 3; 22 Feb. 1964, p. 5; 25 Feb. 1964 p. 6; 14 Dec. 1965, p. 14.

⁹⁷ *Evening Herald*, 16 Jan. 1968, p. 9; 24 Nov. 1990, p. 10; 5 Dec. 1978, p. 10.

⁹⁸ *Evening Herald*, 25 Dec. 1961, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Byrne, *Irish Ghost Stories*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Byrne, *The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories*, p. 7.

In Autumn 1913, after publishing his book *Irish Witchcraft and Demonology*, St. John D. Seymour, a Church of Ireland clergyman, realized that a complete book of Irish ghost stories was yet to be compiled; toward this end he started work on *True Irish Ghost Stories*.¹⁰¹ Published in February of 1914 in Cappawhite county Tipperary, *True Irish Ghost Stories* is an edited collection of materials received in response to a request published in the *Irish Independent*.¹⁰² This letter was an incredible success; the materials he received were so numerous and diverse in quality that Seymour was forced to enlist RIC District Inspector Harry L. Neligan to help him sift through and sequence the material. Seymour acknowledges sixty-seven contributors, including ten clergymen.¹⁰³ The incidents described mostly concern events that occurred in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but thirty-one pertain to events which occurred after 1900, most of these after 1910.¹⁰⁴ Though none of these stories are directly related to the volunteer movement or contemporary nationalist or seditious activities, there are about a dozen which involve the Royal Irish Constabulary, and indeed, the book was edited by a district inspector. The most useful aspects of the work to this study are not the ghost stories themselves but rather the insights which it provides on Irish attitudes toward the paranormal in the early years of the revolutionary period, particularly those of middle and upper class and establishment-affiliated individuals. Seymour was himself an Anglican cleric, the archdeacon of Cashel and Emly throughout the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁵

Seymour includes 121 ‘ghost stories’ in his compendium. He categorizes them into haunted houses (split into Conn’s half, Mogh’s half, and Dublin), haunted places, poltergeists,

¹⁰¹ St. John D. Seymour & Harry L. Neligan, ‘True Irish Ghost Stories’ (<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/14099/pg14099.html>) (accessed 12 Sep. 2022).

¹⁰² ‘Opinions of Our Readers’, in *The Irish Independent*, 29 Oct. 1913, p. 6.

¹⁰³ St. John D. Seymour & Harry L. Neligan, ‘True Irish Ghost Stories’ (<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/14099/pg14099.html>) (accessed 12 Sep. 2022).

¹⁰⁴ St. John D. Seymour and Harry L. Neligan, *True Irish Ghost Stories: Haunted Houses, Banshees, Poltergeists, and Other Supernatural Phenomena* (New York, 2005), pp 2-4, 7-8, 10-11, 19-22, 29-30, 32, 44, 47-64, 71-72, 75-77, 84, 87, 89-90, 93-95, 100-103, 105-109, 112-115, 142-144.

¹⁰⁵T.C. Barnard, ‘Seymour, St John Drelincourt’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (<https://www.dib.ie/biography/seymour-st-john-drelincourt-a7984>) (accessed 19 May 2023).

apparitions at or after death, banshees and other death warnings, miscellaneous supernormal experiences, legendary and ancestral ghosts, and cases of mistaken identity. His percipients lean heavily toward the upper and middle classes but are almost perfectly split along the lines of gender; forty-nine are male, forty-nine are female, three are unknown, and twenty are groups of percipients including both genders. Compared with the collection of sources investigated in this thesis, this split is far more even.¹⁰⁶ Most of these stories are drawn from letters, but a small fraction is drawn from memoirs and extracts from the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. Geographically, his collection is weighted heavily towards Leinster and Munster, with disproportionately high numbers for Leinster, and Ulster and Connacht being relatively underrepresented; this distribution is much like that encountered in this thesis. However, Seymour's collection contains dramatically less material from Connacht than this study, and dramatically more from Ulster, possibly reflecting the religious affiliation of his sample, which seems to have been predominantly Protestant and middle class, whereas the source authors identified in this study were predominantly Catholic. Qualitatively, the stories given by Seymour are, as the title of the collection suggests, primarily concerned with apparitions and haunted places. Substantial space is also given to death warnings, mostly in the form of omens and apparitional experiences associated with particular places or families. Haunted schools, rectories, and barracks feature prominently, reflecting the occupations and preoccupations of the collection's compilers.

Several historians in recent decades have proposed methodologies which fall into what the parapsychologist Michael P. Kelley described as 'the emerging quantum relativistic multidimensional holographic paradigm', an interdisciplinary trend which challenges 'the core ontological assumptions of the classical Newtonian-Cartesian material-reductionist

¹⁰⁶ One of the primary repositories of primary sources consulted by this study are the BMH witness statements, which the vast majority of which have long been known to have been written by men. Eve Morrison, *An Introduction to the Bureau of Military History 1913-1921* (Dublin, 2002), p. 40.

paradigm.’¹⁰⁷ This tendency, though worded in a convoluted way by Kelley, can be seen in the work of some of the previously mentioned historians, and, more simply put, manifests as a willingness to think of time in a less linear and more fractal and probabilistic way. Practically, this takes the form of less dogmatic and more agnostic interpretations, analyses of memory on a phenomenological level, and an ability on the part of the researcher to simultaneously hold different conflicting versions of reality as part of a cohesive narrative. In a published conversation, Guy Beiner and Joep Leerssen discuss concepts of synchrony, ‘neoantiquarianism’, and alternate history which, though only indirectly related to this research, are inspirational to its methodology.¹⁰⁸ They advocate for a kind of virtual historiography, a synthesis between antiquarian-synchronic and historical diachronic (chronological) analyses as a way of better representing the experience of future potentiality on the part of historical actors, and as a way of reclaiming the native cultural resources that have been rejected along with antiquarianism and vernacular folk history by twentieth century historians. This experience of future potentiality refers to how historical actors, as they go through their lives, see their futures as a set of possibilities rather than as the determined narratives of their lives which historians retrospectively establish. Much earlier and more boldly, in his history of Gnosticism *The Tree of Gnosis*, Ioan P. Couliano used a synchronic multidimensional methodology to place different cultural systems as fractal ‘ideal objects’ which from our three-dimensional point of view appear heuristically different and incompatible, but in reality interrelate uncannily as a fifth-dimensional whole which only appears to us historically as fragmented fourth dimensional slices.¹⁰⁹ Couliano’s radical approach informs this work in that it demonstrates a way in which multiple historical and

¹⁰⁷ Michael P. Kelley, ‘The evolution of beliefs in god, spirit, and the paranormal III’ in *The Journal of Parapsychology*, lxxiv, no. 4 (2010), pp 66, 75.

¹⁰⁸ Beiner and Leerssen, ‘Why Irish history starved: a virtual historiography’, *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ Ioan P. Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis: Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism* (San Francisco, 1992), pp 1-7.

intellectual frameworks (with at times contradictory tenets) can be synthesized coherently through considering history from the perspective of quantum mechanics.

This neo-antiquarian quantum paradigm is well suited to paranormal history and memory, which though intuitively unified, remains taxonomically problematic and naturally interdisciplinary. It will inform the interpretive approach of this thesis for the following sources to be analysed, allowing this study to hold different interpretations for a given event collectively as a paracausal quantum cloud that more truthfully reflects the potentiality elicited by the vicissitudes of paranormal memorates. This would appear to be cognitively dissonant, but only if a positivist and reductionist perspective is retained; if it is acknowledged that different potential versions of reality are inherently part of the broader structure of reality, this approach makes sense. The practical application of this approach to this project can be explained with an axiom: simply put, where a dearth of evidence leaves several similarly plausible underlying causes for a given paranormal memorate this thesis will analyse that memorate as if all these potential causes are simultaneously valid; any conclusions about the memorate that will emerge from this analysis will by necessity be valid regardless of any assumption made about its cause. This will result in conclusions that should be acceptable both to those with supernatural and those with exclusively naturalistic worldviews.

Hard and Soft Scientific Approaches

Reviewing scholarly literature on the supernatural is difficult as academics employ a relatively wide variety of disciplinary frameworks to study it, complicating the terminology on the issue, and thereby introducing a great deal of redundancy as studies are conducted repeatedly on the same concept because different terminology is being employed. A comprehensive review of the various approaches is beyond the scope of this thesis, but in the interest of introducing some interdisciplinary insight and broader academic context into the analysis of the source materials

discussed, a brief review of some of approaches taken by the sciences will be attempted here. These will include psychology, medicine, sociology, parapsychology, and neuroscience.

A common approach to the study of supernatural beliefs and experiences is to analyse them through the frameworks of medicine and psychology. Of course, clinically diagnosing historical figures with various medical or psychological ailments in retrospect is both impossible and outside the scope of this thesis. However, a review of some of the current literature on disorders relevant to trauma, exposure, sleep disturbance, phobias, and those with hallucinatory symptoms can be useful, as one of the central questions of this thesis concerns the effects of trauma. For example, recent literature conducted by a team of international medical practitioners in Turkey suggests that women diagnosed with disorders of traumatic stress and dissociation (namely Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)) were far more likely to report experiences of and beliefs in various paranormal phenomena than the general Turkish population.¹¹⁰ In addition, many of the memorates examined by this study occurred during or in close proximity to sleep, and various sleep disorders are known to have symptoms which are often interpreted by sufferers as supernatural (particularly sleep paralysis); where relevant, the work of psychologists Sue Wilson and David J. Nutt on sleep disorders was consulted during the analysis of various memorates in the forthcoming chapters.¹¹¹ A 2008 study with African American subjects suggests that the combination of Isolated Sleep Paralysis (ISP), starvation, exposure to harsh environmental conditions, and PTSD was associated with higher levels of paranormal belief.¹¹² However, we should be careful when interpreting hallucinatory symptoms in the context of various disorders, as recent psychological literature also suggests that hallucinations are not

¹¹⁰ Vedat Sar, Firdevs Alioğlu, & Gamze Akyüz, 'Experiences of possession and paranormal phenomena among women in the general population: are they related to traumatic stress and dissociation?' in *Journal of Trauma and Dissociation*, xv, no. 3 (2014), pp 303-318.

¹¹¹ Sue Wilson and David J. Nutt, *Sleep Disorders* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2013), pp 55-56.

¹¹² Holly J. Ramsawh, Susan D. Raffa, Kamila S. White, & David H. Barlow, 'Risk factors for isolated sleep paralysis in an African American sample: A preliminary study' in *Behavior Therapy*, xxxix (2008), pp 386-397.

necessarily indicative of mental disorder.¹¹³ Considering the various memorates identified by this study in the light of psychological literature can provide insights as the subjects of that psychological literature (particularly in their qualitative reports of anomalous or paranormal experiences) can be compared orthogonally to the historical subjects examined in this thesis.

In the *Brill Dictionary of Religion*, the aim of Parapsychology is defined by Joachim Schmidt as ‘to investigate, by means of academic scientific methodology, phenomena not to be reconciled with scientific images of the world known and acknowledged up until now...the subject area of today’s parapsychology is that of the so-called Psi phenomena’; phenomena including extra sensory perception, telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis.¹¹⁴ There is not a general consensus in the scientific community concerning the validity of the concept of ‘psi’ despite decades of controversy, and there are many studies which provide evidence both for and against its existence.¹¹⁵ This being acknowledged, it should also be said that, arguably, the methodological rigor of lab-based parapsychological research is relatively high due to the perpetual and severe scrutiny the discipline has attracted.¹¹⁶ The advantage of interpreting paranormal memorates as veridical manifestations of psi would be the simplicity of such an interpretation. If psi is indeed real, then it is the simplest explanation for such experiences; the author is telling us the truth. Some research in a more universal and less particularly Irish context supports this idea in the form of the super-ordinate trait dimension

¹¹³ Frank Larøi, ‘The phenomenological diversity of hallucinations: Some theoretical and clinical implications’ in *Psychologica Belgica*, xlvii, no. 1 (2006), p. 165; Marco Giugliano et al, ‘Metacognitive abilities as a protective factor for the occurrence of psychotic-like experiences in a non-clinical population’ in *Frontiers in Psychology*, xiii (2022), pp 1-2.

¹¹⁴ Joachim Schmidt, ‘Parapsychology’ in Kocku von Stuckrad (ed.) *The Brill Dictionary of Religion* (doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1872-5287_bdr_COM_00339) (accessed 8 May 2023).

¹¹⁵ Carlos S. Alvarado, ‘Eight decades of psi research: highlights in the Journal of Parapsychology’ in *The Journal of Parapsychology*, lxxxii (2018), pp 24-35; Daryl J. Bem, ‘Feeling the future: experimental evidence for anomalous retroactive influences on cognition and affect’ in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, c, no. 3 (2011), pp 407-425; K. Ramakrishna Rao and John Palmer, ‘The anomaly called psi: Recent research and criticism’ in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, x (1987), pp 539-643.

¹¹⁶ Cardeña, Lynn, & Krippner, (eds), *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, pp 252-253.

of transliminality, which is argued to have some reproductive advantages. Michael P. Kelley described transliminality and its implications as follows:

Transliminality is a hypothesized tendency for psychological material to cross thresholds into or out of consciousness. The concept of transliminality was suggested by the research of Thalbourne and Delin, who found that belief in the paranormal, creativity, mystical experiences, magical ideation, a history of manic-like experience, and a history of depressive experience were all highly intercorrelated and loaded highly on a single factor. Subsequent studies expanded the concept of transliminality to include schizotypy, psychoticism, extraversion, neuroticism, fantasy proneness, absorption, hyperaesthesia, general religiosity, frequency of dream interpretation, and a positive attitude toward dream interpretation.¹¹⁷

The transliminality of the writers of the memorates analysed in this study cannot realistically be evaluated with any degree of rigor, but it can in some cases be proposed as an explanation for variation in their intensity, frequency, and phenomenological characteristics. Parapsychology's validity is contested, and the idea that psi abilities are real likewise. The so-called 'hard' scientific approaches to the brain like neuroscience are, predictably, highly sceptical concerning the 'reality' of paranormal phenomena. Such studies generally take the perspective that all experiences of the paranormal can be explained by physical processes occurring in the brain in a highly medicalized way (i.e. terming the paranormal as symptomatic of disease).¹¹⁸ Some research (particularly concerning NDEs) emphasizes that such experiences are far more often reported in distant retrospect than shortly after the fact.¹¹⁹ This is relevant to this study as it suggests that the high volume of retrospectively reported supernatural experiences identified in the sources analysed here may be more related to the process of remembering itself than to the environmental conditions of the 'real' experiences being remembered.

¹¹⁷ Michael P. Kelley, 'The Evolution of Beliefs in God, Spirit, and the Paranormal III' in *The Journal of Parapsychology*, lxxiv, no. 4 (2010), pp 66.

¹¹⁸ Peter Brugger & Christine Mohr, 'The paranormal mind: How the study of anomalous experiences and beliefs may inform cognitive neuroscience' in *Cortex*, xlv (2008), pp 1291-1296.

¹¹⁹ Dean Mobbs and Caroline Watt, 'There is nothing paranormal about near-death experiences: how neuroscience can explain seeing bright lights, meeting the dead, or being convinced you are one of them' in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, xv, no. 10 (2011), pp 447-449.

Considerations of historical methodology from the perspective of physics pose even deeper troubles. The way in which historians consider time itself is a century out of date. As Ioan P. Couliano put it, ‘The discipline of history...in fact has not explicitly changed its general premises perhaps for millennia. This is an embarrassing situation. Its remedy should be far more radical than the invention of a few fashionable labels’.¹²⁰ In his history of dualism and gnostic thought, Couliano proposed a historical methodology that attempts to account for Einsteinian notions of spacetime. In 2010 Jeffrey J. Kripal paraphrased Couliano’s key methodological contention:

If we are now living in an Einsteinian space-time continuum determined by three extended dimensions and a fourth of time, the intimate participation of consciousness in the material world, and the metaphysical identity of energy and matter, themselves likely continuously created by utterly bizarre quantum processes that more or less destroy any stable notions of linear causality, time, locality, and independent existence, why are we still writing history as if we only inhabited a simple three-dimensional cosmos, lived in a neat linear time, and existed as so many disconnected billiard balls in a world of Newtonian causality, collisions, and reactions? If the world is so utterly bizarre, why do we pretend it is so simple? And if we now know that the universe is most certainly not a three-dimensional box or two-dimensional pool table, why do we keep writing history as if it were? Why, in other words, cannot we reimagine history (and hence ourselves) “outside the box” and “off the page” of what Max Weber so powerfully called the iron cage of modern rationalism, order, and routinization?¹²¹

Such questions may be at the root of why historians are increasingly focusing their studies on experiences and memories organized in a synchronic thematic fashion, rather than attempting to define some objective reality along a chronological chain of linear causality.¹²² The total warping of traditional conceptions of reality on the part of physicists may be part of the reason why there has been such an interdisciplinary questioning of traditional methods in recent decades.¹²³ In the late twentieth century, scholars such as Aronowitz and Sokal described the

¹²⁰ Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis*, p. xi.

¹²¹ Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred* (Chicago, 2010), pp. 20-21.

¹²² David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921: Provincial Experiences of War and Revolution* (Cork, 1998), *passim*; Roy F. Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923* (New York, 2015), *passim*; Fearghal McGarry *The Rising: Easter 1916* (Oxford, 2016), *passim*; Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans*, *passim*.

¹²³ Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis*, p. 3.

implications that recent advancements in quantum theory bring to bear upon the humanities, and they are significant indeed. In 1996 Sokal wrote that ‘general relativity forces upon us radically new and counterintuitive notions of space, time, and causality; so it is not surprising that it has had a profound impact not only on the natural sciences but also on philosophy, literary criticism, and the human sciences.’¹²⁴ The most salient of these counterintuitive notions for the discipline of history are the unification of space and time into spacetime, the possibility of mutually exclusive states of matter existing simultaneously, and the fact that acts of observation themselves can influence phenomena at an arbitrary distance away in spacetime. This raises many troublesome implications, but thankfully, this thesis is not the first attempt to tackle the issue. In 1992 Ioan P. Couliano developed a historical methodology which integrated advancements in physics which can be drawn upon for inspiration, which was discussed earlier in the literature review.

Some aspects of Couliano’s methodology, though inexplicit in their connection, are apparent in Irish historiographical trends toward neo-antiquarianism as discussed by Guy Beiner and Joep Leerssen in 2007. This thesis draws a great deal of inspiration from their vision. In the context of a counter-factual scenario where Irish history had not purged itself of antiquarianism, Beiner described the characteristics of an idealized version of Irish historiography that incorporates the best of both antiquarian and professional-historical methods:

...the Irish language would be prominent; oral tradition would be accorded respect; investigations of material culture would be integrated into historical work; local studies would be to the fore; and there would be a readiness to transcend rigid disciplinary boundaries. In its multifaceted inquiries, antiquarianism offered a model for the currently lionized interdisciplinary ideal... It would not be a question of unreconstructed antiquarianism replacing scientific history but of an emerging synthesis, which could

¹²⁴Alan D. Sokal, ‘Transgressing the boundaries: toward a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity’ in *Social Text* 46/47, xiv, no. 1 (1996), p. 221.

also allow for creative combinations between antiquarian-synchronic and historical-diachronic (or chronological) analyses.¹²⁵

The key elements here are locality, interdisciplinarity, and the integration of more synchronic analysis reminiscent of antiquarian inquiry. According to Beiner and Leerssen, numerous historical works were already beginning to embody this ideal explicitly or not in 2007.¹²⁶ Arguably, this was happening even earlier; for example, in David Fitzpatrick's *Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921*, originally published in 1970, chapter subjects are divided according to the political allegiances of various groups of historical actors.¹²⁷ The more recent Irish historiography examined here also does this to some extent. The antiquarian-synchronic element is that which is most reminiscent of Couliano's historical methodology. This feature essentially de-emphasizes or removes altogether any underlying linear causality or chronology in favour of emphasizing thematic connections between phenomena regardless of their supposed temporal relationship. This can be seen for example in R.F. Foster's *Vivid Faces*, wherein Foster described how his approach mirrors contemporary historiography:

The approach is thematic rather than chronological...The lives of various people are threaded through the book, recurring in various ways...This approach perhaps reflects historiographical changes since 1978. The Olympian, assured, decisive tone of Lyons's path-breaking work no longer comes easily; themes of fracture, paradox, change and unreliable memory have come into focus, along with the sense of an unforeseeable future.¹²⁸

Foster organized his chapters thematically with headings such as 'learning', 'playing', 'loving', and 'fighting.'¹²⁹ Similarly, in his book *The Time of the Tans*, Tomás Mac Conmara organized stories he collected thematically, with chapter subtitles such as 'Stories of Memory', 'Stories of the Extraordinary', and 'Stories of Death.'¹³⁰ Mac Conmara also emphasized locality and oral tradition, inexplicitly in keeping with Beiner's neo-antiquarian ideal. Irish historians

¹²⁵Beiner and Leerssen, 'Why Irish history starved', p. 74.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 75-76.

¹²⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921*, pp v-vi.

¹²⁸ Foster, *Vivid Faces*, pp xx-xxi.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. x.

¹³⁰ Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans*, pp 10-11.

clearly have not abandoned traditional chronology and disciplinary boundaries completely (after all, most studies are situated within a very specific timespan), but they have been increasingly less rigidly adherent to them.

Sociological approaches to questions of belief have some insights to provide to this study in that they often deal with large sample sizes, much like this thesis. However, conclusions on the beliefs of the Irish or British populations generally cannot be drawn directly from sociological studies and applied to the subjects of this thesis, as sociology is a relatively young discipline and sociological interest in paranormal belief is even younger still.¹³¹ Such a direct application of sociological conclusions would be anachronistic, but the proposed agnostic perspective adopted by sociologists studying paranormal belief (such as Andrew Greeley) is a crucial aspect of how this project has been approached.¹³² Furthermore, the lively interdisciplinary debates in the social sciences as to the fundamental sources of paranormal beliefs and experiences (namely, as either the products of traditional culture or as universal parts of the human experience) are also highly influential to the approach of this project. The definitional approaches used in sociological research are influential as well, and more discussion on them can be found in the forthcoming section on methodology.

Folkloric Approaches

Folklorists have both developed categorical frameworks for, and written extensively on, a wide variety of supernatural beliefs and experiences reported in the early twentieth century and the Irish context. Ireland is known for having one of the most extensive folklore collections in the

¹³¹ Madeleine Castro, Roger Burrows, & Robin Wooffitt, 'The paranormal is (still) normal: the sociological implications of a survey of paranormal experiences in Great Britain' in *Sociological Research Online*, xix, no. 3 (2014), pp 1-2.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

entire world, second only to Finland.¹³³ As has been previously discussed, historical approaches (namely Morrison and Mac Conmara) to the topics of this thesis often are heavily influenced by folkloric methods. In its analyses of the supernatural phenomena identified in various source materials, this thesis draws upon the work of a variety of folklorists including Ellen Badone, Oleh Tyschenko, Bo Almqvist, Patricia Lysaght, and Niall Mac Coitir, among others.¹³⁴ Much of this work has interdisciplinary qualities which have been highly inspirational to the conduct of this research. Many of the phenomena described by the historical actors being investigated here have been studied extensively by folklorists; for example, Patricia Lysaght has conducted thorough investigations into the Banshee (or Bean Sí) which have drawn upon to support analyses of memorates concerning Banshee sightings in this thesis.¹³⁵ Folkloric approaches to the supernatural are centred on the beliefs and tales themselves as the focus of study (rather than fixating on the material or medical causes of those beliefs), and this approach is largely adopted by this thesis and can be said to be its greatest methodological influence. This thesis extensively uses material collected under the auspices of the Irish Folklore Commission, material which has only very scarcely been used in historical scholarship focused on the Irish Revolution.

Unlike most historical literature pertinent to the period, Tomás Mac Conmara's 2019 book *The Time of the Tans* contains several stories of apparitions related to the Irish War of Independence; though a few memorates related to the stories identified by Mac Conmara are referenced in files from the SFC, the stories identified by Mac Conmara are not recorded in

¹³³ Michael Briody, *The Irish folklore commission 1935-1970: history, ideology, methodology* (Helsinki, 2007), pp 1-100; Ríonach úí Ógáin, 'Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann: The National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin' in *Oral Tradition*, xviii, no. 2 (2013), pp 317-321.

¹³⁴ Bo Almqvist, 'The death forebodings of Saint Óláfr, King of Norway, and Rögnvaldr Brúsason, Earl of Orkney' in *Béaloideas*, xlii (1974), pp. 4-5; Patricia Lysaght, 'Irish banshee traditions: a preliminary survey' in *Béaloideas*, xlii (1974), pp. 97-98, 103; Patricia Lysaght, *The Banshee: The Irish Supernatural Death-Messenger* (Dublin, 1997), pp 11-41; Niall Mac Coitir, *Ireland's birds: myths, legends, and folklore* (Cork, 2015), pp 29-30, 47, 122, 267, 289; Oleh Tyschenko, Igor Korolyov, and Oleksandra Palchevska, 'Cultural and cognitive structure of the omen: Epistemology, axiology and pragmatics' in *Wisdom*, xviii, no. 2, (Yerevan, 2021), *passim*.

¹³⁵ Lysaght, 'Irish banshee traditions', pp. 97-98, 103; Lysaght, *The Banshee*, pp 11-41.

other primary source materials and are original products of his interviews with what he described as ‘a fading generation’.¹³⁶ His work is therefore very reminiscent of earlier folklore collection efforts. In his book, Mac Conmara relates several new stories concerning apparitions seen of the lights of Captain Alan Lendrum’s motorcar, and of the haunting of the Broadford Barracks.¹³⁷ In addition, Mac Conmara provides a story related to the Glenwood Ambush on 20 January 1921 where both brigade activity reports for East Clare Brigade’s active service unit, compiled in the 1930s, and Michael Brennan’s memoir claim that six RIC and Black and Tans were killed when a flying column ambushed their lorry.¹³⁸ This incident would result in a wide variety of hauntings corroborated across several sources. An interview collected by Patrick O’Dwyer on behalf of the SFC scheme describes how the area became haunted:

One of the people that was killed was a soldier and they threw him into a bog hole, and so the place was haunted...there used be crying heard every night in that spot. The people were afraid to pass even by day. There were people living nearby and they had to go away. The crying never ceased until the priest of the parish begged to have his body given up, so this was done by the people that knew about it, so when the body was giving [given up] and buried the crying ceased.¹³⁹

Similar tales would later be identified and recorded by Patrick Byrne in 1971, suggesting that this soldier’s reburial was not adequate to properly banish the hauntings.¹⁴⁰ In the course of his research, Tomás Mac Conmara would inquire about the ghost stories in the folklore collection, and according to Mac Conmara’s interview with Dan McNamara on 3 January 2014, the nightly wailings weren’t the last paranormal experiences to be attributed to the ambush. McNamara would explain to Mac Conmara some of the experiences of a member of An Garda Síochána

¹³⁶ Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans*, p. 15.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 189-190.

¹³⁸ Michael Brennan, *The War in Clare* (Dublin, 1980), pp 69-70; ‘Glenwood Ambush’, Military Service Pensions Collection, Brigade Activity Reports, (<https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/1916-1923-resources/operation/glenwood-ambush/>) (accessed 16 Sep. 2022).

¹³⁹ ‘The Ambush of Glenwood’, Patrick O’Dwyer, Clooney, Co. Clare, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0593, pp 436-437). The ‘soldier’ referred to here was, technically speaking, more likely to be a policeman, but this informant does not seem to have known or cared about the distinction.

¹⁴⁰ Byrne, *The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories*, p. 64.

named Bill Kearney, who, after being regaled with tales of the ambush by locals, would have a terrifying experience while bicycling past the ambush site:

I don't know in the hell what he was doing there but was coming cycling past Glenwood and he arrived in an awful panic saying that there were hands clawing at his legs as he was passing the ambush site in Glenwood during the night. Oh, he was frightened out of his wits! I don't know if anyone paid any heed to him but he wasn't a drinking man at all, so he definitely believed it himself.¹⁴¹

Interestingly, this is not the only tale identified in this project where the percipient describes being grabbed by hands while taking a night-time bicycle ride past an ambush site, and indeed, this circumstantially bears some similarities to the strange sounds Ernie O'Malley heard while bicycling through Donegal at night.¹⁴²

In the following chapter, this thesis will provide a detailed discussion of its methodology, including definitions of key terms, descriptions of the primary sources consulted, and the methods used to analyse them. An entire chapter is necessary for this task due to the wide variety and contentious nature of the terminology used in the research questions, the large quantity of primary source materials gathered, and the complexity of the method used to evaluate them. The subsequent four chapters will each discuss a large body of thematically and phenomenologically linked memorates identified in the primary sources. The first of these body chapters will discuss extra-sensory perception (ESP) including varieties of precognition such as premonitions and dreams, and telepathy. The second will discuss apparitions and visions. The third will discuss hauntings, including haunted places and objects, and hauntings which were generated by the Irish Revolution. The fourth considers prophecies, omens, divination, and will include a sub-section investigating the Black Pig of Kiltrustan. These four broad groupings were chosen chiefly for their relative lack of representation in the historiography and their frequent appearance in the source materials. Though larger and more expansive groupings

¹⁴¹ Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans*, p. 188.

¹⁴² Holzer, *The Lively Ghosts of Ireland*, pp 20-22; Ernie O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound* (Cork, 2013), pp 122-123.

than these were identified (chiefly concerning religious phenomena and luck), it was decided that it would be more profitable to focus on a wider variety of slightly smaller groupings, as investigating the largest ones in depth would occupy the entirety of the thesis and leave little room for the substantial and varied smaller groupings which are less represented in the historiography.

Chapter One: Methodology

As was previously discussed, this project draws inspiration from a wide variety of disciplinary approaches. However, at its core, this is a historical dissertation, and has used historical methods as its core analytical framework, taking inspiration from other disciplines where applicable. This project was conducted in five phases which will be described in this section. The first phase of this project consisted of reviewing the literature and defining the boundaries of the project along with the terminology to be used. The second phase consisted of identifying the broad repositories of primary source materials (including the BMH, SFC, Newspaper archives, and memoirs) and where those repositories were digitized, using extensive lists of keywords to identify and collect documents with a relatively high likelihood of being relevant to this investigation. The third phase consisted of closely reading a sufficiently broad and representative selection of the primary source materials collected in the second phase in search of supernatural memorates. In keeping with the classification originally developed by Von Sydow in 1934, a memorate is defined here as a narrative relating purported personal experiences at first or second hand.¹ When a memorate which involved the supernatural was found, it along with various details about its provenance and qualitative characteristics was entered into a database. The second and third phases were staggered apart for the various source repositories used. The fourth phase consisted of reviewing the database created in the third phase using basic quantitative methods both in search of broader patterns and highly representative or noteworthy memorates to take as starting points for the final phase. The final phase consisted of writing up the text of the dissertation. The overall goal of this method was to conduct a broad survey of primary source materials (both retrospective and contemporary) with reasonable analytic depth, using linguistic and quantitative methodological techniques and

¹ Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, 'The memorate and the proto-memorate' in *The Journal of American Folklore*, lxxxvii, no. 345 (1974), p. 225.

recent advancements in source digitization to optimize efficiency and reveal patterns that would otherwise be too subtle or broad to be identified using traditional methods.

Defining Boundaries and Terminology

Supernatural experiences in the Irish revolutionary period have not been comprehensively studied by historians; as was previously elaborated upon in the literature review, what little that has been done has been brief in its treatment, uncritical of terminology, and reluctant to make use of theoretical frameworks developed outside of the historical discipline.² Much historical work has been done on the role of religion in the Irish Revolution, but the closely related categories of the paranormal and supernatural have by and large escaped historical scrutiny, with a few notable exceptions.³ One of the key reasons for this is a lack of a clear definitional framework. For example, in the introductory segments of recent scholarship on the supernatural in Ireland in the early twentieth century conducted by Clodagh Tait, Jodie Shevlin, Eve Morrison, and Andrew Sneddon, little to no space is devoted to defining the terminology being used.⁴ Shevlin comes the closest, but only goes so far as to state ‘in this thesis, the term supernatural is used with the intention of embracing all supernatural powers, good, evil and neutral’, which does little to clarify what she considers the boundaries of the ‘supernatural’ to be.⁵ This can become problematic; by not adequately considering terminology, scholarly dialogue concerning a single subject becomes inhibited by the fact that the variety of different

² With some noteworthy exceptions, namely, Síobhra Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony & The Irish Civil War* (Newbridge, 2022), *passim*.

³ Tomás Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans: An Oral History of the War of Independence in County Clare* (Cork, 2019), p. 187; Eve Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution: veterans and memory of the Independence Struggle and Civil War’ in Marguérite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack, & Ruud van den Beuken (eds), *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations* (Bern, 2017), p. 8585; Jodie Shevlin, ‘The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland in the Long Nineteenth-century, 1821-1921’, (PhD Thesis, Ulster University, Colerain, 2020), *passim*.

⁴ Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution’. pp 81-86; Shevlin, ‘The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland’, pp 5-43; Andrew Sneddon and John Fulton, ‘Witchcraft, the press, and crime in Ireland, 1822–1922’ in *The Historical Journal*, lxii, no. 3 (2019), pp 741-744; Clodagh Tait, ‘Worry work: the supernatural labours of living and dead mothers in Irish folklore’ in *Past and Present*, ccxlvii, Issue Supplement 15 (2020), pp 217-219.

⁵ Shevlin, ‘The Supernatural in Catholic Ireland’ p. 12.

terms and definitions are being used to deal with that subject. This situation obscures the scale and intricately interconnected nature of supernatural phenomena and makes building on past scholarship difficult. This issue is most apparent in the disciplines of sociology and psychology which when approaching the study of supernatural beliefs have routinely run into issues of redundancy due to a lack of consensus on terminology.⁶

The answer to this issue might appear to be as simple as just taking the definitions of the Irish revolutionaries as the basis for this thesis, but there are problems with this approach. Firstly, Irish revolutionaries were a diverse population with differing worldviews, so nothing approaching a consensus on the definition of a given term with any kind of semantic rigor can be extracted from their writings without introducing a serious bias. Additionally, Irish revolutionaries almost never bothered to define the terms used by this study directly, so the reliability of a definition merely inferred from their writings would be tenuous at best. Furthermore, the participants of the Irish Revolution, in addition to being embroiled in a conflict with strong sectarian overtones, did not have access to recent scholarly advancements in the understanding of the supernatural through the disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, religious studies, or folklore. Though it is obviously important to be aware of the perspectives of the historical actors under study to describe their experiences authentically, it is also important to simultaneously make use of the wide variety of scholarly advancements of the past century when analysing source materials to ensure that new interpretations of the past are relevant to the society in which we now live. This is especially true in the Irish context, where, as Ian McBride has argued, the centuries-old spectre of sectarian violence cyclically rears its head through the uncritical invocation of historical traumas with religious

⁶ Peter C. Hill, 'Measurement assessment and issues in the psychology of religion and spirituality' in Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal L. Park (eds.), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (2013), p. 48; Bernard Spilka et al, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach* (3rd ed., Guilford, 2003), pp 312-313; Diane Wind Wardell and Joan C. Engebretson, 'Taxonomy of spiritual experiences' in *Journal of Religion and Health*, xlv, no. 2 (2006), p. 230.

terminology.⁷ In order to avoid this sort of cyclical sectarian trauma invocation, it is important to devise one's definitional frameworks carefully.

Therefore, for the purposes of identifying and evaluating source materials, strictly secular and non-denominational definitions of key terms and concepts such as 'supernatural', 'paranormal', 'religious', 'spiritual', 'mystical', and 'revolutionary' are employed here. To be clear, these definitions are separate from the definitions that Irish revolutionaries would themselves have used. These definitions are being used as a framework to both set the boundaries of specifically what memories, beliefs, experiences, practices, and historical events are under study, and to evaluate the relevance of secondary source literature. By contrast, analysis of the worldview of specific historical actors themselves will be more guided by the terminology and definitions of those actors, which will vary greatly from actor to actor. This separation is not crafted to suggest that the methodological definitions used here are not themselves subjective to the milieu of the researcher conducting this study, it is crafted to acknowledge the breadth and variety of perspectives and experiences of Irish revolutionaries, and not to let that variety entangle the methodology of this project. For the myriad of terms used to denote the various smaller subcategories of supernatural phenomena discussed in this thesis (terms such as 'premonition', 'prophecy', and 'apparition' for example), definitions will be provided in the introductions of chapters two, three, and four.

Scholars across a variety of disciplines have increasingly stressed the importance of interdisciplinarity to research into religious topics.⁸ Entirely new fields of research have been synthesized out of combinations of different disciplinary approaches in the past couple decades; among many others, these include the neuropsychology of religion and the cognitive

⁷ Ian McBride, 'Memory and national identity in modern Ireland' in Ian McBride (ed.) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, (2001), pp 2-4; Alan Ford, 'Martyrdom, history and memory in early modern Ireland' in Ian McBride (ed.) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, (2001), p. 43.

⁸ Raymond F Paloutzian and Crystal L. Park (eds.), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (2013), pp 14-16.

science of religion.⁹ The field of ‘Irish Studies’ itself, though not as specialized as the others mentioned is another example of a recently coagulated interdisciplinary field of study. Irish historians have increasingly been recognizing the need for interdisciplinary perspectives in recent years in an effort to curb the so-called ‘starvation’ of the discipline.¹⁰ Therefore, for the purposes of creating a more robust and well-informed methodology and definitional framework, those developed by anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, folklorists, historians, and religious studies scholars will be briefly surveyed. From these a taxonomy of terms and their definitions will be synthesized, along with a relational framework from which to evaluate the relevance of the source materials used in this project.

Unfortunately, the scientific literature on the subject of the supernatural is complicated by a myriad of closely related but not quite synonymous terms like ‘paranormal’, ‘mystical’, ‘magical’, ‘religious’, ‘psychic’, ‘anomalous’, and ‘spiritual’, which are often used interchangeably by the general public from which data on such experiences is largely gathered.¹¹ This public includes many who adhere to systems of belief that possess their own definitional frameworks, further complicating research.¹² These, among several other issues, make any proper measurement difficult, and as a result, make scientifically gathering data difficult.¹³ To make matters worse, science itself is known to invite decidedly unscientific levels of devotion to its explanatory power which make understanding science’s limitations difficult.¹⁴ All of these issues have troublesome implications for anyone with pretensions

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰ Guy Beiner and Joep Leerssen, ‘Why Irish history starved: a virtual historiography’ in *Field Day Review*, iii, 2007, *passim*.

¹¹ Spilka et al, *The Psychology of Religion*, pp 312-313.

¹² Wardell and Engebretson, ‘Taxonomy of spiritual experiences’, p. 230.

¹³ Hill, ‘Measurement assessment and issues in the psychology of religion and spirituality’, p. 48.

¹⁴ Renia Gasparatou, ‘Scientism and scientific thinking: a note on science education’, in *Science & Education*, xxvi, no. 7-9 (2017), p. 799-806; Eugene Subbotsky, *Magic and the Mind: Mechanisms, Function, and Development of Magical Thinking and Behavior* (2010), p. x.

toward deriving a strictly secular definition of terminology related to the supernatural from scientific research.

Nevertheless, scientists from a variety of disciplines have continued struggling to define the supernatural and all its related categories for the past several decades. Many definitions of religion, magic and related terms from the twentieth century rested on the term ‘supernatural’¹⁵ In 1977, the anthropologist Benson Saler traced the origin of the concept back to the 6th century BC school of Miletus, a group of Greek philosophers who developed the idea of the existence of ‘laws of nature’ which underlay nature’s apparent chaos (a concept not necessarily shared outside of western civilization).¹⁶ From this assumption of nature’s ordered-ness, Christian thinkers began to develop ideas about how God could supersede that order. The first uses of the precise term ‘supernatural’ are found in ninth century Latin translations of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite’s various writings, which used the term ‘supernaturalis’ to describe how God, the Virgin Mary, and the Angels are of a superior substance.¹⁷ In the 13th century St. Thomas Aquinas would go on to develop the term more thoroughly by using it to describe the surpassing effects of God such as miracles, for example.¹⁸ Essentially, the term ‘supernatural’ which is now presently defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a term used to describe phenomena which are ‘beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature’, requires that there be a concept of natural laws to transcend.¹⁹ If what we in western society today would deem supernatural forces are so ingrained in the internal causality of one’s lived experience that they would cease to be supernatural, such supernatural forces would merely be a part of one’s subjective natural order. The subjectivity of what is and is not ‘natural’ thereby precludes

¹⁵ Jens Köhrsen, ‘How religious is the public sphere? A critical stance on the debate about public religion and post-secularity’, in *Acta Sociologica*, lv, no. 3 (2012), p. 280; Benson Saler, ‘Supernatural as a Western category’ in *Ethos*, v, no. 1, (Berkeley, 1977), p. 51.

¹⁶ Saler, ‘Supernatural as a Western category’, p. 51.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁹ ‘supernatural, adj. and n.’, *Oxford English Dictionary*, (<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/194422?redirectedFrom=supernatural&>) (accessed 19 May 2023).

a truly objective use of the term. Benson Saler defined supernatural as follows: ‘The supernatural, then, is our culture-bound category for anything that transcends the immanently principled operations of nature “as we understand them.”’²⁰ If this project’s methodology makes use of the term ‘supernatural’, it needs to acknowledge that the chain of natural causality being transcended might be either that of this project, that of the historical percipient, or possibly both.

Applying this understanding of the laws of nature to Irish revolutionaries is complicated by some of the revolutionaries’ own concepts of natural law. In his statement to the Bureau of Military History (BMH), Seumas Robinson opens with a frank discussion of his attitude toward heresy and theological law, which builds up to the following:

To start with the dictum: All true faith being in essence spiritual comes under theological law. My political faith is not only based on but it is an integral part of religious faith. Theology (God-science), is the only science exact and complete to the Absolute. It is the only one worth worrying about, too, because it produces effects that last for eternity. Without it all else is ephemeral and a waste of precious time. *Theological law is to the natural law as the woof is to the warf.* But the material that theology deals with goes far above and beyond (and includes) all human knowledge, science, logic, conception.²¹

For Robinson, theological law and natural law are literally interwoven, and this weave is in turn braided with his political position. He goes on to attempt to defend himself from charges of irreligious conduct (namely murder) justifying himself on the basis of national liberation, demonstrating his willingness to transcend theological law (and by entanglement natural law) in the name of his ‘political faith’. Therefore, his political stance elevates his actions to the realm of the supernatural, as it compels him to transcend the fifth commandment, and arguably the first if Robinson would consider the ‘Spirit of the Irish Nation’ to be a deity that merits being idolatrously prioritized over the Christian God (unfortunately his witness statement does not provide much clarification on this point). This example illustrates how a simple definition

²⁰ Saler, ‘Supernatural as a Western category’, p. 51.

²¹ Seumas Robinson statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1721), p. 7. My emphasis added.

of supernatural can easily be applied to broadly describe the military actions of a radical Irish nationalist. This might indicate that perhaps the theological connotations of the term ‘supernatural’ itself lend it too much definitional breadth, at least in the case of more theologically versed individuals like Seumas Robinson. However, it is unclear if Robinson’s perspective is a typical one.

Recently, a psychological study led by Christine H. Legare demonstrated that events are often interpreted using both natural and supernatural explanations simultaneously, and that this finding extends across cultures and demographic differences.²² This study defined supernatural as follows:

We define supernatural as phenomena that violate, operate outside of, or are distinct from the realm of the natural world or known natural law. Even when a particular cause is unknown, natural or physical mechanisms are assumed to exist in the case of natural explanations and supernatural mechanisms are assumed to exist in the case of supernatural explanations. Rather than making strong definitional claims about the distinction between natural and supernatural phenomena, we focus on the kinds of causes and practices that are generally regarded as belonging to natural (e.g., science, medicine, and biology) versus supernatural (e.g., religion, divination, and witchcraft) kinds from an intuitive, psychological perspective.²³

An advantage to this definition is that it accounts for the assumption of natural or supernatural explanatory mechanisms, not just the phenomena. A disadvantage is that it distinguishes between natural and supernatural in a vague ‘intuitive’ way, rather than providing a clear cross-cultural definition. Though Irish revolutionaries certainly distinguished between the two in such a manner, this project requires greater specificity for the purposes of defining what source materials are within the boundaries of this project. Legare’s study and others attempt to emphasize that supernatural experiences are an empirically verifiable element of the human condition, and that there may be certain physiological and psychological traits that make

²² Cristine H. Legare et al, ‘The coexistence of natural and supernatural explanations across cultures and development’ in *Child Development*, lxxxiii, no. 3 (2012), p. 779.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 780.

supernatural experiences more likely.²⁴ In spite of this, there does not appear to be anything but the most loose of consensus on what constitutes a supernatural experience as opposed to a natural one, and these studies all seem to target specific phenomena that might be contained within the broader umbrella term of ‘supernatural’ without bothering themselves too much about what else could be found within that category.

Fortunately for the purposes of this study, all that is required is a definition relevant to the cultural context of the Irish Revolution. Definitions which place the supernatural as that which is outside the ‘laws of nature’ will suffice, provided at least that there is a solid understanding of the laws of nature as understood by those involved with the Irish Revolution. If Seumas Robinson’s perspective is taken as an example, then routine Catholic prayers were essentially an undifferentiated part of the natural order of things. This would seem to indicate that such prayers should not be classified as supernatural. However, Seumas’s perspective is only one perspective, and within the catechism current at the time of the Irish revolution there are distinctions between what is natural and what is supernatural. Let us take for example the practice of saying acts of contrition, a practice mentioned in at least twenty-one different witness statements to the BMH.²⁵ The purpose of the prayer according to Catholic doctrine is

²⁴ *Ibid.*; James McClenon, ‘Supernatural Experience, Folk Belief, and Spiritual Healing’ in Barbara Walker (ed.) *Out Of The Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural* (Denver, 1995), p. 107; David Hay and Anne Morrisy, ‘Reports of ecstatic, paranormal, or religious experience in Great Britain and the United States: a comparison of trends’ in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, xvii, no. 3 (1978), p. 255; Aaron C. Kay, David A. Moscovitch and Kristin Laurin, ‘Randomness, attributions of arousal, and belief in God’ in *Psychological Science*, xxi, no. 2 (2010), p. 216; William L. MacDonald, ‘The effects of religiosity and structural strain on reported paranormal experiences’ in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, xxxiv, no. 3 (1995), p. 366; Charles F. Emmons and Jeff Sobal, ‘Paranormal beliefs: functional alternatives to mainstream Religion?’ in *Review of Religious Research*, xxii, no. 4 (1981), p. 301; John W. Fox, ‘The structure, stability, and social antecedents of reported paranormal experiences’ in *Sociological Analysis*, liii, no. 4 (1992), p. 417.

²⁵ Michael Newell statement, (Military Archives of Ireland, Bureau of Military History, WS 342), p. 7; Aoife de Burca statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 359), pp 20-21; Michael Fogarty statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 673), p. 10; Sean Kenny, Michael Keogh, and Joseph O’Shea statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 688), pamphlet p. 22; Mary Clancy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 806), pp 16-17; Bernard Nolan statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 844), p. 6; Ignatius Callender statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 923), pp 15-16; Kevin McCabe statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 926), p. 5; Michael Kilroy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1162), p. 24; James J. Riordan statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1172), p. 9; George C. Kiely statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1182), p. 6; Patrick Keane statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1300), p. 7; Sean E. Walshe statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1363), p. 13; Thomas Mannion statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1408), p. 15; Paul Mulcahy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1434), p. 14; Daniel

to excite the one who says it into a state of perfect contrition, thereby putting their soul into a state of ‘sanctifying grace’ should they not have the capacity to go to confession.²⁶ This sanctifying grace, necessary for salvation, was itself defined in the catechism as ‘a *supernatural* gift, destined by God for our sanctification, and to enable us to merit heaven.’²⁷ Essentially, an act of contrition is a petition to God, a supernatural being, for grace, a supernatural gift. Seumas Robinsons’ undifferentiated ‘casual’ prayers are therefore ‘natural’ in the sense that they were typical, expected, or routine, not in the sense that they had nothing to do with the supernatural. By claiming that ‘religion and prayer were entirely undemonstrative...taken for granted as fundamental, necessary, logical, almost casual’, Robinson underscored the ubiquity of the supernatural in the lives of ‘normal Catholic young people’.²⁸ Even if the laws of science were regarded amongst Irish Catholics at the time with some suspicion and were generally eschewed in favour of theological law, this does not mean that there were no laws of nature to transcend, and that beings such as God, angels, and saints along with their activities could not be classified as supernatural phenomena within the boundaries of Catholic theological law.²⁹ Furthermore, not all Irish Catholics rejected science completely, and explanatory gaps in Catholic doctrine concerning some natural phenomena could be coherently filled by scientific explanations, provided that they weren’t inconsistent with Catholic doctrine.³⁰ Therefore, the following definition of the supernatural should suffice for the purposes of this project’s methodology: the term ‘supernatural’ describes phenomena that violate, transcend, operate outside of, or are

O’Shaughnessy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1435), p. 103; John Hynes statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1496), p. 4; Peter McDonnell statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1612), p. 26; Sean MacEoin statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1716), p. 114; Leslie Price statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1754), p. 9; Daniel Breen statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1763), pp 165-166.

²⁶ James Butler, *The Most Reverend Dr. James Butler’s catechism revised, enlarged, improved, and recommended by the four R.C. archbishops of Ireland as a general catechism and adopted and published by order of the first council of Quebec* (Quebec, 1879), pp 30-31.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30. My emphasis added.

²⁸ Seumas Robinson statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1721), p. 5.

²⁹ Don O’Leary, ‘Faith, nature, and science in the works of Canon Sheehan’ in *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, xvii, no. 2 (2013), p. 121.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 122-125; Diarmid A. Finnegan, ‘Reviewed work: Irish Catholicism and science: from ‘godless colleges’ to the ‘Celtic Tiger’ by Don O’Leary’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxviii, no. 32 (2013), pp 730-731.

distinct from the immanently principled operations or laws of nature as understood by their percipients.

The closely related term ‘paranormal’, which might seem synonymous with ‘supernatural’ at first glance, in fact has a far shorter history and more specific connotations. Several late twentieth century studies in the sociological literature used questionnaires which give insight as to what these early researchers thought ‘paranormal’ was supposed to be describing. These questionnaires included items like extra sensory perception, ghosts, clairvoyance, telepathy, UFOs, sleep paralysis, precognition, angels, devils, astrology, déjà vu, contact with the dead, and life after death. Unfortunately, the different studies all focused on different parts of this list, and there was little consensus on the totality of the contents of the ‘paranormal’. Some popular theoretical approaches put religion as a stepping stone to the paranormal, and nearly all regarded religion and the paranormal to be mutually exclusive and separate spheres.³¹ More recent sociological research led by Joseph O. Baker seems to indicate that religious and paranormal beliefs can be held simultaneously and that their classification is culturally specific, bucking the trends of deprivation and small-step theory in favour of curvilinear or bounded-affinity type models.³² In 2016, Baker, Bader, and Mencken provided their definition of ‘paranormal’ in the context of their bounded affinity theory: ‘the paranormal can be best defined as beliefs, practices, and experiences that are dually rejected—not accepted by science and not typically associated with mainstream religion.’³³ Notably, this definition accounts for not only the rejection of science, but also that of religion, crucially making *both* a requirement for a belief to be considered paranormal. In their paper, these sociologists allowed

³¹ Joseph O. Baker, Christopher D. Bader, & F. Carson Mencken, ‘A bounded affinity theory of religion and the paranormal’ in *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*, lxxvii, no. 4 (2016), pp 335-337.

³² *Ibid.*; Joseph O. Baker and Scott Draper, ‘Diverse supernatural portfolios: certitude, exclusivity, and the curvilinear relationship between religiosity and paranormal beliefs’ in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, il, no. 3 (2010), pp 413-424.

³³ Joseph O. Baker, Christopher D. Bader, & F. Carson Mencken, ‘A bounded affinity theory of religion and the paranormal’ in *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*, lxxvii, no. 4 (2016), p. 340.

for shifting definitions of the paranormal depending on the social context of the belief and experience. A slightly revised definition will be sufficient for the purposes of this study: the paranormal is defined here as phenomena whose existence is rejected by the laws of both science and mainstream religion.

In recent years, the discipline of psychology's prevalent nomenclature about the paranormal has shifted to the phrase 'anomalous experience', which has probably the most consensus concerning its definition. Stanley Krippner has been instrumental in developing the following definition: 'an uncommon experience (e.g., synesthesia), or one that, although experienced by a significant number of persons (e.g., an experience interpreted as telepathic), is believed to markedly deviate from ordinary experience or from the usually accepted explanations of reality according to Western mainstream science.'³⁴ Krippner and other psychologists are keen to stress that such experiences are relatively common, and not necessarily indicative of some kind of psychological pathology.³⁵ Furthermore, these psychologists emphasize that such experiences are distinct from altered states of consciousness though they might at times overlap.³⁶ Psychologists also stress that such experiences often have powerful impacts both on an individual and societal level, which legitimizes serious attempts to research them.³⁷

Using the concept 'anomalous experience' has advantages and disadvantages. It is a new term, devoid of the theological associations of the word 'supernatural' and the cultural relativity of the word 'paranormal'. It is tied to the psychological literature of the past thirty years or so,

³⁴ Everton de Oliveira Maraldi and Stanley Krippner, 'Cross-cultural research on anomalous experiences: theoretical issues and methodological challenges' in *American Psychological Association: Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, vi, no. 3 (2019), p. 306.

³⁵ Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn, & Stanley Krippner, (eds), *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence* (2nd ed., Washington DC, 2014), pp 4-5; Alexander Moreira-Almeida and Francisco Lotufo-Neto, 'Methodological guidelines to investigate altered states of consciousness and anomalous experiences' in *International Review of Psychiatry*, xxix, no. 3 (2017), pp 283-285.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

and highly non-denominational in its religious connotations. Crucially, it does not have the long history of pejorative connotation attached to terms like ‘paranormal’. Unfortunately, within its definition is contained the phrase ‘western mainstream science’, all three words of which are notoriously vague and contentious. Another issue is the phrase ‘believed to markedly deviate from ordinary experience’ which is so vague as to include anything out of the ordinary, regardless of whether it has any metaphysical implications. In addition to these issues, it should be noted that numerous scientists over the years have noted and continue to note that an adequate methodology for studying such experiences properly has yet to be developed, with treatments of the subject chronically reinventing the definitional wheel.³⁸ The definition posed by Krippner may be yet another fruitless attempt for the purposes of this study, as the subcategories explored in his edited collection *Varieties of Anomalous Experience* fail to include any substantive treatment of apparitions, and include mysticism broadly, which is another broad category whose definition continues to remain uncertain.³⁹ That being said, the categories explored were not intended to be comprehensive, but nevertheless the broader category of ‘anomalous experience’ remains too distressingly vague for use in the definitional framework of this thesis.⁴⁰ Though, due to its close connection with the term ‘paranormal’, the literature based around ‘anomalous experiences’ was useful for interpreting certain source materials in this thesis.

Defining what constitutes a ‘Mystical’ experience has long been recognized as a difficult task.⁴¹ Thankfully in recent years sociologists have narrowed down a few factors which seem

³⁸ Joseph O. Baker, ‘The variety of Religious experiences’ in *Review of Religious Research*, li, no. 1 (2009), p. 39. The irony that this project is also in a way reinventing definitional wheels is not lost upon this dissertation’s author.

³⁹ Cardeña, Lynn, & Krippner, (eds), *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, p. 370.

⁴⁰ Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn, & Stanley Krippner, ‘The psychology of anomalous experiences: a rediscovery’ in *American Psychological Association: Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, iv, no. 1 (2017), p. 6.

⁴¹ Spilka et al, *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 299.

to be shared, namely, unity, ineffability, and timelessness.⁴² Debate still rages however as to the ontological status of mystical experiences. The most important division is the one between common-core theorists and diversity theorists.⁴³ The former assume that people essentially have the same experience but interpret it differently afterwards depending on their social context, and the latter assume that people's experiences are inextricably linked with their linguistic interpretations of those experiences and that distinguishing between the language one uses to describe the experience and the experience itself is impossible. Depending on which theoretical framework one takes, definitions of such experiences either coagulate into a relatively small number of larger categories, or fractalize into a plethora of definitions which are highly subjective to each individual's social identity and upbringing. Recent research by Ralph W. Hood comparing mystical experiences as held by Iranian and American university students seems to support the common-core interpretation, but this is hardly definitive.⁴⁴ In the meantime, this study will define 'mystical' as that which pertains to phenomena which elicit in the percipient a sense of numinous ineffable unity with the universe as they understood it.

Working with yet another hopelessly hazy related term, in 2006 Diane Wind Wardell and Joan C. Engebretson developed a 'taxonomy of spiritual experiences' for the purposes of clinically assessing their relevance to health crises.⁴⁵ They gave such experiences three aspects: circumstances, manifestation, and interpretation. Each of these aspects in turn had several subcategories, allowing for increasingly specific classification of these experiences.⁴⁶ Eight years later, anthropologists Julia L. Cassaniti and Tanya Marie Luhrmann also attempted to classify spiritual experiences into three categories. Those categories were the following: named

⁴² Ralph W. Hood et al, 'Dimensions of the mysticism scale: confirming the three-factor structure in the United States and Iran' in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, xl, no. 4 (2001), p. 693.

⁴³ Spilka et al, *The Psychology of Religion*, pp 321-322.

⁴⁴ Ralph W. Hood et al, 'Dimensions of the mysticism scale: confirming the three-factor structure in the United States and Iran' in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, xl, no. 4 (2001), pp. 691-705.

⁴⁵ Diane Wind Wardell and Joan C. Engebretson, 'Taxonomy of spiritual experiences' in *Journal of Religion and Health*, xlv, no. 2 (2006), p. 215.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 221.

phenomena without fixed mental or bodily events, bodily affordances, and striking anomalous events.⁴⁷ Neither of the systems agree or are in themselves universally descriptive of the phenomena this study is trying to investigate, but they do suggest a more organized approach that seems better able to cope with a multiplicity of overlapping terms and their historical contexts. Such an approach seems far more holistic, realistic, and descriptively rich than it would be to simply select a single term and strictly place phenomena either inside or outside of it. Therefore, the analytical method used here will be sure to account for the context of the phenomena and the qualities of its manifestation amongst other characteristics in a taxonomical structure.

Possibly the most intractable definitional quandary comes from the term ‘religion’, which much like the other terms discussed so far has no universally accepted definition. In 2014 Juraj Franek described the situation:

After much ink spilled over thousands upon thousands of pages and no *communis opinio* in sight, the quest for the definition of religion seems to be doomed to failure from the onset. We find ourselves in a situation where there is no consensus even on whether there is a consensus on the pre-theoretical (!) use of the term “religion”; likewise, there is no generally accepted answer to the question of whether the definition of religion is even possible, and if so, whether it is necessary for the constitution of the scientific study of religion.⁴⁸

In the past nine years since Franek published those words, the situation has changed little.⁴⁹ Thankfully, for the purposes of this study, there is no need to define religion universally, but merely in the particular case of the Irish Revolution, where a few key organizations can be easily identified. These are the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, and a handful of other Protestant denominations which were involved with the revolution on some level. These institutions have

⁴⁷ Julia L. Cassaniti and Tanya Marie Luhrmann, ‘The cultural kindling of spiritual experiences’ in *Current Anthropology*, lv, no. S10 (2014), p. 333.

⁴⁸ Juraj Franek, ‘Has the cognitive science of religion (re)defined “religion”?’ in *Religio*, xxii, no. 1 (2014), p. 3.

⁴⁹ Daniele Bertini, ‘On what religion is not’ in *Religions*, x, no. 29 (2019), pp 1-2.

long had explicit written policies as to what beliefs and practices are permissible and facilitated by their organization, which will make defining what is within a given religion's remit relatively simple. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, 'Religious' will be defined as beliefs, practices, and experiences legitimized and encouraged by any of the longstanding established churches in Ireland. This is in keeping with an increasing tendency among religious studies scholars to stick to specific contexts, rather than attempting to craft a holistic theory.⁵⁰

Folklore, unlike the previously discussed fields of study, is a great deal more comfortable with supernatural phenomena, and indeed, has historically been one of the foremost places to which the supernatural has largely been consigned by academia. As a result, folklorists have been steeped in supernatural material, and have long had systems of classification concerning supernatural phenomena. Ireland's Folklore Commission was no exception, and its *Handbook* embodied a system of classification which holistically incorporated a variety of traditional customs and beliefs. Though only two chapters 'Religious Tradition' and 'Mythological (Supernatural) Tradition' are directly concerned with the supernatural as it is defined here, nearly every chapter has sub-headings with direct or indirect relevance to the supernatural.⁵¹ Supernatural and religious traditions are classified into separate categories, indicating that these Irish folklorists may have been using the term 'supernatural' in a similar way to how this study has chosen to use the term 'paranormal'. The system of categories presented by *The Handbook of Irish Folklore* is in some ways very well suited to this study due to its relevance to the Irish cultural context and the relatively close chronological proximity of the Irish Revolution to the creation of *The Handbook of Irish Folklore* (which was created in 1940 based on a classification system devised by Swedish folklorists experienced in folklore collecting in Ireland in the early

⁵⁰ Paloutzian and Park (eds.), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, pp 7-9, 17.

⁵¹ Sean O'Sullivan, 'The collection and classification of folklore in Ireland and the Isle of Man' in *Folklore*, lviii, no. 4 (1957), pp 453-454.

1930s).⁵² Despite this relevance, some of the ideology behind the handbook is at this stage somewhat archaic; contemporary folklorists have changed core facets of their underlying ideological premises since the early twentieth century. For example, in 1999 Gillian Bennett described one of the main changes:

By successive stages folklorists have moved away from the idea that folklore is a body of old-fashioned leftovers from some shadowy pagan past which still survives among some special group called the "folk." They recognize too that, like every other body of knowledge from physics to philosophy, folklore may be true or it may be false, so they no longer subscribe to the popular definition that equates folklore with old wives' tales.⁵³

Practically speaking, this shift allows for the inclusion of 'personal experience narratives' or 'memorates' into the body of folklore, even if their relationship to traditional mythology and legends is somewhat more tenuous.⁵⁴ This difference between folkloristics now and at the time of *The Handbook of Irish Folklore's* creation is embodied by the fact that the Bureau of Military History's endeavours to collect witness statements were regarded as separate from the Irish Folklore Commission's collection efforts, in spite of the fact that the witness statements contain a great deal of what now might be deemed folkloric material. The Irish Folklore Commission at the time was specialized toward the collection of traditions with an ancient pedigree, superstitious customs, or indeed 'old wives tales' to the exclusion of material with a more recent origin.⁵⁵ In the early twentieth century, the emerging disdain of Irish historians for mythology further served to categorically separate the efforts of the Bureau of Military History from those of the Irish Folklore Commission, in spite of the fact that both organizations shared some of the same leadership.⁵⁶ In this regard, the system presented in *The Handbook of Irish Folklore*

⁵² Patricia Lysaght, 'Seán Ó Súilleabháin (1903-1996)' in *Fabula*, xxxix, no. 1 (1998), pp. 120-121.

⁵³ Gillian Bennett, "Alas, poor ghost!": *Traditions of Belief in Story And Discourse* (Logan, 1999), p. 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 4-5.

⁵⁵ Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935-1970*, p. 444.

⁵⁶ Ciaran Brady, "Constructive and instrumental": the dilemma of Ireland's first 'new historians' in Ciaran Brady (ed.) *Interpreting Irish history: The Debate On Historical Revisionism*, (Dublin, 1994), p. 4; Mary E. Daly, 'The state papers of a forgotten and neglected people: the National Folklore Collection and the writing of Irish history' in *Béaloidias*, lviii (2010), p. 69; T.W. Moody, 'Irish history and Irish mythology' in Ciaran Brady (ed.) *Interpreting Irish history*, (Dublin, 1994), p. 71. This same leadership included, namely, James Hamilton Delargy.

is ill-suited toward the classification of supernatural phenomena found in memorates like those contained in the BMH witness statement archive, and though influences will be drawn from it, it will nevertheless not be used by this study axiomatically or in its entirety.

Unfortunately, despite their enthusiasm toward studying it, even contemporary folklorists shy away from a firm, explicit definition of the supernatural, and like the sociological questionnaires mentioned earlier, often content themselves with lists of items which seem intuitively to be part of the same category but aren't derived from any theoretical consensus. This has in part to do with the uselessness of terms like 'supernatural' and 'paranormal' for the purpose of questionnaires, as direct terms like those often have heavily negative connotations which few interviewees would be willing to associate themselves with, even if they do in fact have a great deal to say about the topic, provided of course that it would be couched in less loaded language.⁵⁷ Another reason is that it seems that folklorists regard supernatural beliefs to be so ubiquitous and pervasive that they cannot be unproblematically extracted and isolated from a culture as a whole. As a result, the impression one gets from the types of supernatural phenomena being investigated by folklorists is a very holistic one. In 1995 Barbara Walker described the degree to which the supernatural pervades our lives:

The folklore of the supernatural can be evidenced in all aspects of our lives: the things we say (ghost stories, creation myths, tales of skinwalkers, prayers), the things we do (what we wear, what we eat, how we bury our dead, how and when to plant and harvest crops, avoiding bad luck and encouraging good), the things we create (religious symbols, charms, amulets, foods), the things we believe in (gods, devils, spirits, ghosts, interplanetary travelers, healing rituals, life after death), where we go (to church on Sunday, to the cemetery at midnight, to the Bermuda Triangle), and who our friends and associates are (Catholics, shamans, witches, Navajos, the religious, the irreverent). Even if we personally might not claim any belief in the supernatural, we will rub shoulders with those who do.⁵⁸

This holism echoes the approach taken by *The Handbook of Irish Folklore*, which has chapters dedicated to nearly every aspect of Irish life, but each chapter features supernatural phenomena

⁵⁷ Bennett, "Alas, poor ghost!", p. 15.

⁵⁸ Walker (ed.), *Out Of The Ordinary*, p. 7.

prominently. Furthermore, *The Handbook of Irish Folklore*, like these contemporary folklorists, does not clearly define what is meant by the term ‘supernatural’. Contemporary folklorists seem more concerned with traditionality, orality, and the distinction between official belief and folk belief (that is, unofficial belief). David J. Hufford outlined this distinction in 1995: ‘When I say folk belief, I mean unofficial belief. Official beliefs are those that are promulgated through social structures invested with executive authority, while the beliefs themselves are generally based on claims to cultural authority.’⁵⁹ To others, the minimum criteria for what counts as folklore has more to do with the traditionality and oral transmission of the material.⁶⁰ In general, it seems that folklorists have less insight to provide toward the task of defining the terminology and boundaries of this project and more to provide with the task of analysing its source materials. This is due mainly to the ubiquity of the supernatural in folkloric source material; such ubiquity precludes the need to define what is supernatural, and instead focuses efforts more on the classification and analysis of phenomena within that broader umbrella. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, folkloric classification schemes will be used primarily to categorize the relevant phenomena found and fit them within their underlying traditional context, not to determine whether the phenomena are relevant or if they fit within the boundaries of this study.

It is clear from the literature across a variety of disciplines that the terms ‘supernatural’, ‘paranormal’, ‘religious’, ‘spiritual’, and ‘mystical’ all possess considerable definitional overlap with each other, and their appropriate use is highly sensitive to cultural, psychological, temporal, and physiological conditions. Which term or terms are the most appropriate for describing a particular experience is highly dependent on the percipient, their ideology, and their immediate situation. Additional layers of complexity are introduced by the act of

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶⁰ Larry Danielson, ‘Toward the analysis of vernacular texts: the supernatural narrative in oral and popular print sources’ in *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, xvi, no. 3 (1979), p. 131.

attempting to historically interpret the experiences of deceased people from source materials that were likely created long after the experience under investigation occurred, and in highly different circumstances. For example, most of the BMH witness statements were written in the late 1940's or early 1950's, more than twenty years after the Irish Revolution, and the stories identified from the School's Folklore Collection were collected in the late 1930's, roughly fifteen years after the end of the Irish Civil War. The situation is further entangled by the fact that individuals are quite capable of simultaneously interpreting an experience in multiple contradictory ways, both during the experience and afterwards. After many years of soaking up the master narrative of a historical moment and subconsciously reconstructing their memories accordingly, recollections can become highly distorted indeed. Yet another layer of complexity shrouds the task when one considers the way in which the methodology and terminology of the historian corrals, frames, and curates the collection of experiences being interpreted, influencing their respective classifications by their newly selected association with each other. All these considerations demonstrate that truthfully labelling such unworldly phenomena can only be done by acknowledging that each possesses an intersectional multiplicity of relevant labels chronologically stratified by each attempt to comprehend them. Perhaps the only thing universal about these ghostly recollections is their fickle liminality.

Statement of Definitions

All the approaches so far discussed are synthesized here into an overarching taxonomy relevant to this investigation, so as not to misclassify what is found, and as a result to be able to effectively identify the relevant secondary literature concerning the phenomena in question. This taxonomy needs to address several crucial issues regarding the scope of this project. Does it include political ideologies with spiritual aspects, even if they aren't accompanied by concrete experiences or practices? Does it include routine and church sanctioned devotional practices? Does it include practices or experiences not deemed by the percipient to be in any

way supernatural, even if they meet this project's definitional standard of being supernatural? The answer to all these questions is yes, provided that they are each discussed in a manner that does not unify them all into the same precise category and gives due diligence to their subtle differences. To clarify, this study will concern the recollections of Irish revolutionaries, their opponents, or members of the communities in which they fought that are pertinent to beliefs, practices, and experiences that can be described as both supernatural and also as one or more of the following: religious, spiritual, mystical, or paranormal. The definitions used in this project for these terms are as follows:

Supernatural: Phenomena that violate, transcend, operate outside of, or are distinct from the immanently principled operations or laws of nature as understood by their percipients.

Paranormal: Phenomena whose existence is rejected by the laws of both science and mainstream religion.

Religious: Beliefs, practices, and experiences legitimized and encouraged by any of the longstanding established churches in Ireland.

Spiritual: Pertaining to phenomena associated with the spirit or soul.

Mystical: Pertaining to phenomena which elicit a sense of numinous ineffable unity in the percipient with a transcendent universal reality.

These terms overlap with each other to greater and lesser degrees. For example, all paranormal and spiritual phenomena are also supernatural phenomena, but not all mystical or religious phenomena are supernatural. To visually illustrate how these definitions overlap, a diagram has been included below:

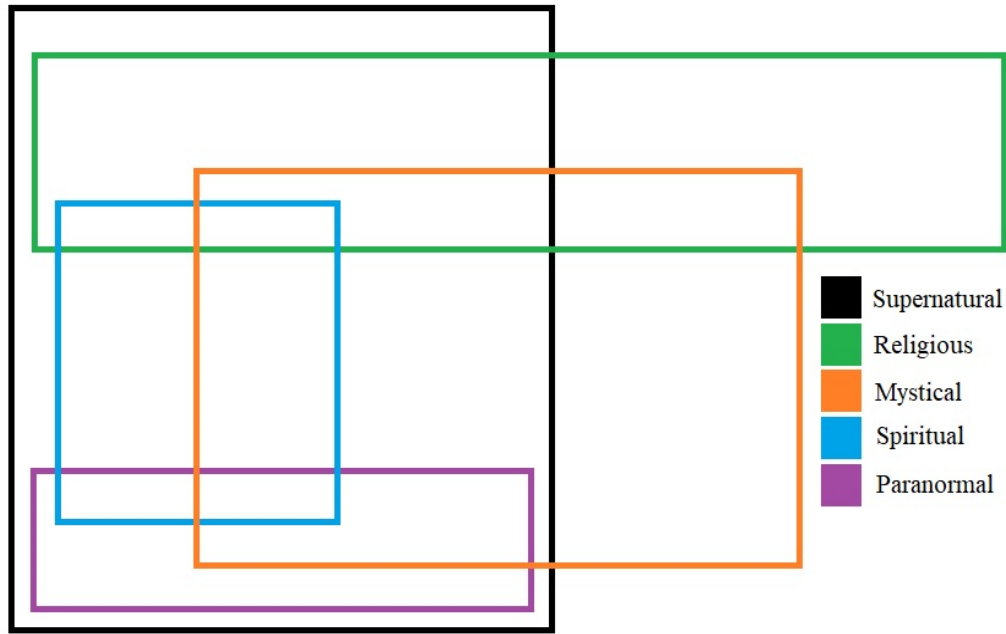


Figure 5: Illustration of Relationships Between Definitions of Supernatural Phenomena

Notably, the boxes which represent religious and paranormal phenomena do not overlap, and the boxes which represent mystical and religious phenomena are partially outside of the box which represents supernatural phenomena. This demonstrates why a single term like ‘supernatural’ cannot be relied upon to describe the subject of this project, as it intersects with categories like ‘religious’ and ‘paranormal’ which would be offensive to uncritically lump together, and with categories like mystical and religious, which may include non-supernatural phenomena that are outside the scope of this project.

Some further elaboration is necessary. Observations that are cynical of the ostensible supernaturality of a phenomenon despite the credulity of others will be included in this study. For example, in the BMH witness statements there are several passages which describe how numerous people flocked to Templemore in hopes of witnessing miracles which were likely fraudulent or could be explained as mental illness. Sean Scott wrote in his statement that ‘during those summer months of 1920 the supposed miracles of the bleeding statues took place in Templemore. The statues were exhibited in a yard in the Main Street by a man named James

Walsh who was called "The Saint" and who, I would say, was suffering from a hallucination.'⁶¹ Though these recollections and their attendant personal convictions are not themselves supernatural, they are pertinent to the supernatural beliefs of others, and thus merit inclusion. Similarly, recollections of a phenomena once regarded by the percipient to be supernatural but at the time of recollection have since been 'debunked' will also be included. If a veteran recalls the experience of seeing a ghost which he now believes has a natural explanation but did not at the time when he saw it, that recollection would be included in this study; this has proven to be the case for memorates found within the statements of Francis Healy and Thomas Hevey. For example, in his statement Francis Healy described searching an attic and encountering a 'one-eyed creature' hidden under some rags which he was later told was in fact an 'old eccentric female employee'.⁶² A recollection need only be pertinent to a supernatural belief, practice, or experience to be included in this study; it need not be credulous toward that experience. Finally, explicitly fictional stories of the supernatural created for the purposes of entertainment will not be included as direct objects of analysis, but only used to contextualize the analyses of other memorates.

The criteria used for distinguishing between supernatural religious phenomena and non-supernatural religious phenomena should be elaborated upon here. In general, if a religious phenomenon either consists of, communicates with, or symbolizes a supernatural being, action, force, or belief, it will be included in this study. For example, the Catholic sacraments are rituals which both symbolize and are believed to actualize the presence of the holy spirit in the bodies of those who perform them rightly through the reception of 'sanctifying grace...a supernatural gift of God by which the soul is made pleasing to Him.'⁶³ The most rev. Michael Sheehan,

⁶¹ Tomas O Maoileoin statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 845), pp. 97, 101; Sean Scott statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1486), pp. 7-8; James Leahy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1454), pp. 43-44.

⁶² Francis Healy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1694), p. 7; Thomas Hevey statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1668), pp. 33-34, 62.

⁶³ The Most Rev. M. Sheehan, *Apologetics And Catholic Doctrine: A Course Of Religious Instruction For Schools And Colleges Part 2: Catholic Doctrine* (2nd ed., Dublin, 1961), p. 108.

titular archbishop of Geremia until his death in 1945, described how the gift of sanctifying grace affects the soul of a man:

...there is still a higher life which he may receive, a *divine life*, a supernatural life, a life which, by a true and real change, raises him above the natural excellence of the most exalted creatures, and sets him, so to speak, on a level with God Himself; a life which places him inside the veil that God has hung between Himself and His creation; *a life which gives him a share in what is special to God Himself, a share in the knowledge God has of His own perfections and in the happiness He derives therefrom.*⁶⁴

All the sacraments provide this gift of sanctifying grace to those who perform them in accordance with Catholic doctrine, thereby enthroning the holy ghost in the souls of those who receive sanctifying grace. More recently, in 2006, Stratford Caldecott described the nature of the sacraments:

The sacraments are symbols, but they are also more than symbols. They occupy a level of reality between the naturally symbolic cosmos and the man who is God. They extend the actions he performed on earth. In that sense they are parts of his “mystical” body, and in fact they generate that body in something of the way a seed generates a plant or an animal. For the church is a supernatural organism that grows and develops over time, just as we do.⁶⁵

Caldecott goes so far as to declare the church itself to be a ‘supernatural organism’ which is largely in alignment with other earlier theologians who in 1923 interpreted the sacraments to be the way by which Christians become united in the ‘mystical body’ of Christ, thereby imparting a ‘...supernatural life and supernatural happiness.’⁶⁶ Therefore, the sacraments as understood by Catholic theologians both before and after Vatican II will be included in the second and third phases of this study, as to believers in Catholic doctrine, the sacraments constitute an envelopment in the supernatural body of Jesus Christ. Other less central and more mundane aspects of Catholicism, for example material culture like pews and candelabra, will

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁶⁵ Stratford Caldecott, *The Seven Sacraments: Entering the Mysteries Of God* (New York, 2006), p. 16.

⁶⁶ C.C. Martindale, ‘The sacramental system’ in O.S.F.C. Father Cuthbert (ed.), *God And The Supernatural: A Catholic Statement Of The Christian Faith* (historical reproduction of first edition originally published 1923, Stockbridge, 2009), p. 278; E.I. Watkin, ‘The church as the mystical body of Christ’ in Cuthbert (ed.), *God and the supernatural*, p. 236.

not be included in this study as they do not consist of, communicate with, or symbolize supernatural beings, actions, forces, or beliefs.

The next concept that needs definition is ‘Irish revolutionary.’ The definition of revolutionary according to the Oxford English dictionary is someone who ‘...advocates or engages in political revolution’.⁶⁷ In turn, a ‘revolution’ is defined as ‘a forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favour of a new system.’⁶⁸ By these definitions, we can infer that an Irish revolutionary would be a person who advocated or engaged in the forcible overthrow of the English government or social order. This means that being in the IRA was not a requirement for being a revolutionary, one would simply have to be an advocate of ‘forcible overthrow’; whether you were physically involved is not relevant, provided at least that you were supportive of someone else who was. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, an Irish revolutionary will be defined as a person who advocated or engaged in the forcible overthrow of the British government or social order. This definition excludes many groups of people who might have written about their supernatural experiences during the period under study such as the Dublin Society of Psychical Research, Labour Unions, and various writers and artists of the revolutionary generation. The historical actors discussed in this thesis are predominantly members of the Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBan, and their communities.

The next question concerns chronology, and historians of the Irish Revolution draw their lines in a variety of places. Some would say that Ireland has been in a state of revolt since the Norman conquests, and that it would be more appropriate to speak of periods of ceasefire than it would be to speak of periods of revolutionary activity.⁶⁹ There may be some truth to this, certainly in the popular consciousness, but historians have increasingly been more in favour of

⁶⁷ Oxford University Press, Angus Stevenson (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3rd ed., Oxford, 2010), p. 1522.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Patrick O’Farrell, *Ireland’s English Question* (New York, 1971), p. 15.

breaking it down into smaller periods, most popularly from 1912-1923.⁷⁰ In 1987 Tom Garvin wrote about the revolution as the seventy year span between 1858-1928, arguing that the famine and Fenian failures were catalytic for the development of a new ideology that would be capable of a substantive popular revolution, though he does not provide any specific justification for choosing 1928 as his endpoint.⁷¹ This approach has its merits, but most historians these days strive for even more specificity, and tend to start around 1912 with the introduction of the third Home Rule bill, 1913 with the formation of the Irish Volunteers, or possibly in 1916 with the Easter Rising.⁷² In his book *The IRA at War*, Peter Hart designated the period between Easter 1916 and the treaty settlement of 1923 as the revolution, in spite of the multiple periods of relative calm interspersed throughout this range; Hart's key metric was based around the idea proposed earlier by Charles Tilly, that being the sundering and ultimate replacement of sovereignty and hegemony over a given state.⁷³ This project's chronology will take Hart and Tilly's approach, and will span from the Easter Rising through to the end of the Civil War. This is the period when drilling and rhetoric transformed into military operations with discrete objectives whose achievement merited using force, sustaining or inflicting significant casualties on a massive scale if necessary. This seems to be where the cultural shift finally translated into a 'forcible overthrow', wherein the sovereignty over most of Ireland was sundered and replaced.

To summarize, this study will concern the recollections of Irish revolutionaries, their opponents, or members of the communities in which they fought that are pertinent to beliefs, practices, and experiences that can be described as both supernatural and also as one or more

⁷⁰ Gearoid O Tuathaigh, 'The Historiography of the Irish Revolution' in John Crowley, Donal O Drisceoil, and Mike Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2019), pp 868-872.

⁷¹ Tom Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858-1928* (Kindle edition, Oxford, 1987), locations 120-128.

⁷² Crowley, O Drisceoil, & Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, p. xvii; Foster, *Vivid Faces, passim*; McGarry, *The Rising, passim*.

⁷³ Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at War: 1916-1923* (Kindle edition, New York, 2003), locations 175-206.

of the following: religious, spiritual, mystical, or paranormal according to this study's methodological definitions of these terms as distinct from the subjective definitions of Irish revolutionaries, their communities, and opponents. The methodological definitions of these terms are based upon a wide interdisciplinary review, with the intention of eschewing both vagary and sectarian conceptual contamination, while simultaneously clarifying which source materials are relevant. The use of several terms is necessitated by both the variety of terms used by the relevant secondary source literature, and by the complex cultural interaction between their different competing and overlapping categorizations, which makes the use of a single term both misleading, and potentially insulting, if not blasphemous. For the sake of convenience, the phrase 'beliefs, practices, and experiences that can be described as both supernatural and also as one or more of the following: religious, spiritual, mystical, or paranormal according to the methodological definitions of this project' will be shortened to 'supernatural phenomena'. This study only investigates recollections of or concerning Irish 'revolutionaries' or their opponents pertinent to supernatural phenomena temporally situated between the Easter Rising and the conclusion of the Irish Civil War.

Collection and Close Reading

The general goal of the second phase of this study was, at the outset, to comprehensively identify and collect all the primary source materials relevant to this project's topic. It was initially estimated that there would not be a great deal of relevant material, that this material would be easily identified, and that such a goal would thus be feasible. However, as the collection process commenced, it became increasingly clear that a much larger than expected range of supernatural accounts and references were present in the sources. Furthermore, it became clear that a close reading of every relevant primary source to the desired degree of thoroughness would be impossible given the amount of material available. Therefore, some

sort of systematic prioritization of the source materials was necessary, and the collection process was optimized to gather the most relevant materials within the available time.

Toward this end, it was decided that, where possible, digitized and word-searchable collections of source materials would be drawn from as the base source repositories for this study; the main repositories were determined to be the Bureau of Military History witness statement collection, the digitized notebooks of the School's Folklore Collection, the Irish Newspaper Archive, and the British Newspaper Archive.⁷⁴ These collections all had the advantages of being both extensive and word searchable. Detailed sets of key words and phrases that would both reflect the topic of this study and be tailored to each collection were developed and entered into the search functions of each collection.⁷⁵ Through recording the number of hits returned by each term, a rough 'lie of the land' was garnered, revealing not only more precisely the scope of the materials which were within the boundaries of the study, but also which sub-topics were most prevalent. From this information, a rough idea of the sample size of all supernatural materials was determined, and from that, a rough idea of what constituted a representative portion of that sample. Once the search results that comprised a representative sample of a given collection was identified, the bulk of materials was thus substantially narrowed down, and each search result from that collection could feasibly be checked one by one for its relevance before the specific source from which it was drawn was committed to being closely read in the third phase. In this way, through the careful use of recent technological advancements, a great deal of unnecessary reading of irrelevant material was prevented, and a high volume of relevant primary source material was gathered.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Both British and Irish Newspaper archives were used in conjunction to supplement gaps in both datasets. The main exception to this was the use of revolutionary memoirs and autobiographies, which will be discussed later on.

⁷⁵ See appendix 6 for an example of one of these lists of keywords.

⁷⁶ The exception to this method of identification was in this project's treatment of memoirs and autobiographies, which will be detailed in forthcoming subsections.

Once a representative sample of the relevant primary source materials was identified and collected, each source was closely read from cover to cover in search of supernatural passages. In this way, each mention of a keyword was more completely contextualized, and further relevant passages that slipped through the keyword net were identified. Before beginning the reading process, details on the provenance of the source, details on its authorship, and its length were entered into a database. Once this was done, a close reading commenced with the aim of identifying supernatural memorates. As was previously explained in the introduction, a memorate is defined here as a narrative relating purported personal experiences at first or second hand. When a memorate with relevance to the topic of this study was identified within the source, a brief preliminary analysis of it was conducted, and a variety of details on it were entered into the database, along with a brief description. A list of these details can be seen in Appendix 20, and it includes fifty-five different metrics, categorizations, and quantitative characteristics relevant to both the inner subjective qualia of the memorate's narrative, its broader historical context, and its context within the source from which it was drawn.⁷⁷ This information was later used to aid the analytical process in phases four and five. For example, both the gender of the percipient of the supernatural phenomena in question and the length of each memorate in words was recorded so that the word length of memorates could be compared by gender.

In general, the goal of the process outlined here was to provide and thoroughly organize a representative set of primary source materials on the topic of this study in the form of a database of discrete memorates. Itemizing passages of the source materials to this degree of granularity allowed for a very wide range of relevant material to be read, and for memorates with particular characteristics within that material to be easily identified, referenced, and compared with each other during later analysis. The database created during this process is

⁷⁷ See Appendix 20.

freely accessible, and will be of use both in the future research efforts of this author, and other scholars working in this field.⁷⁸ The data gathered during this process was so expansive that directly recording all of it in this document is impractical, and thus a series of itemized appendices has been employed. In the following subsections, the peculiar alterations to this process necessary for each collection of source materials will be provided in greater detail.

Sources and methods

As previously stated, the main sources for this thesis were the Bureau of Military History, the School's Folklore Collection, Memoirs, and newsprint. The first we will discuss here is the Bureau of Military History (BMH). This study's investigation into the BMH witness statement archive revealed thousands of reported incidents that either consist of or are pertinent to supernatural phenomena. There are enough mentions to merit some statistical analysis, albeit with limited conclusions. For example, the BMH witness statement archive could not be used to make any definitive statements about revolutionaries as a whole, because a large number of revolutionaries who did not receive their military service pensions did not participate, and the collection is heavily weighted towards former Irish Volunteers and IRA members, particularly officers, who served outside of Ulster, most often in the regions of Cork and Dublin.⁷⁹ Furthermore, many of the statements cannot be taken at face value as being accurate, so the statements cannot be used to make definitive conclusions about what 'really happened' per se. However, the statements can be used to make conclusions about how the experience of the revolution was remembered by those who participated in the collection of the BMH witness statements, and to corroborate other types of sources which report on the same incident.

⁷⁸ For access to a cloud storage folder containing the excel files which represent the entirety of the databases created during the conduct of this project, use the following link: (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1V2fvZCnJgbNtar6ZpDu5hbselNFxpM9T?usp=sharing>).

⁷⁹ Eve Morrison, 'The Bureau of Military History' in Crowley, O Drisceoil, & Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, p. 878.

The method used here for collecting relevant witness statements was to enter keywords or key phrases into the witness statement search index and download those statements which included a mention of the keyword, provided that the keyword was used in a way relevant for this investigation. For example, when statements which mentioned the word ‘devilish’ were scanned for, mentions which used the word more casually as a term of abuse, not in reference to a literal supernatural devil or demonic presence, were not collected. The list of keywords used here was lengthy and designed with the intention of serving like a kind of metaphorical net. Many of the relevant mentions do not speak directly of supernatural causality, and might hedge around the concept, using a variety of different terms to describe the same thing. For example, to describe a ghost, many mentions might use language like ‘mysterious presence’ or ‘strange manifestation’ or ‘apparition’ or other vaguely synonymous terms and phrases. This means that using one simple keyword like ‘ghost’ to search the archive would only provide a fraction of the actual number of ghosts in the archive, as many of them were described using different terminology. This necessitated a long list of keywords, a list provided here in an appendix, ordered by the number of times they were mentioned in the archive, or ‘hits’.⁸⁰ Ultimately 594 keywords were used to search the BMH, which returned a combined total of 15,576 hits.⁸¹ This list of which terms returned the most hits is interesting in and of itself and underscores the relatively greater importance of religion generally in the worldview of those who contributed to the BMH; notably, the keyword with the most hits is ‘mass’. Many of the mentions which turned up were redundant, returning statements which had been previously downloaded, and so the combined total number of hits described in the list above is much larger than the number of statements which contained at least one hit. Many of the hits originated from phrases with little to no supernatural relevance; such hits were weeded out carefully.

⁸⁰ See Appendix 6.

⁸¹ Of these hits, only 6012 were thoroughly checked as described here, most of the omissions from the more thorough checking were religious keywords, which reflects this study’s prioritization of paranormal phenomena.

After collecting all the relevant mentions from these hits, each mention was analysed in a variety of ways. First, it was determined whether the mention was pertinent to a supernatural phenomenon, and used in a literal, non-euphemistic, non-hyperbolic fashion. If it was, then the process continued by gathering some basic biographical information about the percipient, namely, their hometown, main active region, age at the time of the event, age at the time of the interview, the name of the interviewer, where and when the interview was conducted, organizational affiliations, and the religious identification and gender of the percipient. The gathering of this information was supplemented by consulting the military service pension application of the percipient, where possible. Secondly, information was gathered about the event being mentioned itself, inspired by the taxonomical classification of spiritual experiences as detailed by the psychological research of Diane Wind Wardell and Joan C. Engebretson discussed earlier.⁸² This information was largely concerned with the circumstantial and ideological context of the phenomena, and included the reported location, time, category, religious affiliations of the phenomena, credulity of the percipient both at the time of the phenomena and the time of recollection, the proximity of the percipient to the phenomena, the proximity of the phenomena to combat, the phenomena's connection to a physical object (if any), the phenomena's connection to a specific location (if any), if the phenomena constituted a ritual practice, if the phenomena was anomalous, if the phenomena constituted a belief, and the narrative weight of the phenomena. The narrative weight was defined as the percentage of the pages in the witness statement devoted to describing the phenomena. All this information was tabulated on an excel spreadsheet to more easily enable statistical analysis. Such analysis sheds light on the relative prevalence of certain types of supernatural phenomena, their relationship to traumatic experiences, and the relationship between certain geographic regions and supernatural phenomena. In keeping with the efforts of scholars in the monumental tome

⁸² Wardell and Engebretson, 'Taxonomy of spiritual experiences', p. 215.

Atlas of the Irish Revolution, this statistical analysis will allow for the mapping of supernatural experience both chronologically and geographically, by extension aiding the conceptualization of how such phenomena relate to overall four-dimensional historical process of the Irish Revolution.⁸³

The process of extracting this information from the witness statements often involved reading lengthy sections of the statement on either side of the reported phenomena to gain context for the event being analysed, and during this process, more phenomena were often discovered unintentionally, so those mentions initially gathered by the net of key words and phrases do not comprise the entirety of the mentions that were ultimately found. Evaluation of the ‘credulity’ of the percipient was conducted on a modified five stage belief scale as used by folklorist Gillian Bennett in her 1980 survey of the beliefs of ninety-one Manchester women on the topics of ‘extrasensory perception, omens, premonitions, fortune-telling and horoscopes, and the possibility of life after death.’⁸⁴ In Bennett’s scale, a ranking of one represented convinced disbelief, two represented some disbelief, three represented uncertainty, four represented some belief, and five represented convinced belief.⁸⁵ As Bennett’s process involved the use of certain linguistic clues only identifiable in the setting of direct interviews, applying sections of witness statement narratives to this scale could admittedly only be approximate at best, and where there was not sufficient information available to conclusively determine their degree of credulity, a zero was marked.

A variety of other rating scales were invented and applied to each phenomenon mentioned. The religiosity of a given phenomenon was rated on a four stage scale: zero represented phenomena with no connection, real or imagined, to a contemporary religious tradition, one represented phenomena with some doctrinally unacceptable or tangential

⁸³ Crowley, O Drisceoil, & Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, p. xviii.

⁸⁴ Bennett, "*Alas, poor ghost!*", p. 13.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 20-23, 173-193.

association with a contemporary religious tradition, two represented anomalous phenomena conditionally acceptable to the doctrine of a contemporary religious tradition or practices which though associated, were not explicitly denied or encouraged, and finally three represented phenomena which were not only doctrinally acceptable, but also obligatory and prescribed by a contemporary religious tradition as part of routine practice. For example, seeing the ghost of a dead farmer would be classified as a zero, seeing the ghosts of long dead Catholics near an old mass path would be classified as a one, unverified miracles associated with statues of the holy family would be classified as a two, and attending mass or going to confession would be classified as a three. The degree to which the circumstances surrounding each phenomenon were dangerous was also recorded on a five stage scale: phenomena which occurred more than two weeks away from any dangerous or harrowing activity were classified as a zero, phenomena which occurred within two weeks of a battle or potentially dangerous mission were classified as a one, phenomena which occurred within a day of a battle or potentially dangerous mission were classified as a two, and phenomena which occurred in the midst of combat or a potentially dangerous mission were classified as a three. Finally, the proximity of the percipient to each phenomena was rated on a five stage scale: if the witness heard about the phenomena through legends or folktales it was classified as a one, if the witness heard about the phenomena from a rumor of contemporary origin it was classified as a two, if the witness heard about the phenomena from the person who experienced the phenomena first hand it was classified as a three, if the witness themselves experienced the phenomena first hand it was classified as a four. Through the analysis of the statistics of these numbers, conclusions can be drawn about the degree to which supernatural phenomena were believed, religious, associated with dangerous situations, and experienced directly.

As oral history documents, the degree and manner that investigators influenced the content of BMH witness statements is mysteriously occluded; the documents are mostly

derived from interviews that have been edited and formatted by the investigators in ways which are not yet entirely understood.⁸⁶ It is highly likely that each individual investigator's training, personal biases, and relationships with the various interviewees had an impact on their editorial choices. To reveal what these impacts may have been on the paranormal and supernatural material particularly, the investigator associated with each supernatural memorate has been noted. From this process a body of data has emerged from which tentative observations can be made about the relative likelihood of each investigator to allow paranormal material through their editorial process. All the paranormal memorates identified in the BMH Witness statements were found in statements edited by twenty-four investigators, and the number of paranormal memorates found was concentrated in statements edited by a relatively small portion of these twenty-four.⁸⁷ For most of these twenty-four investigators, six or fewer paranormal memorates were found.⁸⁸ Sixty-three percent of all the paranormal memorates found were in the statements edited by just six investigators, and forty-four percent of all paranormal memorates found came from the witness statements edited by just three investigators, Lieutenant Colonel Seán Brennan (forty-two memorates), Commandant Michael F. Ryan (thirty-six memorates), and Jane Kissane (twenty-six memorates).⁸⁹ This indicates that some investigators were indeed more likely to allow paranormal material through their editing process; if the peculiarities of each investigator had no bearing on the amount of paranormal material, then the distribution would not be so heavily skewed. More thorough analysis of the editorial process of the BMH has been conducted by Chris Fitzgerald and Eve Morrison, though definitive details about how

⁸⁶ Chris Fitzgerald, *Investigating a Corpus of Historical Oral Testimonies: The Linguistic Construction of Certainty* (New York, 2023), pp 33-34.

⁸⁷ See Appendix 10 for a more detailed breakdown of this data.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

exactly investigators influenced the creation of the witness statements remains frustratingly unclear due to the interview techniques of the investigators not being archived.⁹⁰

Some of the phenomena found in the archive were more remarkable than others in their length, vividness, emotional impact, and the absence of any discussion of them in secondary source literature. These phenomena merit deeper qualitative analysis as individual cases. These include among others the haunting and exorcism of Kinsale barracks, the apparition of the Black Pig in Kiltrustan (and its attempted banishment), the telepathic connection between Grace and Joseph Plunkett, and the spirit guardian of Ailbhe Ó Monacháin and Liam Mellowes' escape party. There are dozens of other cases, but they will be largely discussed as broader types whereas the more substantial and intersectional phenomena will be discussed individually in depth so as to simultaneously give both a more subjective feeling of these phenomena, and a more statistical and representative big picture.

The SFC, and Dúchas.ie

The treatment of SFC was broadly similar to that of the BMH. To search the digitized transcripts on The Dúchas Project's website, www.duchas.ie, a list of sixty-eight keywords relevant to the Irish revolutionary struggle was developed.⁹¹ Ultimately, the hits from only thirty-four of these keywords were completely scanned and tabulated, but this would prove to be sufficient for the purposes of this project. Many of these keywords were chosen so that Irish language materials would return hits from the search using terms with numbers, acronyms, and proper names like 'IRA', '1921', '1916', or 'De Valera', for example, which would be substantially the same across sources in both English and Irish. A query was conducted on all these words for the number of hits they brought up and arranged the keywords by priority. This

⁹⁰ Fitzgerald, *Investigating a Corpus of Historical Oral Testimonies*, pp 15-39; Eve Morrison, 'The Bureau of Military History: separatist veterans' narratives of the Irish Revolution', (PhD Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2011), pp 84-258.

⁹¹ For the list of keywords, see Appendix 21; 'The Dúchas Project', National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin, (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/info/about>) (Accessed 22 May 2023).

priority was determined by considering which keywords seemed most relevant to the revolutionary period as whole while still fitting within the time requirements of the project. To match the number of paranormal memorates produced by the search of the BMH, it was determined that this project would need to investigate roughly 4,700 hits from the folklore collection. This is about 1,000 fewer hits than what was ultimately investigated from the BMH, with only sixty-eight keywords compared to the 594 keywords investigated there. This difference is due to two factors. Firstly, the folklore collection is far richer in terms of supernatural material. Each of the stories in the folklore collection are far shorter on average than a typical witness statement and far more dense in their supernatural content; for example, the average witness statement read was typically around thirty-five pages long and had about three pages of supernatural material divided over eight or nine memorates, whereas the average story from the folklore collection was about a page long and half of this page or more would be a single memorate highly supernatural in character. Nevertheless, even with the hits of only thirty-four keywords properly collected and tabulated, a considerable number of supernatural memorates was accumulated which provide a sample of how the supernatural side of the Irish Revolution manifested in folk memory representative enough for the purposes of this project.

British and Irish Newspaper Archives

The approach of this project toward collecting material from newspaper archives was like the approach used for BMH witness statements, however there were some further complications. Newspapers from throughout the British Isles were consulted, which necessitated the use of both the Irish and British Newspaper archives. Additionally, the newspaper archives are obviously not exclusively full of reportage on the Irish Revolution or on the supernatural, so to narrow down hits returned in searches it was necessary to use more complex queries. A string of words and phrases related to the Irish Revolution was used in conjunction with a string of words and phrases related to the supernatural; these strings and their constituent parts were

connected using Boolean operators. The search functions of the archive websites were used to narrow down the date range, and, if necessary, the location. This process revealed an unmanageably large number of hits, even with the lengthy Boolean strands. For example, the term ‘Prophecy’ was used quite regularly during the Irish Revolution by politicians, journalists, and sports commentators in a quasi-hyperbolic fashion; a search for the term ‘prophecy’ between the years 1916 and 1923 in the Irish Newspaper Archive returned 5,166 hits, a considerable amount of material.⁹² Further narrowing this initial result with a Boolean clause that both omits sporting prognostications and targets terms common to discussions of the Anglo-Irish conflict resulted in 653 hits.⁹³ To this might be added the hundreds of hits which are returned by searching the intersections of ‘Prophecy’, ‘Black Pig’, and the various derivations of St Columba’s name.⁹⁴ Considering the imperfect digitization of the archive and the incomprehensive nature of the Boolean clause used, it seems safe to assume that there are thousands of uses of the term prophecy in the context of the Irish revolutionary struggle present in the Irish newsprint of the period. Similarly large numbers of hits were returned for a variety of other searches related to categories including telepathy, premonitions, and apparitions. Preliminary examination of this deep well of material brings us to the conclusion that comprehensively investigating supernatural memorates in the contemporary newsprint is a task beyond the scope of this project.⁹⁵ Therefore, it was decided to make use of newsprint sources in a more targeted, case by case manner to supplement analyses in the writeup. For example, in the analysis of apparitions and prophecies concerning The Black Pig of Kiltrustan presented later in chapter four, a large collection of contemporary newsprint on the topic is referenced and discussed to illustrate both the wide renown and public perceptions of the paranormal

⁹²(<https://archive.irishnewsarchive.com/olive/APA/INA.Edu/Default.aspx#panel=home>) (26 Sep. 2022).

⁹³*Ibid.* To be more precise, this clause reads as follows:

Prophecy <AND> (Auxiliaries <OR> Outrage <OR> Ambush <OR> Republican <OR> "Sinn Fein" <OR> "Irish Volunteers" <OR> "Murder gang" <OR> "Irish Republican Army" <OR> "Black and Tans") <NOT> Sporting

⁹⁴ See Appendix 11 for a list of articles concerning the prophecies surrounding the Black Pig alone.

⁹⁵ For a small sample of prophetic newsprint identified in preliminary efforts, see appendix 19.

incidents. It should be noted that there is substantial scope for further research in newsprint sources.

Memoirs and Autobiographies

Unlike the previous collections of source materials, the second phase of this project could not be conducted using the same methods when it came to investigating memoirs and autobiographies, as most of these writings have not been digitized. Instead, a list of nineteen potentially relevant memoirs was created; this list was made to be as long and representative as was feasible to be closely read in a manner consistent with the other collections.⁹⁶ Widely read memoirs such as *On Another Man's Wound* by Ernie O'Malley, *Dublin Made Me* by Todd 'C.S.' Andrews, *My Fight for Irish Freedom* by Daniel Breen, and *Guerilla Days in Ireland* by Tom Barry were included primarily due to the relatively high impact they have had on how the Irish Revolution has been popularly remembered. In addition, a variety of less well-known memoirs from the perspectives of women, British authors, and Irish emigrants was also included to provide a greater diversity of perspectives. In terms of the third phase, these memoirs were closely read in much the same way as BMH witness statements, from cover to cover, identifying and detailing the characteristics of each memorate along the way, and entering everything found into the database. Approximately 4,200 pages of memoirs, diaries, and other autobiographical materials were read in this way (about a third of the number of

⁹⁶ This list includes the following 19 publications: Todd 'C.S.' Andrews, *Dublin Made Me*, (Dublin, 1979), *passim*; Tom Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, (Cork, 2013), *passim*; Pdraig de Burca & John F. Boyle, *Free State or Republic?*, (Dublin, 2015), *passim*; Daniel Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, (Cork, 2010), *passim*; Michael Brennan, *The War in Clare 1911-1921: Personal Memoirs of the Irish War of Independence*, (Dublin, 1980), *passim*; Kathleen Clarke, *Revolutionary Woman: Kathleen Clarke 1878-1972*, Helen Litton (ed.), (Dublin, 1991), *passim*; Darrell Figgis, *A Chronicle of Jails*, (Dublin, 2015), *passim*; Frank Gallagher, *Days of Fear*, (London, 1928), *passim*; Maurice 'Mossie' Harnett, *Victory and Woe*, (Dublin, 2015), *passim*; Charlotte Elizabeth 'Lottie' Macmanus, *White Light and Flame*, (Dublin, 1929), *passim*; Sir Nevil Macready, *Annals of an Active Life*, ii, (London, 1925), *passim*; Kathleen Keyes McDonnell, *There is a Bridge at Bandon*, (Cork, 1972), *passim*; Jeremiah Murphy, *When Youth Was Mine: A Memoir of Kerry 1902-1925*, (Dublin, 1998), *passim*; William O'Brien, *The Irish Revolution and how it came about*, (London, 1923), *passim*; Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty, *The Victory of Sinn Fein*, (Dublin, 2015), *passim*; Ernie O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, (Cork, 2013), *passim*; Ernie O'Malley, *Rising Out*, (Dublin, 2015), *passim*; Sir Henry Robinson, *Memories Wise and Otherwise*, (London, 1923), *passim*; Caroline May Woodcock, *Experiences of an Officers Wife in Ireland*, (London, 1921), *passim*.

pages read from BMH witness statements). From this survey 1,243 memorates were identified and tabulated.

Like for the other source types discussed here, the memoirs investigated by this study were often written many years after the events which they describe. However, unlike the other sources, they varied significantly in the length of this time gap; for example, William O'Brien's *The Irish Revolution and How it Came About* was published in 1923, before the Irish Civil war had even ended, and Kathleen Keyes McDonnell's *There is a Bridge at Bandon* was published in 1972, nearly fifty years later.⁹⁷ Additionally, these memoirs were usually much longer, and their target audience also varied more than the target audience of the other source types; some memoirs were written for family, some for the general public, and others for political or polemical reasons. These differences called for additional care in the fourth and fifth phases of this project as they impacted the character of the memorates collected from memoirs and made direct comparisons with memorates drawn from other source types difficult.

Analysis

The fourth phase of this study involved using the databases created to identify broad patterns in the source materials and particularly rich or representative memorates to be used as the basis for discussion in the thesis. The first steps were quantitative in nature and chiefly concerned the second research question; namely, what types of supernatural phenomena were most prevalent in the sources consulted? Since the categorization of the memorates had been so granular and thorough, answering this question definitively, exactly, and in a variety of ways was a simple matter of reordering and sorting the entries for the memorates in the excel spreadsheets. What became abundantly clear, and to some extent was clear even before the fourth phase commenced, was that supernatural phenomena of a religious nature were far and

⁹⁷ McDonnell, *There is a Bridge at Bandon*, p. 4; O'Brien, *The Irish Revolution*, p. iv.

away the most prevalent. As the religious and political history of modern Ireland has been relatively well covered in the historiography compared to the paranormal history of modern Ireland, and the amount of paranormal memorates was manageable by one researcher, the decision was made that the bulk of the qualitative analysis presented in this project would concern paranormal material. The exclusively religious and civic religion-oriented material would be referenced to contextualize and supplement the main analyses but would not be the exclusive subject of one of the chapters in this project as such. Greater attention could now be paid to the different categories of paranormal material identified.

Broadly speaking, the paranormal phenomena identified fell into four main subcategories: extra-sensory perception, apparitions, hauntings, and prophecy. These were decided upon as the main subjects for the body chapters of the dissertation. A variety of smaller subcategories (like telepathy and omens for example) were folded into one of the four main thematic chapters with the greatest degree of similarity. At this point, the database was searched for suitably representative and psychically rich memorates to be explored in depth in each chapter. This was done in several ways. One of the first ways this was done was by sorting all the memorates within a given subcategory by their word count. The longest of these were more closely reviewed for their suitability and relevance (length alone not necessarily being an indicator of psychic richness.) Another way involved returning to memorates that had been noticed earlier; during the second phase, certain noteworthy memorates had already been highlighted for later consideration, and these were reviewed for their suitability. For each given chapter, once a set of roughly a dozen suitably rich and representative memorates were chosen, close analyses of each memorate were written. During this writing process when discussing specific themes or patterns present in each memorate, other briefer memorates bearing similar qualities which had not been chosen earlier were referenced to further underscore and evidence

observations made. Each chapter was further supplemented by quantitative analyses concerning various aspects of that chapter.

Statement on Causes of Supernatural Phenomena

The memorates that will be analysed in the body of this thesis will be interpreted using six different broader explanatory frameworks. Where corroborating evidence makes it possible, a tentative estimation will be offered as to which one or ones are the most likely, but in no case will it be asserted with complete certainty that one is exclusively the case. Outside of the six frameworks provided there are an infinitude of other valid possibilities, but for reasons of expediency this study will generally focus discussing these six. The first of these frameworks is that of flawed memory, where the memorate is interpreted as an example of a memory of the paranormal caused by gaps, mis-orderings, or other flaws in the memory of the writer. The second is post-traumatic narrative coping, where the memorate is interpreted as an example of a memory of the paranormal constructed semiconsciously or subconsciously by the writer as a coping mechanism for a traumatic event. The third is as hallucination, where the memorate is interpreted as an example of a memory of a hallucination, interpreted either later or contemporaneously as a paranormal event. The fourth is propagandistic fabrication, where the memorate is interpreted as an example of a memory intentionally fabricated for political or propagandistic reasons by the writer. The fifth is personal fabrication, where the memorate is interpreted as an example of a memory intentionally fabricated for malicious, creative, or otherwise personal reasons by the writer. The sixth is through a parapsychological lens, where the memorate is interpreted as an example of an accurate recollection of a veridical manifestation of a paranormal phenomenon.

In keeping with the previously discussed quantum physics-informed and neo-antiquarian approaches of historians like Couliano, Beiner, and Leersen, this thesis contends that none of

the various explanatory frameworks discussed can be proven to be valid with any certainty, and to choose one would only partially illustrate the truth: that the truest explanation of the paranormal experiences depicted in the memorates exists in a kind of metaphorical quantum superposition, where all interpretations are simultaneously valid until sufficient evidence can be found to confidently settle upon one.⁹⁸ The interpretations are informed by each other and cross-contaminated into the broader whole which attempts to explain the phenomena. This interdisciplinary meta-interpretation might leave the reader unsatisfied, but it is the closest thing to truth that can be honestly managed. Settling upon one interpretation and stiffly advocating that it is the only valid version would be sophistry.

There is a subtle difference between this paracausal interpretation and a polycasual interpretation; whereas a polycasual interpretation would assert the validity or high probability of a specific combination of causes for a given event, a paracausal interpretation is instead asserted here: that until proven otherwise all the possible causes in all the possible combinations are valid interpretations; they are all in superposition as a kind of quantum cloud, which is itself the most valid cause for the given event. One could critique this by asking ‘Was not the wave function for the event already collapsed when it was first observed?’ which could be countered with the reply that the wave function would be collapsed if we could be reasonably certain that the event even occurred in the first place and is not an artifact of narrative memory. For most of the memorates dealt with here we simply cannot be certain of this. They have effectively been un-observed, their collapse both has and has not occurred. As a result, the alleged paranormal phenomena described by the unverifiable memorates remain suspended in an ontological limbo, simultaneously real and unreal, a truly fundamental liminality befitting of paranormal entities. This way of looking at them has the advantage of illustrating their fifth-

⁹⁸ Beiner and Leerssen, ‘Why Irish history starved’, *passim*; Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis*, pp 1-7.

dimensional breadth, like a ‘souplander’ who found a way to conceive of the entire spoon as it passed through his domain.⁹⁹

Within this method are several implicit assertions about Irish revolutionary historiography. The most fundamental is that its prevalent tone of certainty is limiting. Asserting that a given historical phenomena has one most likely valid explanation or combination of explanations without substantially exploring the others does not do justice to the true complexity of the past, with its fractal myriad of possibilities. Furthermore, it tends to privilege the most probable explanations, leaving the more unlikely, distasteful, and anomalous explanations undiscussed. Another implicit assertion here is that, at least where the supernatural is concerned, interdisciplinary insights are crucial to a well-rounded understanding. As was stated previously, literature on the topic being investigated by this thesis is simultaneously extensive and scant. Only a handful of historians have seriously attempted to investigate the supernatural aspects of the Irish Revolution. However, each thematic component of the topic being investigated here when taken in isolation has an extensive literature of its own with a wide variety of disciplinary approaches, each with their own lively discourses and useful perspectives. To make up for the paucity of literature specifically dealing with the supernatural in the Irish Revolution, this thesis draws upon methods, insights, and secondary source literature from a wide variety of disciplinary approaches. In this way, this thesis offers potentially useful information and challenging perspectives both to the historiography of the Irish Revolution and the broader scholarly discourses on the supernatural.

⁹⁹ Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis*, pp 2-3.

Chapter Two: Extra-Sensory Perception: A Seventh Sense

Introduction

In his statement to the Bureau of Military History, Colonel Eamon Broy claimed the Irish people had developed a special mental faculty as an adaptation to centuries of British occupation:

For centuries the people had, by bitter experience, learned to regard all strangers as enemies of one kind or another whether landlords, soldiers, police or officials. All Government representatives were the enemies of the people out only to do evil to the ordinary population and they never appeared for any good purpose. The people had had to develop *a sixth and if possible, a seventh sense* in order to be eternally on their guard against their enemies.¹

Broy was one of the IRA's most valuable intelligence agents working in Dublin Castle. An escort and private secretary to Michael Collins, Broy was as credible a witness to the War of Independence as any. He, along with many others who fought in the Irish Revolution, recorded remembrances of incidents of what has come to be known as extra-sensory perception (ESP). Whether or not one views these remembrances as merely hyperbole, artifacts of temporal distortion, vicissitudes of memory, or perhaps something altogether more eerie, they undeniably appeared regularly in the source materials consulted in this thesis. This chapter is an investigation into these curious memories, how they were written, why they were made, their psychological significance, what they were attempting to describe, and their place in the supernatural lore of the Irish Revolution.

Stories about different varieties of ESP are one of the most common types of paranormal phenomena reported by Irish revolutionaries in memoirs and witness statements; they also have a significant presence in sources drawn from folklore collections, though perhaps to a lesser

¹ Eamon Broy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1280), pp 7-8. My emphasis added.

degree.² ESP is known by many names, including a ‘sixth sense’, ‘second sight’, intuition, gut feeling, instinct, or hunch, among many others. ESP is defined here as true information gained without the conscious use of the externally perceptive senses or inferential reasoning based on evidence. Phrased differently, it is knowing without knowing how one knows (albeit, within a tradition where such unknowable knowing is commonly known). The following sections do not represent all the different types of ESP found in accounts of the Irish Revolution, only premonitions, dreams, and telepathy. They come from a variety of different contexts – men, women, rich, poor, rural, urban, young, and old are all represented here – but despite their differences, they are all united in their attestations to the experience of ESP.

In many ways, this is the chapter which most challenges an editorial choice predominating in the historiography of the supernatural in the Irish Revolution; specifically, the choice to focus almost exclusively on apparitions and haunted houses. Though ESP is more subtle than banshees and poltergeists, it was just as common if not more so. ESP was nuanced, reflecting the increasingly incredulous, materialistic, and psychologically reflective nature of early-twentieth century thinking about the supernatural in Britain and Ireland.³ ESP is subtle enough that it often goes unnoticed by those who experience it, even to this day. Concepts like intuition and instinct are only rarely interrogated with any degree of critical depth by most people, and this was also true during the Irish Revolution. A closer questioning of such terms reveals that at their root there exists a profound vagueness; the source of intuition and instinct (when it was even investigated) was attributed to things like ancestral memories, the hands of the fates, divine providence, or the sea of ethereal visions floating in the collective unconscious, all of which are manifestly supernatural. George William Russell, also known as ‘AE’, a nature

² See appendices 1 and 2 for data comparing quantities of different types of paranormal phenomena in memoirs, BMH witness statements, and SFC memorates.

³ Shane McCristine, *Spectres of the Self: Thinking about Ghosts and Ghost-Seeing in England, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 218.

worshipping mystic, was one of the few politically engaged Irish revolutionaries of the time to think deeply on the root of intuition. He conceived of it as a nigh on ineffable divine logos manifesting as the myriad experiences of ‘nature’ both internal and external. In 1918 he wrote:

Everything in nature has intellectual significance, and relation as utterance to the Thought out of which the universe was born, and we, whose minds were made in its image, who are the microcosm of the macrocosm, have in ourselves the key to unlock the meaning of that utterance. Because of these affinities the spirit swiftly by intuition can interpret nature to itself ... We react in numberless ways to that myriad nature about us and within us, but we retain for ourselves the secret of our response, and for lack of words speak to others of these things only in generalities.⁴

Irish revolutionaries wrote in such generalities when describing what we now call ESP, using seemingly innocuous words and phrases such as ‘instinct’, ‘strange feeling’, ‘intuition’, and ‘presentiment’, among others. Such terms were utilized in the search queries within the relevant databases during the second and third phases of this project.

Though most Irish revolutionaries were not mystics like AE, their extra-sensory perceptions are well described by the above passage in that they are interwoven with and informed by a powerful sense of a transcendent supernatural force. Seumas Robinson, one of the men who fired the opening shots of the War of Independence at Soloheadbeg, described this weave of the supernatural and the natural, but with a more Catholic viewpoint. In his witness statement he wrote:

to think that the marvellous wonders of this visible and invisible creation with its panoramic complex multiplicity (in-finity - to us finites) ... just happened by accident, or by some kind of auto-suggestion was self-created, is an insult to reason, ignores commonsense and outrages every generous human instinct. No one, no thing, no mere fortuitous chance could possibly have brought into being such an intricate and continuous positivity, governed by such an in-finity of laws, forces and results (results so inevitable as to be calculable if we had the brains to know how) except only an Infinite Mind ...⁵

⁴ George William Russell, in Raghaven Iyer and Indini Iyer (eds) *The Descent of the Gods: The Mystical Writings of G.W. Russell-A.E.* (Buckinghamshire, 1988), p. 135.

⁵ Seumas Robinson statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1721), pp 13-14.

Unlike AE, Robinson worshipped ‘the one true Church – God’s Oracle’, and, for him, the key was in a specific received tradition rather than from within. Where AE and Robinson agree is that underlying all is an infinite mind, creator of and interwoven with nature, which dispenses wisdom to humanity through a panoramic multiplicity of mysterious thoughts and words. For some Irish revolutionaries, particularly those inspired by nineteenth century mystical literature, ESP can be accurately conceived as flashes of inspiration from this infinite consciousness. Others thought much less discursively about where such presentiments, omens, or premonitions came from, but nevertheless accepted absolutely their reality and veracity, invoking them vividly even many years later.

Historians can be forgiven for largely failing to identify these little sparks off the cosmic inferno. This chapter will be a contribution toward rectifying that oversight. Based on research in hundreds of memoirs and witness statements and many thousands of accounts in folklore collections, this chapter will tease out memorates of the supernatural from subtle contextual clues; premonitions, precognitive dreams, and telepathy will be discussed, demonstrating some of the subtle, almost ineffable ways in which the supernatural manifested in revolutionary memory. Here, detailed evidence will be provided of the inarguable fact that ghosts and haunted houses are only part of the story, and that ESP was undoubtedly a significant aspect of the Irish revolutionary experience. Examples of the different varieties of ESP played a noteworthy part in how revolutionaries constructed personal narratives of their lives, how they justified their ideology, how they built heroic myths, and how they coped with both trauma and a chaotic political climate. This chapter augments how we think about the Irish Revolution through an illustration of how, in many cases, belief in extra-sensory perception powerfully shaped the remembrance and commemoration of the conflict; through the employment of ESP in their narratives Irish revolutionaries underscored the parts of their experiences of the conflict which had great emotional or ideological significance to them. The investigation of ESP beliefs in this

context can therefore reveal important historical insights about Irish revolutionaries' inner experiences and perspectives.

Precognition

The idea of haunting and 'hauntology' is often invoked to describe historical remembrance in Irish literature.⁶ However, the experience of living in the revolutionary period itself was naturally more focused on surviving the present rather than ruminating on the past, and thus more regularly evoked a different, more anxious sort of paranormality, that of precognition. In a way the inverse of haunting, which brings the horror of the past into the present, precognition brings the horror of the future into the present. It could be seen as a variety of haunting referring to spectres of the perceived future returning to disturb you. If one disregards the arrow of time altogether as an illusion (as some systems of physics would have one do), one will abolish any distinction between haunting and dreadful premonition: both are sides of the same coin, the currency of traumatic emanation.

For some, precognition manifested bodily, when an unbearable growing feeling of dreadful uncertainty in the guts evolved into a prediction with all the certainty of a near memory. In time, as the foreseen horror unfolded, this feeling would afterwards be vindicated, donning the mantle of precognition. Scores of those who contributed witness statements to the BMH describe premonitions of the themselves or others presaging deaths or great peril.⁷ For

⁶ Graham Fraser, "No more than ghosts make": The hauntology and gothic minimalism of Beckett's late work' in *Modern Fiction Studies*, xlvii, no. 3 (2000), pp 777-778; Ian Hickey, "'The old cause is never dead': hauntology and Brendan Behan's 'The Hostage'" in *Irish Studies Review*, xxviii, no. 2 (2020), pp 171-185; Katie Mishler, "A phantom city, phaked of philim pholk": spectral topographies and re-awakenings in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Sheridan Le Fanu's *The House by the Churchyard*' in *Joyce Studies Annual*, (2018), pp 162-163, 168, 170-172; Edward Molloy, 'Racial capitalism, hauntology and the politics of death in Ireland' in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, xxviii, no. 2 (2021), pp 129-146; Helen Sword, 'Modernist hauntology: James Joyce, Hester Dowden, and Shakespeare's ghost' in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language; Austin*, xli, no. 2 (1999), pp 180-201.

⁷ For examples, see Appendix 4 for a complete list of premonitions identified in Bureau of Military History witness statements, ranked by their combat proximity.

example, in his witness statement, Sean MacEntee recalled how Willie Pearse, who would later be executed in the aftermath of the Easter Rising, ‘had a premonition of his fate’ as he and the other prisoners were marched away to be processed (despite Willie Pearse’s low rank).⁸ In his witness statement, Vincent Byrne (a member of the infamous ‘squad’ of Michael Collins), described how it seemed as if DMP Constable Johnnie Barton used a precognitive faculty to evade him and his comrade Jimmy Slattery as they shadowed Barton in hope of finding an opportunity to assassinate him in November 1919:

We followed him along up Grafton St. He was walking on the left-hand side, and we were on the right. Somehow I think he had *second sight*, for, from the time we had seen him, he would just walk a few paces and, if possible, look into a mirror in the shop windows and then give a quick glance across to the right hand side... We kept a fair distance behind him, at the same time keeping him under cover, until we came nearly to the bottom of Grafton St. when he vanished as if in to thin air.⁹

For others, the anxiety would roil in the subconscious, emerging in dreams, or perhaps in utterances triggered by foul omens.¹⁰ In his witness statement, Frank Robbins recalled a dream he had three months prior to the Easter Rising wherein the position he would later take at St. Stephen’s Green during the rising was predicted.¹¹ Prophecies were shared by firesides as people living in uncertain times struggled to make sense of the political situation, perhaps eking out a glimmer of hope.¹² Irish revolutionaries who experienced precognition varied to what extent they would act on these experiences; sometimes self-doubt or social pressure would lead them to keep it to themselves, at times with disastrous consequences.

One of the most colourful examples of precognition comes from the memoir of Kathleen Keyes McDonnell, *There is a Bridge at Bandon*, published in 1972. Due to its vividness, complexity, and how well it represents the experience of precognitive ESP

⁸ Sean MacEntee statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1052), p. 119.

⁹ Vincent Byrne statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 423), pp 12-13. My emphasis added.

¹⁰ See Appendices 12A and 12B for complete lists of omens identified in the BMH, Memoirs, and the SFC for examples.

¹¹ Frank Robbins statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 585), p. 20.

¹² Ernie O’Malley, *On another man’s wound* (Cork, 2013), p. 105. See Appendices 15A, 15B, 16A, 16B, 16C, 16D, and 17 for complete lists of examples.

phenomenologically, McDonnell's memorate merits quoting at length here. On 28 August 1920, Sean Hales and a small party of volunteers were ambushed by the Essex regiment two miles from her home at Castlelack; an IRA officer, Lieutenant Tim Fitzgerald, was killed. McDonnell's home was known to be an IRA safehouse and had increasingly been subject to raids from the Crown forces. In the days following this ambush, Kathleen waited tensely along with her children and servants, expecting a raid from the dreaded Major Percival. On the night of 31 August that raid occurred, but it was preceded by a series of omens and nightmares, which Kathleen remembered as follows:

The third night the solemn moan of the wind seemed to portend misfortune, lying awake in the darkness there was something unendurably depressing in listening to the *caoine* in the grove back of the house. At last sleep overcame me and I was soon enmeshed in a frightful nightmare...I seemed to be wound up in a coil of confusion...I couldn't wake up, I couldn't stir hand or foot, but I could think, and my one thought was Percival, the torturer. Incensed by his evil presence now, I could hear him croaking...

I knew at once what that meant; murder was in the air...The first sensation of which I was conscious, though not yet wide awake, was the unseen presence of the enemy. With a suffocating sense of dread I tried to get my bearings but was still tied to the tenor of the night. It was pitch dark, the shapeless darkness outside as ominous as the shapeless gloom within. The first familiar sound was the ram in the orchard driving water to the cistern. Next an unholy howl afar off set another dog barking nearer home. 'Tisn't for nothing dogs bark like that,' I thought, 'on a night like this and no moon out either. And that old crow beyond! Why on earth is he cawing his head off this time of night?' It was uncanny; something was going to happen. Still there was no sign of the Banshee; no flapping of wings around the room; no shower of stones down the chimney, heralding death or disaster in the family on one side or other.

I was listening for half-dreaded sounds when suddenly the front' garden seemed to be alive with noiseless movement, veering towards the back door. I knew nothing more until a peremptory rap on my bedroom door rang out like a shot; in that moment the house that had been frozen with expectancy came to life; steel helmets glinted the entire length of the landing.¹³

This account contains several different kinds of precognition including omens (the keening wind, howling dogs, croaking birds), a precognitive nightmare, and a premonition (unseen presence of the enemy). It also references the banshee and includes a probable example of sleep

¹³ Kathleen Keyes McDonnell, *There is a Bridge at Bandon* (Cork, 1972), pp 172-173.

paralysis ('I couldn't wake up, I couldn't stir hand or foot, but I could think'). Sleep paralysis is a well-researched and common phenomenon in which the percipient awakens from a dream state, but their body remains frozen with muscle paralysis, inducing terrifying hallucinations involving the presence of malevolent or foreign spirits.¹⁴ In this case, the sleep paralysis is interpreted as precognitive. This account demonstrates how a rising atmosphere of anxiety can induce paranormal experiences. Oddly enough, despite being devoutly Catholic, Keyes McDonnell has no hesitancy when reporting a paranormal faculty explicitly condemned both in 1898 and 1917 by decrees of the Holy Office to be evil and unlawful under Catholic doctrine.¹⁵ This evidences the lack of any linear dichotomy between religious and paranormal beliefs demonstrated both in historical treatments of the subject by historians such as Owen Davies and by scientific writers such as Christopher D. Bader, Joseph O. Baker and Andrea Molle in their study of the relationship between religious and paranormal beliefs in Italy.¹⁶

There are numerous documented anecdotes of precognition in recollections of the Irish revolutionary period, and they can be interpreted in several ways. One way is simply to take them at face value, though this is problematic for both historical and scientific reasons. Another explanation is that these anecdotes of precognition are in fact misremembered prospections. This could be explained by the author losing their memory of the mundane way in which they acquired the information, leading to that mundane explanation being replaced by a fabricated (intentionally or otherwise) supernatural explanation during the recollection process. Another way of interpreting these anecdotes of precognition is as accurate memories of the post-

¹⁴ Caroline Watt and Ian Tierney, 'Psi-related experiences' in Etzel Cardena, Steven Jay Lynn, and Stanley Krippner (eds) *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence* (2nd ed., Washington DC, 2014), p. 248; Sue Wilson and David J. Nutt, *Sleep Disorders* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2013), pp 55-56.

¹⁵ McDonnell, *There is a Bridge at Bandon*, pp 7-34; Rev. M. Sheehan, *Apologetics and Catholic doctrine: A course of religious instruction for schools and colleges: part 2 Catholic doctrine* (2nd ed., Dublin, 1961), pp 84-85.

¹⁶ Christopher D. Bader, Joseph O. Baker and Andrea Molle, 'Countervailing forces: religiosity and paranormal belief in Italy', in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, li, no. 4 (2012), pp. 705-720; Owen Davies, *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith During the First World War* (Oxford, 2018), p. 1.

traumatic subjective experience of precognition induced by extremely stressful conditions. Some scientific research suggests ‘that believing the future is predictable increases one’s own perceived ability to exert control over future events. As a result, belief in precognition should be particularly strong when people most desire control—that is, when they lack it.’¹⁷ This belief could be forged in the near aftermath of a traumatic event to create a sense of agency and orderliness in what would otherwise be a narrative of chaotic disempowerment and victimization, not just for the subject of the prediction, but for their community as well.¹⁸ Yet another possibility is that extraordinary prescience, a common trope in revolutionary hagiography, was drawn upon by veterans while writing their memoirs as a narrative device for ideological reasons; the inclusion of a premonition could be a way of providing evidence for the kind of racial prescience described by Broy in the form of a personal anecdote. In any case, visions or dreams of the future have been a topic of discussion among writers in the Britain and Ireland for centuries, who at turns have interpreted them as angelic, demonic, or natural in origin. Seeing the future in strange ways would hardly have been a notion original to the Irish revolutionary generation.¹⁹

Regardless of their cause, the appearance of memorates concerning precognition seems remarkable, considering the lack of motivation to report such incidents in operationally-focused military history projects like the Bureau of Military History, and even more remarkable is the sizable number of them; as was previously discussed, between the witness statements, memoirs, newsprint, and folklore collections, 274 written attestations to precognition were identified (at least 200 of which came from witness statements), and there are almost certainly

¹⁷ Katharine H. Greenaway, Winnifred R. Louis, and Matthew J. Hornsey, ‘Loss of control increases belief in precognition and belief in precognition increases control’ in *PLOS One*, viii, no. 8 (2013), p. 4.

¹⁸ Ellen Badone, ‘Death omens in a Breton memorate’ in *Folklore*, lxlvi, no. 1 (1987), pp 99-104; Peter Berta, ‘The functions of omens of death in Transylvanian Hungarian peasant death culture (examples from Csikkarcfalva and Csikjenőfalva)’, *OMEGA*, xl, no. 4 (1999-2000), p. 480.

¹⁹ S.J. Wiseman, in Katharine Hodgkin, Michelle O’Callaghan, and S.J. Wiseman (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Dream: The Terrors Of The Night* (New York, 2008), pp 1-13.

more that have not been discovered yet. Despite how heavily curated the Bureau of Military History's witness statements were by their investigators, they were not curated in a way that banished the hundreds of paranormal memorates which currently can be read there. Though it must be acknowledged that the vast bulk of written material concerning the Irish Revolution has little or nothing to do with precognition, it is unclear if this is because precognition was not a common experience, or if it was because precognition was the sort of experience that the cultural milieu of the writers discouraged them from reporting. Another possibility is that for many it was such a common experience that it did not merit special mention. In any case, it appears frequently enough to warrant analysis here, and this alone says something noteworthy about Irish revolutionaries; namely, that for many of them the experience of precognition shaped how they remembered the conflict for years to come.

Viewed in the broadest sense, precognition was not as common as some other types of experience in Irish revolutionary remembrance, typically appearing as a brief anecdote spliced into the main narrative by the more loquacious revolutionaries to emphasize the terrifying intensity of a particular situation, the extraordinary prescience of particular individuals, or simply as a way to inject a little bit of extra colour into their stories. Nevertheless, there remain hundreds of memorates describing it, and each one is a fascinating case in and of itself, representing microcosmically how the emotional experience of the Irish Revolution was intense enough to create remembrances that defy our very notions of temporal reality. There is a great deal of phenomenological variety in these memorates. Though each example has an aura of strangeness about it, it is striking how unreflective and offhanded the authors typically were. They usually did not deign to explain, justify, or attempt to empirically validate these experiences. This suggests either that they could not provide such an explanation, or that they did not feel any need to do so, and assumed their readers were tolerant and familiar enough with such things that there would not be a problem uncritically incorporating them into an

official operational account; this reflects a shared understanding of their significance that did not need to be explained, and indeed, went without saying. This section will explore a collection of these precognitive experiences and demonstrate that, despite their brevity, they can show us a great deal about the mentality of Irish revolutionaries.

Premonitions and Other Strange Feelings

As was previously discussed, premonitions are defined here as a strong feeling, instinct, urge, sense, or 'inner voice' not preceded by any kind of intentional rational prospection that accurately predicts a future occurrence. Premonitions are the second most common variety of precognitive experience and therefore one of the most common varieties of ESP generally to be found in memoirs and BMH witness statements. Premonitions were most typically described by the authors of the primary sources examined in this study using terms like 'presentiment', 'premonition', 'instinct', or 'intuition', and those described this way usually were not accompanied by a very detailed explanation of how that experience felt, as if presuming the audience would already know. There were however a significant number which were described as feelings or emotional states, and these memorates usually provided more qualitative detail. The character of this feeling was usually strange or uncanny to some extent and elicited an anxious response depending on the degree of certainty; the more certain the percipient was, the more likely they would be to describe it as fear, terror, or dread. The experience often occurred in the evening, or sometimes in the middle of the night. Two described strong bodily sensations; one as being pulled out of her bed by an unseen force, and another as a sharp rapping on her skull.²⁰

Searching the phrase 'premonition <OR> presentiment' between the years of 1916-1923 in the Irish Newspaper Archives online website returns 414 hits; at least seventy of these hits

²⁰ McDonnell, *There is a bridge at Bandon*, p. 136; Grace Plunkett statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 257), p. 62.

come from coverage of revolutionary violence.²¹ These sources pose some interesting challenges to the idea that premonitions are mostly an artifact of reconstructed memories committed to writing decades after their supposed occurrence; the premonitions reported on in the newsprint are not typically described by the person who experienced them directly, and they often date to mere days after their supposed occurrence. This suggests that at the time belief in premonitions was commonplace, to the point that journalists were willing enough to mention them uncritically. One of the more valuable characteristics of these newsprint premonitions is that they often concern members of the Crown forces or revolutionaries who were killed during this period, individuals for whom proximate sources on their personal experiences are often difficult to come by.²² One widely reported example was the capture of Roger Casement in 1916, whose hiding place in a fairy fort was given away by a member of the Crown forces who claimed to have come to this knowledge by way of premonition.²³ Another example is the death of police sergeant John Higgins, who was shot while coming home from Victoria Barracks in Derry in 1921. According to several newspapers, Higgins had premonitions of his death; the *Skibbereen Eagle* wrote that he ‘had a premonition he would fall a victim, and often talked of it to his friends.’²⁴ It is unclear here if the word ‘premonition’ is being used more informally as a synonym of ‘prediction’, especially considering the high levels of risk in Higgins’ job at the time. Historians Eunan O’Halpin & Daithí O Corráin omit this premonition in their account of Higgin’s demise.²⁵ At least twenty-two other distinct stories concerning premonitions in the Irish Revolution can be found in the Irish Newspaper Archives;

²¹ Irish Newspaper Archives, ‘Search / Results’, (<https://archive.irishnewsarchive.com/olive/APA/INA.Edu/Default.aspx#panel=search>) (Accessed 23 May 2023).

²² William Sheehan, *British Voices of The Irish War of Independence* (Cork, 2007), pp 1-4.

²³ *The Liberator (Tralee)*, 2 May 1916, p. 1; *Leinster Leader*, 6 May 1916, p. 7; *Kerryman*, 6 May 1916, p. 3; *Irish Examiner*, 4 May 1916, p 3; *Kerry Sentinel*, 10 May 1916, p. 4; *Evening Herald*, 4 May 1916, p. 2.

²⁴ *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, 9 Apr. 1921, p. 6; *Larne Times*, 9 Apr. 1921, p. 6; *Skibbereen Eagle*, 9 Apr. 1921, p. 2; *Irish Independent*, 4 Apr. 1921, pp 5-6

²⁵ Eunan O’Halpin & Daithí Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (New Haven & London, 2020), p. 368. It should be noted that the sources cited for their account of Higgin’s death do not mention this premonition.

though they tend to be far better corroborated than their counterparts in the BMH, they are in most cases far less vividly described.²⁶ It is unclear if this brevity is due to limitations of the medium, or is reflective of something else like a perception of premonitions as unremarkable for example.

Notably, accounts of premonitions were relatively brief in comparison to accounts of other varieties of paranormal phenomena. Memorates of premonitions from memoirs, the BMH, and the SFC were 110.7 words in length on average, less than two thirds the average length of other types of precognitive memorates in the same sources (169.9 words), and shorter than the average length of all paranormal memorates in the same sources generally (131 words); though they make up roughly a quarter of all precognitive supernatural phenomena, they only make up about a sixth of the text written about such phenomena.²⁷ This indicates that premonitions were relatively simple to describe and needed little explanation, unlike apparitions for example.²⁸ Predictably, premonitions occurred in closer proximity to combat and traumatic situations; in BMH witness statements, premonitions had an average combat proximity value of 1.66, half a point higher than the average of all other types of supernatural phenomena in the statements (1.16).²⁹ These statistics paint a picture of a quick and powerful kind of precognition experienced by people caught up in the fray.

²⁶ *Kerryman*, 5 Feb. 1921, p. 5; *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 2 Sep. 1922, p. 2; *Sligo Champion*, 2 Sep. 1922, p. 5; *Donegal News*, 15 Mar 1919, p.3; *Nenagh Guardian*, 28 Aug. 1920, p. 4; *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 30 Oct. 1920, p. 2; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Mar 1921, p. 3; *Nenagh Guardian*, 21 Aug. 1920, p. 4; *Donegal News*, 1 Apr. 1922, p. 8; *Kerryman*, 12 Mar. 1921, p. 8; *Nenagh Guardian*, 28 Jul. 1917, p. 3; *Offaly Independent*, 4 Sep. 1920, p. 6; *Limerick Leader*, 13 Jun. 1917, p. 4; *The Nationalist (Tipperary)*, 25 May 1921, p. 11; *Westmeath Independent*, 12 Jul 1919, p. 4; *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Dec. 1920, p. 3; *Sunday Independent*, 30 Jan. 1921, p. 1; *Westmeath Examiner*, 6 Nov. 1920, p. 6; *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Feb. 1921, p. 4; *Connaught Telegraph*, 15 Jul. 1922, p. 3; *Irish Times*, 26 Nov. 1917, p. 2; *Drogheda Independent*, 31 Mar. 1923, p. 4.

²⁷ These figures are drawn from a database of memorates compiled for this project; how the memorates were collected and tabulated is explained with greater depth in the methodology chapter.

²⁸ See Appendices 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D. The average length of memorates of apparitions and hauntings from the S.F.C sampled in this study is 134.33 words.

²⁹ See Appendix 4. Each phenomenon's proximity to combat was evaluated on a scale of zero to three, a value of three was given to phenomena which occurred in the middle of combat, a value of zero was given to phenomena which occurred at least a month away from any personal experience of combat; one was given for a week or more away, two for less than a day. A value of 1.659 indicates most premonitions occurred within a few days of combat.

For example, Dan Breen's memoir *My Fight for Irish Freedom* describes how in the middle of the night of 11 October 1920, while he and his friend Seán Tracy were sharing a bed at 49 Parnell Square in Dublin, they both were struck by a foreboding premonition:

My mind became obsessed by a strange presentiment. Perhaps it was the after-effects of my recent perilous adventures. I tried to sleep but for once sleep would not come. Seán, too, was still awake, but not disposed to chat. I felt half-inclined to tell him of the foreboding that was disturbing me, he was himself the first to speak: 'Dan, do you find any strange feeling coming over you? I can't sleep, can you?' He had, in fact, put the very questions that were agitating my mind. I told him so, and we both laughed. 'We may have a raid to-night, Seán,' I said, half-joking. 'I wonder if there is any danger that we were shadowed on our way to the house? If we were surrounded in this place, we'd have a very poor chance of escaping.' A full minute passed before Seán replied... Another brief silence, and we both dozed off. Suddenly we sat up in the bed. We could distinctly hear the heavy tramp of marching men. There was a low murmur of voices... a crash of glass at the front of the house, and the hall door was burst open.³⁰

This example is typical of a broader pattern; in the midst of a long series of military engagements the percipient is afflicted by an unaccountable sensation of impending danger which interrupts their sleep, shortly thereafter the expected danger arrives. What makes this example distinctive is how it was shared with another in a quasi-telepathic sort of way. They did not heed their presentiment and the house was raided while they were still inside; they would only very narrowly escape capture in the ensuing chase.³¹

In his statement to the BMH, Michael Davern reported a similar experience while staying at his aunt's house in Kilshinane, county Tipperary in the aftermath of the Clune ambush in May 1921. He responded to it in a different way:

I had arranged to go to bed and actually had my shoes off - about 11.30 p.m. - when I got a premonition that the house would be raided. I was strapping on the guns when my aunt came in from the yard and said: "Sure, they never raided the place and they won't raid tonight". But I certainly had such a strange feeling that I decided to leave. Mick Kennedy, who worked on my aunt's farm, and who was a member of the I.R.A., was on the road, scouting. I proceeded to Maher's of Ballymore and told Mick to go to bed. Mick Kennedy was only in bed when the house was surrounded by detachments of military³²

³⁰ Dan Breen, *My Fight For Irish Freedom* (Cork, 2010), p. 140.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp 140-144.

³² Michael Davern statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1348), p. 52.

Like Breen and Treacy, Davern's rest was interrupted around 11:30 in the evening by a premonition of a raid. Unlike Breen and Treacy, Davern elected to act on his feeling, saving himself a great deal of trouble. This is a clear example of how a premonition could have direct tactical benefits, at least in retrospect, though for most revolutionaries, premonitions were not relied upon in any systematic way.

Sometimes, men in the IRA would communicate their premonitions to their superior officers. James Kilmartin was left in command of his column when his commanding officer, Dinny Lacey, left to attend the wedding of Dan Breen on 12 June 1921. Kilmartin was ordered to hold a tenuous position on the side of the hill of Kilcash, above the village of Ballypatrick, while doing so he experienced a premonition:

I was so uneasy while we were there that I sent messages into the Despatch Centre, asking Lacey, for God's sake, to allow us to move from that place. I had some kind of intuitive feeling that we would be surrounded if we remained there and I remained awake night and day for a couple of days, watching and waiting. On the third evening we got a reply, giving us permission to move...On the following morning the whole place where we had been was surrounded...There must have been at least three or four hundred troops in the raiding party and we had only got clear away.³³

Kilmartin believed that his 'intuitive feeling' ultimately saved his column from disaster. This incident could also be interpreted as a Kilmartin making a sound military decision based on the tactical situation and later framing it as 'intuitive', but then the question of why he decided to frame it this way would still remain. Premonitions were generally clustered around periods of violence in 1916, 1920, and 1921; this is to be expected as the bulk of most first-hand accounts of the revolution concern these periods. Furthermore, it is unlikely that premonitions presaging a danger which never materialized would be remembered as readily, let alone committed to writing. As a result, almost all the premonitions had to do with forebodings of a danger which came to pass shortly thereafter, with only a few exceptions. One of these exceptions was Frank Robbins, who had a feeling his family would visit him while he was jailed at Knutsford prison:

³³ James Kilmartin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 881), p. 19.

'I had a premonition that I would receive a visitor, but why I had this feeling I could not say...after dinner I was called to the visitors' room, where I found my aunt, her husband Thomas Kemple, my uncle James Whelan, and his brother-in-law Dave Sheppard.'³⁴ This example is an outlier in that it presaged something positive.

Though premonitions were remarkably consistent across demographic categories, notable patterns of difference based on gender are noticeable; for example, premonitions reported by women often concerned danger to someone other than themselves.³⁵ This demonstrates a subliminal awareness on the part of female revolutionaries of the gendered boundaries in which violence could operate in that these women did not anticipate lethal violence to be inflicted upon themselves, despite the nature of the conflict presenting very real dangers on both the 'homefront' and 'battlefront' as Mary McAuliffe has argued.³⁶ A typical case comes from Michael Lynch's statement to the BMH. In spring 1920, Michael Lynch's wife had premonitions of danger concerning her husband. Lynch heeded her presentiments:

One night after a Brigade meeting, I arrived home at about 11.30, tired and weary. I was urged by my wife not to sleep at home, as she had a premonition that there would be a raid on the house. To ease her mind, I went out and stopped the night with Dan Kavanagh...the next morning, I found that my wife's premonition had been quite correct and that there had been a very prolonged and thorough raid on the house in my absence...I attended my office regularly and came home to my meals, but I did not sleep at home, for the simple reason that I would not be allowed by my wife. This went on for four or five days...by a stroke of great luck and probably due to somebody's prayers, I escaped.³⁷

Lynch attributes his wife's premonitions (and by extension his survival) to a combination of luck and prayers rather than to any specific precognitive faculty. It should be noted that Lynch himself was not the one having the premonitions, and it would be more conclusive to have his wife's perspective on their source. Regardless, Mrs. Lynch's premonition is a great example of

³⁴ Frank Robbins statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 585), p. 101-102.

³⁵ For data comparing other aspects of premonitions based on gender, see Appendix 3.

³⁶ Mary McAuliffe, 'The homefront as battlefield: women, violence and the domestic space during war in Ireland, 1919-1921' in Linda Connolly (ed.), *Women and the Irish Revolution* (Newbridge, 2020), pp 112-121.

³⁷ Michael Lynch statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 511), pp 109-111.

how premonitions could be interpreted both religiously and paranormally, and often in both ways simultaneously. In any case, it is clear Mrs. Lynch was not short on bravery, given that she decided to remain in her home despite her conviction that a raid was imminent.

Many women described premonitions as manifestations of a kind of instinct. For example, in relation to a premonition of the death of her brother, Katherine Barry-Moloney explained her experience as follows:

I knew by some obscure instinct that Kevin was finished. I had no knowledge of how or when he had been arrested. I had no knowledge of any soldier being killed and, up to then, no prisoner had been executed since 1916. But from that moment I knew there was no hope. This instinct worked more clearly when I was young. I find it dying away as I grow older, but it was unerring when I was young, if anyone I loved deeply was involved.³⁸

This premonition occurred shortly after she was informed of Kevin Barry's arrest around 4 pm on 20 of September 1920. Katherine Barry-Moloney describes an 'obscure instinct' that dims with time and is more effective where it concerned 'anyone I loved deeply'. This observation is consistent with the other experiences of premonitions described in this section. This instinct was described as a 'woman's instinct' or a 'natural womanly instinct' by Christopher M. Byrne and Jeremiah Mee in their witness statements; in both cases women are described as using this precognitive instinct on behalf of beloved men in their lives.³⁹ Another example of this is Mary Flannery Woods; in her statement to the Bureau of Military History she describes how she instinctively knew her son had been shot before being told:

'He was leaving 131 one day for the Four Courts when "Pudge" Gargin and Jack Lawlor came in. They went away together soon after. Then I heard shots. Later Lawlor and Gargin returned to 131. "Where's Tony?", I asked them. They made some excuses, but instinctively I knew Tony had been shot. "I heard shots", I said. Still they would not admit anything.'⁴⁰

³⁸ Katherine Barry-Moloney statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 731), p. 10.

³⁹ Christopher M Byrne statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1014), p. 12; Jeremiah Mee statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 379), p. 22.

⁴⁰ Mary Flannery Woods statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 624), p. 62.

Woods may have simply been able to infer from the gunshots, Gargin and Lawlor's body language, and her son's conspicuous absence, that Tony had been shot. However, she ultimately attributed it to instinct, another word often used to describe ESP. The fact that women experienced premonitions more about others than about themselves makes sense when one considers that women were far less likely than men to be killed in combat during the Irish Revolution; if women were more often in the line of fire, presumably they would have had more premonitions about themselves. The case of Katherine Keyes-McDonnell's premonitions preceding the raid of her home at Castlelack shows that women would have premonitions about themselves when they were personally exposed to danger, a not infrequent circumstance.⁴¹

Quantitative data collected over the course of this study, though limited, tentatively supports these hypotheses.⁴² Some other gendered differences (aside from combat proximity) suggested by this data are the age of the percipient of the premonition, the length of the memorate, the willingness of the percipient to give credit to the perceived warning, and the religiosity of the premonitions supernatural source (as attributed by the percipient). According to the data, women who were older at the time of their experience were more likely to speak of premonitions, women's premonition memorates were substantially longer and made up a greater portion of the narratives within which they were located, and women were slightly more likely to be credulous about the supernaturality of their premonitions.⁴³ This suggests that women felt freer to express their supernatural beliefs than men, and that such experiences were more frequent in old age, despite Katherine Barry-Maloney's musings to the contrary that she found her precognitive instincts to be 'dying away as I grow older'.⁴⁴ Why this is the case is unclear; it could have been that age gave women more authority to speak on such matters, that

⁴¹ McAuliffe, 'The homefront as battlefield', pp 112-113.

⁴² See Appendix 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Katharine Barry-Maloney statement (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 731), p. 10.

older women were more likely to give credence to supernatural beliefs, or some combination of these factors.

Using Boolean search methods to identify premonitions concerning the revolutionary period in the SFC proved challenging. Searching only English language texts using the terms ‘premonition’, ‘presentiment’, and ‘intuition’, eighteen stories about premonitions were identified. Considering the limited scope of this search there are likely many more that remain to be found. Of those eighteen, fourteen did not concern the revolutionary period.⁴⁵ Of the four that were relevant, two of these were retellings of Charlie Hurley’s death (which will be discussed in more depth in the fifth chapter on prophecies). The third was closely tied to a poltergeist and will be also discussed later in the third chapter. The final example was an interesting transcription of Tim O’Donoghue’s first-hand account of the fall of Rosscarbery barracks (originally published in the *Kerryman*) wherein Tom Barry is described as using some kind of mysterious sense to detect incoming grenades during a firefight despite the overwhelming noise and danger:

I often wondered how he sensed their coming. He could not see them, and I do not know how he could have heard them coming with the continuous rifle fire, four rifles in the house across the street and at least twenty cracking from the barracks and only fifty feet apart, but as each bomb came he always shouted just in time, “Bomb, get down”, and each of them came to either three or four feet from him... At one time I remarked to

⁴⁵ For ‘premonition’, the following stories were returned: ‘Premonition of Death’, Patrick Dorrian, Cliffony, Co. Sligo, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 155, pp 532-534); ‘Piseoga’, Kilmurry, Co. Kerry, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 449, p. 27); ‘Kilmichael Graveyard’, Eugene O’Riordan, Teerelton, Co. Cork, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 339, pp 53-54); ‘The School District’, Charles Doherty, Lurganboy, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 1088, p. 5); ‘Local Happenings’, Thomas Driscoll, Dunmanus East, Co. Cork, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 288, p. 197); ‘An Old Ruin’, Mrs Dwyer, Boyle, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 235, p. 164); ‘Story of Thomas Plunkett and Mary Cruys’, Athboy, Co. Meath, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 696, p 252); ‘Bean Sí - Scéal Eile’, Paddy Donoghue, Kilmurry, Co. Kerry, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 449, p. 21); ‘Things Lucky and Unlucky’, Aghnaglogh, Co. Monaghan, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 958, p. 141). For ‘presentiment’ the following stories were returned: ‘The Story of the Penal Days’, Mr P. Brown, Scartlea Upper, Co. Cork, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 393, p. 261); ‘Exploits of the Brickalock’, Carrignavar, Co. Cork, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 382, p. 477); ‘Inchicarron Castle’, Mr Crotty, Mullinavat, Co. Kilkenny, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 850, p. 251). For ‘intuition’ the following stories were returned: ‘Apparition at Bettyville House’, Seán Ó Cuirc, Crecora, Co. Limerick, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 525, p. 128); ‘Daoine Cáiliúla’, Mr Sam Mc Cormack, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 89, p. 430).

Jim Hurley that we would be soon minus a Column leader. Jim said, “Not at all; he has a charmed life”.⁴⁶

Barry was a hardened veteran of the First World War who had enlisted at the young age of 17 (having falsified his age), and subsequently saw extensive active service with the British army in ‘Mesopotamia, Asiatic Russia (where he was wounded), Egypt, Italy, and France.’⁴⁷ Yet it seems this admirer did not think to attribute Barry’s combat intuition to his British army experience, preferring to imply that he had some kind of mysterious extra-sensory perception of falling bombs. In addition to supporting the contention in the previous paragraph that Barry may have had some sort of inexplicitly precognitive capacity, this memorate also supports the contention that premonitions were a variety of precognition more commonly experienced near combat. Also, this memorate is one of many examples where the admirers of an individual with a particularly heroic reputation ascribe that individual’s feats of derring-do to some supernatural faculty, in this case, being ‘charmed’.⁴⁸ This case is one of the three folkloric memorates found which were transcribed from newsprint publications, where premonitions appeared far more commonly.

Revolutionaries rarely engaged in any serious contemplation as to the source of precognitive instincts, with a few exceptions; as was previously mentioned, Eamon Broy described this faculty as ‘a sixth and if possible, a seventh sense’ developed by the Irish ‘race’ in response to centuries of foreign aggression.⁴⁹ Daniel Breen and Ernie O’Malley both describe similar phenomena in their memoirs but in different ways. Breen very briefly mentions ‘one of the volunteers, warned of danger by a sixth sense’ anticipating the arrival of a group of British lorries (unfortunately not early enough for this unnamed volunteer to escape capture),

⁴⁶ *The Kerryman*, 11 Dec. 1937, p. 17; ‘The Fall of Rosscarbery Barracks’, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 311, pp 143-144).

⁴⁷ M.A. Hopkinson, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, ‘Barry, Thomas Bernadine (‘Tom’), (<https://www.dib.ie/biography/barry-thomas-bernadine-tom-a0472>) (accessed 4 November 2022).

⁴⁸ ‘The Fall of Rosscarbery Barracks’, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 311, p. 144).

⁴⁹ Broy statement, p. 8.

and earlier in the same chapter Breen described how his own escape attempts were aided by a similar faculty: ‘some interior voice must have warned me...I was guided solely by instinct...I do not know what instinct guided me...It was as if an angel had whispered that this door, and this only, held out hope to me.’⁵⁰ Breen does not seem to have a thoroughly developed or consistent concept of what is happening here, and attributes such incidents variously to interior voices, a sixth sense, luck, or angelic guidance, and their appearance seems to be largely a providential or perhaps even random affair. In contrast to both Breen and Broy, Ernie O’Malley seems to think of this sense more as a capacity that can be developed with experience, and goes into substantially greater depth on the topic, writing:

I had a new sense, strongly developed, and I relied on it at times as I would on my sight. On the roads at night in north Tipperary I would turn back with the feeling that something was going to happen. Next day I would find that soldiers had been holding a crossroads ahead of me...The sense of danger threw out its warning signals, which could be disputed but not argued away. I would sit by a hedge to discuss the new situation with myself, but I would act on the warning.⁵¹

O’Malley mentions various kinds of precognition explicitly on numerous occasions in his memoir.⁵² Here he acknowledges that part of his mind struggled with accepting input from this new sense, but that, ultimately, he came to trust it; that O’Malley had this struggle implies that he saw this faculty as somehow apart from normality, as something supernatural.

Where precognition concerned women, revolutionary writers saw it as special kind of instinct, one of the natural capacities of Irish women, particularly suited to their roles as wives or sisters.⁵³ The possibilities that such experiences are examples of post-traumatic narrative coping mechanisms or literary devices cannot be denied, but conversely, such possibilities cannot be confirmed either. Similarly, taking these recollections at face value is difficult to

⁵⁰ Breen, *My fight for Irish freedom*, pp 144, 153-154.

⁵¹ O’Malley, *On another man’s wound*, p. 141.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp 21, 26, 105- 107, 136-137, 141, 188, 254, 272, 328, 387, 398-400.

⁵³ This viewpoint is also expressed by some stories in the SFC, see ‘Daoine Cáiliúla’, Mr Sam Mc Cormack, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 89, p. 430).

justify; the internal nature of premonitions makes them impossible to truly corroborate. However, the foregoing examples have at the very least provided evidence that premonitions were common in narrative remembrances of the Irish Revolution, and therefore shaped that remembrance, thus providing an answer to one of the central questions of this study. Recollections of premonitions were short in length, and close in proximity to dangerous situations. When they were heeded, they are described as providing great tactical benefits and when they were ignored, the consequences are typically described as dire. Such recollections were clearly catalysed by the remembering of traumatic experiences, and if these recollections are to be taken at face value, they most certainly had tactical significance.

Precognitive Dreams

Outside of the Irish revolutionary context, in 2014, scientific studies conducted by Caroline Watt & Ian Tierney reported that realistic visual images seen in dreams were recognized as making up a two-thirds majority of reported experiences of precognition.⁵⁴ In Irish revolutionary memory, they are significantly less common, and make up a minority, albeit a substantial one. Dream precognition compensates for this in its length, which is on average 230 words, significantly longer than precognitive phenomena generally, whose length averaged 169 words. Precognitive dreams are some of the most vivid of paranormal phenomena, and often had a powerful emotional impact on the dreamers, in some cases shaping their remembrance of the revolution for many years to come. In many cases, these precognitive dreams had religious elements, either within the dream or preceding it as religious practices, making them compelling case studies illustrating how religious and paranormal phenomena intersected in the Irish revolutionary context.

⁵⁴ Caroline Watt & Ian Tierney, 'Psi-related Experiences' in Etzel Cardena, Steven Jay Lynn, and Stanley Krippner (eds) *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence* (2nd Ed., Washington, D.C., 2014), p. 244.

In many cases, precognitive dreams performed a similar tactical and narrative function to premonitions in that they are described as having warned the percipient of an impending danger. One example is that of John King, whose dreams preserved him from bodily danger in June 1921. According to his witness statement to the BMH, his conviction was such that he was able to overcome his self-doubt and fears of social repercussions and inform his comrades Wallace and Coyne of his troubling dream:

One night, I had a dream as the three of us slept in the dug-out. I thought I was being pursued by the Tans, and I had fallen down, and that they were about to fire at me. I jumped up, and hit my head against the low sheet-iron roof of the dug-out ... Try as I would, I could not get back to sleep again. About 9 a.m., Wallace and Coyne awoke and dressed, and started to go down in the direction of the house...I said that I did not think that we should go to the house today, as I had a feeling, due to a dream I had during the night, that something would happen. The two fellows looked at each other, shook their heads, thinking that I was cracking...After some dallying, they too got cold feet ... I began to think that, if those two told the O.C. that I was acting on dreams, I might be dismissed from the active service unit; so I did not feel too happy about the matter. It was not long, however, until we heard shots in the direction of Eriff woods and, through the telescope, saw dust rising off the road...⁵⁵

The quartermaster of King's column, John Feehan, remembered the situation somewhat differently in his statement, describing how informants notified the column of the impending roundup, and how he scrambled to go around to various billets of his men to spread the word; Feehan does not mention hearing about King's dream in his statement.⁵⁶ Thomas Wallace, who King claims to have notified of his dream, does not mention the incident in his statement either (or any other part of that particular situation for that matter).⁵⁷ The statements of both Feehan and King were gathered by the same investigator, John P. Briody, whose investigators notes to their statements suggest that Feehan's statement was more heavily revised than King's, which had been sent in later in a more complete form.⁵⁸ Though we cannot be certain, it seems most

⁵⁵ John C. King statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1731), pp 39-41.

⁵⁶ John Feehan statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1692), pp 78-82.

⁵⁷ Wallace was noted by his investigator to have 'confessed to a poor memory for details.' Thomas Wallace statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 852), pp 1-7; Investigator's notes to Thomas Wallace statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 852, S. 2086).

⁵⁸ Investigators notes to John Feehan statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1692, S. 3000); Investigators notes to John C. King statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1731, S.3033).

probable that Wallace's poor memory led him to forget the incident, and Briody's greater involvement in preparing Feehan's statement (which involved a closer adherence to the Bureau's questioning guidelines) led to the dream incident being excised or omitted; perhaps having read Feehan's statement and noticing that it did not mention certain things which he deemed important, King submitted his draft to Briody which contained his version of events 'for inclusion in the records of the bureau.'⁵⁹

King's dream memorate is phenomenologically interesting in that he himself expresses some doubt about his choice of even mentioning it, indicating that it was unusual to report such experiences, and that doing so was perceived to have harmful repercussions for one's reputation, that it would make one seem to be 'cracked'. Edward Brennan, Ernie O'Malley, and Patrick J. Bermingham describe how they or their friends had similar dreams of impending danger, but only in Brennan's case was the dream heeded and crisis avoided.⁶⁰ This indicates that even when such dreams of impending danger were communicated, they often were not taken seriously. In his witness statement, DMP constable Patrick J. Bermingham describes peculiar comments made by his comrade Andy O'Neill while they rushed to Howth to intercept Irish Volunteer gun runners in 1914:

He said "Sometime ago I dreamed that my brother's arm was broken. The dream was very vivid and I was so curious about it that I wrote to my people to enquire if this had happened. When writing they denied the accident but subsequently admitted this accident had occurred at the particular time I had the dream. Last night I dreamed that there were a lot of women praying for me in the sacristy of the chapel and I could see a stream of blood running down the street." It was peculiar that on that same day blood was spilled and was flowing down the street in Bachelor's Walk.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Investigators notes to John C. King statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1731, S.3033).

⁶⁰ Edward Brennan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1514), pp 3-4; Patrick J. Bermingham statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 697), pp 1-2; O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, pp 398-399.

⁶¹ Bermingham statement, pp 1-2. After the Irish volunteers had landed arms at Howth and unsuccessful attempts were made by the RIC to confiscate those rifles, British troops were sent to assist the RIC. These troops would open fire on a Dublin crowd at Bachelor's Walk who had been taunting them, killing four and wounding 40.

In this case, O'Neill feels the need to cite another dream as a preamble to telling Bermingham about his more recent dream, presumably because the latter dream would not be as believable without some supporting evidence. It seems to have worked, because Bermingham ultimately gave O'Neill's ostensible precognition some credence.

O'Neill's dream is not the only precognitive dream prominently featuring blood and religious imagery. A few years later, on Easter Saturday night in 1916, a near relation of Maire de Butléir had a dream which she related in a letter to her friend Loretta MacManus (also known as Lottie, Lil, Lillie, Charlotte MacManus, or L. MacManus), who later quoted it in her memoir. This unnamed near relation described how in her dream she was walking with the Virgin Mary in a convent garden. Suddenly Mary froze and began to bitterly wring her hands and weep. What came next was shocking:

I put my arms around her and said, 'What is the matter?' At which she answered 'How can you ask? Look at that!' and she pointed to her feet and said 'Ireland.' I looked and saw a pool of blood at our feet. I knew then that some great tragedy was about to happen, and I suddenly woke up, crying bitterly to myself. I have never had such a vivid dream, and it so often comes back to me.⁶²

This case further evidences the influence of Gothic literature, particularly on female memoir writers; it is reminiscent of Sheridan Le Fanu's story 'Moll Rial's Adventure' wherein Moll Rial sees blood at her feet.⁶³ In addition, this memorate is another clear example which shows how religious and bloody imagery could accompany precognition. Dreams concerning blood are mentioned by several informants recorded in the SFC; these informants typically understood such dreams to be omens of impending injury or bad luck.⁶⁴ Another precognitive dream discussed later in this section concerns the bodies of the Loughnane brothers; in his

⁶² Loretta MacManus, *White Light and Flame* (Dublin, 1929), p. 112.

⁶³ Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Stories of Lough Guir' in *All the Year Round*, (April 1870), p. 257. (<https://celt.ucc.ie/published/E870000-007.html>) (accessed 24 Jan. 2022).

⁶⁴ 'Omens', Patrick Delaney, Doochorran, Co. Leitrim, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0226, p. 122); 'Omens and Superstitions Gathered from Pupils of Drumeela', Molly McCusker, Drumeela, Co. Leitrim, (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 0229, p. 95); 'Dreams', Ballyduff, Co. Kerry, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0415, p. 27).

statement to the BMH, Pádraig Ó Fathaigh claims that blood from their bodies was collected by attendees at their funerals, despite the fact that the bodies were probably bloodless by the time they were found, suggesting the miraculous and powerfully symbolic qualities of blood shed from violence.⁶⁵ Additionally, a folksong ‘composed by some local poet whose name is unknown’ provided by Eileen Kelly to the SFC also describes ‘fresh blood oozing from a wound in Harry’s side’, reminiscent of the ultimate mortal spear wound in the side of Jesus Christ’s chest.⁶⁶ The glorification and alleged collection of the Loughnane brother’s blood echoes the millennia old catholic tradition of collecting and venerating relics of martyrs for the faith.⁶⁷ In his memoir, Ernie O’Malley described how following a dream foretelling a future injury of his, Mrs. Tobin splashed him with holy water in hopes of averting the grim outcome: this by contrast is an example of how religious beliefs could intersect with precognitive dreams in a more adversarial and apotropaic way.⁶⁸

Some precognitive dreams consisted of messages communicated from beyond the grave by dead friends or relations. Patrick Moylett describes two in his witness statement. The first occurred on Easter Sunday night 1916:

I dreamt I saw my father walk up the short drive to the house; I saw him stand in front of me and salute with his rifle. He was wearing a Volunteer cap and a black belt, and he had his jacket buttoned. I was so disturbed and the dream was so extremely vivid that I said to my wife "We will go home by the first train"...My father was a Fenian and had a short American Cavalry rifle in his possession for many years in the early eighties of last century. I mentioned the dream to Larry Ginnell when he came out of jail and he said: "That was your father sanctioning in spirit the work of 1916".⁶⁹

Moylett’s first dream is not the only other precognitive dream concerning the Easter Rising.

Frank Robbins, Charlotte McManus, and Thomas Meldon all report themselves or their friends

⁶⁵ Pádraig Ó Fathaigh statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1517), pp 4-5.

⁶⁶ ‘Song’, Eileen Kelly, Bunnaglass, Co. Galway, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0050, pp 148, 150).

⁶⁷ Simon Ditchfield, ‘Martyrs on the move: relics as vindicators of local diversity in the Tridentine church’ in *Studies in Church History*, xxx (1993), p. 287.

⁶⁸ O’Malley, *On Another Man’s Wound*, pp 398-399.

⁶⁹ Patrick Moylett statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 767), p. 5.

having dreams prior to the rising which either predicting the rising or described specific events that would occur during it.⁷⁰ Moylett's first dream is also an example of how the interpretation of dreams could at times be a collaborative process, informed both by confidants and other writers; for the BMH witness statements this process was likely smoothed out and obscured by the investigators.⁷¹ There are several other cases where the spirits of specific deceased individuals appear in dreams to communicate something to the dreamer.⁷² Patrick Moylett's second dream was one of these; it occurred shortly before or during Terence MacSwiney's death: 'I dreamt I saw a monk, dressed in a Franciscan habit, approaching me through the ballroom. He came towards me with his hands up and outstretched in my direction. His face was gaunt, his nose and chin nearly met, and his skin was like parchment. I woke up saying to myself: "Save me from that horrible monk".'⁷³ Later that week he would attend the first of Terence MacSwiney's several funeral ceremonies in Southwark cathedral. Upon approaching the coffin, he peered in only to see something horrifyingly familiar: 'in the coffin I saw the exact man I had seen in my dream. His face was most emaciated, he had yellow parchment skin and his chin and nose were nearly meeting. It reminded me of a face that was mummified. The skin was as if preserved, with no moisture of death. It was the identical face I had seen in my dream.'⁷⁴ This monk and the man in the coffin were both MacSwiney; Moylett's dream had shown him a vision of MacSwiney's dead and emaciated face, which was distinct from the living face of MacSwiney Moylett had been familiar with. Both of Moylett's dreams involve incidents of national significance and are distinctive in that they are not closely associated with a personal familial trauma of his own.

⁷⁰ McManus, *White Light and Flame*, p. 112; Thomas Meldon statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 734), pp 16, 20; Frank Robbins statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 585), p 20.

⁷¹ Eve Morrison, 'The Bureau of Military History: separatist veterans' narratives of the Irish Revolution', (PhD Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2011), pp 198-258.

⁷² Mary MacGeehin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 902), pp 9-10; Moylett statement, pp 30-31; Henry O'Mara statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1652), p. 9.

⁷³ Moylett statement, pp 30-31.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 30-31.

The other cases of the dead communicating to dreaming people are much more personal. One case, though it is not precognitive, merits discussion here due to it having this quality, and involving an exploration of an alternate timeline. In her witness statement, Maire MacGeehin describes how Reggie Dunne's death had a profound impact on his mother, stating that in the seventeen years of her life remaining after Reggie's death 'she never ceased talking of Reggie. She never got over the tragedy.'⁷⁵ MacGeehin goes on to describe how Reggie Dunne's mother was visited in her dreams by her dead son:

She told me once three or four years after Reggie's death, when she was still mourning his loss as keenly as the first day and I think maybe her mind was in a precarious state - that she had a dream that she saw Reggie grown up and turned to profligacy. He had joined a band of something like tramps or tinkers and nothing was too hot or heavy for him. His appearance was evil. She thought she must die of sorrow when she saw him like this and suddenly he changed back to the boy she knew and he spoke to her, saying: "Mother, you have been grieving too much for me. After all death is preferable to an evil life and imagine now that if I had lived I might have turned to evil." This dream consoled her Immensely and she felt that the message came from him. She always felt that he was still very close to her...⁷⁶

This example is similar to some of the sentiments expressed by other writers in that aspersions are cast upon the dreamer's mental integrity: 'her mind was in a precarious state'. This passage somewhat contradicts MacGeehin's preceding assessment of how the Dunne family 'were all very good practical Catholics and now the parents got their only consolation from prayer.'⁷⁷ Clearly the mother got a great deal of consolation from what she believed were the telepathic transmissions of her dead son's spirit as well. This case further evidences the more regular intersection of religious elements in these paranormal revolutionary dreams.

Five references to precognitive dreams with relevance to the revolutionary period were identified in the SFC. These varied greatly in character, two were very brief passing mentions, and a third was a short tale of a man who shot his neighbour's horse on account of his belief in

⁷⁵ MacGeehin statement, p. 9.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 9-10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

a precognitive dream, perhaps an example of how mental disturbances continued for veterans long after the revolution ended: ‘one of them [the man who shot the horse] was out in the civil war. He had a terrible habit of dreaming in the night. This night he dreamt he was going to be shot’.⁷⁸ The final two cases from the folklore collection were long and vivid accounts describing dreams with decidedly nationalistic and prophetic qualities, including references to nationalist heroes. These latter two either included or consisted of ballads. The longer and more bizarre of the two memorates was the dream of a blacksmith from Gelsha, county Longford, named Jim Mallon (the time at which Mallon had this dream can only very roughly be dated to sometime between 1921 and 1939), wherein Jim met with various historical figures like Wolfe Tone, Henry Grattan, Roderick O’Connor (once high king of Ireland), and ‘Páid O Donoghue the famous blacksmith from the plains of Royal Meath.’⁷⁹ In his dream, Jim brought these figures up to speed with recent historical events in the Irish revolutionary period, after which the high king O’Connor delivered a prophecy of sorts:

The high king who was an attentive listener appeared to look sad, spoke those words to Jim “Tell the Boys to Keep united, rule the 26 counties wisely and well. And like the Pale "the Border" will fade away and Ireland will be a nation once again. Ireland will never be content with partition. God ordained it a Nation - a bit of heaven that dropped into the ocean - and no power on earth has any right to partition a Bit of Heaven”...And while / grass grows and water flows there will be men got who will dare to and die for her God given rights.⁸⁰

This account of Mallon’s dream is followed by a ballad about local blacksmiths in which Mallon’s dream tale features in a verse mocking his long-windedness. All in all, the memorates from the folklore collection seem to evidence that belief in the predictive power of dreams was present among at least some of those who lived through the revolution, that these dreams might

⁷⁸ ‘121’, Glenough Lower, Co. Tipperary, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0583, p. 318).

⁷⁹ ‘(no title)’, Patrick Connally, Aghnacliff, Co. Longford, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0761, p. 220).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 223-224.

have a bearing on events of both personal and national significance, and that they might raise questions about the mental health of the dreamers from outside observers.

Dreams also allegedly helped revolutionaries to find lost people, living or dead. In her witness statement, Mary Flannery Woods cites a letter written to her by Sean MacConmara in April 1936. In it, MacConmara describes how Michael ‘Micho’ Molony foresaw his encounter with Liam Mellows in the Summer of 1916 while Mellows was on the run in the aftermath of the Easter Rising in Galway: ‘During the night he had a dream of being in contact with strangers. At day-break he went to look for his horses and after a while saw them in the distance. As he went in their direction he saw a man kneeling, his hands before his face as if praying and two others lying on the heather beside him.’⁸¹ Ailbhe Ó Monacháin was one of those lying on the heather. Ó Monacháin corroborates MacConmara’s letter, and also mentions this dream in his witness statement and its connection with Molony’s lost horse: ‘a colt of his went astray the night before, but it was too dark to look for him. When he got up next morning, he told his mother a dream he had. He dreamt that he went looking for the colt, and that he found three men in the bog and that they were starving. His mother did not say anything about the dream, it was nothing strange.’⁸² Unlike almost all the other precognitive dreams discussed here, this one has detailed corroboration, and concerns a windfall rather than a tragedy.

The last example recounted here is the most widely corroborated precognitive dream, that of Michael Loughnane, cousin of the Loughnane brothers who were infamously mutilated and murdered on 27 November 1920.⁸³ The horrific murder of the Loughnane brothers is covered regularly by historians, but what often goes unremarked upon is the manner in which their bodies were found, with the exception of recent accounts by Conor McNamara and Eve

⁸¹ Mary Flannery Woods statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 624), appendix C, p. 2.

⁸² Ailbhe Ó Monacháin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 298), p. 35.

⁸³ Eunan O’Halpin & Daithí O Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, (New Haven & London, 2020), pp 238-239.

Morrison, both of whom go into some detail as to the supernatural side of their discovery.⁸⁴

Henry O'Mara describes in his witness statement how Michael Loughnane was very attached to the brothers and heavily involved in the search efforts for their bodies, and how, eventually, he found them:

Saturday, night, December 4, he dreamt that he saw them in a pond at Umbriste from which he had once taken water for an engine when he was working in the locality. Next morning, he went to Mass in Gort and then sought two brothers, Michael and Willie Hynes...Michael lives in the old home in Kinvara. He well remembers the day:

'I thought Tally was daft but I told him to go and have a look in the pond and then come back to us. He was back in quick time, with a frightened look in his eyes, to tell us that some things like burnt bodies, were there under the water which was covered with filthy oil. We went to the pond with him and, right enough, the burnt bodies were there.'⁸⁵

Charlotte MacManus described this incident in her memoir as well, though she described the pond as a 'boghole', and Michael as a brother rather than a first cousin.⁸⁶ Michael Hynes does not go into any detail about how the bodies were found in his witness statement, other than to say that no one other than the Auxiliaries saw where they were dragged.⁸⁷ In his witness statement, Pádraig Ó Fathaigh describes the incident as well, in a yet again slightly different way:

The discovery of their bodies came about in a remarkable manner. A comrade of the Loughnanes named Mickey Loughnane, who was aged about 18, often saw Pat in vision after his arrest by the Black and Tans. One night as he sat inside a stone-crusher van with his employer Mick Shaughnessy (Leahy) of Blackwater, Gort, the boy asked, 'Why didn't you stay longer with Pat Loughnane?' And when his employer asked him if he was dreaming, the boy replied, 'No, I surely saw Pat Loughnane with you, and he was leaning over his bicycle'.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; Dorothy MacArdle, *The Irish Republic* (3rd Ed., Dublin, 1999), p. 418; Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913-1922* (Newbridge, 2018), pp 124, 152, 159; Conor McNamara, 'Changing Times' – Terror in County Galway', (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgLM9gVIJck&ab_channel=GalwayBeo) (accessed 9 Feb. 2021); Eve Morrison, 'Hauntings of the Irish Revolution' in Margu rite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack and Ruud van den Beuken (eds) *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations* (Bern, 2017), pp 94-95.

⁸⁵ O'Mara statement, p. 9.

⁸⁶ MacManus, *White Light and Flame*, p. 162.

⁸⁷ Michael Hynes statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1173), p. 8.

⁸⁸ Pádraig Ó Fathaigh statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1517), p. 3.

This account gives a little more information about Michael Loughnane, including another nickname ‘Mickey’. Ó Fathaigh describes how Michael had been seeing them in dream-like visions prior to the one which would identify their bodies, possibly in the form of an apparition. Ó Fathaigh goes on to describe how the suspense built up to a boiling point in Michael and forced him to act:

He visited Shanaglish Church and prayed to the Sacred Heart to show him where the Loughnanes were, and that night he dreamt he saw his beloved comrades in a pond at Dombriste, near Drimharsna. After hearing Mass at Gort on Sunday, the boy took a comrade with him, cycled to Dombriste, crossed a field to the pond, and there lay the brothers exactly as he saw them in the dream.⁸⁹

Here, Ó Fathaigh brings in a religious element to the story, that being how the dream which would identify the location of their bodies was induced by prayers to the image of the Sacred Heart. This memorate is yet another example of how the line between the religious and the paranormal can become blurry in the Irish Revolution. Eve Morrison describes Ó Fathaigh’s religious inclusions as ‘a heavy dose of Catholic mysticism’ and a ‘retrospective embellishment’.⁹⁰ Considering that mass makes a prominent appearance in the other accounts as well, it is not unbelievable that Michael Loughnane’s visions were indeed influenced by Catholic mysticism and were not merely an embellishment. In all accounts of the aftermath of the murders, the funerals play a prominent role. Several of the accounts also agree that a relation with a close emotional attachment to the Loughnane brothers had some kind of precognitive dream or vision which provided the location of their bodies. Eve Morrison has identified contemporary newspapers which corroborate this, describing how Michael Loughnane testified in court as to the location of the bodies, and that subsequently it was revealed that a dream was what led to their discovery.⁹¹

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 3-4.

⁹⁰ Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution’, p. 95.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109; *Irish Independent*, 9 December 1920; *Connacht Tribune*, 11 December 1920.

This case provides insights to all five of the central questions of this project. It has had long and wide-ranging impact, shaping the remembrance of the Irish Revolution in county Galway. A recent article from the *Irish Times* describes how the tale of Michael Loughnane's miraculous visionary identification of the bodies continues to resonate in local folklore, with some residents such as Martina Blackwell even having occasional dreams about the mutilated Loughnane brothers.⁹² In November of 2020, Conor McNamara emphasized the importance of the Loughnane brothers commemoration in county Galway in a talk he gave virtually on behalf of Galway Beo.⁹³ Grisly images of the brothers' mutilated bodies drew international attention in the winter of 1920-1921.⁹⁴ These images undoubtedly cemented the trauma of the incident in communal memory, and continue to be remarked upon by historians and journalists to this day.⁹⁵ It can be confidently asserted that trauma had been catalytic for dreams precognitive and otherwise, both before and after the Loughnane's double murder. Catholic belief was clearly a factor in this case, and the way in which religious ceremonies preceded the precognitive visionary dream illustrates how religious and paranormal practices intersected with each other in the Irish Revolution. The finding of their bodies would result in a propaganda coup for the revolutionary cause, thereby having both ideological and strategic significance.

Telepathy

Telepathy, otherwise known as thought-transference or thought-reading, is the transmission of information from the mind of one person to the mind of another without using any known human sensory channels or physical interaction. It is one of the least well-attested of the

⁹² Keith Duggan, 'Sordid murder of hurling brothers still resonates in south Galway', *The Irish Times*, 28 Nov. 2020, (<https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/gaelic-games/hurling/sordid-murder-of-hurling-brothers-still-resonates-in-south-galway-1.4420619>), (accessed 9 Feb. 2021).

⁹³ Conor McNamara, 'Changing Times' – Terror in County Galway', (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgLM9gVIJck&ab_channel=GalwayBeo) (9 Feb. 2021).

⁹⁴ Conor McNamara, 'Galway' in John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, and Mike Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2017), p. 617.

⁹⁵ McNamara, 'Changing Times', (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgLM9gVIJck&ab_channel=GalwayBeo), (accessed 9 Feb. 2021).

paranormal phenomena in the Irish Revolution; to date, only a handful of examples have been identified, and some of these are edge cases. For example, Edmund ‘Ned’ Tobin described in his witness statement to the BMH how Jimmie Brislane read his thoughts: ‘At Kingsbridge station things did not go too well...Coming back along the platform I met Jimmie Brislane, O/C. of a Cork Battalion. He *read my thoughts* and said, "You are in trouble, Ned"’.⁹⁶ This is an edge case because it is unclear whether Tobin’s statement ‘he read my thoughts’ is hyperbolic slang for Jimmie reading his body language or if the statement is Tobin literally attributing thought-reading powers to Jimmie. Most would probably assume the former, but other witness statements in BMH archive evidence that the idea that someone could literally read thoughts was not beyond the pale for Irish revolutionaries; we therefore cannot assume Tobin was merely being hyperbolic. Memorates drawn from the witness statements and memoirs of Grace Plunkett and Kathleen Keyes McDonnell also attest to the experience of telepathy.⁹⁷ However, it was an exceptionally rare phenomenon; only eight of the paranormal memorates identified concern telepathy. This should not be surprising for two main reasons; telepathy as a concept was relatively young at the time having only been developed in the late nineteenth century.⁹⁸ Furthermore, unlike most kinds of precognition which are associated with common experiences like dreaming and anxiety, telepathy is far-removed from most people’s everyday experience. This section will examine several cases to reveal the significance of telepathy in the Irish revolutionary context.

The first case we will examine in depth comes from what Clodagh Tait has described as ‘one of the Rising’s most romanticised episodes’, that of the marriage of Grace Gifford to

⁹⁶ Edmund Tobin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1451), p. 19. My emphasis added.

⁹⁷ McDonnell, *There is a bridge at Bandon*, pp 135-136; Grace Plunkett statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 257), pp 11-12.

⁹⁸ Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901* (Oxford, 2002), pp 9-51; Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritual and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1985), pp 135-249.

Joseph Plunkett.⁹⁹ This case is a key illustration of how telepathy as an experience could serve as a kind of proxy for an emotional connection with a valued person in a time of crisis. In her statement to the BMH, Grace Plunkett described her possession of a ‘sort of telepathy’: ‘I have a peculiar faculty that, if somebody in Drogheda, say, was thinking about me, - some casual thought - I would instantly feel and realise it.’¹⁰⁰ She goes on to describe how it manifested shortly before Joseph’s execution in the dawn twilight, after a long and sleepless night:

I woke up as if I were being pulled out of bed by an unseen force, and dead beat after being awakened. I dressed, and went to the priest; and I told him Joe was going to be executed. I had no notion what I was doing, except I was being pulled on...I went to Kilmainham then...His [Joseph’s] thoughts were so powerful that I was simply pulled out of the bed.¹⁰¹

This account is remarkable for several reasons. Grace’s marriage to Joseph in Kilmainham Gaol is a very famous incident, and it is interesting, though unsurprising, that its paranormal preamble has gone largely unnoticed. Another remarkable aspect of this memorate is the explicit reference and self-application of an exotic paranormal faculty. Like many of the other paranormal memorates discussed in this chapter, the percipient reports that it occurred in the liminal period between night and day, in the boundary area between waking and sleeping. In addition to being liminal in a circadian sense, it is also categorically liminal, in that it could be described both as telepathy and premonition.

Like many of the BMH’s witness statements, this memory was written down by an older individual many years after the events being described (in this case by a sixty-one-year-old person thirty-nine years after the incident). It describes a simultaneously traumatic and exciting moment in her life. This makes the description of events in this memorate particularly vulnerable to distortion, both by flawed memory and narrative coping mechanisms. The

⁹⁹ Clodagh Tait, ‘Joseph Plunkett: Martyrdom and Mysticism’ in David Bracken (ed), *The End of All Things Earthly: Faith Profiles of the 1916 Leaders* (Dublin, 2016), p. 89.

¹⁰⁰ Plunkett statement, p. 11.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp 11-12.

investigator to Gifford Plunkett's witness statement, Jane Kissane, remarked that 'her memory, even of her personal experiences, is very vague.'¹⁰² Though this memorate of Plunkett's personal experience does not seem to be 'very vague' at all, quite the opposite, Kissane's observation should nevertheless be borne in mind. The romantic aura and wide knowledge of the surrounding events provide enough motivation to make propagandistic or personal fabrication into distinct possibilities as well. Countering this, Grace and Joseph are both known to have read writings on mysticism and may have been open to ideas of telepathic communication, which suggests that Grace's telepathic attribution was not necessarily a later addition.¹⁰³ Provided that this telepathy was not a later fabrication (intentional or otherwise), the experience of telepathy could easily be interpreted as a hallucination induced by a combination of sleep deprivation and extreme circumstances, later attributed to telepathic faculties. However, the rest of Grace's memorate claims that this sort of experience was not uncommon for her, which makes attributing this exclusively to sleep deprivation in the immediate moment less appealing. More likely than any one of these options is a combination of several, though which and in what proportion is difficult to affirm. As tempting as it is to attempt to provide some concrete explanation or diagnosis for this experience, we must resist; there is simply not enough information to know with even near certainty if or why Grace Plunkett felt this unseen force in 1916. What we can know for certain is that she committed it to the historical record through the BMH as one of her memories; it seems fair to give her the benefit of the doubt and assume she was telling the truth to the best of her ability. The fact that this incident was even subjectively part of the official reckoning of the rising shows us a way in which even the most belief-begging manifestations of the supernatural were threaded into

¹⁰² Investigator's notes, Grace Plunkett statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 257).

¹⁰³ Tait, 'Joseph Plunkett: Martyrdom and Mysticism', pp 91-92.

the memory of the Irish Revolution. It reveals how, through the prism of memory, powerful emotional experiences can take on forcefully overt physical qualia to the point of eeriness.

A more amusing example of telepathy comes to us from the witness statement of the Roscommon ASU's quartermaster, Patrick Mullooly. In it he describes a brief telepathic connection with his friend Nangle as they were being searched and harassed after being captured by the Black and Tans near Doughill in the spring of 1921: 'Suddenly I thought of Nangle and, looking up the road, saw him being searched and abused. Needless to say, I was very glad to see him alive and I now asked one of the Tans for a cigarette and ever since I firmly believe in telepathy because immediately Nangle said in a loud voice "Will any of you give me a cigarette?"'¹⁰⁴ It is somewhat difficult to tell if this is a genuinely held belief or a fanciful hyperbolic addition; it is likely a bit of both. Aside from this, Mullooly's statement describes a variety of other paranormal phenomena, so it is difficult to offhandedly dismiss this passage as merely written in jest.¹⁰⁵ This incident could be attributed to a coincidence; it is not terribly far-fetched for both Mullooly and Nangle to simultaneously ask for a cigarette during a stressful situation. Mullooly chooses to attribute it to telepathy, though he may have elaborated on the incident to spice up the narrative (which should not be discounted as a possibility since Mullooly was considered by bureau investigators to be prone to exaggeration).¹⁰⁶ In any case, this memorate is another example of how telepathy can serve as a proxy for an emotional connection with a valued person in a time of crisis, although in comparison to Grace Plunkett's memorate, Mullooly's seems relatively light-hearted.

Another potentially coincidental example is provided by Michael O'Kelly in his witness statement, wherein he describes the telepathic qualities of Seamus O'Kelly's fairy tales, and how Seamus had an 'extraordinary gift of impressing his imaginative pictures on the minds of

¹⁰⁴ Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1086), p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 5-6, 28, 32, 66-68.

¹⁰⁶ Investigator's notes, Patrick Mullooly statements (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 955, 1086, 1087).

his listeners'. Michael continues, describing how the name of one of Seamus's favourite fairies, 'Lanty-Cant', came to Seamus in a mysterious way:

How this name suggested itself to him I cannot remember but some time after he had introduced 'Lanty-Cant' this identical appellation formed the title of a story in a Dublin publication of the period then much read in the provinces. This may have been an example of that subtle telepathy which, it is claimed, is more common than sceptics will admit. By the family of Seamus it was regarded as a remarkable coincidence occasioning much merriment.¹⁰⁷

This description follows a discussion of Seamus O'Kelly's funeral, suggesting the possibility that Michael is hyperbolically exaggerating Seamus's storytelling prowess to the point of telepathy as a kind of eulogy. The author posits the possibility that O'Kelly had access to some kind of 'subtle telepathy' which transferred the fairy's name to the author of the Dublin publication.¹⁰⁸ Unlike the other examples provided here, this account provides an alternate explanation to telepathy, that of a 'remarkable coincidence' which demonstrates that Michael O'Kelly has some degree of scepticism about the phenomena. Interestingly, the way he talks about telepathy suggests that it was a topic of conversation at the time, at least enough to provoke a crowd of sceptics. O'Kelly's injection of scepticism into the memorate makes sense considering the relatively low level of supernatural content in his witness statement, especially compared to the other telepathy percipients.

Kathleen Keyes McDonnell provides an example of telepathy in her memoir *There Was a Bridge at Bandon*. In it she describes one of the periodic raids on her home at Castlelack. This raid was foreseen by a premonition in the night, which awoke her at three AM: 'I woke up with a start as if something had rapped me on the head, warning me of danger.'¹⁰⁹ She was hiding Willie Walsh in her home, a lawyer with connections to the nationalist movement who

¹⁰⁷ Michael O'Kelly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1155), p. 51.

¹⁰⁸ Despite extensive efforts, this publication 'much read in the provinces' could not be found in newspaper archives, likewise, any other mention of the phrase 'lanty-cant' could not be found in Seamus O'Kelly's bibliography; Seamus O'Kelly, *The Golden Barque and The Weaver's Grave* (Dublin, 1919); Seamus O'Kelly, *The Lady of Deerpark* (London, 1917); Seamus O'Kelly, *The Leprechaun of Killmeen* (Dublin, 1920); Seamus O'Kelly, *Waysiders: Stories of Connacht* (Dublin, 1917).

¹⁰⁹ McDonnell, *There Is a Bridge at Bandon*, pp 135-136.

was wanted by the Crown forces, and a set of documents meant for him. After they hid Walsh's documents in a cavity behind the oven and the chimney, she urged Walsh out into the wilderness. A few hours later the Crown forces arrived and began ransacking her house. She went down into the kitchen to find it in utter disarray, being picked through by an officer armed with a flashlight and a revolver:

I stopped dead, my mind on the range. No word was spoken; neither of us stirred, while I stared him blankly and he stared me, as if transfixed, his eyes boring into mine, reading as it were the secret hidden there, for, next moment, to my horror and amazement he swung round to the range, lifted the one lid involved, trained his torch on the cavity and bent over. In utter panic I stood there motionless, half-mesmerized by the element of daring and danger, watching mechanically his frantic efforts to reach the hole, but the old range was high and wide, the officer short and stout and black lead a menace to his uniform; he seemed convinced that hidden there was a prize for his taking...After moments of indecision he shook himself free of dust, shot a black look in direction and strode out of the kitchen, while I stood there as if rooted to the ground, so great had been the shock and dread of discovery.¹¹⁰

This passage naturally raises the question of what motivated the officer to search the cavity behind the range specifically. McDonnell claims he read the secret hidden in her mind by staring transfixed into her eyes. More mundane possibilities are that something in her body language gave it away, or that the cavity behind the oven just happened to be the last unsearched area in the kitchen by the time she arrived. The officer gave up trying to reach the cavity after a few minutes, which indicates either that whatever secret he read was not terribly convincing, or that his ungainly rummaging was too uncomfortable and embarrassing to be worth the reward. The possibility of flawed memory being the explanation for this alleged telepathy is appealing when her sleep deprivation and the considerable time (fifty-three years) between the event and the writing of the memorate is accounted for. Other possibilities are that the remembered telepathy is a distortion caused by the extreme stress of her situation, or that it was added later as a way of making the incident more exciting.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 135-137.

Like the other examples cited here, given that she provides no name for this telepathic soldier, corroborating her account and coming to something resembling an objective explanation is impossible. Subjectively however, we might be able to decipher what this power represented to McDonnell. It is hypothesized here that this memory is a hyperbolic manifestation of diabolical power she believed possessed the Crown forces operating in county Cork. There are six other passages in her memoir in which either her, sympathetic journalists, or republican politicians such as Terence MacSwiney attribute diabolical power to the black and tans or associate them in other ways with hell or the devil.¹¹¹ Though diabolism is not a dominant motif in other autobiographical recollections, semi-hyperbolic diabolism appears occasionally, usually as a way to describe particularly fearsome individuals enlisted in the crown forces, troublesome machinery, or political movements which the author finds noxious.¹¹²

One remarkable diabolical incident comes from another revolutionary from Cork, Michael Vincent O'Donoghue, who described with great dramatic detail the demonic possession and subsequent exorcism of a barracks which had previously been occupied by the Crown forces.¹¹³ O'Donoghue's statement was particularly long (385 pages), and Bureau investigators noted that O'Donoghue was 'rather flamboyant in his description of commonplace occurrences'.¹¹⁴ Similarly, in reference to her witness statement, Kathleen Keyes McDonnell was noted by Bureau investigators to have a tendency for exaggeration.¹¹⁵ It seems that the particularly vitriolic and murderous intensity of the conflict in Cork was remembered in diabolical terms by those revolutionaries with hyperbolic reminiscence styles. These sources

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 114, 129, 159, 170, 172-176, 192.

¹¹² Geraldine Dillon statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 424), p. 29; George Chester Duggan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1099), pp 22-23; Sean Farrelly statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1734), p. 27; Patrick Rankin statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 671), pp 5, 7-9; Alfred White statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1207), pp 14, 25-26.

¹¹³ Michael V. O'Donoghue statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1741), pp 215-217.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, investigator's notes.

¹¹⁵ Kathleen Keyes McDonnell statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 88), investigator's notes.

evidence that some revolutionaries believed the Crown forces to be possessed of infernal power or even demons directly; however, it should be stressed that this was not a typical feature of revolutionary remembrance generally, or even telepathic revolutionary remembrance particularly.

In *On Another Man's Wound*, Ernie O'Malley describes a kind of spiritual attunement that he achieved with some of his soldiers in the countryside of county Dublin in 1920. Though he does not explicitly refer to this as telepathy, he describes a kind of extra-sensory communication which arguably could be categorized as such, deeming it a kind of 'Inward discipline'. O'Malley describes it as

a thing of the spirit. There were so many shades and half shades. The force of a flame-like spirit; the owner had never to be reprimanded...with him one was at once closely knit. Something jumped across the gap of personality and made a contact...Talk was not necessary; an understanding had been firmly set...you said things that meant nothing unless a man was attuned, and in the conversation there would be two languages. I would fence for opening, slowly or quickly follow with words that might or might not have a common value. At times one came across a man who had been born free. There was no explaining it. One just accepted and thanked God in wonder.¹¹⁶

Here, O'Malley describes how, inexplicably, the force of the flame-like spirit possessed by men 'who had been born free' would jump 'across the gap of personality' and make a contact, allowing him to communicate wordlessly with them and count on their morale and discipline. Arguably more than it is suggesting a kind of ESP, this memorate is a striking example of how ideas of the galvanising power of 'the national spirit' could manifest itself in Irish republican praxis. However, O'Malley could easily have described it mundanely as a kind of shared political conviction, but instead he chooses to describe it as an inexplicable and wondrous flame-like spiritual attunement (the sequel to *On Another Man's Wound*, after all, was titled *The Singing Flame*). It is possible that O'Malley describes it in this way as a kind of literary device, a hyperbole to emphasize the closeness, spirituality, and conviction he shared with

¹¹⁶ O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, p. 167.

some of his men. On the other hand, throughout his memoir, he describes dozens of paranormal and spiritual experiences, which would suggest that his description of a gap-jumping spiritual attunement was not entirely hyperbolic; earlier in the same chapter he describes his reliance on an ‘extra’ sense to foretell and avoid dangerous situations.¹¹⁷

Telepathy is one of the most uncommon varieties of extra-sensory perception in memorates of the Irish Revolution: it is an outlier among outliers. Compared to premonitions, which could be almost casually recounted, telepathy was far more exotic and explicitly psychical. Despite this, none of the authors of the memorates discussed above are known members of the Dublin Society for Psychological Research.¹¹⁸ Though it is possible that Grace Gifford and Joseph Plunkett may have been familiar with psychical literature, they do not seem to have been involved in any relevant societies either.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, telepathy was a popularly understood concept in both the revolutionary period and the period when the witness statements were written; a search of the term ‘telepathy’ in the Irish Newspaper Archive between the years 1916 and 1923 reveals 466 hits, and 245 hits between the years 1948 and 1957 when the BMH was operational (these results do not include those referring to horses named ‘telepathy’). This seems to indicate that popular discussion of telepathy may in fact have waned between the revolutionary period and the period when the witness statements were compiled. Considering this, it is possible that telepathy may have been a more common experience in the revolution than the witness statements would indicate, or at least that it was more likely to manifest in certain types of people, though we cannot be certain.

In any case, the sample size here is far too small to confidently extrapolate anything about the demographics of telepathy, but some common characteristics of the examples provided can

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹¹⁸ Shane McCorristine, ‘William Fletcher Barrett, spiritualism, and psychical research in Edwardian Dublin’ in *Estudios Irlandeses*, 2011, vi, no. 6, pp 42-48.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

be pointed out. Except for Michael O’Kelly, all the writers place the telepathy in close proximity to a stressful situation, and all of the writers have relatively high levels of supernatural material in their written work. This suggests that telepathy is more likely to appear as a theme in the accounts of those who were most liable to credit and to recall uncanny or supernatural experiences during extreme situations. In both female percipients of telepathy, the telepathy comes closely linked with a premonition. Overall, telepathy seems to have been relatively rare in revolutionary memory; an absence indicating the limits of paranormal abstraction which revolutionaries were willing to undertake in official contexts like witness statements or published memoirs.

Categorization and quantitative analysis of ESP Memorates

During the process of gathering memorates for analysis in this study the various memorates found were sorted into several broad categories and labelled accordingly. The categories used here are based upon a set of semi-original definitions; certain common understandings of these terms already exist, but for the purposes of a more thorough analysis this understanding needed to be further refined into more exacting definitions. These definitions were derived from a combination of several things: patterns in the characteristics of the qualia of the experiences (from the percipients’ perspective), the relationship of the memorate author with the percipient, and pre-existing categories in folkloric and psychological literature. For example, premonitions are defined here as strong feelings, instincts, urges, senses, or ‘inner voices’ not preceded by any kind of intentional rational prospection that accurately predict a future occurrence; prophecies by contrast are defined as accurate predictions of future occurrences witnessed and deemed by external observers to be prophetic by virtue of the external observer’s belief in the prophecy’s source of supernatural inspiration. These definitions were applied to

every supernatural memorate encountered during the source gathering phase of this study. For example, John J. O'Brien described how:

I was out early in the morning, about 6 o'clock, on scout duty with somebody else. I don't know what time exactly I was relieved and had some food. About midday, I was in a field some short distance from the house when I had a premonition that something was about to happen. I ran towards the house to get my guns and met some of the boys of the house, running from it. "Run, run!" he said, "they are landed".¹²⁰

As O'Brien's 'premonition' had predicted, something noteworthy occurred; the Black and Tans had arrived at the house he and his comrades were billeted at. Though this is a prediction of a future event, a characteristic of both prophecies and premonitions, comparing this memorate to the aforementioned definitions allows us to firmly categorize it as a premonition for several reasons. Firstly, there were no external observers witnessing the premonition, it was internal to O'Brien. Secondly, there was no intentional or rational prospection involved in the prediction of the Crown force's arrival. In addition, the percipient explicitly defined the experience as a premonition. For these reasons, this memorate was categorized as a premonition rather than a prophecy and labelled accordingly. Definitions for other categories presented here are explained in the following third, fourth, and fifth chapters, along with a detailed rationale for their use. After categorization, characteristics of each memorate including its length in words, its narrative weight (i.e., the memorates length expressed as a percentage of the length of the entire source), the degree of cynicism expressed by the memorate author, and a variety of other metrics. A more detailed explanation of this process has been provided in the chapter on methodology.

This process allowed for a quantitative overview of the different varieties of precognition examined in this study. 274 examples of Irish revolutionary precognition in BMH witness statements, memoirs, diaries, and the SFC have been identified and tabulated.¹²¹ These have

¹²⁰ John J. O'Brien statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1647), p. 32.

¹²¹ See Appendices 2, 4, 5A, 5B, and 5C.

been grouped into several categories, displayed below as pie charts along with other varieties of ESP.¹²²

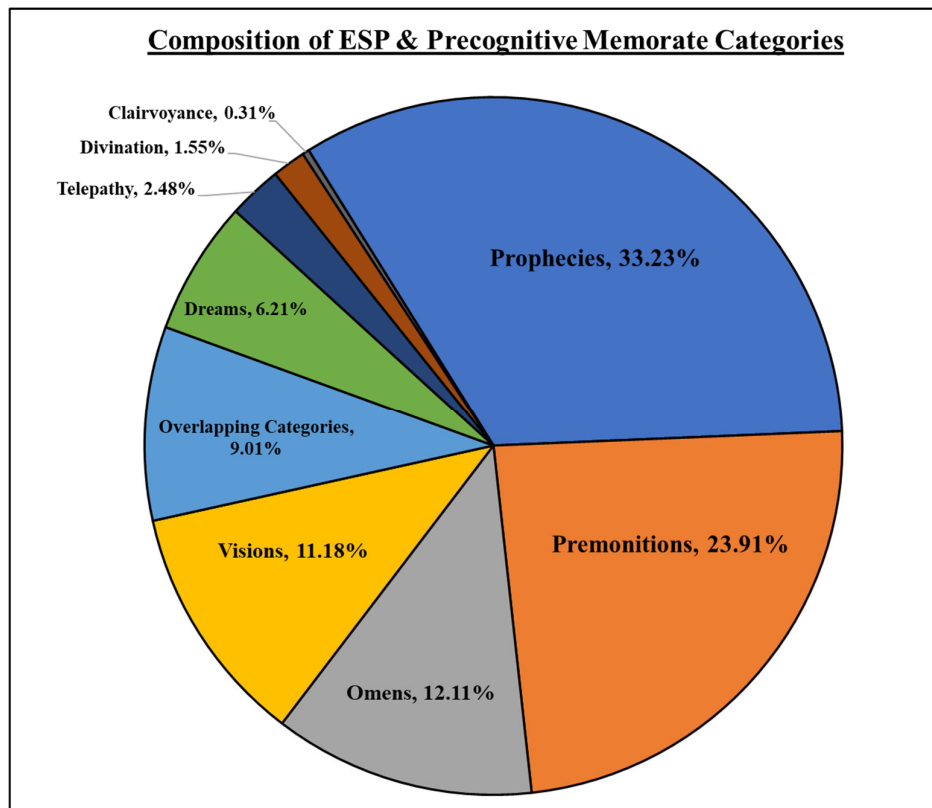


Figure 6: Composition of ESP & Precognitive Memorates Categories

The two largest categories are premonitions and prophecies. Middling in size are omens, visions, and dreams. Clairvoyance, divination, and telepathy are the smallest categories, with ten or less memorates per category. There is a modest degree of overlap. Twenty nine (9.01 per cent) of the memorates fell into multiple categories at once; a further breakdown of this overlap can be seen in figure seven. Most of the memorates which overlapped were related to prophecies, omens, and divination, which is to be expected considering their close relationship. This relationship will be discussed in greater depth in the chapter dedicated to prophecies, omens, and divination.

¹²² See Figures 6 and 7.

ESP & Precognitive Memorates of Overlapping Categories

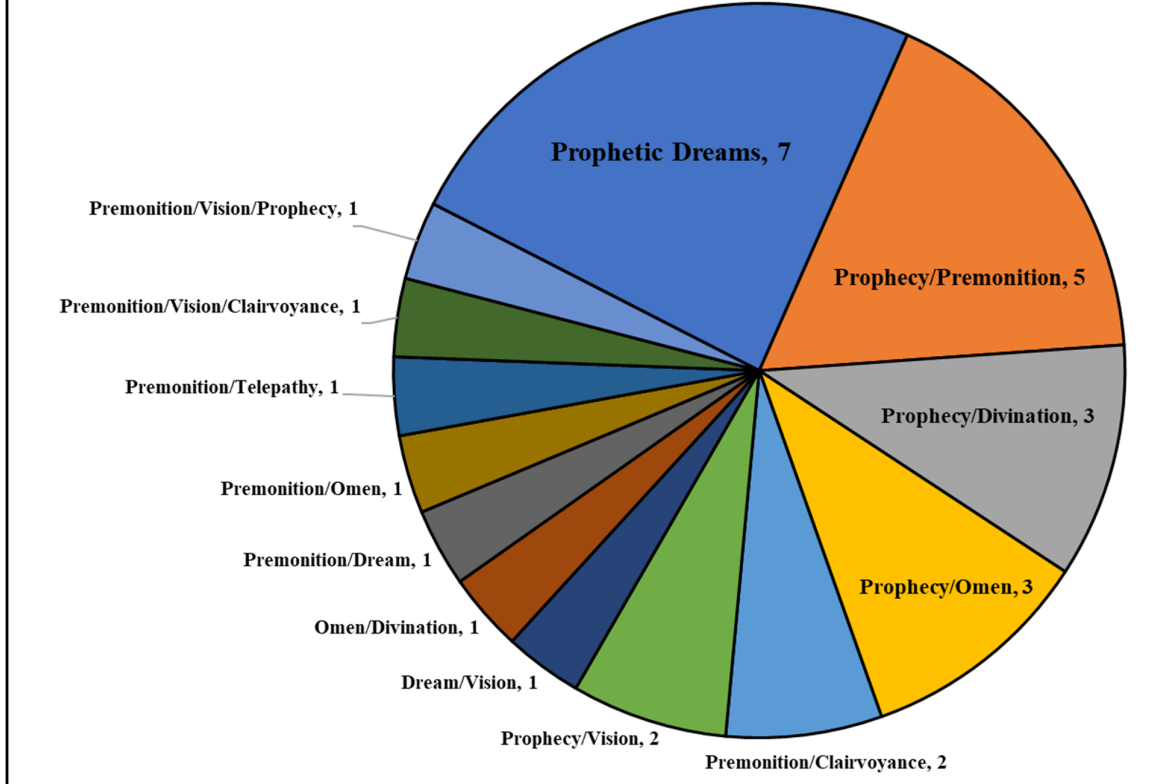


Figure 7: ESP & Precognitive Memorates of Overlapping Categories

Those who wrote about precognition rarely wrote about it in order to debunk it; fewer than ten of the 274 precognition memorates analysed here were explicitly cynical of their own veridicality.¹²³ It should be said however that precognition was not typically discussed at great length; though one third of the sources mentioned precognition at least once, these mentions collectively only comprise about 0.25 percent of the total text; in other words, for every page written about precognition there were 400 more written about other aspects of the revolution. On average, in the BMH witness statements, each memorate concerning precognition was a little over half a page in length and made up about 1.17 percent of the document it was written in; this makes the average precognitive memorate about forty percent longer in terms of words,

¹²³ See Appendix G.

but comparable in narrative weight to the average supernatural memorate.¹²⁴ This suggests that those who wrote about precognition typically wrote longer statements than those who did not, but this did not necessarily mean that precognition was more important to them, and may have also signified just that they typically had more to say in general. The fact that precognition was common but treated relatively quickly implies that it may have been taken for granted as a fact of life that, though relevant to their experiences of the conflict, did not merit a great deal of expansion in narratives primarily concerned with military and political affairs. Additionally, it may have been included to emphasize the importance of particular events by casting a supernatural aura over them.

Conclusion

As the preceding sections illustrate, a thorough search of memoirs, witness statements, folklore, newsprint, and other sources make it abundantly clear that ESP shaped how many remembered their experiences of the Irish Revolution. The paranormal during this period is more than just hauntings and ghosts; there is a great deal of evidence that a variety of different ESP-type beliefs coexisted in the worldview of the revolutionary generation both during the revolution and afterwards. Though not always explicitly articulated, these different varieties of ESP were a significant element of how revolutionaries constructed personal narratives of their lives, how they justified their ideology, how they built heroic myths, and how they coped with both trauma and a chaotic political climate. The different varieties of ESP discussed here had significant phenomenological, ideological, and behavioural differences and were not interchangeable. They also occurred with different levels of frequency and appeared at different rates in different

¹²⁴ See Appendix 5A. The average narrative weight of the 3632 supernatural memorates identified in this study from memoirs and BMH witness statements was 0.72%.

types of sources and were associated with different sets of circumstances. Despite these differences, a core common feature is readily apparent: namely, the association of trauma (either personal or societal) with experiences of ESP.

These memorates of causality-defying perceptions naturally raise questions about how the process of narrative remembrance distorts reality, and what purpose these distortions serve. Varieties of precognition had a particularly influential role in the temporal structuring of the narratives, and in shaping the degree to which the narrator appears to have been in control of their situation; if the narrator appears to have foreknowledge of a particular event, they give the impression of intentionally choosing their approach to that event, rather than unintentionally and chaotically reacting to the event as it happens to them. This is one of the reasons why reports of ESP are temporally situated around chaotic or traumatic situations. They are a way in which the writer can recreate a painfully chaotic and frightening memory into a safe and orderly one, thereby dampening and processing the trauma.

A different way of looking at these experiences is through the lens of their strategic use. The most apparent use for ESP is ideological; memorates of ESP in many cases acted as propaganda, invoking the trope of a kind of racial Celtic prescience. In at least some of the cases discussed here, ESP was used as a narrative device to cast chaotic situations in a more favourable light, vindicating of the essential rightness of the revolutionary cause by disentangling bloodthirsty actions from their immediate visceral motivations (and consequences) and recasting them merely as means to the noble end of liberation; this gives those who died before seeing the political fruits of their violence both moral vindication, and a claim to racial authenticity. As will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 4, this is particularly true in the case of prophecy, the most prevalent form of ESP in the source material; the invocation of prophecy served to cast the conflict's outcome as predetermined, absolving actors

of some degree of moral responsibility, while simultaneously building a sense of racial or national continuity through reference to heroic or gifted historical figures.

Another salient presence in the source materials was precognitive dreams. These dreams, much like premonitions, often preceded danger, death, or violence, and they were also typically taken with a grain of salt; the dreamers were often reluctant to report them for fear of appearing mentally unwell. Unlike premonitions, the dreams were characterized by much more vivid and specific imagery, and in many cases were interpreted as messages from deceased people. Trauma on both a personal and communal level was catalytic for all but one of the precognitive dreams discussed. Interestingly, many of the dreams were related not by the dreamers themselves, but by a close friend of the dreamer who thought the dream was remarkable enough to merit recounting; in this way these precognitive dreams shaped the remembrance of the revolution. Some of these dreams, like that of Michael Loughnane, have attracted attention and study for more than a century. The strategic significance of these dreams was powerful according to some of the dreamers, influencing the decisions they made and the outcomes of certain engagements. Many of the precognitive dreams intersected with religious symbols, imagery, and practices. These examples make it clear that precognitive dreams had a profound and nuanced impact on the mental world of those who lived through the Irish Revolution and would go on to influence how they remembered it.

Whether it was to cope with trauma or to fight in the propaganda war, ESP clearly shaped how many in the revolutionary generation remembered and wrote about their experiences. The evidence discussed in this chapter was far from comprehensive, and there remains a great deal of research to be done on this topic; nevertheless, the variety and sheer quantity of material uncovered with this foray into one category of supernatural phenomena is indicative of the truth behind the core claims of this project as a whole; supernatural beliefs and experiences were a significant aspect of the Irish Revolution, a colourful and fascinating aspect that is

clearly worth studying, and ESP was one of the main ways in which the supernatural manifested itself during this period.

Chapter Three: Apparitions and Visions

Introduction

This chapter illustrates how experiences of visions and apparitions played a part both in how the Irish Revolution was experienced, and how it was remembered. In addition, it illustrates the relationship of such phenomena with trauma and combat stress, and how their qualia were influenced by the ideology of Irish revolutionaries. There are numerous themes which can be seen with a close examination of the source materials, but the most outstanding of these are the qualitative influence of folktales, the phenomenological proximity of the memorates to certain types of psychological settings such as stress, extreme fear, and sleep, and finally, the influence of an ideological opposition to materialistic thinking in favour of a more spiritual worldview. This chapter concerns paranormal phenomena of a more direct and traditionally sensory nature. Unlike the extra-sensory perceptions discussed in the previous chapter, apparitions are experienced through sight, sound, and touch, and feel as if they originate from outside the minds of those who experienced them. Of the paranormal phenomena, visions and apparitions tend to be the most sensational and striking; where they appear, they have a powerful impact, almost always inducing intense reactions of terror, bewilderment, confusion, despair, or awe. Some examples include ghosts, disembodied voices or footsteps, bizarre and impossible creatures, floating lights, fantastic waking visions, and powerful supernatural beings like the grim reaper or the banshee.

The broader historical context of belief in apparitions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the British Isles is complex and neatly mapping it onto Irish revolutionaries is a challenge. By the time of the Irish Revolution, belief in ghosts in academic discourse was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain by all but a few dedicated psychical researchers, as Owen Davies put it ‘‘Ghost’ carried too much historical baggage for those who

sought to maintain an impartial, scientific, empirical position free of religious inference.’¹ However, popularly, such belief was far from dead, as the First World War had sparked a modest renewal in the spiritualist movement as a response to ubiquitous experiences of bereavement.² Spiritualism however was not necessarily the dominant framework for popular belief during this time, and experiences of apparitions could just as easily be interpreted through a folkloric lens as ‘wraiths’, ‘fetches’, or a variety of other similar concepts rooted in oral traditions.³ Depending on the context of the teller, the tale, and their audience, relating a memorate of an apparition could have a wide range of consequences and social implications. In the context of an informant to the SFC, providing a ghost story, even a very colourful one, would be encouraged as this practice was part of entertainment in twentieth century Ireland and in this case the audience would have been especially receptive as it was their remit to collect such stories. In the case of BMH witness statements, which were delivered to a relatively sceptical audience of investigators concerned with creating as accurate a record as possible, recollections of apparitions may have seemed unbelievable and fantastic, and for the teller, the social risks associated with reporting such experiences to this audience would be far greater than they would be for reporting more subtle types of experiences like premonitions for example, and as a result would require more conviction to relate. This often made their telling more emotionally significant and complex, and second-guessing or attempts at providing corroboration for the story were more common than they might be for a premonition, for example.

This emotional significance to the teller had a deep impact on the qualitative character of the apparitions. In his study of the supernatural in the First World War, Owen Davies has noted

¹ Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (New York, 2007), pp 131-132.

² Owen Davies, *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith during the First World War* (Oxford, 2018), pp 75-76; Shane McCorristine, *Spectres of the Self: Thinking about Ghosts and Ghost-Seeing in England, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, 2010), pp 222-223

³ Davies, *A Supernatural War*, p. 73.

that, unlike in previous centuries where sightings of ghostly armies were the more regularly reported type of apparition by veterans, in the context of the cultural conditions surrounding the First World War (most notably the spiritualist revival) it was far more common ‘for soldiers to see the ghosts of their dead comrades in the war zone...The First World War clearly generated personal hauntings rather than legendary phantom spectacles.’⁴ The visions and apparitions of the Irish Revolution were similarly personal, which should be expected considering the close relationship between the two conflicts in both timing and participants. The deeply personal and psychologically rich quality of these apparition memorates could at times reveal internal conflicts of a highly abstract, and at times even ideological, nature.

The memorates discussed in this chapter are but a small fraction of the visions and apparitions identified as a whole. In the revolutionary memoirs, Bureau of Military History witness statements, ghost story compilations, the Louis O’Kane archive, and the Schools Folklore collection, 363 memorates which describe a haunting or an apparition have been identified; 237 (65.3 percent) from the School’s Folklore Collection, sixty-five (17.9 percent) from BMH witness statements, forty-three (11.9 percent) from memoirs, sixteen (4.4 percent) from ghost story compilations, and two (0.5 percent) from the Louis O’Kane archive.⁵ Hundreds more are available in British and Irish newsprint archives.⁶ Given the relative social risks of reporting such experiences to the SFC as compared to the BMH, it makes sense that the SFC would have far more memorates of hauntings and apparitions to provide. For reasons of space, this chapter obviously could not discuss all of these in depth, and so some of the most well corroborated, detailed, and representative of broadly occurring themes in the primary source materials have been selected to serve as examples here. This more selective method is

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 70-71.

⁵ For witness statements, see Appendix 7A, for memoirs and ghost story compilations see Appendices 7B and 7C, and for the school’s folklore collection see Appendix 7D. Only two sources were consulted from the Louis O’Kane Archive, which was not searched to the same degree of thoroughness as the other source archives mentioned.

⁶ For newsprint memorates concerning the Black Pig of Kiltrustan alone, see Appendix 11.

in keeping with other recent historical treatments of apparitions in wartime contexts such as Heonik Kwon's *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*, Leo Ruickbie's *Angels in the Trenches*, and Owen Davies' *A Supernatural War*; along with other smaller publications.⁷

Apparitions

The definition of the term 'apparition' is contested and varies depending on the historical context being investigated. For example, in the Early Modern European context, the term apparition was used interchangeably with words like "ghost," "demon," "the returned dead," "...phantom," "shade," and "spirit", and generally referred exclusively to the spirit of a dead person returned to (or perhaps remaining trapped upon) Earth.⁸ In the modern Vietnamese context, the spirits of the dead are defined in relationship to concepts of sacred spaces like *co bac* (or *kham* more popularly).⁹ For the purposes of this study, a broader definition of apparition will be taken than just a manifestation of a given dead person's unsettled spirit or as manifestations necessarily tied to specific haunted or sacred places, because many of the direct sensory paranormal experiences identified by this study are not necessarily linked to a specific place or dead person (namely floating lights and sightings of mythological figures). Here, an apparition will be defined as an anomalous supernatural experience of an *entity*, perceived directly and immediately, superimposed on an otherwise mundane environment. This more flexible definition allows for the inclusion of phenomena which lie outside of the realm of ghosts, while still being distinct from the concept of a 'vision' (a vision being an entire supernatural environment into which the percipient is superimposed), which will be discussed

⁷ Patrice M. Dabrowski, 'Multiple visions, multiple viewpoints: apparitions in a Polish-German borderland, 1877-1880', in *The Polish Review*, lviii, Nono. 3, (2013), pp 35-64; Davies, *A Supernatural War*, *passim*; Heonik Kwan, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (Cambridge, 2008), pp 10-83; Peter Jan Margry, 'Marian interventions in the wars of ideology: the elastic politics of the Roman Catholic Church on modern apparitions', in *History and Anthropology*, xx, Nono. 3, (2009), pp 243-263; Leo Ruickbie, *Angels in the Trenches: Spiritualism, Superstition and the Supernatural During the First World War* (London, 2018), *passim*.

⁸ Kathryn A. Edwards, 'The history of ghosts in Early Modern Europe: recent research and future trajectories' in *History Compass*, x, no. 4 (2012), p. 354.

⁹ Kwan, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*, pp 20-22.

in a later section of this chapter. As will be demonstrated here, Irish revolutionaries reported experiences of mythological beings and floating lights as well as the more traditional ghostly, returned-dead types of experiences.

In terms of length, immediacy, and psychological, mythological, and religious depth, one of the most remarkable of all the paranormal memorates of the Irish Revolution is provided by Frank Gallagher in his published diary *Days of Fear*. In his diary, he recounts day by day his experience of the hunger strike in Mountjoy Gaol in April 1920. Published in 1928, the editor John Murray described it as ‘what must be one of the strangest diaries ever published.’¹⁰ Initially quite lucid, Gallagher’s diary describes his increasingly spiritual state of mind as he struggles to cope with the prospect of an impending death; in a starvation and isolation-induced fugue state his account reaches a crescendo, culminating in a series of powerful visions and apparitions. These memorates are so vivid, temporally proximate, and complex that they merit quoting at length; they give the closest approximation possible to a snapshot of the mind of an Irish revolutionary during a paranormal experience. Gallagher’s diary entry for 13 April 1920 describes the arrival of an apparition of Death itself and is littered with intriguing four-stop ellipses. These ellipses perhaps suggest pauses, or that parts of the original manuscript were not included, or were unintelligible, and have been faithfully reproduced here:

This is the darkest night yet Death alone could find his way in here now. Thought I saw him sitting in that corner last night, waiting.... Yes.... He is there again to-night.... I cannot see him.... But he is breathing softly, and I hear him.... It is funny to think of Death breathing.... Perhaps if it were not so still he would not be heard.... He will sit there all night.... He may come and stand over me as he did last night.... If he does, I shall ask him. I feel him coming towards me, not walking, but, as it were, floating, like smoke in the air... listlessly.¹¹

In a testament to both how phantasmagorical his environment had become and how much he had been contemplating the topic, Gallagher cheerfully addressed the fearsome

¹⁰ Frank Gallagher, *Days of Fear* (London, 1928), p. 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

anthropomorphized presence of his own mortality: ‘Well, Death, how goes it?’ To this, ‘Death’ acerbically replied ‘Better with me than with you.’¹²

Introductions aside, they began a lengthy, morbid repartee, in which a fundamental duality in revolutionary ideology is presented: that of the material and the spiritual.¹³ In this dichotomy Gallagher, our protagonist, takes the spiritual side. Faced with an imminent demise by starvation, Gallagher is compelled to advocate for his immortal soul to save his sanity. To bolster his position, Gallagher asserts the supremacy of God over the power of Death:

“But you are not a master, Death; you are a servant. What you get you give to the earth or to the sea; but you cannot order. You have to wait until we are given to you, wait for the rejected of the tables of God.”

“God is my Master, but He trusts me. He has found me a good servant. Seldom He interferes with my work.’ He will not interfere now.¹⁴

Death does not disagree with Gallagher, and doubles down on the intimidation, emphasizing that he does not make mistakes anymore, and that God will not interfere with his grisly work with a miracle. More subtly, this cynical attitude towards miracles is a jab against the spiritual side of the dichotomy between the material and spiritual.

Satisfied that Death and God are on the same side, Gallagher changes tactics and questions Death about his methods. Death gives him in answer in terrifying lurid detail: ‘I have only one method. Whether I am to come soon or late, I do not decide. He decides. But when I am come time ceases. It is given to me to enter in even to the souls of those to whom I am sent. The man whom I am taking knows, before any others know, that I am taking him.’¹⁵ Here, reinforcing his alliance with the almighty, Death declares that he is permitted to enter into the very souls of the dying, implying that the conversation he is having at that very moment with Gallagher is taking place in the metachoric terrain of Gallagher’s soul, separated by both space

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp 92-93.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 93-94.

and time from normal reality. Here, Death paradoxically undermines their own veracity in that they are thereby admitting their own unreality.¹⁶ However, in the immediate sense, this also serves as a tactic to convince Gallagher that Death's presence is real.

Death continues elucidating his morbid methodology with an almost moralistic description of how he draws out the process of death in ways commensurate with the sins of the dying: 'I close his senses one by one. That sense which he gratified most I leave him longest. If it be the great things of the mind which he cherished, his mind lives even while his body lies dead. If it be his flesh which he nursed in desire, then his flesh dies last and the fires of its yearnings torture him.'¹⁷ The image of candles is invoked in a similar way in a different apparition memorate reported by Joseph McCarthy in his description of the aftermath of the explosion at Saltmills in county Wexford while last rites were being administered to the victims: 'They had a candle which they placed, lighting, in a cart track and, in some mysterious way, it kept alight while an Act of Contrition was breathed into his ear.'¹⁸ Gallagher continues his dialogue with Death, and in so doing clutches for a way to escape the morbid struggle he is being faced with:

"In that struggle you always win?"

"I always win; for that struggle always kills. Death is the robbing from man of his great desire."

"But if a man's great desire be unity with God: what then?"

"Then he does not struggle. His senses are extinguished one by one, but I cannot rob him of his great desire. That which he yearns for is given him in death."

"Is such a man, then, never afraid of death?"¹⁹

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 94-95.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁸ Joseph McCarthy statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1507), pp 5-6.

¹⁹ Gallagher, *Days of Fear*, p. 95.

Gallagher's hope of escape is cut off when Death resorts to the very theology to which Gallagher so devoutly clings:

'All men are afraid of me...It is the humanity in man which dreads my coming, although the divinity in him has prayed for my coming. But Death deals only with the humanity in man, and the soul is inundated with the fear that is in the flesh. My Master was perfect as a Man; and His manhood, the more intensely for its perfection abhorred my coming.'²⁰

Rebutted, Gallagher desperately seeks an escape through the realm of dreams: 'And what of those who lose consciousness and meet you without waking?', to which Death replies, 'The knowledge of death is in the flesh. All who meet me are awake, because they are not dead. Consciousness is a human word and has no real meaning.'²¹

Increasingly panicked, cornered by the rhetoric of an avatar of death threatening the very chamber of his soul, Gallagher begins to inquire about the true purpose of death's presence. Death reassures Gallagher that he has not come to take him yet, and that in fact Death has not even yet entered Gallagher's soul. Death explains that he has come to Mountjoy Gaol because so many of the hunger strikers are yearning for his presence at that very moment, and that he is merely lurking in wait for an order from the Almighty to sever them from their mortal coil: 'I learn most from the eyes. I shall soon be ordered...I who entered Adam have learned to wait with patience. I who entered Christ have learned to wait with confidence.'²² With that, the apparition suddenly disappears, leaving Gallagher alone in the darkness. Gallagher, now completely terrified, cries out, begging for Death to return and speak with him, hoping that Death will settle his deep uncertainties. He questions the stygian abyss, asking 'What is beyond you? How do you take the body and leave the soul? With what sense am I to fight the battle you will win? Why don't you answer Death?'²³ Left with nothing but silence, Gallagher

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 95-96.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²² *Ibid.*, pp 96-97.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

plaintively concludes the entry: 'Even you in the cell are better than darkness that has no beginning and no end.'²⁴

What are we to make of these apparitions of Death? Frank Gallagher's version of the Mountjoy hunger strike is not the only one, but it is by far the most surreal and relevant to this study. In his memoir *Dublin Made Me*, C.S. Andrews describes the hunger strike, briefly quoting an article from the *Evening Telegraph* which described him as in 'a state of delirium', but aside from this does not admit to suffering much in the way of ill mental effects.²⁵ The closest Andrews comes to spiritual turmoil is when the prison chaplain lectures him as to the immorality of his actions instead of providing him with the last sacraments.²⁶ One might dismiss Gallagher's visions as delirious hallucinatory ravings, but he was probably not alone in experiencing such visions. It is quite possible even Andrews had similar experiences in his 'state of delirium' but chose to omit them from his memoir. In their witness statements to the BMH, Joseph O'Connor and Andrew McDonnell, rather than describing in detail the thoughts that went through their heads during the hunger strike, cite *Days of Fear* and the 'pen of Frank Gallagher' as providing a perfectly suitable description of their state of mind.²⁷ According to James Kavanagh's witness statement to the BMH, Gallagher's writing and journalistic integrity was respected by other members of the newly forming Irish government, and he was known for stubbornly refusing to allow his writings to be altered unnecessarily by editors.²⁸ If Kavanagh is to be believed here, it is unlikely that Gallagher's visions were fabricated by his editor, and considering the support his diary receives from other sources, it is safe to assume that visionary experiences like the ones he describes were not uncommon. For example, at several points in his memoir *A Chronicle of Jails*, Darrell Figgis describes surreal mystical

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ C.S. Andrews, *Dublin Made Me* (Dublin, 1979), pp 140-144.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

²⁷ Andrew McDonnell statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1768), p. 45; Joseph O'Connor statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS544), p. 29.

²⁸ James Kavanagh statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS889), pp 102-103.

experiences he had while isolated in cells in Stafford Gaol, Castlebar Gaol, and Reading Prison.²⁹ Owen Davies has argued that throughout history the gaol cell has been a common location for hauntings.³⁰ According to scientific literature, starvation, isolation, and sleep deprivation are known to induce hallucinations and trance states.³¹

These harrowing conditions combined with Gallagher's natural talents and cultural context makes for a heady ideological cocktail, and this diary should be seen in the context of Gallagher's role in the nationalist movement as a propagandist. Graham Walker has described Gallagher as having 'a partisan sense of history and, in relation to all things English, a moral and cultural feeling of superiority derived largely from Catholic religious teaching, Gaelic enthusiasms and an ascetic anti-materialism...It [the partisan sense of history] provided a way of fashioning a holy weapon out of the past.'³² Gallagher was considered a highly skilful propagandist, and the U.S. minister in Ireland during the Second World War would label him 'the Irish Doctor Goebbels'.³³ His diary was received well by reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic.³⁴ One American reviewer summarized the work nicely, recognizing and highlighting the primacy of the spiritual struggle presented there, describing it as

a faithful account of the struggles between a body craving food and a soul dominating the body for an ideal. Outside the prison walls, the people prayed and chanted; within, the strikers went through the terrors...He [Gallagher] tried to analyse just what Ireland

²⁹ Darrell Figgis, *A Chronicle of Jails* (Dublin, 2015), pp 26-27, 29-31, 74, 80-82, 101-102, 126.

³⁰ Davies, *The Haunted*, p. 49.

³¹ Lindsay A. Bornheimer et. al., 'The role of social isolation in the relationships between psychosis and suicidal ideation' in *Clinical Social Work Journal*, iil (2020), pp 54-55; David T. Bradford, 'Brain and psyche in early Christian asceticism' in *Psychological Reports*, cix, no. 2 (2011), pp 470-511; Angela M. Ethier, 'Death-related sensory experiences' in *Journal of Pediatric Oncology*, xxii, no. 2 (2005), p. 79; Björn Schlier et. al., 'Fluctuations in hallucination spectrum experiences co-vary with social defeat but not with social deafferentation. A 3-week daily assessment study' in *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, xlii, no. 1 (2017), p. 92.

³² Graham Walker, 'The Irish Dr Goebbels': Frank Gallagher and Irish Republican propaganda' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, xxvii, no. 1 (1992), p. 152.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

³⁴ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 8 Mar. 1930, p. 2; *Tipperary Star*, 6 Apr. 1929, p. 15; *Tuam Herald*, 29 Aug. 1931, p. 2; F.X.T., 'Days of fear. By Frank Gallagher.' in *America: A Catholic Review of the Week*, xl, no. 22 (1929), p. 532.

it is for which he is suffering. The land? The people? No, not that, but something greater, the spirit.³⁵

Another reviewer from the *Tipperary Star* described it as ‘a book that holds in itself the struggling, unconquered spirit of Ireland.’³⁶ Gallagher’s conversation with Death is in effect a ‘holy weapon’ of republican propaganda, striding along the liminal terrain between the sacred and profane, and in so doing illustrating both the anti-materialistic qualities of Irish revolutionary ideology and profound spiritual fervour with which they viewed themselves and their cause.

This case bears some similarities to conversations with personifications of Death in the School’s Folklore Collection, though there are some key differences as well. For example, the main continuities here are that Death is a powerful supernatural entity that can be conversed with, acts as a kind of intermediary between God and man, appears at or near one’s bedside in times of mortal extremity, has a certain inevitability, and has certain powers to foretell the demise of mortals.³⁷ The main difference is that Gallagher’s version of Death is substantially more loquacious and temperate in demeanour, and Gallagher leaves his encounter with Death without any meaningful sense of triumph. In the folktales, the main character of the story often outwits Death (at least for a time) with some stratagem or special device, frustrating Death and gaining at least a temporary sense of relief.³⁸ Though Gallagher is not claimed by Death in his narrative, he certainly does not seem to have outsmarted Death or gained any kind of special power. In addition, the style of Gallagher’s story has a degree of gothic detail and realism,

³⁵ F.X.T., ‘Days of fear. By Frank Gallagher.’ in *America: A Catholic Review of the Week*, xl, no. 22 (1929), p. 532.

³⁶ *Tipperary Star*; 6 Apr. 1929, p. 15.

³⁷ ‘A Funny Story’, Mary Geraty, Tonranny, Co. Mayo, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0137, pp 272-275); ‘A Story’, Maura Lacken, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0749, pp 26-30); ‘no title’, Edmond Buckley, Knocknagree, Co. Cork, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0357, pp 251-254); ‘Paddy Makes a Compact with Death’, Cathal Mac Murchadha, Crossboy, Co. Sligo, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0178, pp 421-424); ‘Story - Jack the Tinker (Origin of Jack of the Lantern or Will o’ the Wisp)’, Patrick Mullins, Rockvale, Co. Clare, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0614, pp 37-45).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

differing substantially from the folktales present in the SFC which often have a light-hearted, and humorous quality. Furthermore, the folktales are typically described in the second or third person and recounted a much greater distance in time from the events being described. If we were to consider Gallagher's hunger-strike visions as purely an example of narrative artifice, we could conclude that he was putting a gothic spin on folkloric dialogues with Death. However, it seems just as likely that he authentically experienced these apparitions, and though we do not have any direct evidence of this, the stylistic qualities of his account suggest that his experience was informed by a consumption of Irish folktales and gothic literature.

This case is unparalleled in its detail and immediacy, both as an example of an apparition and of a paranormal phenomenon more generally. It directly addresses the central questions of this study in several ways. Frank Gallagher's 'Death' is not merely a floating light or strange sound, it is a servant of God descended upon him to deliver a detailed message. It is one of the rare, recorded instances in the Irish Revolution when a being understood by the percipient to be from beyond the grave speaks to a human intelligibly, and the only instance of such a being speaking at length. It is auditory, tactile, and extra-sensory, with some capacity to warp the surrounding environment for the percipient; this manifested in the post-dialogue coffin-themed sleep paralysis. Unlike the other examples which will be discussed in this chapter, this experience occurred on hunger-strike in prison, which undoubtedly had an impact on its intensity and acuity.³⁹ The specific circumstances of the hunger strike lend it a powerful spiritual quality in that it put Gallagher into an environment of extended isolation and physical deprivation, not to mention the troubling theological and moral issues around suicide and the afterlife.

³⁹ It should be noted that Gallagher's diary is not the only example of republican prison spirituality. Darrell Figgis' memoir describes several mystical prison experiences: Darrell Figgis, *A Chronicle of Jails* (Dublin, 2015), pp 29-31, 74, 80-82, 101-102, 108-110, 126.

This apparition, though terrifying, was ultimately helpful, providing a kind of spiritual consolation for Gallagher by revealing powerful truths to him about the nature of reality, particularly in how the apparition of Death clarified and reinforced its subservient relationship with God; though in the passages discussed here Gallagher does not specifically state that the apparition provided him with consolation, it is clear that this period of deep despair was inspirational for his more existentially and spiritually comfortable experiences which he reported afterwards toward the end of his ordeal, effectively providing the deep darkness from which Christian hope could arise.⁴⁰ It is a clear example of how religious beliefs interact with paranormal experiences, in that it is a very religiously unorthodox sort of apparition that nevertheless exists literally in dialogue with the percipient's religious beliefs, even though it was not induced by any religious practice or ritual. It is clearly catalysed by trauma in that it manifested from pure and explicit death anxiety, uncertainty, and sensations of losing control. It was not only the direct subject of revolutionary remembrance, but influential to other accounts as well. Strategically, it did not have much of an impact, but ideologically, this conversation with an apparition served as a battleground for one of the deep underlying tensions of the Irish Revolution: that of the spiritual and material. In this instance, the spiritual wins out, and in the process demonstrates an important truth about the revolution and the revolutionaries; that the conflict was not merely one of politics and material conditions but was also one of metaphysical abstraction and deeply held spiritual convictions.

Remarkably, Gallagher's 'Death' is not the only example of an extra-sensory helper in the personal accounts of revolutionaries. In his witness statement to the BMH, Ailbhe Ó Monacháin described how he, Liam Mellows, and Frank Hynes were obliged to billet

⁴⁰ Gallagher, *Days of Fear*, pp 159-161.

themselves in a cold, damp, and rat-infested shed while on the run in the aftermath of Galway's Easter Rising. While there, they attracted a strange presence:

During the stay in the hut on Corr na Gaoithe, a curious feeling or imagination manifested itself to the three of us. We got a feeling that there was a fourth man present. Each one of us had had this feeling before the matter was mentioned between us. It was not an eerie or a ghostly feeling. It was just a consciousness of the fourth man's presence.⁴¹

The little band of volunteers did not merely notice this 'Fourth man', they engaged with it in a ritualistic and practical way:

When sharing our food, there was always an instinctive tendency to share out four portions. Then discussing anything, there was always an expectancy of hearing the fourth man's opinion. Waking up out sleep, each of us felt an expectancy of seeing the fourth man. The feeling was very real and it became accepted that there was a fourth presence with us, and often, when in doubt as to what to do, we would say "Well, leave it to the fourth man to lead us right". And he did lead us safely through all danger.⁴²

This 'Fourth man' the trio were instinctively feeding would lead them out of trouble when trying to find shelter the next day.⁴³ It is corroborated by Alfred White in his witness statement, who quotes from a document written by an unnamed 'western comrade'.⁴⁴ The description provided by White is remarkably similar in content, differing only in some of its phrasing and vocabulary: 'One morning I awoke and it was just daylight...I looked around and saw my two comrades asleep, but I said to myself: "Where is the other man?" I supposed he'd gone outside...I waited for a while to hear him coming in; when I woke up properly, I knew there were only three of us... Liam told me the same thing troubled him.'⁴⁵

When comparing other features of the account of the 'western comrade' cited by White with Ó Monacháin's witness statement there are some key differences which suggest that this 'western comrade' is in fact Frank Hynes. Ó Monacháin's description of his first interaction

⁴¹ Ailbhe Ó Monacháin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS298), pp 27-28.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁴ Alfred White statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1207), p. 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

with Liam Mellows was when he took over Mellows' job as an organizer in Dublin in July 1915, whereas the western comrade describes his first meeting with Mellows as occurring in January 1914 in Galway.⁴⁶ Frank Hynes does not mention anything about this fourth man in his witness statement, though he does describe their stay in the cattle shed.⁴⁷ Hynes prefers to attribute their good luck in escaping capture to the 'special hand' of God.⁴⁸ Why Hynes elected to omit the fourth man from his witness statement but include him in his correspondence with White is unclear, but some possibilities can be offered. As Hynes' statement was collected a year later than Ó Monacháin's statement by the same BMH investigator (Sean Brennan), perhaps Hynes did not feel the need to repeat what Ó Monacháin had already explained, or Hynes thought the story of the fourth man was merely incidental to a military history narrative and unworthy of official inclusion. Investigators notes to the statements of Ó Monacháin, Hynes, and White suggest that all three were seen as reliable, though Brennan remarked that the first draft of Hynes' statement required some expansion through the answering of some questions; perhaps its initial brevity was part of the reason for the omission.⁴⁹ Unhelpfully, Liam Mellows' account of the rising in Galway mentions nothing of this stay at the Corr na Gaoithe hut, but this is unsurprising given the propagandistic nature of Mellows' rising narrative and the relative ignominy of being forced to flee to a damp cattle shed.⁵⁰

Despite the inconsistencies in Hynes' accounts, this apparition is relatively well corroborated: we have two first-hand descriptions of the fourth man from different individuals which agree with each other in a substantial and detailed way. The apparition is also unusual in that the percipients formed an attachment with it, even going so far as to provide it with

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8; Ó Monacháin statement, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Frank Hynes statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS446) pp 18-29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴⁹ Investigator's notes, Frank Hynes statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS446, S.1322); Investigator's notes, Ailbhe Ó Monacháin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS298, S. 1364); Investigator's notes, Alfred White statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1207, S. 118).

⁵⁰ Conor McNamara, *Liam Mellows: Soldier of the Irish Republic, Selected Writings 1914-1922* (Newbridge, 2019), pp 71-80.

propitiatory offerings. Indeed, this behaviour may have made Hynes uncomfortable upon reflection, and perhaps this discomfort was one of the reasons he elected to omit it from his witness statement. Another oddity with this apparition is its explicitly extra-sensory nature: ‘It was not an eerie or a ghostly feeling. It was just a consciousness of the fourth man's presence.’⁵¹ Arguably, this makes the fourth man a kind of hybrid between a premonition and an apparition. Were it not for the personification and corroboration of the explicitly non-ghostly feeling, it would be categorized as some variety of ESP. Like many other apparitions, it arrived as a kind of waking dream, manifesting in the dawn twilight. Strangely however, the sensation did not vanish. It not only persisted, but persisted collectively in the minds of Ó Monacháin, Mellows, and Hynes. Comparing the two accounts, Hynes was at the time the first to explicitly mention the fourth man, and though both accounts claim the feeling manifested independently, it is possible that Hynes initiated speaking about it. However it came about, they ultimately arrived at a mutual understanding about this mysterious presence and elected to write about it later.

This case addresses the central questions of this study in several ways. The fourth man had very little in the way of ideological or strategic significance, but it had an impact on how the rising was remembered by Hynes, Ó Monacháin, and White. The fourth man arrived in a time of desperation, discomfort, and relatively low spirits, and could be interpreted as catalysed by trauma, although admittedly in a less extreme way than Gallagher’s death apparition. Though not ‘religious’ in nature, the fourth man is nevertheless liminal in that it blurs the line between apparitions and premonitions and would more accurately be described as a personified premonition. In some ways it bears a resemblance to the idea of a guardian angel, but this connection is not made explicit by those who remembered it. It is a well-described and

⁵¹ Ó Monacháin statement, pp 27-28.

independently corroborated paranormal phenomena, making it more difficult to dismiss as a fabrication or false memory.

Corroboration of similar phenomena extends outside of the Irish revolutionary context; similar incidents of the felt presence of another person appearing in extremely stressful situations have been abundantly catalogued throughout history. John Geiger, who has collected many examples of people who described sensing the presence of an additional person during times of trial, calls this phenomenon the ‘third man factor’.⁵² There is no academic consensus on what this experience is or represents, which Geiger acknowledges:

The Third Man has been called many things: a sensory illusion or hallucination caused by extreme physical exertion or monotony; a medical condition attributable to low blood glucose, high-altitude cerebral edema, or cold stress; a ghostly apparition or mediumistic experience; a manifestation of a guardian angel; or a psychological “compensatory figure” that embodies “inner resources that the beleaguered person is not able to call on in the ordinary way.”⁵³

Geiger concludes that ‘It is when that faith is severely tested, and failure—even death—seems inevitable, that the Third Man appears...It begins with belief, a belief that a companion stands with them.’⁵⁴ Geiger describes this moment as ‘the angel switch’, though he prefers scientific explanations; thereby acknowledging and validating in his survey the plethora of ways in which this event has been interpreted historically.⁵⁵ In the cultural context of Ailbhe Ó Monacháin, interpreting such an experience as from a spiritualistic or a Catholic point of view would not be uncommon.

In 1937, another paranormal guardian of the Irish revolutionary period was described by Nell McCarthy, a collector for the School’s Folklore Collection scheme writing about old

⁵² John Geiger, *The Third Man Factor: Surviving the Impossible* (New York, 2009), pp 117-171.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 248-249.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 237-253.

graveyards in the vicinity of Dunmanway, county Cork. To her account of Kilbarry graveyard, she added the following tale:

One night a party of I.R.A. men stole the mails off a train and hid them near Kilbarry. When they were ready to return home a light came out of the graveyard and went over ditches and fields. The men followed it until they reached another road by which they could return home. The light then disappeared and when the men were returning home they met a messenger who told them that a party of Black and Tans were waiting for them on the other road, with rifles and ammunition. Had they not followed the light they would have walked into the danger of encountering the Black and Tans, but the mysterious light from the graveyard saved them.⁵⁶

Like the fourth man described by Ailbhe Ó Monacháin, this floating light was a helpful guide, acting almost like a guardian to the party of IRA men, though unlike the fourth man, this case has very little in terms of corroboration. However, this light was not the only example of a floating light, it was one of several, others of which appeared in graveyards as well. For example, another incident involving a floating light comes second-hand from the witness statement of William Kent wherein he describes how the funeral cortege of his brother Richard was accompanied by a floating light: ‘At the burial service at the family vault in Castlelyons, a light, which appeared to have followed the cortege from Fermoy, shone on the vault, and by this light the officiating clergyman read the burial service.’⁵⁷

This case is highly coloured by religious beliefs, occurring during a burial service, and may have been influenced by catholic martyrdom publications. For example, the tale given here is quite similar to some of the martyrdom tales of the penal laws recounted in Rev. Denis Murphy’s *Our Martyrs*, namely, the deaths of John Cathan, O.S.F. in 1622, Thomas Aquinas of Jesus, O.D.C. in 1642, and the trio Daniel O’Brien, Dean of Ferns, Luke Bergin, O.Cist., and James Murchu in 1655; these stories all feature lights or pillars of flame floating over the

⁵⁶ ‘Old Graveyards’, Nell McCarthy, Dunmanway, Co. Cork, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS0305, pp 38-39).

⁵⁷ William Kent statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS75), p. 2.

graves or death sites of the martyred individuals.⁵⁸ Though it is not certain that Kent had read stories such as this, given the political and religious fervour displayed in his witness statement it certainly seems well within the realm of possibility. Furthermore, folktales from eastern and southern county Cork collected in the late 1930's would suggest that there was a belief in the area that floating lights would follow certain families; perhaps Kent's family was one such family.⁵⁹

Not all sightings of floating lights were helpful or consolatory. On 5 November 1920, the night following his resoundingly victorious defence of the village of Ballinalee in county Longford, Seán Mac Eoin, the so-called 'Blacksmith of Ballinalee', along with his flying column stood watch in readiness for a counterattack from the crown forces. Around midnight, the half of the column standing watch were brought to attention by an unaccountable and unforgettably weird sight: 'a series of lights started up on our right front, about two miles distant in the direction of Granard. Individual points of light were visible over a three-mile stretch which extended almost to Doherty's Crossroads'.⁶⁰ Mac Eoin and his men were alarmed by the sight and thought that the lights must be the counterattack they were expecting, but the details did not make sense. After checking with scouts in nearby villages, it became clear that only Mac Eoin and his flying column could see the lights. Mac Eoin mused that perhaps his Freemason informant had betrayed him. Fearing an encirclement by what appeared to be an army of at least 2,000 men, they shifted from their positions and moved out into the night to investigate. After travelling three miles through the dark bogland, Mac Eoin ordered a halt near Earley's home overlooking Mac Eoin's forge: 'There we found that what we had thought was an encircling army was nothing other than "will-o-the-wisp" over that three-mile stretch of

⁵⁸ Rev. Denis Murphy, S.J., L.L.D., M.R.I.A., *Our Martyrs: A Record of Those Who Suffered for the Catholic Faith Under the Penal Laws in Ireland* (Dublin, 1896), pp 262, 279, 362.

⁵⁹ 'Piseoga Connected with Funerals and Wakes', Úna Ní Máthúna, Timoleague, Co. Cork, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0318, p. 331).

⁶⁰ Seán MacEoin statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1716 pt. 2), pp 122-123.

moor and bogland. It was my first experience of this extraordinary phenomenon, and, having regard to the circumstances, it was both disconcerting and terrifying.’⁶¹ This incident is remarkable for several reasons: it was seen first-hand by a large group of people, and it was enormous in scale involving thousands of lights stretched out in a three-mile-long line. Furthermore, Mac Eoin, rather than attributing the lights to a mundane or religious explanation, ultimately and explicitly deems them to be a case of the ‘will-o-the-wisp’, a renowned supernatural being with a rich and storied body of folklore.⁶² English and Irish folktales concerning this phenomenon typically depict the main character being led astray into marshy terrain, often feature blacksmiths, and depict heroic characters overcoming death or infernal adversaries.⁶³ Though there is little evidence as to Mac Eoin’s degree of familiarity with such tales, the fact that he uses the terms ‘extraordinary’ and ‘will-o’-the-wisp’ rather than the Latin term *ignis fatuus* common amongst more sceptical scientific discourses on the topic in the early twentieth century suggests he was at the very least unaware of scientific discourses on the matter.⁶⁴ Mac Eoin’s use of the term ‘extraordinary’ here is significant; in his book *Extraordinary Beliefs: A Historical Approach to a Psychological Problem*, historian Peter Lamont argues that ‘beliefs in extraordinary phenomena depend on the exclusion of ordinary explanations’, the fact that Mac Eoin describes will-o’-the-wisps as extraordinary implies that he views them as devoid of any satisfactory ordinary or natural explanation.⁶⁵ In any case, Mac Eoin and his men felt foolish in the aftermath of the event ‘We returned to the France road wiser men, dejected because we had made such fools of ourselves.’⁶⁶

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁶² Leon A. Hausman and Joseph S. Hall, ‘Will-o’-the-wisp’ in *Western Folklore*, xvii, no. 2 (1958), pp 128-129; Dianne Meredith, ‘Hazards in the bog--real and imagined’ in *Geographical Review*, lxlii, no. 3 (2002), pp 327-331; William Wells Newell, ‘The ignis fatuus, its character and legendary origin’ in *The Journal of American Folklore*, xvii, no. 64 (1904), pp 39-60.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp 41, 49, 51-52, 55, 57, 59.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 42-43.

⁶⁵ Peter Lamont, *Extraordinary Beliefs: A Historical Approach to A Psychological Problem* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 8.

⁶⁶ Mac Eoin statement, p. 124.

The attitude that seeing an apparition was indicative of some kind of mental failing appears in several of the apparition memorates.⁶⁷ Self-questioning is an important aspect of the emotional depth of Irish Revolutionary apparitions, and could take different forms, with different revolutionaries approaching it in different ways. At the end of his witness statement to the BMH, a pair of apparition memorates are provided by Patrick Mullooly, the quartermaster of the IRA North Roscommon Brigade's active service unit (ASU). They are included to bolster his account of events in Hillstreet in the months just before the truce. The first occurred while he was relaxing at Delia O'Beirne's safehouse with his comrades Dockery and Nangle and describes the wail of a banshee, one of the most well-known supernatural beings in Irish folklore.⁶⁸ Though Mullooly seemed certain about the provenance of this particular screech, he was decidedly more unsure about the second apparition, inviting us to make up our own minds, describing it in his witness statement as a 'strange incident...still an unsolved mystery or phenomenon if either is an appropriate term. Let others judge'.⁶⁹

Having just arrived in Hillstreet on Sunday morning with Michael Dockery, the brigade commanding officer, Mullooly spotted Bridget McCloughlin returning from mass. They were looking for her because Dockery needed her to transmit a message to Carrick-on-Shannon concerning some prisoners. The three of them retired to a safehouse, probably Delia O'Beirne's, where Mullooly was witness to something strange:

I left Dockery and her speaking at the door facing each other. One was each side of the doorway...I was sitting on a settlebed almost directly opposite the door when a young man well-known to each of us cycled to the door and casually and deliberately got off the cycle. This man looked at Dockery who, returning the look, was in the act of putting out his hand to him when suddenly I was seized by a great fear lest the newcomer would see me and so I went to the room beside me. A few minutes later Dockery got writing material to send a message...I asked him if the lad was below yet. He asked me what

⁶⁷ Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, p. 79; Francis Healy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1694), p. 7; John C. King statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1731), pp 39-41; Mac Eoin statement, p. 124.

⁶⁸ Patricia Lysaght, 'Irish banshee traditions: a preliminary survey' in *Béaloides*, xlii (1974), pp. 97-98, 103; Patricia Lysaght, *The Banshee: The Irish Supernatural Death-Messenger* (Dublin, 1997), pp 11-41; Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1086), pp 66-67.

⁶⁹ Mullooly statement, p. 67.

lad and when I mentioned his name and said they shook hands Dockery laughed and said: "I often thought you were mad and now I'm sure of it". Suddenly the fear left me and I searched everywhere inside and out and felt anxious to meet now the young man I had feared to meet before.⁷⁰

Upon making inquiries both by dispatch and 'through every source' Mullooly discovered that in fact, this mysterious lad whom he saw shake hands with Dockery had been in England the entire time, and what he had seen was an apparition.⁷¹ Compared to the previous memorate concerning a banshee, Mullooly's tone concerning this apparition is decidedly more tremulous, and his discussion of this experience seems devised to leave the reader unsure.

Mullooly's statement gives no other clues as to the identity of this mysterious lad other than to say that Mullooly was terrified of being seen by him. Dockery thought Mullooly would be insane to think Dockery would shake hands with him, the word 'lad' here is underlined in the original document, Mullooly chose not to name this lad in his statement, and this lad was well known to Dockery, Bridget McCloughlin, and Mullooly. After searching Mullooly and the other members of his ASU's witness statements for references to a young man fitting these criteria who had fled to England by June of 1921, only two individuals were found who fit the bill: either a Roscommon shop boy named McCullagh, or a man known only as 'Higgins'. McCullagh was a messenger for a spy named Scanlon active in Strokestown; when Scanlon was captured and executed by the IRA on 8 May 1921, McCullagh managed to flee the country.⁷² Higgins was thought by Mullooly to be responsible for the capture of Marty O'Connor on 25 March 1921.⁷³ Higgins narrowly escaped being executed by the IRA for this, taking shelter with the Black and Tans 'for a time' before fleeing to England, never to return.⁷⁴ At the time of seeing this apparition, Mullooly had only recently escaped imprisonment, and

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 67-68. The underlined words are reproduced here as in the original.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁷² Luke Duffy statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS661), p. 30; Kathleen Hegarty Thorne, *They Put the Flag a-Flyin': The Roscommon Volunteers 1916-1923* (Newberg, 2013), p. 94.

⁷³ Mullooly statement, p. 69.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 69-70.

as he had been captured shortly after the Scramogue ambush (23 March 1921) it is possible he would not have known of what had happened to Higgins or McCullagh (or another candidate) while he was imprisoned. This would explain why Mullooly would not want to be seen by this 'lad' and would use the word 'lad' in such a mysterious way. Admittedly, using solely witness statements to narrow down this individual is not the most reliable evidence for the informer theory, but in the absence of any other documentation concerning this individual, they provide the most plausible explanation.

In any case, Mullooly believed he had seen someone who could not have possibly been there and gave two explanations. The first was that he was indeed mad and the second (which he preferred) he enigmatically delivered by quoting *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "The lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact" and truly were not the lads great lovers in those glorious years and days'.⁷⁵ Mullooly follows this with a couple of pages describing the loyalty and national spirit of the people of Strokestown.⁷⁶ In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare follows the sentence quoted by Mullooly will several more:

'One sees more devils than vast Hell can hold: that is the madman. The lover, all as frantic, sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt. The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance from heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven, and, as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.'⁷⁷

Mullooly's second explanation is not a denial of his madness, but a claim to being a lover and poet in addition to being a lunatic; through referencing Shakespeare, the apparition effectively becomes a devil bodied forth out of 'airy nothing' by his poet's eye. He concludes his statement with a series of 'foolish' letters of resignation from the National Army, a claim to having coined the term 'Absconsionist', and an invocation of the 'blessing of Saints Patrick, Bridget and

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 68-69.

⁷⁷ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London, 1600), act 5, lines 7-24.

Columcille whose sacred dust the soil of Armagh enshrouds' upon the IRA unit that raided Gough Barracks in June 1954.⁷⁸

Mullooly has two witness statements. The first is quite conventional, lacking in any folklore or paranormal activity.⁷⁹ The second, written eight months later and almost twice as long, is 'a correction and elaboration' of the first littered with a menagerie of oddities.⁸⁰ In the investigator's notes to Mullooly's second statement, Matthew Barry remarked that Mullooly was 'very intelligent and well read...of a spiteful nature...did not impress me as a good witness and I concluded he was too much given to exaggerate his own importance.'⁸¹ Nevertheless, we should hesitate to take Mullooly at his word and deem him insane. Recent psychological literature tells us that experiencing hallucinations is both more common than is typically assumed and not necessarily an indicator of madness.⁸² Furthermore, his story fits well within traditions that were very strong in the north Leinster and Ulster region of apparitions of the living called fetches, thus in Mullooly's context such story might not seem especially mad.⁸³ His experience of an apparition of an informant is more an indicator of how stressful the Irish War of Independence was for those experiencing it directly, and of how personally impactful and psychologically nuanced apparition memorates of the Irish Revolution could be. Frustratingly, Mullooly did not mention this experience to Ernie O'Malley when he was interviewed by him.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Mullooly statement, pp 71-72.

⁷⁹ Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS955), *passim*.

⁸⁰ Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1086), p. 1.

⁸¹ Investigators Notes, Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1086, S.2273).

⁸² Frank Larøi, 'The Phenomenological Diversity of Hallucinations: Some theoretical and clinical implications' in *Psychologica Belgica*, xlvii, no. 1 (2006), p. 165; Marco Giugliano et. al., 'Metacognitive Abilities as a Protective Factor for the Occurrence of Psychotic-Like Experiences in a Non-clinical Population' in *Frontiers in Psychology*, xiii (2022), pp 1-2.

⁸³ William Sayers, 'A Hiberno-Norse etymology for English fetch: "Apparition of a Living Person"' in *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, xxx, no. 4 (2017), pp 205-209.

⁸⁴ Patrick Mullooly interview, (UCDA, O'Malley notebooks, P17b/131, pp 27B-30A); Patrick Mullooly interview, (UCDA, O'Malley notebooks, P17b/132, pp 2B-7); Patrick Mullooly interview, (UCDA, O'Malley notebooks, P17b/137, pp 6B-13B)

In an interview with Fr. Louis O’Kane, John Murphy related a story of an apparition. While stationed in an ‘old manse’ on the Monaghan side of the border near Red Tweed’s Manse, in Newtown, county Armagh in May 1922, Murphy’s comrades saw ‘very mysterious’ strange lights in the near distance. Murphy would say to O’Kane that they were ‘like a flash signal of some kind - little spurts of fire. Harry, was tellin’ me afterwards; but they could not make out what it was’.⁸⁵ Soon enough, the thing made its way around the side of the house, hurtling toward them at great speed:

So the guards on the road saw something coming and one of them still maintained that it was more like a big animal, and it was on its hands and feet. He said if it was a man he must have been walking on his hands and feet but that he had something on him like a trench coat; and saw him coming down past the side of the house. It didn’t go out on to the road while they were but they challenged him then and shouted “Halt!” and as they challenged him he made two springs like a hare and he disappeared into the shrubbery and they fired at the object, but that was the last that was seen of it, but eh, you couldn’t convince the men but that they saw it; and there was moonlight but as it was in the month of May it was clear.⁸⁶

Murphy was divided as to whether or not to attribute the creature to a paranormal or mundane cause: ‘that was the ghost anyway; but as you say there, probably the Specials were near Fane Valley and all like that...It was a dangerous area.’⁸⁷ It is difficult to divine what Murphy was meaning to imply here through repeating that the area was dangerous; did he mean that this creature was probably one of the Specials playing a prank, or merely that the area was dangerous and that contributed to a stressful atmosphere? Though the strong loyalist presence in the area and significant threat posed to the IRA by the Specials would seem to support the latter conclusion, we cannot be completely certain. The spurts of fiery light which preceded the creature’s appearance would seem to bely interpreting this sighting as a prank.

⁸⁵ Fr. Louis O’Kane, ‘Conversation With: John Murphy – Tullyvallen and Eddie Boyle March 3rd., 1966’, (Tullyvallen, 1966), p. 20.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 20-21.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

In any case, Murphy was somewhat reluctant to tell the tale; he was being interviewed by a priest in tandem with Eddie Boyle and probably did not want to seem overly credulous or superstitious. Prior to relating the tale, John had to be prodded by Boyle and O’Kane:

[John Murphy] “You didn’t go immediately, Eddie I’m sure, did you?”

[Eddie Boyle] “Well, we were in an old manse – that’s where the ghost was.”

[Fr. Louis O’Kane] “Well what about the ghost John? (laugh) There wasn’t any ghost, of course, was there?”

[John Murphy] “Well, it was very mysterious – it was very mysterious.”⁸⁸

O’Kane clearly is acting as a mediator here, and his perspective on the issue is revealed through saying ‘there wasn’t any ghost, of course, was there?’ This likely is part of the reason why Murphy distances himself from the belief through the way he tells the story, redirecting responsibility for the beliefs through claiming that some of his men were convinced of seeing it. The building being described here appears in other memorates as a haunted place; Eddie Boyle refers to it in his witness statement to the BMH:

...we billeted ourselves in an unoccupied house which had no windows. I think we only used the place for a few nights. The house previously had been the residence of the local protestant Clergyman and was on the Co. Monaghan side of the border. We had to leave this house as the building had the name of being haunted. Some of our boys claimed to have seen a man who refused to halt when challenged and moved about at night in the grounds without making the least noise.⁸⁹

Based on the respective timelines in Boyle’s statement and the interview with O’Kane, this ‘unoccupied house...previously the residence of the local protestant Clergyman’ was probably the same building as the ‘old manse’ which Boyle referred to in his interview with O’Kane. Both the statement and the interview describe a series of tense skirmishes in the vicinity of Mulladuff, Castleblayney, and Newtownhamilton around the time these apparitions were reported. The ambient danger and strain of the weeks preceding these experiences probably

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19. My brackets added to clarify the speakers.

⁸⁹ Eddie Boyle statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 0647), p. 22.

contributed to the sightings, along with sectarian tensions, and the buildings' haunted reputation. In addition, local folktales describe several sightings of strange black animals along roadsides at night, such tales may have informed the qualia of these disturbing experiences.⁹⁰ This spate of paranormal activity is relatively well-corroborated, being attested to both by Boyle and Murphy, and demonstrates both how local folktales influenced experiences of apparitions and illustrates the close relationship between hauntings and apparitions.

Such folktales informed the experiences of revolutionaries and could give an eerie paranormal cast to unexpected sounds or lights, examples of which can be seen in Ernie O'Malley's memoir *On Another Man's Wound*. In the winter of 1918 Ernie O'Malley was bicycling around the mountainous and rugged western regions of Donegal (according to his memoir this was at the behest of Michael Collins), checking in on the various companies of the Irish Volunteers, establishing more companies where he could, and canvassing on behalf of Sinn Féin.⁹¹ During this arduous process, he stayed in a variety of local farmhouses, and had the opportunity to listen to local folktales. O'Malley wrote the following concerning the beliefs of Donegal natives in the supernatural: 'Spirits, good and bad, left at cockcrow. The dead walked around, there was an acceptance of their presence, no horror and little dread, the wall was thin between their living and their dead.'⁹² With such tales in the back of his mind, he found himself bicycling along a precipitous cliffside roadway near the Gweebarra bridge on a dark midwinter night. His journey was eerily interrupted:

I heard a noise of wailing. I wondered what it could be. I could not see any lights of houses, nor, though I had passed there a few times in day, could I remember houses. The wailing increased, then it fell and seemed to moan itself out. I lifted my bicycle over the ditch, drew my revolver and made in the direction of the noise. All was silent

⁹⁰ 'Strange Animals', Mrs. T. Robinson, Altnamaekan, Co. Monaghan, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0942, p. 163); 'Strange Animals', Mrs. Florrie Powell, Drumacrib, Co. Monaghan, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0942, p. 164); 'Strange Animals', Mr. Joseph Powell, Drumacrib, Co. Monaghan, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0942, p. 165-166); 'Strange Animals', Mr. R. Douglas, Drumacrib, Co. Monaghan, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0942, p. 166-167); 'Strange Animals', Mrs. Trainor, Drumacrib, Co. Monaghan, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0942, p. 168);

⁹¹ O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, p. 117.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

now. Suddenly the sound began again. I gripped the butt tightly as I tried to make my way in the darkness. The sound increased. My knees trembled and I was afraid to advance. I turned and ran for my bicycle, scrambled across banks until I reached the road, then pedalled with my head well down until I became tired.⁹³

On Another Man's Wound contains twenty-eight paranormal memorates.⁹⁴ In twenty-three of these O'Malley expressed no doubt as to their veridicality, and for the other five he seemed to be of a divided opinion, though at no point in his narrative does he express outright scepticism for the paranormal in general.⁹⁵ As was discussed in the previous chapter on ESP, O'Malley had some faith in his own supernatural power, and wrote that during the conflict he had developed a special danger sense of a precognitive nature, that he had also developed a kind of pseudo-telepathic bond with other comrades possessing a 'flame-like spirit', and that he was 'a very competent fortune-teller'.⁹⁶ These beliefs were undoubtedly influenced by his upbringing in Mayo: in his memoir he describes at length how his Nannie taught him a variety of omens and 'could tell fortunes with tea-leaves', and how another old woman told his fortune after he had fallen out of a punt, prophesying his coming fighting and trouble.⁹⁷ Clearly, at the Gweebarra bridge he had become terrified of some sort of otherworldly creature, possibly a banshee, though he does not explicitly give it a name. Memorates from O'Malley's memoir demonstrate how local folktales informed the experiences of revolutionaries and could give an eerie paranormal cast to unexpected sounds, lights, or strange coincidences.

O'Malley explicitly emphasised the importance of this kind of imaginative popular spirituality toward the nationalist project in the first page of the introduction to his memoir, where he wrote the following:

The tradition of nationality, which meant not only the urge of the people to possess the soil and its products, but the free development of the spiritual, cultural and imaginative

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 15-16, 21, 26, 105-107, 121-123, 129, 136-137, 141, 156, 167, 170, 188, 254, 272, 276, 290, 325, 328, 379, 382, 387, 398-400.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 105-107, 156, 272. In these sections O'Malley seemed slightly less credulous.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 141, 167, 188.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 21, 26.

qualities of the race, had been maintained towards the end of our struggle not by the intellectuals but by the people, who were themselves the guardians of the remnants of culture.⁹⁸

The inclusion of all the paranormal memorates throughout his memoir are in this way a deliberate strategy toward promoting and cultivating Irish cultural identity as part of the broader nationalist project. This engagement with the supernatural in discussions of Irish national identity can be seen in other source materials. For example in Charlotte ‘Lottie’ MacManus’ memoir *White Light and Flame*, she gives an account of her experience of the Irish literary revival which preceded the revolution, describing in lurid detail the ‘third sight’ or ‘gift of vision’ possessed by George William Russell (AKA ‘AE’).⁹⁹ Russell would go on to publish very mystically-inspired works discussing both Celtic cosmogony and what he termed the ‘national being’ of Irish polity, works which may have informed MacManus’ portrayal of him a decade later in her memoir.¹⁰⁰ Another manifestation of what O’Malley termed ‘spiritual, cultural and imaginative qualities of the race’ being maintained ‘by the people’ is evident in a memorate from the SFC attributed to a blacksmith named Jim Mallon from Gelsha, county Longford, wherein ‘during the fight for Irish freedom from 1916 onwards’ Mallon shared a remarkable dream with some of his fellow townsfolk gathered around the forge ‘after a hard days toil and much discussion on the Irish question’.¹⁰¹ In his dream, Mallon was a guest attending a feast in the castle of the former high king of Ireland Roderick O’Connor, a feast at which he discussed the future of the country with a variety of famous figures in the Irish nationalist pantheon, figures including Henry Grattan, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Wolfe Tone, among others.¹⁰² This lengthy description of a little-known blacksmith’s dream demonstrates how the spiritual aspects of Irish nationality were a key talking point during and

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹⁹ MacManus, *White Light and Flame*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁰ George William Russell, *The Candle of Vision* (Dublin, 1918), pp 98-108; George William Russell, *The National Being, Some Thoughts on an Irish Polity* (Dublin, 1916), *passim*.

¹⁰¹ ‘No title’, Patrick Connolly, Aghnacliff, Co. Longford, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0761, p. 219).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp 219-224.

after the Irish revolutionary period, and not just for writers like O'Malley, Russell, and MacManus.

The examples presented in this section show the various ways that psychological stress, folk traditions, and nationalist ideology both informed and catalysed apparitional experiences. Apparitions such as Frank Gallagher's conversation with Death, Ailbhe Ó Monacháin's Fourth Man, and the creature seen by Boyle and Murphy at Red Tweed's Manse are particularly illustrative of how both acute and protracted stress along with extreme environmental conditions were often crucial contextual aspects of paranormal experiences. Paranormal incidents drawn from *On Another Man's Wound* and the SFC are particularly illustrative of how folk traditions informed the qualitative character of apparitional experiences, and in addition, how these experiences represent a crucial spiritual element of Irish revolutionary ideology. The self-questioning elements of some of the examples given here, especially those of Eddie Boyle, John Murphy, Patrick Mullooly, and Frank Gallagher, illustrate the often personal and psychologically nuanced qualities of apparitional experiences. Some of these psychological nuances will be further expanded upon in the following subsection.

Large Scale Apparitions: The Templemore Miracles

The paranormal incidents which unquestionably had the greatest degrees of societal impact and corroboration were mass sightings of apparitions, with the two most noteworthy incidents being the Templemore miracles in the Summer of 1920, and the prophetic panic surrounding the appearance of the Black Pig of Kiltrustan in April of 1918 (which will be discussed later in chapter five). These apparitions were interpreted in a variety of ways by numerous different individuals, and as a result do not fit into the previously explored analytical categories easily; for example, they were seen as genuine marvels by some, and as an opportunity to exploit public fervour by others. Furthermore, both engaged with dimensions of group dynamics and

the public sphere in ways that the previously discussed apparitions did not. The quantity and variety of contemporary perspectives on these events can, in a limited way, suggest how publicly professed credulity toward apparitions was apportioned in the Irish revolutionary context. However, these events cannot be seen just in the context of the Irish Revolution, but also in the context of Irish folklore, and even more broadly in the context of how apparitions and miracles were regarded by Roman Catholics, both the clergy and laity.

The more well-known of the two series of apparition sightings are the Templemore miracles of August 1920. John Reynolds has explored the incident very thoroughly, and he summarizes it well in his introduction:

When violence reached a peak during the summer of 1920, a series of extraordinary events occurred in Templemore and the nearby townland of Curraheen near the village of Gortagarry. James Walsh, a 16-year-old farm labourer, claimed that he was experiencing Marian apparitions, and that religious statues owned by him were moving and bleeding. He also said that a 'holy well' had sprung up in the floor of his bedroom. Miraculous cures were attributed to Walsh, and the religious fervour which subsequently gripped the area led to an influx of thousands of pilgrims from all over Ireland and abroad. The phenomenon of the 'Templemore Miracles', or 'bleeding statues of Templemore', lasted for several weeks.¹⁰³

The incident resulted in an informal ceasefire, and the resulting commotion disrupted military activity so much that it demanded an inquiry from the highest levels of the hierarchy of the IRA (though not before some would take the opportunity to raise money for their cause from the throngs of pilgrims).¹⁰⁴ Reynolds' treatment of this incident, though admirable, is limited in its contextualization of the Templemore miracles, both in terms of their relationship to other similar supernatural incidents during this period, and to the broader world of Marian apparitions both in Ireland and in other Catholic countries.

¹⁰³ John Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles: Jimmy Walsh, Ceasefires, and Moving Statues* (Cheltenham, 2019), p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 8-9, 58-61; James Duggan statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1510), pp 15-16; James Leahy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1454), pp 41-46; Sean Scott statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1486), pp 7-8.

In the Catholic world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries more broadly, such apparitions were not unheard of. For example, renowned Marian apparitions and miraculous cures at Knock in Ireland (1879), Lourdes in France (1858), and Fatima in Portugal (1917) created their own cults and pilgrimage circuits.¹⁰⁵ The main differences between these and Templemore are that they would ultimately receive sanction and approval from the Catholic Church, and they all occurred earlier. Even the more specific circumstantial and thematic characteristics of the Templemore Miracles can easily be seen as one example of a widespread surge of Marian apparitions. On this, E. Ann Matter has written:

The surge of apparitions of the Virgin in the century between the 1830s and the 1930s is marked by a pattern that favoured seers of humble origins, often young girls, usually in rural areas, outside of the pomp and power of the official Church... Throughout this period, the Virgin's apparitions have been tied to themes of repentance and the healing of a broken world.¹⁰⁶

The apparitions seen by Jimmy Walsh fit neatly into this paradigm. Considering the context of Knock, Lourdes and Fatima, it is unsurprising that the Catholic people of Templemore were very open to Walsh's visions. John Reynolds' interpretation of the Templemore Miracles as being indirectly caused by the spate of burnings and killings in Templemore which preceded Walsh's visions ignores this broader context; Walsh's apparitions and the associated miracles are closely in dialogue with Revolutionary violence and presented a respite from that violence and an opportunity for healing.¹⁰⁷

Though thousands of pilgrims came to Templemore to experience supernatural healing (and allegedly some even found what they were looking for), ranking IRA officers along with Catholic clergy and journalists were sceptical of the veracity of the bleeding statues.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁵ Paul Carpenter, 'Mimesis, memory, and the magic lantern: What did the Knock witnesses see?' in *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, xv, no. 2 (2011), pp 102-120; Willy Jansen and Catrien Notermans, 'From vision to cult site: A comparative perspective' in *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, lv, no. 151 (2010), pp. 71-72.

¹⁰⁶ E. Ann Matter, 'Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the late twentieth century: apocalyptic, representation, politics' in *Religion*, xxxi, no. 2 (2001), p. 128.

¹⁰⁷ Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles*, pp 133-138.

¹⁰⁸ Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracle*, pp 51-52, 54-61; Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, p. 79.

incident would be remembered by informants to the SFC twenty years later by collectors as far away as Clonakilty in county Cork.¹⁰⁹ Numerous memorates concerning supernatural cures and holy wells can be found in the SFC notebooks associated with the general area, suggesting that belief in such cures was prevalent in the local population.¹¹⁰ However, despite this, those Irish revolutionaries who wrote about the incident in later years recall reacting to this incident with marked scepticism. This diversity of opinion is among other things a product of its historical context, as the early-twentieth century was a period in which the relationships between Catholic and medical epistemologies were undergoing substantial renegotiation, with many acute examples of this concerning the variety of challenging Marian apparitions appearing in the Catholic parts of western Europe and the world more broadly.¹¹¹

Dan Breen for example saw taking credence in the healing power of Jimmy Walsh's holy water as religiously shallow; in his memoir he recalls remarking to Michael Collins "If my religion went no deeper than to take a glass of that water," I replied, "I'd consider myself to be an outrageous impostor."¹¹² The Templemore convent may have taken a similar view, as their contribution to the SFC notebooks mentions nothing about the Templemore Miracles.¹¹³ In his statement to the BMH, James Leahy described the attitude of him and his men concerning the incident after interviewing Jimmy Walsh:

Frankly, we looked upon the whole business with incredulity and the interview only added to that feeling. Walsh stated to us, among other things, that as a result of questions put by him to the "apparition" the Blessed Lady indicated her approval of the guerilla

¹⁰⁹ 'No title', Mrs. Nagle, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0312, p. 11).

¹¹⁰ 'Old Cures', Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0549, pp. 19-35); 'Our Holy Wells', Mr M. O'Meara, College Hill, Co. Tipperary, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0549, pp 185-186); 'The Blessed Well of Killea – St. James' Well', Templemore, Co. Tipperary, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0550, p. 8); 'Local Cures – Prayers', Templemore, Co. Tipperary, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0550, p. 26); 'Blessed Well of Aughall', Miss Tracy, Templemore, Co. Tipperary, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0550, p. 36).

¹¹¹ Tiago Pires Marques, 'Experiencing religion and medicine: Marian apparition and victim souls in Portugal, 1910-1950' in Tine Van Osselaer, Henk de Smaele, and Kaat Wils (eds), *Sign or Symptom? Exceptional Corporeal Phenomena in Religion and Medicine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leuven, 2017), pp 57-59; Tine Van Osselaer, 'Introduction' in Tine Van Osselaer, Henk de Smaele, and Kaat Wils (eds), *Sign or Symptom? Exceptional Corporeal Phenomena in Religion and Medicine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leuven, 2017), pp 7-14.

¹¹² Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, p. 79.

¹¹³ 'Templemore Convent', Siobhán Nic Giolla, Templemore, Co. Tipperary, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0550, pp 1-3).

tactics including the shooting of the Black and Tans and R.I.C. and wished to see the campaign intensified...not a man of us could have kept a straight face on hearing such remarks... In the ensuing weeks the events in Templemore began to cause me a lot of worry. I was satisfied that there was nothing genuine about the business and that *Walsh was either mentally abnormal or a hypocrite and, as a Catholic, I did not believe that it should be allowed to continue.*¹¹⁴

Here, Leahy evidently used a combination of religious and medical frameworks in his interpretation of Walsh and the miracles; Walsh was not only ‘mentally abnormal’, but he was also worryingly irreligious, particularly in his assertion that the Blessed Lady approved of the shootings involved with the IRA’s guerrilla tactics. Leahy ultimately decided to shake Walsh down for seventy-five pounds he had received ‘as spoils’ from pilgrims.¹¹⁵ Leahy capitalized on the situation further, using collection boxes to raise a 1,500 pound ‘windfall’ for his brigade from passing pilgrims.¹¹⁶ Leahy would participate in the encouragement of local clergy to denounce the veracity of the miracles.¹¹⁷ Sean Scott, who was a part of the brigade collection efforts, would describe Walsh in his statement to the BMH as ‘suffering from a hallucination’ and the throngs of pilgrims as ‘people of simple faith’.¹¹⁸

The writings of Irish revolutionaries explored here indicate that Walsh and his miracles were seen by those revolutionaries who explored them most closely with condescension framed both religiously and medically. Furthermore, the percipient of the Templemore miracles was seen as a frivolous youth. Despite this, in the very same memoir in which he castigates Walsh’s shallowness, Daniel Breen attests to seeing an apparition of his dead comrade Seán Treacy, experiences of premonitions and the sixth sense, and to the veracity of a prophecy delivered in Coole House, county Tipperary at a statue of the Virgin Mary.¹¹⁹ The most obvious difference between paranormal events which Breen takes credence in and those which Breen does not is

¹¹⁴ James Leahy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1454), pp 42-43. My emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 43-46.

¹¹⁸ Sean Scott statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1486), p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, pp 140, 144-145, 153-154, 178.

their scale; Breen took to heart more readily those incidents which were personal to him. This is consistent with the trend observed by Owen Davies of supernatural wartime experiences becoming more personalized, psychologically nuanced, and less communal during and following the First World War.¹²⁰

Visions and Visionaries

In the weeks following the Easter Rising of 1916, Kathleen Clarke, widow of Tom Clarke and sister of Edward Daly (both executed in the aftermath of the Rising), was suffering terribly from the effects of a miscarriage. In her memoir *Revolutionary Woman*, Kathleen Clarke recalled a near-death-experience (NDE) she had while in the hospital; this experience consisted of a remarkable vision which merits quoting at length:

I could stand the pain no longer...The doctor and Mrs. McGarry arrived in a short time, and later a nurse. My baby was dead, and I hoped soon to be.

Then I had a strange experience. The doctor and nurse were busy with me and while I was looking at them, suddenly everything went dark blue. 'This is the end,' I thought, and said, 'Goodbye doctor, I'm off', I heard him say 'My God nurse, she's gone.' I thought I was going to join Tom, and was very happy about it. I felt myself lifted up, through the clouds which seemed to be arranged like feathers on a bird. As I passed through, they closed behind me. When I got up a certain distance I heard a great shout, like men's voices. They sounded joyous to me, and I recognized Ned's voice. Then what seemed a chorus of men were shouting joyfully, 'Here she comes.' Then there was silence.

I still kept going up, and through the clouds I saw Tom's face and then Seán MacDermott's. Seán said 'She must go back, Tom, she must.' Tom said 'God Seán, we can't send her back, it is too cruel', and Seán said, 'You know, Tom, she must go back. She has to do the work we left her to do.' On both their faces there was a look of intense sadness. I wanted to say I would not go back, but I was unable to speak. Their faces disappeared, and I felt myself being slowly but sure pushed down through the clouds of feathers. The next thing I heard was the doctor saying, in a very shocked voice 'My God, nurse, she's coming back.' And back I was, and a more disgusted creature never arrived on this earth. But now I knew what I had to do, and gave up trying to take the easy way out. I just had to take up my burden and carry it as well as I could.

The doctor told me afterwards that for some minutes he had been sure I was dead; heart and everything had ceased for the moment. When my sisters arrived from

¹²⁰ Davies, *A Supernatural War*, pp 70-71.

Limerick later in the day and stooped over to kiss me, I cried for the first time since the executions, cried with sheer disappointment that I was not dead. A few days afterwards I was sitting up in bed, dealing with correspondence...¹²¹

This experience bears many of the hallmarks of other NDEs studied in different times and places. Recent research has defined NDEs as ‘a set of mental events including highly emotional, self-related, mystical and spiritual aspects occurring in an altered state of consciousness classically in the context of a life-threatening condition (e.g., cardiac arrest, trauma, perioperative complications, near drowning or asphyxia, electrocution, attempted suicide).’¹²² Common qualitative themes in such experiences have been identified by scholars over the past fifty years and prominently ‘include vision[s] of light, intense feelings of well-being, astonishment, and fear; sense of helplessness; supernatural aspect[s] of the experience’, and a sequence of phases consisting of an ‘out-of-body experience, followed by experiencing a tunnel, seeing a bright light, and ending with a feeling of peace.’¹²³ Clarke’s experience follows these general themes very closely. Though she writes of her profound disappointment and disgust at having been brought back to Earth, the experience gave her the strength to continue in her life’s mission, in which by any measure she was incredibly successful.¹²⁴

Clarke’s NDE is a good example of what this study defines as a ‘vision’, i.e., an apparition that, rather than being an anomalous perception superimposed onto an otherwise ordinary environment, is an entire anomalous perceptual environment within which the percipient finds themselves superimposed. This type of experience has also been described as a ‘waking dream’ or as a ‘metachoric’ apparition.¹²⁵ Irish revolutionaries often called such experiences visions, and called those who experienced them visionaries. This study has

¹²¹ Kathleen Clarke, in Helen Litton (ed.), *Revolutionary Woman: Kathleen Clarke, 1878-1972: An Autobiography* (Dublin, 1991), p. 127.

¹²² Vanessa Charland-Verville and Demetrius Ribeiro de Paul, ‘Characterization of near death experiences using text mining analyses: A preliminary study’ in *PLoS One*, xv, no. 1 (2020), pp 1-2.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Frances Clarke, ‘Clarke, Kathleen (Caitlín Bean Uí Chléirigh)’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (<https://www.dib.ie/biography/clarke-kathleen-caitlin-bean-ui-chleirigh-a1707>), (accessed 6 Mar. 2023).

¹²⁵ Celia Green and Charles McCreery, *Apparitions* (Oxford, 1989), p. 2.

identified thirty-eight memorates describing visions and visionaries from the BMH witness statements and memoirs.¹²⁶ A salient aspect of these memorates is their mystical character and relevance to the struggle of Ireland more broadly, particularly in that they inspired efforts toward that struggle. For example, in his witness statement to the BMH, William D. Daly described the powerful atmosphere in SS. Michael and John's church as he and the other Irish Volunteers attended mass on St. Patrick's Day 1916:

The scene had a profound effect on me which will never leave my mind. A guard of honour in full uniform had been drawn up around the altar ...in the immediate silence that took place the priest on the altar, with the guard in the attitude of salute, looked, like a vision from another world and in the faces of those near me was the appearance that they also were looking into something wonderful. Patrick Pearse, The O'Rahilly, Sean McDermott, and the executive who were in close attendance near the altar, appeared to look in their uniforms as if receiving a special blessing from God, and undoubtedly every man attending that Mass received such a blessing. Suddenly a rich baritone voice burst into the hymn to our Patron Saint "Hail Glorious St. Patrick" and it was taken up by the whole congregation in such a fervent manner that a lump rose in my throat and I wanted to burst out crying...I feel sure that such were the feelings of every man there.¹²⁷

Other memorates describe Pearse's speeches in similar language. In her witness statement Peig Conlon described Pearse during one of his speeches: 'I'd swear he did not see anybody in the room; he had his mind and eyes fixed on the vision he saw. We were nearly in tears.'¹²⁸ In his memoir, Todd Andrews wrote of how Pearse and other revolutionary orators cast powerful spell-like visions over him with their speeches.¹²⁹ However not only famous individuals like Pearse were the catalysts of such visions. For example, Seán Moylan described in his witness statement how his men were inspired to an extreme degree by the opportunity to hold a rifle:

It is amazing now to look back on the change these rifles made on the mind of the Volunteers. Hard sinewy hands gripped them and grasped reality. Keen eyes looked over their sights and saw a vision of battle, a dream of success, a realisation of this hope

¹²⁶ See Appendices 18A and 18B.

¹²⁷ William D. Daly statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0291), pp 9-10.

¹²⁸ Mrs. Martin Conlon statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0419), p. 3.

¹²⁹ Todd 'C.S.' Andrews, *Dublin Made Me: An Autobiography* (Dublin, 1979), p. 200.

for freedom which remained immortal while generation after generation sacrificed and died. We were on our way.¹³⁰

In the memorates of inspirational visions like these it is often unclear how the supernatural mechanics of the 'vision' was believed to operate, but in all these cases a kind of transportation of the perceptual self into an alternate reality occurs. That psychic transportation is the core element of the supernatural of the visions examined here.

Not all visions were inspirational, however. Many, like the previously described NDE of Kathleen Clarke, were, at least in part, induced by psychological and physiological states of extremis. For example, Robert Holland's witness statement describes how while he was locked into solitary confinement without a good way to keep track of time, his dreams started to blend into his reality, and he started seeing visions of food and a variety of visual distortions in his environment.¹³¹ Similarly, Frank Gallagher in his diary describes how while on hunger strike, he was afflicted by a waking nightmare of being trapped inside of a coffin.¹³² Sean Prendergast in his witness statement described how the heads of he and other Irish volunteers were swimming with worrisome dream-like spells in the hours preceding the Easter Rising in 1916:

Such are the peculiar workings of the human intellect, emotions and feelings, that even at such moments one's thoughts could entertain exorbitant flights of fancy over kith and kin and the natural order of things...These came in flashes across the threshold of consciousness to form, as it were, a common bond of affection between the nearest and dearest, and to the exclusion of, and direct antagonism for, the bad on mother earth. Perhaps it has ever been so, that the moments of great trial, of danger and of perplexity, one's most intimate thoughts fleet in the direction of paternal and maternal cares, "dreaming sweet dreams of hearth and home" and of those so abruptly and momentarily left behind...such moments for dreams or soliloquizing came in brief spells that night...¹³³

A scan of the effects on long-term morale of subjects in the various memorates concerning visions reveals that, of the thirty-eight vision memorates identified in this study, eighteen were

¹³⁰ Seán Moylan statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0838), p. 76.

¹³¹ Robert Holland statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0371), pp 17-19.

¹³² Gallagher, *Days of Fear*, p. 38.

¹³³ Sean Prendergast statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0802), pp 5-6.

inspirational, eleven were demoralizing, and nine were not strongly inspirational or demoralizing.¹³⁴ Most visions identified had some sort of substantial impact on morale for the long-term, either positive or negative. This is different from most of the other types of supernatural experience discussed in this study, which generally have a limited impact on long-term morale.

Apparitions and Mundane Explanations

There are several incidents reported by revolutionaries where an apparition is seen, but within the narrative the author provides us with a non-paranormal explanation. Sometimes the percipient is the author who came to a mundane explanation upon retrospection, sometimes the percipient is someone else who lacked certain information available to the author at the time. That both mundane and paranormal explanations were arrived at upon investigation shows us that making a definitive statement about how the psychologically diverse population of Irish revolutionaries generally interpreted or reacted to apparitional experiences is fruitless. These cases also provide more evidence that trauma could in some way be catalytic for apparitional experiences. Though these incidents are mundane in nature, they still show us that ghosts were present enough in the mental environment of these Irish revolutionaries to merit use as an explanation before further investigation became practical.

The most vividly described of these cases is a memorate provided by Francis Healy in his statement to the BMH. In it, he describes a raid for arms on Anahisk House in county Cork. While searching what he thought was an uninhabited attic at the rear of the home he was frightened by a strange creature: 'I felt the presence of another being. Some object was lying on what I took to be a quantity of rags on a broken bed frame. It gazed at me from between the rags with only one eye. I backed out of room, being afraid to turn about in case I was attacked

¹³⁴ See Appendix 18C.

by some ghost-like creature...'¹³⁵ Healy was thoroughly terrified by what he saw and was haunted for days after the raid by the cyclopean apparition: 'I felt that this one-eyed creature had me under observation both night and day.'¹³⁶ Healy did not tell his comrades about this experience for fear that he '...would not be considered suitable to participate in future raids' by the senior members of his unit.¹³⁷ Fortunately for Healy, his terror would be alleviated after talking to some of the locals in the area, who informed him that 'an old eccentric female employee' lived in the Anahisk house and seldom appeared in public; Healy now had an explanation for what he saw and was able to relax.¹³⁸ This theme of having paranormal experiences being seen as making someone somehow unfit for service appears in several other memorates.¹³⁹ Healy's case also involves a kind of ESP, in that he 'felt the presence of another being' without having seen or heard that being first; this demonstrates how different kinds of supernatural phenomena would often coexist or be synthesized in a single experience.¹⁴⁰

Thomas Hevey described another apparition with a more mundane explanation in his witness statement. On 22 March 1921, Hevey was making his way along a bog road past the Cushlough R.C. church; it was at night, and he was alone, returning to his commanding officer, Michael Kilroy, after a reconnaissance mission. He describes a strange encounter as he passed the main road outside the church:

'I was startled by the sudden apparition of a woman who said: "The R.I.C. are just gone ahead of you". She pointed in the Westport direction... I peered in the direction in which she pointed but could not see anything...I turned to ask her some question but she had vanished, where or how I know not, but she probably slipped noiselessly into the yews around the church...'¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Francis Healy statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1694), p. 7.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, p. 79; Healy statement, p. 7; King statement, pp 39-41; Mac Eoin statement, p. 124.

¹⁴⁰ Healy statement, p. 7.

¹⁴¹ Thomas Hevey statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1668), p. 33.

With this fresh information, he started off after the R.I.C. patrol on the double, but he could not shake an ‘eerie feeling’; Hevey continued, writing ‘I thought I had seen a ghost’.¹⁴² At the time, he conceived of a mundane explanation for himself: ‘it was a girl waiting for her lover and they had to avoid being seen by the patrol, who would probably have asked awkward questions.’¹⁴³ This explanation ultimately turned out to be incorrect, and the incident would puzzle Hevey for decades, remaining unexplained until the eve of the thirty-sixth anniversary of the truce, when he met Thomas Hoban, a native of Westport. By chance, Hoban happened to be the brother of the woman who had pointed Hevey in the right direction thirty-six years earlier. Hoban gave him the story from her point of view, which matched Hevey’s experience in detail, allowing him to dispense with his previous explanations. Satisfied with Hoban’s account, Hevey concluded that ‘it was not an apparition after all.’¹⁴⁴ An interview of Hevey by Ernie O’Malley conducted sometime between 1948-1954 can be found in O’Malley’s notebooks; it describes this incident on March 22nd, and though it mentions the girl, it does not describe her in paranormal terms, suggesting that by the time Hevey was interviewed by O’Malley, he had come to some sort of closure concerning this incident.¹⁴⁵

Other cases are left unexplained altogether. In Michael Davern’s statement to the BMH, he describes how his mother saw Seumas Robinson carrying turf, even though at the time she saw him he was in fact miles away from her setting up an ambush. Davern and his mother were interrogated in their home shortly thereafter by the RIC about the whereabouts of Robinson. When asked if he knew what Robinson had been doing that day, Davern lied to them, saying he had seen Robinson carrying a load of turf down the road at one’ o’clock; he knew the ambush had taken place around then. His mother then unexpectedly piped up:

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁴⁵ Tommy Heavey interview, (UCDA, O’Malley notebooks, P17b/120, pp 46a-46b).

She chimed in and said that she, too, had seen him with the load of turf. She spoke with such conviction that the R.I.C. believed her. After they were gone, I told my mother that she had told her white lie splendidly! but she indignantly retorted "I told no lie black or white, I saw him". It took some time to convince her that she had been mistaken. "But", she said, "I could have sworn I saw him".¹⁴⁶

This strange incident was not given any explanation by the Daverns, but Seumas Robinson would later comment on it saying that 'Providence can play some humorous tricks.'¹⁴⁷ As this incident concerns an apparition or 'double' of a living person, it can be classified as a wraith, a phenomenon believed by some during this time, though neither Davern or Robinson would use this terminology, preferring mundane or religious explanations instead.¹⁴⁸

Altogether, these cases support psychological explanations for apparitions, providing evidence that the mind can play tricks when subject to heightened levels of stress, a conclusion supported by psychological literature.¹⁴⁹ These cases also provide more evidence that trauma could in some way be catalytic for such experiences. Nevertheless, even though these incidents are mundane in nature, they still show us that ghosts were present enough in the mental environment of these Irish revolutionaries to merit use as an explanation in lieu of an easier alternative. They also show us that in some cases, particularly Thomas Hevey and Francis Healy, these revolutionaries devoted some time and energy to investigating the cause of what they saw, and when they did, a mundane explanation would present itself. This is not to say that investigation would always lead to a mundane explanation; the inverse is true of Patrick Mullooly's experience of the mysterious lad at Delia O'Byrne's, which upon investigation, became only stranger. These investigations show us that Irish revolutionaries did not always

¹⁴⁶ Michael Davern statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1348), p. 15.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ 'Wraiths' in Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud (eds) *A Dictionary of English Folklore* (Oxford, 2003), (<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198607663.001.0001/acref-9780198607663-e-1150>), (accessed 5 Oct. 2022).

¹⁴⁹ Robert Hoskin, Mike D. Hunter & Peter W. R. Woodruff, 'The effect of psychological stress and expectation on auditory perception: A signal detection analysis' in *British Journal of Psychology*, cv, Nono. 105, (2014), p. 524; Georgie Paulik, Johanna C. Badcock, & Murray T. Maybery, 'The multifactorial structure of the predisposition to hallucinate and associations with anxiety, depression and stress' in *Personality and Individual Differences*, xli (2006), p. 1067.

take apparitions at face value. Deborah R. Davis described this process as generative of a ‘personal and empirical basis for belief’ which should be taken seriously.¹⁵⁰ Recent historical scholarship on trauma in the Irish Civil War emphasizes the diversity of revolutionary approaches to trauma. Siobhra Aiken contends that ‘Revolutionaries approached psychological wounding from various – often competing – secular, spiritual, religious or even paranormal perspectives.’¹⁵¹ That both mundane and paranormal explanations were arrived at upon investigation shows us that making a definitive statement about how the psychologically diverse population of Irish revolutionaries generally interpreted or reacted to apparitional experiences is impossible; they clearly exhibited a wide range of responses.

Conclusion

This chapter has recounted and discussed a wide range of memorates describing visions and apparitions associated with the Irish Revolution. These memorates are broadly representative of the entirety of material identified in this project, and their analysis provides key insights toward answering the central research questions of this project. Apparitions and visions affected how the Irish Revolution was experienced in manifold ways. As this chapter has demonstrated, many of the historical actors involved in the Irish Revolution evidently believed they had had first-hand encounters with visions and apparitions of various kinds. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates that experiences of visions and apparitions shaped how the Irish Revolution was remembered both by its combatants and the communities in which they operated, that trauma and protracted combat stress impacted and were at times catalytic for paranormal experiences, and that these experiences could illustrate central ideological conflicts and provide opportunities to propagate and perform Irish cultural identity.

¹⁵⁰ Deborah R. Davis, ‘Famine Ghosts and the Fear Gortach: A Strand of Irish Belief’ in *Folklore Forum*, xxvii, no. 2 (1996), pp 40-41.

¹⁵¹ Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds*, p. 22.

These experiences of visions and apparitions were quite intense and unusual. Circumstantially, such experiences were most often experienced between action or near action, and in many cases were related somehow to sleeping in a new place or having a difficult or troubled sleep. Those who had such experiences often were reluctant to share them with their comrades and were more likely to distribute responsibility for the experience amongst their peers. Often anxiety about being believed manifested in the memorates through qualifying language or musings about mental illness. Where responsibility could be offloaded completely outside of the revolutionary circle mental illness was readily resorted to as an explanatory framework. Such psychological depth and personalization are also characteristic of supernatural experiences reported by veterans of the First World War, suggesting that the contextual factors (namely shifts in the intellectual climate around mental illness and spiritualism) held in common between the Irish Revolution and the First World War influenced the character of paranormal experiences associated with those conflicts in a profound way.

Qualitatively, the visions and apparitions discussed here were often informed by folklore and demonstrate that such folklore was an easily resorted to explanation that Irish revolutionaries could employ when faced with an experience that could be difficult to explain. Though less common, folk-histories of religious violence also played a role in influencing these experiences. Folklore provided a great deal of the explanations for what would be otherwise inexplicable, effectively filling in gaps where necessary to round out the cosmology of the world as remembered by Irish revolutionaries. This folkloric basis for experiences of these apparitions served both an ideological and psychological purpose in this way in that they dealt with disturbing uncertainties in memory as they simultaneously performed Irish identity. In their psychological, tactical, and ideological dimensions, the memorates discussed in this chapter illustrate how the paranormal played an impactful role in the remembrance and experience of the Irish Revolution.

Chapter Four: Hauntings

Introduction

This chapter concerns memorates describing places or objects which were haunted by (that is, possessed by, frequented by, or associated with) supernatural forces or beings; unlike the previous chapter, the examples given here do not necessarily involve reports of apparitions, or even perceptions of anything anomalously supernatural in particular, and are more concerned with places or things that managed to develop enough of a supernatural reputation prior to and/or during the revolutionary period to merit mentioning in the memorates of Irish revolutionaries and their opponents. Fairy forts, haunted houses, ruins, swamps, and various other places were often used by Irish revolutionaries as hiding places, and their often-eclectic accounts of these places can be found in memoirs, BMH witness statements, and in stories provided to the SFC. Their use of these locations was a part of the IRA's tactical toolbox to such a degree that both the IRA and the Black and Tans would become associated with these locations in folk narratives, many examples of which will be provided here. The core term uniting this chapter is of course 'hauntings', which are defined here as places or objects possessed by, frequented by, or associated with supernatural forces or beings. Generally, though not always, these hauntings had a negative, unlucky, or terrifying aspect; where they were negative in aspect, hauntings can be understood as the temporal inverse of the types of precognition discussed in chapter two, where a strongly negative event rather than (or perhaps in addition to) creating extraordinary supernatural phenomena before its occurrence, creates extraordinary supernatural phenomena afterwards, as a kind of traumatic emanation or residue.

This chapter will highlight some newly discovered descriptions of hauntings in revolutionary remembrance and show how they impacted how the conflict was fought and remembered. A variety of haunted places will be explored here, including fairy forts, houses,

castles, hills, and fields. Following this, haunted objects both lucky and unlucky in aspect will be discussed. Finally, hauntings which are attributed to revolutionary violence will be discussed to illustrate how the aftermath of the conflict was generative of haunted places. This chapter illustrates that experiences of hauntings shaped how the Irish Revolution was remembered (both by its combatants and the communities in which they operated), that trauma and protracted combat stress impacted and were often catalytic for paranormal experiences, and that hauntings often revealed core ideological conflicts and retelling them provided opportunities to propagate Irish cultural identity. This chapter changes how we think about the Irish Revolution by underscoring the ubiquity and importance of hauntings; these beliefs and experiences impacted the way the Irish Revolution was remembered in not just a metaphorical sense of the literature itself being ‘haunted terrain’, but also in a practical and immediate way for Irish the revolutionaries who often had to physically interact with haunted places and objects during the conflict itself.¹ Revolutionaries had to both physically and mentally negotiate these haunted places and things both in the material world, and the social world of their haunted reputations, reputations informed by folklore. This chapter illustrates this, thereby demonstrating the value of a neo-antiquarian approach to researching the Irish Revolution.

Haunted Places

Place is one of the most preeminent intellectual frameworks for studying hauntings, a pre-eminence reflected both in popular and academic literature as specific places take on an important role as the setting of the narratives wherein hauntings are described.² Aidan Anthony O’Lynn has argued that ‘place cannot be subtracted from the telling of a story, nor usually the

¹ Eve Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution: veterans and memory of the Independence Struggle and Civil War’ in Margu rite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack, & Ruud van den Beuken (eds), *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations* (Bern, 2017), p. 106.

² Aidan Anthony O’Lynn, ‘Ghosts of place and spirits of war: Spectral belief in early modern England and Protestant Germany’ (Doctoral Thesis, University of Bristol, Bristol, 2018), p. 34.

spirit from the site of its haunting...by examining ghosts in the environment and place their legends are located, it gives us a better understanding of what they were and why they were there.³ Arguably, the entirety of written revolutionary memory represents a haunted metaphysical ‘terrain’ in that it projects a traumatic and unresolved past on the present; the often-commemorative written works that both manifest and manifest from this haunted terrain describe a ghostly virtual version of the revolution which corresponds only imperfectly with the past as it was presently experienced. Michael Mayerfield Bell has argued that haunted places are ‘a common feature of the human experience...for both modern and traditional peoples...a ubiquitous aspect of the phenomenology of place.’⁴ Bell goes further, contending that haunted places are not only universal across cultures and time periods, but also embody central aspects to the identity and social significance of a place in a similar way to how human beings are believed to have a soul:

A crucial aspect of how we experience the person is our sense that the person has an animating spirit, a ghost, within. We also experience objects and places as having ghosts. We do so because we experience objects and places socially; we experience them as we do people. Through ghosts, we re-encounter the aura of social life in the aura of place.⁵

Irish revolutionaries in their conflict with the Crown forces moved through landscapes which folklore had informed them were haunted; this highly psychologically charged movement through spaces culturally primed for the uncanny catalysed paranormal experiences both in the moment and in decades afterwards. In the Irish revolutionary context, this social life in haunted or inhabited places and objects often had a powerful political and religious significance which justified the goals of Irish nationalists; Irish revolutionaries were haunted by the ghosts of a roll of martyred rebel heroes, and the traumatic legacy of centuries of oppression.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴ Michael Mayerfield Bell, ‘The Ghosts of Place’ in *Theory and Society*, xxvi, no. 6 (1997), p. 813

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 821.

Not all hauntings were necessarily negative, however. For example, in his witness statement to the BMH, Joseph V. Lawless described at length the long history of, and a variety of antiquarian and folkloric vignettes about, the hill of Knocksedan which ‘lies about two miles west from Swords when the Dublin-Ballymun road crosses the Ward river.’⁶ This hill was where he and his comrades were mustered on Monday for the Easter Rising at around noon on 23 April 1916. In his statement, sandwiched between lengthy passages on the medieval and early modern history of the hill, Lawless wrote the following antiquarian and folkloric details:

Some curious gentlemen about two years ago discovered in this mount a human skeleton of a monstrous size, which measured from ankle bone to the top of the cranium eight feet four inches; “so that, allowing a proportional distance between the ankle bone and the sole of the foot, and for the skin and flesh covering the cranium, as well as the space occupied by cartilages between the several bones in a living body, the person to whom this skeleton belonged must have been not far short of nine feet high”.

What ancient battle was fought here, of which neither history nor tradition exists? But the burial mound was revered as all places of burial are in Ireland, until in the course of time people remembered only the reverence due to the spot, but had forgotten why this was due. Then, as in many another case, this was attributed to fairies or, in the Gaelic, *sidhe*, and the place known as *Cnuc-sidhe-Dunn*, the hill of the fairy fort.

An alternative derivation would be *Cnuc-Siodhan*, the word *Siodhan* signifying a fairy or a fairy hill. The double reference to the word *hill* might refer to the hill of the fairy mound, as the mound stands on the hill crest.⁷

These anecdotes along with the historical context of the hill build up to the following passage where Lawless waxes eloquent on the ‘national faith’ and the onlooking ‘spirits of the great dead’:

So, on this historic spot gathered the men of Fingal on that fateful Easter Monday to unsheathe the sword in another effort to achieve the freedom of our land. What a pitiful effort it might have seemed to Berwick or Eoin Roe; this miserable handful of ill-armed boys coming forth to challenge the might of a great Empire. And yet, perhaps, *the spirits of the great dead* watched approvingly over this beginning of what was to be the struggle that eventually brought to a successful conclusion the centuries of war between the adjoining islands. No thought of all this was with us then; perhaps Ashe, Dr. Hayes and my father were conscious of the influence of the spot and the full implications of our action, but to the rest of us this was merely the natural climax of our national faith,

⁶ Joseph V. Lawless statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1043), p. 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 50-51.

and we felt that we must stand or fall and be judged by the vigour of our reaction to the call to arms... above and beyond all that, was the deep-rooted feeling that the cost must not be counted, the important thing being that the effort must be made with all the force and all the practical application we could bring to bear, trusting in God and the justice of our cause for the outcome.⁸

The psychological and folkloric charging of this place is prominently on display here, along with evidence of how the significance of this revolutionary moment itself effectively catalysed a haunting. Though Lawless explicitly states that 'no thought of all this was with us then', clearly the supernatural significance of the place was in his thoughts in retrospect, demonstrating how the intensity of the Easter Rising and the folk antecedents of Knocksedan were synthesized in revolutionary memory to create this memorate describing the presence of 'spirits of the great dead' such as 'Berwick or Eoin Roe'.

An example of how the traumatic legacy of oppression manifested in the form of a haunted place can be found in the witness statement of George Kiely, adjutant of the West Waterford ASU. Kiely describes how he and his comrades were billeting in a farmstead in Vicarstown, county Waterford, when they were plagued by lingering echoes of the legacy of the era of the penal laws:

It would be shortly after midnight when we awoke with a start. All around the house we could hear voices and the sounds of feet as if there were many persons outside. We looked through the window but saw nobody. We jumped out of bed and grabbed our rifles. I remember well Pat Keating saying: "It looks as if we are surrounded, lads; when they come in I'll take the first that comes, and ye make a dash for it". The voices and footsteps still continued while we waited, all tensed up for what looked like a fight to the death. We had resolved to sell our lives dearly that night.

This went on for fully half an hour or so. Gradually the voices faded and so did the footsteps. We were puzzled, but, naturally, relieved. We lay on the bed until morning came, but none of us slept.

...When we had finished breakfast we went to contact some of our lads in a nearby farmhouse...An old woman living there was listening to us and told us that the explanation was that the room which we had occupied the previous night had been built over what she called a "Mass path" which, was used by people going to Mass at night during the penal days; this path was, she said, desecrated by the erection of the room

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 52. My emphasis added.

over it and the voices and footsteps we heard, were of those people. Whatever the explanation, I can certainly vouch for the truth of the extraordinary occurrence.⁹

Kiely's experience illustrates how traumatic legacies, stressful circumstances, and unfamiliar sleeping arrangements lent themselves easily to paranormal experiences, and additionally how the influence of local folktales might impact how such experiences were remembered and processed. This memorate reinforces a sense of identity, of belonging to the land, and provides an avengable grievance in its attribution of the experience's cause to the period of the penal laws. These are themes which will be further evidenced throughout this section.

There are at least seventy other different tales of the IRA, the Black and Tans, or other participants in the Irish revolutionary struggle using, desecrating, or occupying ringforts, popularly known as 'fairy forts' in the SFC.¹⁰ This leads us to both of the following conclusions; firstly, that combatants in the Irish Revolution had by the late 1930's been thoroughly integrated into the legendarium of Irish folklore surrounding fairy forts, and secondly that this was because fairy forts were part of the IRA's tactical toolbox to such a degree that they would become associated with these locations in folk narratives. This should not be surprising, because fairy forts have obvious practical utility for an insurgent due to their often tactically advantageous locations in their environment (often being situated on hills or in dense cover) and their fearsome reputations in those same environments; these factors make fairy forts obvious choices for those on the run looking for rendezvous points and hiding places either for themselves or their contraband.

Witness statements to the BMH corroborate such usages of these locations.¹¹ One such place was 'Kenny's Fort' of Ballybeggan, county Kerry, which is mentioned both in the SFC

⁹ George Kiely statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1182), pp 13-14.

¹⁰ See Appendix 8 for a list.

¹¹ James Kilmartin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 0881), p. 1; Sean MacEoin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1716), p. 149; John J. O'Brien statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1647), p. 5; Donnchadh O'Hannigan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 0600), p. 32; Timothy Tierney statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1227), p. 6.

and the BMH.¹² Thomas Sheehy, a company officer of the Oakpark company IRA, would later provide a ghost story to the SFC not given in descriptions of happenings around Kenny's Fort in BMH witness statements.¹³ Sheehy wrote the following:

Four men of "Oakpark Company" of the I.R.A. were sent with guns and ammunition to wait at the fort for other members of the I.R.A. All of a sudden while they were watching a crowd of men appeared a little distance away from them and walked along by the ditch in the field. The four men thought they were also of the I.R.A. and began to whistle. The crowd took no notice but kept walking till they reached the fort. Then immediately they disappeared. The four men again whistled to make sure no mistake was made, but got no reply. They inquired afterwards if any of the troops had left headquarters but they were informed that none had left. No one ever knew who the crowd was, but they believe, they must be fairies, or other enchanted people.¹⁴

This story illustrates well why haunted places are so closely related with apparitions, particularly in how the folklore of haunted places informs apparition sightings, transforming what might otherwise seem to be an ordinarily peculiar incident into a supernatural phenomenon. Tactically speaking, in this case, the fairy fort was being used as a rendezvous point to transfer ammunition, but other types of uses in the context of supernatural phenomena can be seen as well.

Three memorates, two from the BMH witness statements of Donnchadh O'Hannigan and Daniel O'Shaughnessy, and a third from Maurice 'Mossie' Harnett's memoir *Victory and Woe*, describe an incident where a mysterious fog arose at an opportune moment shortly after taking shelter behind a fairy fort near Ballyhahill, county Limerick.¹⁵ Harnett described it as merely 'one of those unpredictable occurrences', but O'Hannigan described it in greater depth:

Taking cover behind a lís or rath which was at one corner of the field, we prayed fervently and awaited developments, having no hope but the confidence gained by trust in God. In a very short time a dense fog came down over the landscape and closed over

¹² 'A Story of Ballybeggan', Thomas Sheehy, Ballybeggan, Co. Kerry, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0440, pp 355-356); John O'Riordan statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1117), p. 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*; Michael O'Leary statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1167), p. 10.

¹⁴ 'A Story of Ballybeggan', Thomas Sheehy, Ballybeggan, Co. Kerry, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0440, pp 355-356).

¹⁵ Maurice 'Mossie' Harnett, *Victory and Woe* (Dublin, 2015), p. 79; Donnchadh O'Hannigan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 0600), p. 32; Daniel O'Shaughnessy statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1435), pp 85-86.

our position. We welcomed it as it crept up from the shores of the lordly Shannon, bringing with it its blessed twilight.¹⁶

This is an example of both the tactical significance such places could possess and how anomalous incidents could be remembered in different ways by different authors. O'Hannigan was the commanding officer of the group and remembered this incident as 'a crucial moment', and O'Shaughnessy as 'the most distressing circumstances'; both men use substantially more stress-laden language than Harnett to describe the situation, and both also would subsequently attribute supernatural agency to the outcome.¹⁷ O'Shaughnessy wrote that 'death faced every man caught within the steel ring of the enemy; but the God of Mercy came to their aid in a most extraordinary way. In a most inexplicable manner, a thick fog descended on the land and the firing stopped. The enemy blew their whistles and retreated.'¹⁸ The differences in how this incident was later remembered illustrate the influence of stress on memory of the supernatural.

A peculiar tale titled 'The Removal of Stones from a Fairy Fort' collected for the SFC from Pat Clancy in Cliffony, county Sligo, shows how even in a state of physical dismemberment, the constituent parts of a haunted place could still bear substantial paranormal potency. In this tale a fairy fort is disassembled to build a path disguising the boot marks of 'boys who were on the run' to a safehouse, but the occupants of the house are forced to bring the stones back to their original resting places after being troubled on a nightly basis by the eerie sounds of 'running of people around the house - the arguments - the shouting and screeching of people' where in fact no 'people' in the ordinary sense of the term were present.¹⁹

¹⁶ Harnett, *Victory and Woe*, p. 79; O'Hannigan statement, p. 32

¹⁷ O'Hannigan statement, p. 31; O'Shaughnessy statement, p. 85.

¹⁸ O'Shaughnessy statement, pp 85-86.

¹⁹ 'The Removal of Stones from a Fairy Fort', Pat Clancy, Cliffony, Co. Sligo, (N.F.C., S.F.C, MS0155, pp 502-505).

Mapping the approximate locations attributed to each of the fairy fort memorates identified in this study and comparing that map to a map of the known locations of Fairy forts in Ireland illustrates how the presence of fairy forts in a given county did not guarantee that they would be used by the IRA, or that such a use would be committed to the written record.²⁰

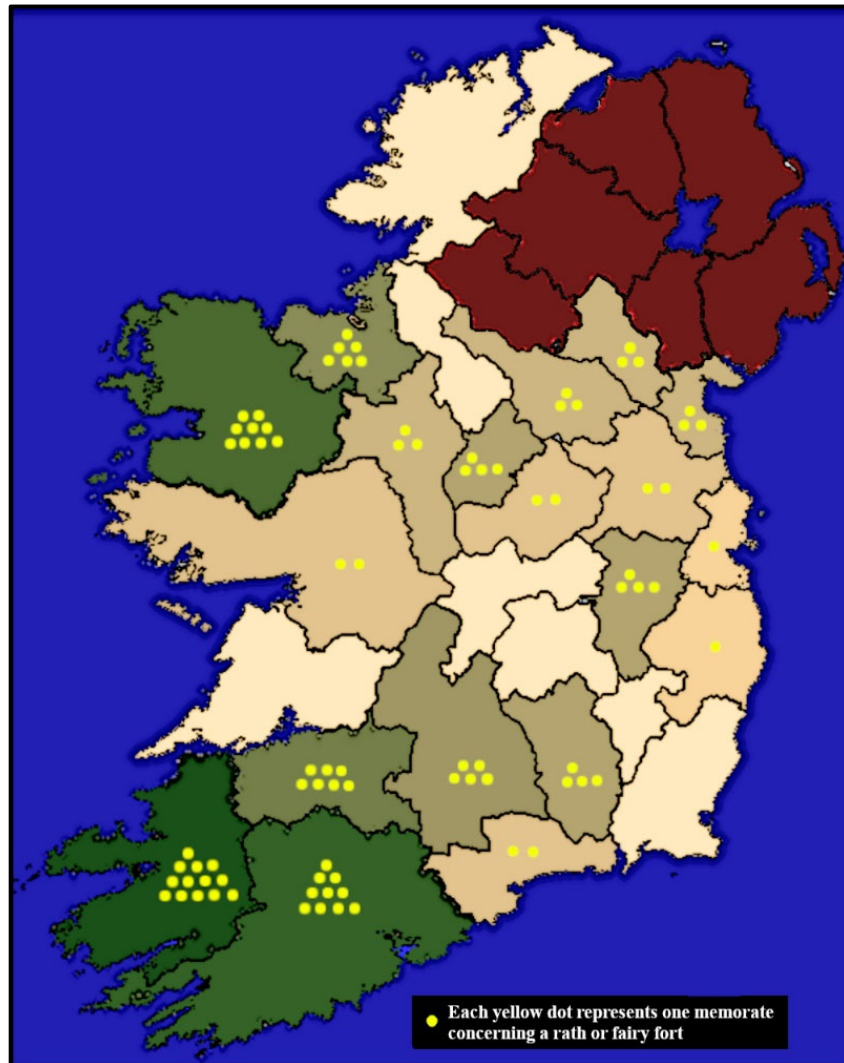
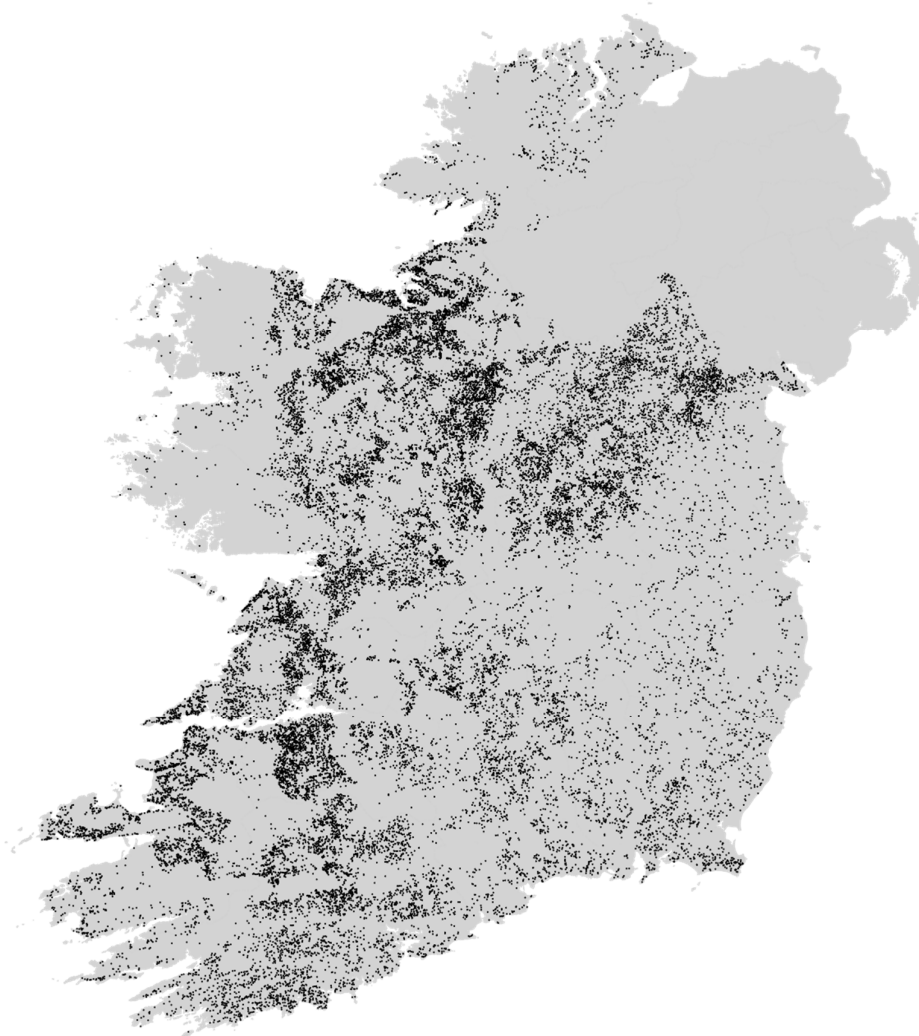


Figure 8: Map of the Locations of Identified Fairy Fort Memorates by County

²⁰ Keith Phelan, 'Distribution of Ringforts in the Republic of Ireland', (<https://voool.ie/everyringfort/>), (Accessed 30 Jan. 2023). See Appendix 8 for the data from which the map in figure 8 was derived.



Distribution of Ringforts in the Republic of Ireland

Figure 9: Keith Phelan's map of the distribution of ringforts in the Republic of Ireland, based on data from the Archaeological Survey of Ireland's database of the National Monuments Service Sites and Monuments Record

Specifically, this comparison most obviously illustrates this for counties like Clare and Galway, where despite an abundance of fairy forts, relatively few memorates concerning their use during, or relationship to, the revolutionary period was found. This could be the result of relatively sparse fighting in these counties compared to counties like Cork, Tipperary, Kerry, and Limerick.²¹ Another obvious conclusion which can be drawn from this comparison is the

²¹ Peter Hart, 'The geography of revolution in Ireland 1917-1923' in *Past & Present*, no. 155 (1997), pp 147-154.

stark difference in quantity; of the 30,125 known raths, cashels, and ringforts, this study can only demonstrate that less than seventy became notably entangled with supernatural activity of the Revolution.²² It should also be acknowledged however that it is not definitively known how many of these 30,125 sites are linked to supernatural activity, though it has been a known general assumption for centuries that they are.²³

A crucial observation of this study is that all the identified memorates of this kind are situated in rural settings. This may seem to be an obvious point, but it has deep implications about how these places were perceived by the Irish revolutionaries who travelled through them. In some cases, revolutionaries took advantage of what they perceived to be the greater superstitiousness of rural people. For example, in Ailbhe Ó Monacháin's statement to the BMH, he describes how he, Liam Mellowes, and Frank Hynes 'nearly revived the belief in fairies - if it ever died out' in the area of Cnoc na bhFoclach through scaring locals by rearranging piles of turf during their night-time sallying from the hedgerows in which they were hiding: 'anybody who had seen turf spread out in the late evening and had seen it all up in gruagans the following morning must believe the fairies did it, but they would not say anything about it - for fear people would laugh at them.'²⁴ This evidences an interesting dual aspect to how Ó Monacháin perceived rural fairy belief in that he simultaneously assumed that people who saw the disturbed turf would believe it to be the work of the fairies, but that they would be mocked by the communities for holding such a belief.

Haunted places other than raths associated with fairies were also found in revolutionary remembrance. Some parts of the countryside were believed to be places where fairies gathered, played, or walked, even if there was not a great deal in the way of archaeological sites in those

²² See Appendix 8 for examples from the SFC.

²³ Marion Dowd, 'Bewitched by an elf dart: fairy archaeology, folk magic and traditional medicine in Ireland' in *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, xxviii, no. 3 (2018), pp 454-457.

²⁴ Ó Monacháin statement, pp 38-39.

places. For example, in his witness statement, Andrew McDonnell described how he and his comrade Michael Chadwick were waylaid by fairies on a 'garden path' leading from the Holy Well in Ticknock in the Spring of 1917:

The path from the Holy Well in Ticknock over the mountain to Courtney's was as well known to us as a garden path. Hardly a week passed without a trip across the fields, over the river and up the steep ridge to the house. There was a very dark night when Chad and myself had to make this trip. All went well until we reached the second field, and out of it we could not get. Everywhere we went there was obstruction of some sort, a deep ditch, strong hedge or a wall, but no sign of the gap we had used so often. We decided we had got lost on the way and were in the wrong field. We sat down to eat some sandwiches, Chad, pointing out the lights of the city below, giving me some idea as to where his girl-friend lived (May Kelly of the G.P.O. Garrison). The meal over, we started along the path, through the gap and over the hill to Courtney's, nothing to hinder us. We thought nothing of this at the time, we found our way. I mentioned this to my mother and some of the older locals a long time after, and got the same reply from all of them: "You had disturbed the Good People (meaning Fairies) and by sitting down you had broken the spell and your way was clear". There is no doubt we were in the right field but out of it we could not get.²⁵

Though Michael Chadwick did not contribute a statement to the BMH, he did write about this period in a very brief contribution to *The Kerryman*, but his version of events does not mention anything about the Good People; however, this can most likely be attributed to the brevity of his account, which was roughly 1,000 words within which he described the entire period from 1917-1921.²⁶ McDonnell's tale is another memorate, like the discussion of the Knocksedan hill from Joseph V. Lawless' statement discussed earlier, where an experience was deemed to be supernatural in retrospect once the folkloric context of the place was taken sufficiently into account. This is also another example of how those who contributed witness statements to the BMH conceived of the 'older locals' in rural areas.

Other haunted places besides fairy forts were used for shelter. A variety of tales depicting people hiding in haunted places from Crown forces and being frightened by the ghostly denizens of those places can be found in the SFC. One informant, Mary Meehan of

²⁵ Andrew McDonnell statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1768), p. 37.

²⁶ Michael Chadwick, 'With the Sixth Battalion' in The Kerryman (eds), *Dublin's Fighting Story 1916-1921: Told By The Men Who Made It* (Dublin, 1948), pp 183-185.

Sampson's Lane, county Louth, in what she claimed to be 'a true story', described how a pair of Irish Volunteers on the run from the Black and Tans, 'John and Patrick Donoghue', were obliged to stay in a haunted castle occupied by two rich farmers, a husband and wife, who had grown so accustomed to the ghost dwelling therein that 'they did not mind or bother about it'.²⁷

Despite being warned, the Donoghue brothers were severely bothered by the ghost at midnight:

they were awoke by breaking of Delph, Crocks rattling, pots and pans being thrown about, it was like an earthquake. The boys were going to jump out the windows as they thought that the Black and Tans were in the kitchen. The two people kept telling them it would go after a while. The people kept telling them not to be annoyed. The boys were more frightened when they heard the noise of feet coming up the Stairs and going into their bedroom and into all the other rooms of the house. The boys ran to the window to jump out to escape the Tans. The man and woman ran and caught them and shook holy water about, and said, "It is only men who were killed here, it will pass away". after a while the Ghost and noise was not heard.²⁸

The Donoghue boys would request the assistance of a priest to rid the building of the spirit: 'they told the story to the Priest. The Priest put the Ghost out the House, When the Ghost was going away it was roaring. It took the shape of a Crow.'²⁹

One of the more detailed descriptions of a haunted place used for shelter comes from the witness statement of Andrew McDonnell. He was the commanding officer of the sixth battalion of the Dublin brigade IRA. In his statement, McDonnell described his stay in the haunted Glencullen house with his comrades for the last month of the War of Independence:

We decided to stay the night -at least, four of us did...I cannot say that we slept much...A chestnut tree had burst through the floor of the dining room, and was almost as tall as the table. Dust, inches of it, was on everything, and an uncanny atmosphere about the whole place. We were jumpy - aye, frightened. There was little comfort in guns. Our only light was a flashlamp, and this had to be kept away from windows, not that it mattered much, as they were covered in cobwebs. The silence was overbearing. We took turns to sleep. It was restless and came in fits and starts. A long night, and never was a dawn more welcome!³⁰

²⁷ 'No title', Mary Meehan, Sampson's Lane, Co. Louth, (N.F.C., S.F.C, MS0680, pp 475-477).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

³⁰ Andrew McDonnell statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1768), p. 65.

The next morning, they met a priest, Father O'Rourke, who had been investigating the house.

O'Rourke took the opportunity to interview McDonnell and his comrades:

we met Father O'Rourke, who was very surprised to see us...Over breakfast - he was a thought-reader, and invited us to join him - he asked all sorts of questions about the house, what we found in it, and if we intended to stay there long. Then came his side of the story.

A suicide had been committed in the basement, some time ago, and, since then, the house had been closed and never entered. The usual rumours about lights and noises, seen and heard, after dark, kept the local people away from the place, and he assured us we would not be disturbed. I assured him that the lights and noises would be more pronounced from now on. I could safely say that he was not too pleased that we had moved in. Sound as a bell and always willing to help us, in any way, but the idea of us staying in Glencullen House disturbed him, for some unexplained reason.

We lived in that house, and used it until the Truce. It always remained spooky. Nothing was ever seen or heard, worse than ourselves. We were not disturbed, except by our own fears of the supernatural.³¹

This case demonstrates the well-known pattern of suicides resulting in a place gaining a haunted reputation; four similar stories are present in St. John D. Seymour's compilation of ghost stories.³² Curiously, the lengthy treatment given for the haunting of this house is not present in the notes for McDonnell's interviews with Ernie O'Malley, suggesting that the paranormal aspect of the tale was anecdotal in character and not central to his narrative.³³ Though perhaps this paranormality was an optional aspect of the place for McDonnell, we know it had a haunted reputation from multiple sources; the haunting of this house is mentioned in the witness statement of Moira Kennedy O'Byrne, who recalls delivering explosives picked up from the men hiding there.³⁴ These memorates provide a strong example of how the IRA would use the haunted reputation of certain buildings as cover for their operations. Several accounts from the BMH witness statements describe using haunted houses as hiding places,

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp 65-66.

³² Owen Davies, *The haunted: A social history of ghosts* (New York, 2007), pp 47, 51-52, 63; St. John D. Seymour and Harry L. Neligan, *True Irish Ghost Stories: Haunted Houses, Banshees, Poltergeists, and Other Supernatural Phenomena* (New York, 2005), pp 47, 71, 78, 95-96.

³³ Andrew McDonnell interviews (UCDA, O'Malley notebooks, P17b/100, P17b/101, P17b/96, P17b/91).

³⁴ Moire Kennedy O'Byrne statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1029), p. 5.

targets for bomb throwing practice, or even as a source of lead for making munitions.³⁵ Fairy forts or raths were also used in this manner.³⁶ In his witness statement, Dominick Molloy described how one arms smuggler used a haunting-based tactic to conceal his operations by staging what appeared to be a pagan bonfire ritual to scare local people away: ‘he pretended to the neighbours that he was mad and spread the story that he had been told in a vision to light a fire in the open and perform certain rites thereat. These fires were signals arranged with the U. Boat Captain. The atmosphere he created had the effect of keeping the local people indoors during the periods required.’³⁷

Though these practices might suggest that the IRA took a sceptical stance about haunted houses generally, McDonnell’s account is not the only example of IRA men moving through and contributing to folklorically rich landscapes and getting spooked in the process; the previously described case of Edward Boyle and his comrades getting scared away from their haunted billet by an apparition is another example.³⁸ Another is provided in the witness statement of Thomas Pugh, who describes how ‘a lot of the boys from the west of Ireland’ used holy water to protect themselves from malign spirits which they believed were haunting the creaking pipes in the south camp at Frongoch (incidentally, Pugh also mentions others using this influx of holy water as an opportunity to smuggle Poteen into the camp).³⁹ Unusually, McDonnell provides a detailed supernatural chain of causality for the haunting, an explanation given to him by a priest.⁴⁰ Another perspective on the haunting of the Glencullen house comes

³⁵ John Carroll statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1258), pp 3-4; Micheál O’ Ciardubhain statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1175), p. 4; James Cullen statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1343), p. 3; Patrick O’Brien statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 812), p. 7; Moire Kennedy O’Byrne statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1029), p. 5; Sean Whelan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1294), pp 12-13.

³⁶ James Kilmartin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS0881), p. 1; John J. O’Brien statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1647), p. 5; Ó Monacháin statement, pp 38-39; Sean MacEoin statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1716), p. 149; Timothy Tierney statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1227), p. 6.

³⁷ Dominick Molloy statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1570), p. 1.

³⁸ Edward Boyle statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 647), p. 22.

³⁹ Thomas Pugh statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 397), p. 17.

⁴⁰ McDonnell statement, pp 65-66.

from the witness statement of Moire Kennedy O'Byrne who described it as 'a big empty one that was supposed to be haunted. That rumour was possibly spread by the I.R.A. who were using it for their own purposes. It was in a lonely place covered, with trees. It was the stable that was used for making the bombs and the I.R.A. lived in the house in great discomfort.'⁴¹ Though she suggests here that the IRA 'possibly spread' the rumours about the haunting themselves, she also states they were living in 'great discomfort', which indicates that regardless of where the rumours originated, they still had some power over McDonnell and his comrades.

Another remarkable incident comes from the witness statement of Michael V. O'Donoghue, who describes at length how he and his comrades were plagued by 'extraordinary eerie incidents' during their stay at Kinsale barracks. The barracks was one of the last to be evacuated following the truce in July 1921, and O'Donoghue was a member of the Cork III brigade assigned to occupy it. After a late night playing bridge, O'Donoghue retired in a large room which had been retrofitted to house IRA officers passing through the area; a room in which he would be plagued by evil spirits:

I awoke suddenly about 2 a.m. with a feeling of some great danger threatening me. I sat up, calling "who's there?" Not a sound. Then I felt an oppressive weight crushing down on my two legs. I felt paralysed. Now quite awake, I thrust out my hands to push aside what was crushing me (I thought it was one of the lads coming in late sitting on me for a practical joke) snarling at the same time: "Get off my feet you bastard!" There was nobody there. Cold sweat broke out all over me. Then, suddenly, I felt the awful weight removed from my feet. I heard what I thought was a mocking devilish laugh and then the door slammed. I jumped out of bed, rushed to the door and pulled it open. Not a sign of life or movement. Shaking now, I locked the door, went back to sit bolt upright in bed smoking a cigarette to steady my nerves. Hours passed and nothing happened.⁴²

O'Donoghue is probably describing an episode of sleep paralysis here; the feeling of danger, pressing weight, and auditory hallucinations are common symptoms of the condition.⁴³

⁴¹ Moire Kennedy O'Byrne statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1029), p. 5.

⁴² Michael V. O'Donoghue statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1741), pp 215-216.

⁴³ Sue Wilson and David J. Nutt, *Sleep Disorders* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2013), pp 55-56.

Furthermore, sleep paralysis, along with other parasomnia type sleep disorders like night terrors, commonly resurface among those prone to them when subjects are in their twenties or thirties, experiencing periods of increased stress, under the influence of alcohol, and sleeping in unfamiliar environments.⁴⁴

O'Donoghue probably was not the only one experiencing such conditions, as he goes on to describe how he was not the only one afflicted by terrifying phenomena:

A few nights later, shots rang out in the barrack square. The sentry on duty had ordered a shadowy figure approaching him across the square to halt, a round midnight. The figure kept advancing and the sentry fired once, twice, the guard turned out and made a thorough search without finding anything. Then, in the guardroom, peculiar things happened nightly. The guards became scared at rattling noises. Weird blood-curdling shrieks, curses, yells, and other terrifying phenomena kept the lads who stayed and slept in the place in a constant state of nervous tension and fear.⁴⁵

The hauntings spread far beyond O'Donoghue's bunk and escalated into a full-blown panic. O'Donoghue continues, describing how the situation got so bad that IRA guard parties were refusing to stay in the barracks. Ultimately, a Franciscan priest was called in to investigate and alleviate their distress; O'Donoghue describes how this unnamed Franciscan was able to identify the source of the haunting:

He knelt for a time on the stone floor of the guardroom, then arose, saying that his knees felt scorched from the burning heat of the floor. Moving closer to the walls, he prayed again, He stood up again and the beads of perspiration were large and visible on his forehead. "There is something. terribly bad, some awful evil, in those walls", he said. We were all wide-eyed. Moving around the guardroom walls, the Franciscan prayed fiercely in the dead silence. Suddenly he turned around to the officer of the guard: "Tear down those walls", he ordered. The covering on the walls was torn off, a mixture of paint, plaster and paper. The timber wainscotting was smashed off. There on the exposed surface of the wall were some frightful pictures, some painted, some pasted. They were horrible, diabolical, obscene. The priest ordered them to be destroyed, as they were, by burning them off the wall surface. It was done. The Father then prayed once more and assured us as he left that no more would the peace of the guardroom be troubled, that the evil spirits that molested the guards there had been exorcised. And so it was. From that day on, no more was heard of mysterious ghostly prowlings in the military barracks of Kinsale.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 49-52.

⁴⁵ O'Donoghue statement, p. 216.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 216-217.

O'Donoghue's story is the only case of a resoundingly successful banishment of evil spirits recorded in the BMH witness statements.

If O'Donoghue is to be believed, the Franciscan Father probably used Pope Leo XIII's revised rite, which consisted of a recitation of extracts from psalms sixty-seven and thirty-four, an extended petition to St. Michael, and ten conjurations and an adjuration (both in Latin).⁴⁷ This rite's peculiarities and significance was well described by the historian Francis Young in 2016:

it was not intended to exorcize a specific person or object. It was, instead, a 'general exorcism' directed against the powers of darkness...Leo's exorcism...could be used privately by priests and by the laity, thereby recruiting them to the struggle against Satan...recombining elements of the ancient liturgy in new and creative ways, his 'general exorcism' was a theological and liturgical innovation.⁴⁸

Pope Leo XIII was preoccupied with spiritual warfare and the threat of satanic secret societies (real and imagined); with this exorcism he intended to marshal both the Catholic laity and clergy at all levels of the hierarchy to confront a newly bolstered and highly organized satanism encroaching upon the Catholic church.⁴⁹ From a clerical point of view, the exorcism at Kinsale barracks can be seen as one battle in Pope Leo XIII's broader spiritual war. It is a striking example of both the devout religiosity of men in the IRA and just how credulous they could be to paranormal activity. This barracks had been previously occupied by the dreaded Essex regiment, the same regiment that had so haunted the dreams of Kathleen Keyes McDonnell in her memoir (a source which also includes a case of diabolically induced sleep paralysis).⁵⁰ In this way, O'Donoghue's memorate builds on the trope of casting the Essex regiment in a diabolical light. Taken at face value, this case leaves us with a variety of tantalizing mysteries, namely, what was depicted by the diabolical images, when were they made, and who made

⁴⁷ Francis Young, *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity* (Cambridge, 2016), pp 189-190.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 188-191.

⁵⁰ Kathleen Keyes McDonnell, *There Is A Bridge At Bandon* (Cork, 1972), p. 172.

them. That they were hidden under the wallpaper and wainscoting suggests that they were not made by the Essex regiment, but rather, by whoever had occupied it before them.

O'Donoghue's witness statement was prepared by himself at his own request, and thus was relatively under-curated and quite lengthy compared to most others.⁵¹ Therefore, the statement can help to inform us as to the editorial proclivities of the BMH's investigators, but also encourages us to seriously entertain the possibility that O'Donoghue was exaggerating this account; his witness statement contains several sections redacted for defamatory naming of living individuals, and includes a variety of other bizarre and scandalous tall-tales, including, among others, how during a Christmas carnival in the Presentation Convent in Bandon, county Cork, O'Donoghue got monstrously drunk on brandy and 'made love to several young ladies that night in the convent', it is unclear if these ladies were nuns or Cumann na mBan members.⁵² The investigator of O'Donoghue's witness statement Seán Brennan would write concerning O'Donoghue that 'he showed a marked tendency to over-elaboration and irrelevancy when recounting incidents'.⁵³ The exorcism of Kinsale barracks is probably an example of what Brennan meant by 'over-elaboration and irrelevancy', suggesting the possibility that other statements which sustained more thorough editing and revisions by Brennan are likely to have initially contained similar paranormal material that was excised during the editing process, though other evidence of this was not identified in this study. Thus, this memorate and this statement indicate that Irish revolutionaries may have experienced a great deal more of the paranormal than what the witness statements would indicate.

In an intelligence summary of the activities of 'I' company of the Auxiliary Division R.I.C. there is a brief and intriguing anecdote titled 'Sad Story of a Spirit', which concerns the billeting of 'I' company in Castleblaney, county Monaghan in June 1921 as an alternative to

⁵¹ Investigator's notes, Michael V. O'Donoghue statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1741, S.2676).

⁵² O'Donoghue statement, p. 210.

⁵³ Investigator's notes, Michael V. O'Donoghue statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1741, S.2676).

their planned billeting at the Ballybay house which had been burned down.⁵⁴ The cadets were happy to stay at such a beautiful location, and even took an interest in its folklore as the summary recounts:

The cadets are very interested in the ghost of some old Lord Blaney who is supposed to walk the grounds by night. They have searched for him, but in vain. It is thought that unmindful of new conditions he must have tripped over the barbed wire entanglements placed there for the confusion of the I. R. A. and has retired to "Black Island" situated in the middle of the lake where he can sulk to his heart's content with the banshees.⁵⁵

Though the story is ostensibly sad, it is narrated in a rather light-hearted and jovial tone, concluding with a joke about a ghost tripping over barbed wire. The cadets were credulous, bored, or confident enough to actively go looking for Lord Blaney's ghost; the summary does not reflect a fearful or reverent attitude to the supernatural on their part. It should be noted that in a military source like this (in this case an intelligence summary), encountering such supernatural material is exceptionally rare.

In the SFC, several versions of the folktales surrounding Castleblaney, Lord Blaney, and Black Island can be found, but in these, the ghost is not of Lord Blaney, but of a Chief McMahan and his children:

Lord Blayney, an English Chief, was sent...to conquer McMahan, when he had McMahan hanged on a tree at the door of the Castle. The story goes on to say that the tree never bore leaves since...On the Lake is an island called Black Island and also a district on the shore called "Annyart". The legend is that Annie and Art were McMahan's children who fled from the Castle when Blayney invaded it. They escaped across the Lake to Black Island where they died of hunger...There is also a belief that from the tree where the Chieftain McMahan was hanged comes tinkling of Bells and Musical sounds.⁵⁶

Perhaps one of the banshees referred to in the intelligence summary was McMahan's daughter Annie. It is unsurprising that the Auxiliary cadets did not find Lord Blaney, because the ghosts associated with the castle not only are of Blaney's opponents rather than Blaney himself, but

⁵⁴ 'I Company ADRIC', (<https://www.theauxiliaries.com/companies/i-coy/adric-i-coy.html>), (accessed 3rd Feb. 2021.)

⁵⁵ 'Sad Story of A Spirit' (The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom, CO 904/168).

⁵⁶ 'Caisleán Mathghamhna', Castleblaney, co. Monaghan, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0943, pp 446-447).

they only manifest in the form of sounds which emanate from a particular tree. In some ways, this incongruence between the story of the auxiliaries and the local folklore is emblematic of the strained relationship between the auxiliaries and the local people; it describes a distorted version of an ancient grievance wherein the protagonists are inverted and transposed from a traumatic ancient context into a tragically absurd modern one. The barbed wire of the modern world takes the place of the dispossessed lordship of the ancient world as the central conflict of the story.

Haunted Objects

In addition to the previously discussed haunted places, there are several hauntings on a smaller scale, concerning objects detached from any fixed location. These objects were cursed or blessed, and their supernatural qualities were remarkable enough to merit mention in revolutionary remembrance. A good example of this is the efforts of Seán Moylan to secure himself some artillery. Witness statements from the BMH describe several occasions where the IRA attempted to scavenge and repair what were believed to be seventeenth century cannons from beaches and historic sites in their constant efforts to secure weaponry; these efforts were almost entirely ill-fated.⁵⁷ In April 1921, Seán Moylan was the commanding officer of the Cork No. 2 Brigade of the IRA. Moylan previously had some minor successes with field guns scavenged from Ross Castle in Killarney, so when men of the second Kerry Brigade brought him a similar artillery piece ‘of Cromwellian vintage’ he had high hopes.⁵⁸ However, it came with a storied past, a past which, according to Moylan, was enough to ‘fill ten volumes’ full of

⁵⁷ Peter Browne statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1110), p. 30; Daniel Harrington statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1532), pp 3-4; John Jones statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS759), pp 6-7; Jeremiah Kennedy statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1192), p. 4; Patrick J. Lynch statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1543), p. 4; Sean Moylan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS838), pp 165, 232-233; Manus Moynihan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1066), p. 3; Patrick O’Sullivan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS794), p. 4; ; John Scannell statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1114), pp 3-4; Michael Sheer statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS803), p. 21.

⁵⁸ Moylan statement, pp 165, 232-233, O’Malley, *On Another Man’s Wound*, pp 251-252.

fearsome anecdotes.⁵⁹ Recalling his experiences with the weapon, Moylan was forced to conclude that it was possessed by a malevolent force, stating ‘if ever inanimate objects embody an evil spirit then the dull rusty metal of this gun was the armour of a most formidable one.’⁶⁰ Moylan describes some of the exploits of this possessed cannon which he was witness to: ‘It smashed the cars on to which it was loaded, lamed the horses that drew it, crushed fingers and toes.’⁶¹ One day some of the ‘brass hats’ came to see this gun in action, but the gun refused muster, and attempted to escape:

It slipped off a cart, rolling madly downhill in erratic circles, transforming, in their effort to avoid it, a column of marching men into a mad riot of dancing dervishes; smashed through a gate, came to rest so deep in a slimy ditch that nothing of it appeared but the little lump of metal round the touch hole which stared up from the slime like an eye, glaring in gleeful malice at those who had retreated madly from its onslaught and were now engaged in recovering it from its slimy bed.⁶²

The personification of the weapon’s maliciously cyclopean touch hole builds further on Moylan’s attestation of spiritual embodiment. One of the ‘Brass hats’ that was present for this last incident was Ernie O’Malley, who upon viewing the wreckage, according to Moylan, remarked dryly: ‘Proverbs of the I.R.A. No. 1 "Never put all your powder into one gun".’⁶³ After O’Malley’s sardonic quip, they elected to let the armoured demon rest in its slimy ditch. If this cannon was possessed by an evil spirit, the best candidate would undoubtedly be O’Donoghue Ross, the ghost of a medieval lord known in folklore to haunt the castle grounds and surrounding lake, trapped there as the wage of his Faustian magical pacts.⁶⁴ A more likely explanation for the diabolic behaviour of the weapon is the revolutionaries’ ignorance of early modern gunnery. The mechanical failures of the gun could easily have had disastrous consequences, might have been remedied with more expertise and patience, and necessitated

⁵⁹ Moylan statement, p. 233.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ ‘Ross Castle – Killarney’, Helen O’ Sullivan, Waterville, Co. Kerry (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0475, p. 115).

shifting a heavy object around. Blaming these frustrations on evil spirits allowed Moylan to comfortably shift the blame away from himself.

Another peculiarly malign piece of equipment was Erskine Childers' .32 calibre Spanish Automatic pistol (serial number 10169).⁶⁵ In 1995, J.P. Duggan, historian, and former officer in the Irish army, deemed it the 'poltergeist pistol'.⁶⁶ Childers received the diminutive pistol from Michael Collins, who told him to 'defend the republic' with it.⁶⁷ Childers would never fire a shot. On 10 November 1922 Childers elected to visit his cousin Robert Barton at Annamoe, county Wicklow but he unluckily arrived just in time to be arrested by a small raiding party of National Army troops; even more unluckily, he was carrying this pistol at the time and drew it, but he did not fire. His unlawful possession of this pistol would famously cost him his life when he was tried by the Free State courts. Following Childer's execution, Cahir Davitt, the judge-advocate general, received the exhibits from the case, including this pistol, which he promptly pocketed instead of handing it in to the stores. This decision would come back to haunt him.

In his witness statement, Davitt spends several pages describing his subsequent misadventures with the pistol, describing it as 'wretched' and 'unlucky'.⁶⁸ Duggan describes it as taking on 'a troublesome restless life of its own.'⁶⁹ After attending a dance at the newly opened metropole (with the pistol in his pocket), Davitt would be questioned about his petite armament by Free State troops despite his high rank, because he had neglected to bring any identification; he was thus escorted by taxi to Collins barracks for questioning. It is unknown whether the irony was lost on him. Davitt describes how during that trip 'a very dour-looking

⁶⁵ Cahir Davitt statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1751), p. 46.

⁶⁶ J.P. Duggan, 'Poltergeist Pistol' (<https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/poltergeist-pistol/>) (accessed 25 Feb. 2021).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; Davitt statement, p. 46.

⁶⁸ Davitt statement, pp 50, 52.

⁶⁹ J.P. Duggan, 'Poltergeist Pistol' (<https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/poltergeist-pistol/>) accessed 25 Feb. 2021.

soldier who appeared to regard me with the gravest suspicion...sat opposite me with his rifle between his knees and the muzzle pointing at my chest. I said several silent prayers that the trigger mechanism might be safe and that the taxi would not go over any bump in the course of our Journey.⁷⁰ His prayers were answered, and he arrived at the barracks unscathed at about four in the morning, where he was forced to rouse Sheehy so he could be identified. The second 'adventure' occurred a few weeks later; he was once again coming home from a party in a taxi, with the pistol in his pocket (safety off, of course), where he was idly fiddling with it. The taxi went over a bump, resulting in a negligent discharge. Thinking they were under attack, the driver stomped on the accelerator. Cursing his stupidity, Davitt frantically examined his leg only to find 'a lump and a bruise on my thigh about the size of a shilling.'⁷¹ The taxi driver was unharmed. Davitt wrote 'I thanked my stars that I had not had to pay the full penalty for my carelessness.'⁷²

Nine years later, the pistol would strike again, but this time with more serious consequences. In 1932, Davitt went to a rugby match at Lansdowne Road, and, fearing recrimination from members of an 'illegal organisation' whom he had been obliged to prosecute, he once again had pocketed the Iberian .32; after the match he 'adjourned' himself to the members' bar in the Lansdowne pavilion to have some drinks with a bank manager Paddy Stokes.⁷³ After a few pints, his hand drunkenly wandered into his coat pocket to twiddle the little firearm, and he promptly shot himself in the foot. Incredibly, he managed to nonchalantly play this off to Stokes as the backfiring of a nearby van and was able to inconspicuously finish his pint and limp out of the lounge to find a doctor (at least according to his own testimony). He describes his recovery: 'I spent some days in bed and some weeks hobbling about...the

⁷⁰ Davitt statement, p. 47.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp 49-50.

only permanent record of my adventure a sore and an ankylosed top joint. I had little pain at any time although the bullet had gone through the bone, shattering it somewhat in the process. I had again escaped without paying the full penalty of my stupidity'.⁷⁴ Ironically, by recounting this misadventure, Davitt made a more permanent and public record of the incident than any ankylosed top joint might have provided. After this, having had enough of the pistol, he would return it to Erskine Childers' son rather ceremoniously, complete with a luncheon and official letter, in which he tactfully referred to it as a 'treasured relic', and claimed both that he had always intended to return it and that he had come to the decision more recently 'for personal reasons'.⁷⁵ The gun was subsequently handed in to Cabra Garda station in Dublin, but rather than ending up in the Garda museum it was stolen and sold on the black market by one of the Guards there.⁷⁶ Its current whereabouts are unknown.⁷⁷

Taking the previously established definition of a haunting as 'a place or object possessed by, frequented by, or associated with supernatural forces or beings', we are obliged to consider the wide variety of apotropaic objects thought to be blessed or lucky as also being, in a way, haunted. A variety of objects were deemed to be lucky or protective by Irish revolutionaries and their opponents. For example, in his witness statement to the BMH, Ignatius Callender attributed his narrow escapes to 'a small badge of the Little Flower' which was given to him by his mother during the Easter Rising: 'I left again, but had not gone far when my mother ran after me and, opening my coat, she pinned on my vest a small badge of the Little Flower, saying "you're all right now, the Little Flower will protect you" I am sure I owe my life to the Little Flower's protection as I had a few narrow escapes, as will be seen in the following pages.'⁷⁸ In his witness statement, Ailbhe Ó Monacháin tells 'a good yarn' about how Liam Mellows

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁷⁶ Duggan, 'Poltergeist Pistol'.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Ignatius Callender statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 923), p. 6.

thought his waistcoat was blessed with ‘magic’ pockets that always seemed to have just what he and his companions needed:

I appeared to be remarkable for the extraordinary things I carried in my pocket, for instance, if anyone wanted a piece of pencil, a bit of string or wire, or a nail, I had it in my pocket. One day Liam and Frank got a Supply of tobacco and filled their pipes with great satisfaction and expectation, but alas, when all was ready, there was no match to light up. The two of them walked up and down with their pipes in their teeth and despair in their eyes. Suddenly Liam said to me "Here, haven't you Eamon Corbett's waistcoat on? There might be a match in it." The waistcoat was searched and sure enough the head of a match was discovered in the corner of one pocket, and there is where the smoking was!

On day Liam got a fiddle, but the A string was missing. Liam started to tune up the three strings and while doing so he said laughingly to me, "Here, you have everything in your magic pockets, have you an A string?" And he nearly fell out of standing when I handed him a little square envelope containing an A string. It seems that I had the string since I left Belfast in July 1915.⁷⁹

Though Ó Monacháin seems to be mixed on the matter of whether the waistcoat is magical or just coincidentally handy, according to Ó Monacháin, Mellows explicitly deemed the coat pockets to be magical, and we cannot be certain if this was in jest. This highlights some of the difficulties faced in the second and third phases of this project; in the medium of text, it was often difficult or even impossible to determine if supernatural attributions were earnest or comedic. Another example like this is the ‘quartermaster’s magic sack’ of Paddy McCarthy described by Ernie O’Malley in his memoir.⁸⁰

Unlike the magic waistcoat and magic sack, the following memorate is completely unambiguous. Though it was previously identified and briefly mentioned by Eve Morrison, it merits further, more detailed discussion here.⁸¹ During the Thomastown ambush on 28 October 1920, Michael Fitzpatrick was shot several times by Crown forces, most gravely in the thigh. He managed to escape, and was transported to nearby Abbey Golden, where Dr. Russell of Bansha, county Tipperary, probed his thigh wound in an unsuccessful attempt to remove the

⁷⁹ Ailbhe Ó Monacháin statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 298), pp 41-42.

⁸⁰ O’Malley, *On Another Man’s Wound*, p. 389.

⁸¹ Morrison, ‘Hauntings of the Irish Revolution’, p. 95.

bullet. On Dr. Russell's recommendation he was smuggled into St. John's Hospital in Limerick and placed under the care of Dr. Roberts, who after two attempts managed to remove the bullet, but not before Fitzpatrick developed severe septic poisoning. The Blue Nuns and the nurses considered his case to be hopeless, and Fitzpatrick spent the remainder of the Autumn and part of the Winter fearing his leg would be amputated. Fortunately, he would ultimately be saved by the supernatural intervention of a mysterious Franciscan bearing a strange mechanical relic:

During this time one of the nuns, Sister Domitilla, had been telling me of a saintly priest, Fr. Bonaventure, O.F.M., who sometimes visited the hospital and had effected some remarkable cures. She promised she would bring him to me, and one Sunday after I had been four or five months there she came into my room in great excitement, telling me Fr. Bonaventure had arrived and would cure me.

I was prepared to see a very ascetic, saintly-looking priest, but when he came into the room I nearly laughed when I beheld a smallish, rosy-cheeked, bald-headed Franciscan, whose jolly smile and joking manner was the very opposite to what I had been expecting. When the nun had left us alone, his expression became serious and he told me he would cure me if I had faith for a few minutes. Impressed by this, I repeated some prayers while he read over me, holding in his hand a small, glass-covered box something like a watch, which, he said, contained a holy relic. After some encouraging talk, he went away and I have not seen him since then. In three days I was able to get out of bed and walk around the room without assistance, and in a short time was able to leave the hospital and eventually arrived back in my own area, where I reported to Brigade H.Q. I firmly believe that this was a miraculous cure, and I have never had any trouble or pain in my leg, which, apart from the many scars of the operations, is as good as ever it was, Thank God.⁸²

Though insufficient details are given in Fitzpatrick's witness statement to be certain, it is possible that this Fr. Bonaventure was Fr. Bonaventure Murphy O.F.M. Cap., who was ordained on 16 March 1907 and is known to have been acquainted with and to have aided a variety of prominent Irish Republicans.⁸³ Fr. Bonaventure can be seen pictured in the figure below sitting just a few feet away from Michael Collins.⁸⁴

⁸² Michael Fitzpatrick statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1433), pp 14-15.

⁸³ 'Murphy, Bonaventure, 1880-1968, Capuchin priest', Catholic Archives Catalogue, (<https://catholicarchives.ie/index.php/murphy-bonaventure-1888-1968-capuchin-priest>), (accessed 3 Apr. 2023).

⁸⁴ Fr. Brian Shortall, 'Tired of all the Bad News', (<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-WThNEG9DHbE/UgoP5YHLXXI/AAAAAAAAAf0/M-ABGcKFxxs/s1600/proxy.jpg>) (Accessed 3 Apr. 2023).



Figure 10: Father Bonaventure Pictured Near Michael Collins

Even more mysterious than this Franciscan's identity is the relic contained in the 'small, glass covered box' which he used to cure Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick clearly believed that a combination of the relic and the prayers of a Franciscan Friar were sufficient to effect a miraculous cure. In its reverence for the supernatural power of Franciscans, this memorate echoes the previously discussed exorcism of the Kinsale barracks described by Michael V. O'Donoghue.

Generally, the most common type of apotropaic objects carried by revolutionaries were religious in nature and included rosary beads, medals, scapulars, Agnus Deis, and crucifixes. This study has identified at least eighteen different memorates describing this.⁸⁵ Relics like the one described by Fitzpatrick were more rarely discussed. Additionally, several sources describe British soldiers asking for or keeping Catholic religious emblems on themselves for good luck, even if they were not themselves Catholic.⁸⁶ Irish revolutionaries and their opponents kept

⁸⁵ Patrick Harris statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 80), p. 4; Seamus Kenny statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 158), p. 9; Fr. Aloysius statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 200), p. 14; Joseph Hawes statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 262), p. 45; John Flannery statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 287), pp 41, 43; Aine O'Rahilly statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 333), p. 5; Geraldine Dillon statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 358), p. 18; Aoife de Burca statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 359), p. 16; Mary Flannery Woods statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 624), p. 2; Sean Kenny, Michael Keogh, and Joseph O'Shea statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 688), pamphlet, p. 20; Thomas J. Meldon statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 734), pp 24-25; Annie O'Brien & Lily Curran statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 805), p. 45; Rev. Fr. Augustine statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 920), pp 20, 23-24; Matthew Barry statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 932), p. 5; Eileen Costello statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1184), p. 3; Gerald Doyle statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1511), p. 9; Fr. Eugene Nevin statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1605), pp 42-43.

⁸⁶ Gerald Doyle statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1511), pp 9, 39; Liam Mellows, 'The True Story of the Galway Insurrection' in Conor McNamara, *Liam Mellows Soldier of the Irish Republic: SELECTED WRITINGS 1914-1922* (Newbridge, 2019), p. 80; Sean Prendergast statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 755), pp 172-173.

objects like this for a variety of reasons. These practices may have been inspired in part by veterans of the First World War, many of whom, as Owen Davies has amply demonstrated, kept a wide variety of lucky charms and protective objects.⁸⁷ These practices also have far older roots in the traditions of Ireland, Britain, and the Catholic religion more broadly, however tradition and imitation alone do not explain their lasting appeal.⁸⁸ Recent research in social psychology has shown that subjects possessing an object which they perceive to be lucky perceive their performance of tasks to be better and experience less anxiety; effectively, believing in lucky objects and holding on to them facilitates coping with stress.⁸⁹ This effect likely was a factor in why Irish revolutionaries used such objects.

Revolution-Generated Hauntings

The violence of the Irish Revolution generated hauntings of its own in the decades following its conclusion. A variety of these hauntings appear in newsprint, the SFC, and the writings of ghost hunters.⁹⁰ One particularly well-illustrated example was provided to the SFC by Pat Garrahy of Dough, county Clare; in this example he described how a local roadway was haunted by the ghost of a British soldier who had been shot dead ‘near the gate of M. Ross Rose’s house’ just outside of Lahinch.⁹¹ Garrahy would also provide a sketch of this apparition.⁹² According to sources in the folklore collection, Crown forces killed by the IRA

⁸⁷ Davies, *A Supernatural War*, pp 139, 144, 145–146, 152, 154, 155, 157, 158, 162–163, 168, 169, 171–173, 174, 190, 191, 195–196, 197, 228, 229.

⁸⁸ Owen Davies and Ceri Houlbrook, *Building Magic: Ritual and Re-Enchantment In Post-Medieval Structures* (Cham, 2021), pp 95-138.

⁸⁹ Nicola Lasikiewicz and Wan Yee Teo, ‘The effect of superstitious thinking on psychosocial stress responses and perceived task performance’, in *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, xxi (2018), p. 32.

⁹⁰ See Appendix 9 for a list of such hauntings in the SFC.

⁹¹ ‘No Title’, Pat Garrahy, Dough, Co. Clare, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, Vol. 0621, pp 306-307).

⁹² See figure 11.

came back to haunt the places where they had been killed in variety of forms including as apparitions, floating lights, or frightful animals.⁹³



Figure 11: Pat Garrahy's Illustration of a Spectral British Soldier in SFC

Such hauntings were not limited to the folklore collection; they appeared in Irish newsprint as well.⁹⁴ Most notably, a variety of ghosts attributed to Irish revolutionary violence were submitted to Aidan Pender and Patrick Byrne's 'Ghosts' column in the Dublin *Evening Herald* in the 1960's.⁹⁵ In the following decade, Patrick Byrne would publish two books compiling the most noteworthy hauntings he collected by correspondence during his time at the *Evening Herald*; ten of these stories are related to the Irish Revolution.⁹⁶ For example, in his book *The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories*, Patrick Byrne related a story told to him by the thespian and author Dr Micheál MacLiammóir. In this story, MacLiammóir describes how in 1930 he

⁹³ 'Eden Vale', Mrs Brennan, Ballyboggan Lower, Co. Wexford, (N.F.C., S.F.C., Vol. 0885, p. 34); 'The Dog with the Tail Six Feet Long', Mary Hanlon, Gortatlea, Co. Kerry. (N.F.C., S.F.C., Vol. 0442, p. 170); 'Stories', Joseph Meade, Poplar Square, Co. Kildare, (N.F.C., S.F.C., Vol. 0776, p. 414).

⁹⁴ *The Corkman*, 28 Jun. 1969, p. 3; *Evening Echo*, 4 Jan. 1927, p. 12; *Evening Herald*, 27 Dec. 1937, p. 8.

⁹⁵ *Evening Herald*, 11 Jan. 1961, p. 4; 8 Feb. 1961, p. 4; 7 Nov. 1962, p. 10; 10 Dec. 1964, p. 4; 28 Jan. 1965; 11 Mar. 1969, p. 9.

⁹⁶ Patrick Byrne, *Irish Ghost Stories* (Cork, 1973), pp 30-32, 39, 64; Patrick Byrne, *The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories* (Cork, 1979), pp 24-25, 25, 41, 47-51, 63, 64, 67.

unknowingly rented a flat in Dublin which had been the site where seven British servicemen had been killed on 21 November 1920 (AKA Bloody Sunday), and how on one dark November night while climbing the stairs he and his friend came into unnervingly direct contact with the spectral figures of five men running past them; ‘I realized with a shock that I had actually seen no-one and heard no-one...how to make that clear I cannot easily explain.’⁹⁷ During the 1960’s and 1970’s, other ghost hunters such as Hans Holzer would take a more hands-on approach, personally investigating reported hauntings before publishing their findings; Holzer would investigate several related to revolutionary violence.⁹⁸

The most illustrative example of Holzer’s method is his investigation of paranormal activity related to the Gortnagleanna monument in county Kerry. Holzer conducted a radio interview with an illusionist named Patrick Maloney wherein Maloney related a tale from his youth where his and his companion’s bicycle were clutched by poltergeists while they travelled past a site where three Irishmen had been recently shot.⁹⁹ These three Irishmen were probably Patrick Walsh, Patrick Dalton, and Jeremiah Lyons who had been killed there by Crown forces in May 1921, and for whom a large monument including a Celtic cross and Gaelic inscriptions would later be erected.¹⁰⁰ Holzer added Gortnagleanna to his list of places to visit on his trip to Ireland. There, he brought Sybil Leek to the monument, having informed her of the events which it commemorated as little as possible. She proceeded to enter her mediumistic trance and communicate at length with the spirits of three Irishmen whom she concluded had been violently killed nearby and who dwelt by the monument in a state of eternal watchfulness; her observations seemingly corroborated the details of the historical event which Holzer had deliberately not informed her of, and she even corrected Holzer about the date of the event

⁹⁷ Byrne, *The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories*, pp 47-51.

⁹⁸ Hans Holzer, *The Lively Ghosts of Ireland*, (London, 1967), pp 20-22, 31, 80-81.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 20-22

¹⁰⁰ ‘Local Place Names’, John Enright, Trien, Co. Kerry, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0405, p. 210); ‘Local Place Names’, William Keane, Lissaniska, Co. Kerry, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0405, pp 229-230).

which he had mistakenly thought occurred in 1918.¹⁰¹ At this point, Holzer directed Leek to inform the spirits that ‘the war was long over and they should return home to their families, that in fact, they were relieved of duty.’¹⁰²

Unlike most historical literature pertinent to the period, Tomás Mac Conmara’s 2019 book *The Time of the Tans* contains several stories of apparitions related to the Irish War of Independence. Related stories are referenced in files from the SFC but are not recorded in other primary source materials and are original products of his interviews with what he described as ‘a fading generation’.¹⁰³ Mac Conmara relates several new stories concerning apparitions seen of the lights of Captain Alan Lendrum’s motorcar, and of the haunting of the Broadford barracks.¹⁰⁴ Though this section of his book is brief, the final paragraphs provide some interesting observations about the function of telling and retelling ghost stories when Mac Conmara relates the experience of the anthropologists Conrad Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball. The latter of these two, after telling locals in Shaughnessy’s public house in Ennis about his troubling experience of seeing a shadowy apparition in the doorway where a Black and Tan had been killed twenty years earlier, was able to gain the trust of the locals.¹⁰⁵ In this way the inherent risk of retelling a ghost story acted as a kind of price for entry into a social circle; according to Arensberg, by corroborating the ghost story on his own initiative, Kimball ‘was “in”’ as he had demonstrated his empathetic understanding of ‘the well-known but never mentioned “soldier,” the supernatural.’¹⁰⁶

Hauntings such as these are evidence that the Irish Revolution and its surrounding mythology had become cemented as an Irish cultural touchstone to such a point by the late

¹⁰¹ Holzer, *The Lively Ghosts of Ireland*, pp 28-31.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁰³ Tomás Mac Conmara, *The Time of the Tans: An Oral History of the War of Independence in County Clare* (Cork, 2019), p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 189-190.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 190-191.

¹⁰⁶ Conrad M. Arensberg, ‘Sol Kimball: anthropologist of our America’ in *Florida Journal of Anthropology*, ix, no. 1 (1983), p. 9.

1930's that it could be handily relied upon as a heuristic framework for explaining particularly extraordinary paranormal experiences like apparitions and other hauntings. Indeed, seeing Irish revolutionaries explicitly as ghosts to be revered was not beyond the pale for some. In 1963 the Kilmainham Jail Restoration Society published a brief work titled *The Ghosts of Kilmainham* within which is contained a catalogue of noteworthy nationalist political prisoners interned within Kilmainham Gaol. It concludes with the statement 'Should not every Irish boy and girl, every Irish man and woman, be grateful for the preservation of this monument to Ireland's glorious past, haunt of the ghosts of so many Irish patriots?'¹⁰⁷ Effectively, seeing the dead of the Irish Revolution more as the latest generation of undead revenants haunting a grimly glorious stone edifice is cast as the patriotic thing to do. Not only did Irish revolutionaries witness ghosts and hauntings, but ultimately were destined to become ghosts and hauntings themselves.

Conclusion

This chapter has recounted and discussed a wide range of memorates describing hauntings associated with the Irish Revolution. These memorates are broadly representative of the entirety of haunting-related material identified in this project, and their analysis provides key insights toward answering this project's central questions. Hauntings affected how the Irish Revolution was experienced in a variety of ways. It must be admitted that these effects were not nearly as strategically significant in comparison to other more oft-discussed factors like access to arms, the dissemination of propaganda, religious divisions, or impactful political events like the conscription crisis, the political victory of Sinn Féin, or the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act. However, many of the historical actors involved in the Irish Revolution evidently believed they had had experiences of hauntings of various kinds. These encounters

¹⁰⁷ The Kilmainham Jail Restoration Society, *The Ghosts of Kilmainham* (Dublin, 1963), p. 54.

could induce small-scale troop movements, cause changes in morale, and inform tactical and logistical decision making on a local level. Furthermore, the reputation of haunted locations could serve as cover for Republican forces conducting training exercises or hiding from crown forces. In addition, this chapter demonstrates emphatically that experiences of hauntings shaped how the Irish Revolution was remembered both by its combatants and the communities in which they operated, that trauma and protracted combat stress impacted and were at times catalytic for paranormal experiences, and that hauntings often illustrated central ideological conflicts and provide opportunities to propagate and perform Irish cultural identity.

Circumstantially, such experiences of hauntings were often experienced between action or near action, and in many cases were related somehow to sleeping in a new place or having a difficult or troubled sleep. Those who had such experiences often were reluctant to share them with their comrades and were more likely to distribute responsibility for the experience amongst their peers. Qualitatively, the hauntings discussed here were often informed by folklore and demonstrate that such folklore was an easily resorted to explanation that Irish revolutionaries could employ when faced with an experience that could be difficult to explain. Though less common, folk-histories of religious violence also played a role in influencing these experiences. Folklore provided a great deal of the explanations for what would be otherwise inexplicable, effectively filling in gaps where necessary to round out the cosmology of the world as remembered by Irish revolutionaries. This folkloric basis for experiences of hauntings served both an ideological and psychological purpose in this way in that they dealt with disturbing uncertainties in memory as they simultaneously performed Irish identity. In their psychological, tactical, and ideological dimensions, the hauntings discussed in this chapter illustrate how the paranormal played a small but deeply impactful role in how the Irish Revolution was experienced and remembered.

Chapter Five: Prophecies, Omens, and Divination

Introduction

In comparison with the varieties of precognition discussed in chapter two, prophecies, omens, and divination draw on bodies of lore and ritual practices with much more ancient origins.¹ Due to their prevalence in the source materials investigated by this study, and some key qualitative and functional differences from the precognitive memorates discussed previously, prophecies, omens, and divination merit separate discussion in their own chapter. The most significant difference lies in their externality; this has a profound bearing on their psychological function and phenomenological characteristics. Prophecies, omens, and divination provide external loci of control in lore or traditions drawn from the community of the percipient. This provides a more reliable, easily attestable, and stable way of rationalizing chaotic experiences than might be provided by premonitions or dreams. This externality makes them more akin to religious beliefs and practices.² Indeed, some have argued the only thing which might distinguish religious belief from the varieties of precognition discussed up to this point is to what degree they have been institutionalised.³ Omens and divination are often institutionally liminal; though distinct bodies of myth and practice have accrued around them, they often remain peripheral to the doctrine of the religious institutions they coexist with and have long been a topic of debate among Christian theologians.⁴ Despite this, they were resorted to by the revolutionary generation with regularity. Unlike omens and more ritualistically technical

¹ Martti Nissinen, *Prophetic Divination: Essays In Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (Berlin, 2019), pp 51-84.

² Marija Branković, 'Who believes in ESP: cognitive and motivational determinants of the belief in extra-sensory perception' in *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, xv (2019), pp 131-132; Iqra Safdar, Sadia Niazi, and Adnan Adil, 'Paranormal beliefs mediate external locus of control and religiosity' in *Journal of Behavioural Science*, xxvii, no. 2, (Sargodha, 2019), pp 1-2.

³ Eugene Subbotsky, *Magic and the Mind: Mechanisms, Functions, and Development of Magical Thinking and Behavior* (Oxford,), pp. 11-12.

⁴ Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250-1750* (Oxford, 2010), pp 1-5, 27, 30, 42, 63-69, 241-248, 311.

varieties of divination, prophecies are thoroughly intertwined with religious belief and are indeed a central component of biblical narrative. Perhaps for this reason, prophecies make up the most typical type of precognition mentioned in the primary sources investigated by this study. This chapter will provide evidence for this conclusion and discuss the subtleties of these beliefs and their relevance to lived experience of the Irish Revolution.

According to Robert Hayward, the term ‘prophecy’ had developed two meanings by the modern era in Britain; prophecy’s original meaning was simply ‘speaking or communicating the words of God.’⁵ By the early twentieth century, prophecy had accrued a more popular second meaning ‘as an act whereby the future is revealed, either through omens, the direct word of God or the interpretation of sacred texts.’⁶ Hayward ultimately concludes that, in the modern world, ‘prophecy was no longer seen as a divine sign of the intervention of God, rather it was interpreted as a psychological symptom demanding the intervention of pastors and psychiatrists.’⁷ The development presented by Hayward here from prophecy as revelation to prophecy as divination does not necessarily hold outside of Ireland and Britain; for decades biblical scholars have noted the divinatory qualities of prophecy in writings contemporary to the Old Testament.⁸ In his exploration of ancient near-eastern prophecy, Martti Nissinen provides a nuanced theoretical perspective on the issue, acknowledging the global prevalence of practices labelled as prophecy and arguing that the meaning of prophecy is socially constructed; effectively, when discussing a given prophecy we should refer to ‘the kind of people, the classification itself, and the matrix within which it works’ rather than the individual

⁵ Robert Hayward, ‘From the millennial future to the unconscious past: the transformation of prophecy in early twentieth-century Britain’ in Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton (eds), *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300-2000* (Bodmin, 1997), p. 162.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁸ Anne Marie Kitz, ‘Prophecy as divination’ in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, lxxv (2003), *passim*; William L. Moran, ‘New evidence from Mari on the history of prophecy’ in *Biblica*, l (1969), pp 15-17; J.M. de Tarragon, ‘Witchcraft, magic and divination in Canaan and ancient Israel,’ in J.M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (New York, 1995), p. 2071.

prophet or some kind of universalized ‘human intuition of divine-human communication.’⁹ Therefore, prophecy in the culture of Irish Republicanism is presented here in its most immediate context, wherein the divinity communicating to the prophet is often the Republican ideal itself; sometimes through received sub-altern oral traditions, and sometimes through inspired intuition.

Omens and divination often bear a close relationship to prophecy which can be illustrated by the following sentence: ‘using her divination rituals to interpret a series of omens, the seer was able to deliver a prophecy.’ Consideration of the terms ‘omen’ and ‘divination’ as parts of a process which produces a ‘prophecy’ further complicates how the term ‘prophecy’ was used in the source materials while illustrating why discussing omens, divination, and prophecy together in the same chapter is necessary. Nevertheless, omens and divination are distinct concepts and should be defined and explored here, especially since within this chapter they are being discussed in separate sub-sections. In recent literature on folkloric epistemology and semiotics, omen memorates have been described as one of a variety of ‘microgenres’ of folkloric texts with an ‘instructive-prognostic orientation.’¹⁰ Omens have a long history and have been identified in some of the most ancient extant works of literature, like the Epic of Gilgamesh, for example.¹¹ In 2021, Tyshchenko, Korolyov, and Palchevska defined an omen as ‘a stable connection between two objective reality phenomena, one of which is understood as a sign, and the other as its interpretation, usually done in the form of a forecast for the future’, further specifying that, axiomatically, ‘omens include those interpretations that are based on the collective experience and are fixed in the collective memory.’¹² This fixing of omens in the

⁹ Martti Nissinen, ‘Prophecy as construct, ancient and modern’ in John Barton, Reinhard G. Kratz, Nathan MacDonald, Sara Milstein, Carol A. Newsom, and Markus Witte (eds), *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (Berlin, 2019), pp 3-5.

¹⁰ Oleh Tyshchenko, Igor Korolyov, and Oleksandra Palchevska, ‘Cultural and cognitive structure of the omen: Epistemology, axiology and pragmatics’ in *Wisdom*, xviii, no. 2 (Yerevan, 2021), p. 138.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 138-139.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

collective memory is often done with short phrases or rhymes, which is easily visible in the context of Irish folklore, and particularly the folkloric source repositories used in this study; for example, a collector for the SFC in county Donegal listed a variety of common omens such as ‘a cat to sit with her back to the fire is a sign of storm’, ‘to meet a red haired woman in the morning is bad luck’, and ‘a knife falling, a gentle man visitor.’¹³ This study deals with Irish omens in the context of the Revolutionary period of 1916-1923; a list of those which were identified can be seen in Appendices 12A and 12B, several of which will be discussed in this chapter. These specific omens are generally more morbid than Irish omens outside of the Irish revolutionary context, and often anticipated deaths, which is to be expected considering the violent nature of the period being investigated here. Omens are distinct from prophecies and divination in their simplicity, commonplace usage, and their ability to exist in isolation from specific individuals, magical rituals/ceremonies, or circumstances. Divination is interpreted here as the use of ritualized ceremonies whereby a pre-established set of omens are interpreted from a contained chaotic situation to deliver a prophecy. It was relatively uncommon in the Irish revolutionary context and will only be treated briefly in this chapter.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first discusses the Black Pig of Kiltristan; this topic merits its own dedicated section because, in addition to exemplifying how prophecy interfaced with both Irish society and folklore, it is exceptionally well corroborated and complex. The second discusses prophecies more generally, and includes subsections discussing prophecies of individual fates, prophecies of general trouble, and prophecies attributed to St. Columba. The third section provides quantitative analyses of the prophecies identified. The fourth discusses omens and divination. Conclusions demonstrated by this chapter are manifold. The prophecies, omens, and divination discussed in this chapter show

¹³ ‘Signs or Omens or Superstitions (Common)’, Niall C. Ó Dochartaigh, Moville, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 1119, pp 262-263).

how both in the immediate experience of witnessing them, and in the later remembering and narrativization of them, they provided a sense of psychological relief from anxiety, and grief for Irish revolutionaries and their opponents, along with reinforcing a sense of Irish identity and even serving political ends. Such phenomena had an important role in shaping the remembrance of the revolution, and such phenomena were often catalysed by trauma. Evidence provided in this chapter will show that the conceptual framework of prophecy was both credible and easily accessible to the revolutionary generation. Prophetic terminology was used widely in contemporary newsprint, and prophecy was a central element of Christian religious tradition. Therefore, the use of prophetic language was far more intuitive than terms only recently developed by psychical research societies. This chapter further demonstrates that a wealth of longstanding and well circulated prophetic oral traditions existed in Irish society referring both to the powers of Irish saints and to escaping the yoke of British oppression. These oral traditions synthesized well with narratives of martyrdom and independence disseminated by Republican propagandists, and this synthesis would have been comfortable and even intuitive for Irish writers describing their experiences of the revolution.

The Black Pig of Kiltrustan

One of the most well attested, supernaturally rich, and phenomenologically nuanced incidents of the revolutionary period is the appearance of the Black Pig of Kiltrustan during the conscription crisis of April 1918. Though this incident does not solely consist of prophecies, it is thoroughly entwined with the prophetic discourse of the time. The Black Pig of Kiltrustan is a marvellous case study for exploring how direct experiences of the paranormal interact with their folkloric and political contexts, and for understanding the spiritual world of Irish people in the revolutionary period. Almost all the other paranormal memorates discussed so far only appear in one source, usually an account written decades after the fact and not corroborated by

others, let alone contemporary primary source documents; by contrast, the high degree of corroboration and wealth of contemporaneous source material attesting to the Black Pig allows an exceptionally rich and multifaceted picture of the supernatural beliefs of Irish revolutionaries to emerge. However, despite this wealth of primary sources related to the Black Pig, histories written about the Irish Revolution in Roscommon or the conscription crisis generally tend to ignore it, despite the heavy involvement of the people of northern Roscommon in the conscription crisis.¹⁴ One exception to this is Owen Davies' *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith During the First World War* where Davies briefly discusses the Black Pig, blithely attributing its cause to 'National politics and propaganda'.¹⁵

The Black Pig of Kiltristan is a supernatural being, a colossal shapeshifting sable sow connected with a variety of archaeological sites, ancient legends, and ominous prophecies. On 18 April 1918, reports circulated that the legendary Black Pig had appeared to a handful of people throughout north-western Ireland, mostly children, after having been asleep for 1,400 years, as legend had it.¹⁶ These appearances were widely reported on in Irish newspapers and sparked a massive surge of interest in the Black Pig and the associated prophecies of St. Columcille.¹⁷ Large crowds arrived in the Kiltristan area to investigate the pig, and a variety of interpretations were written. The appearance of the Black Pig of Kiltristan was one of the most widely remarked upon clusters of paranormal events in the Irish revolutionary period,

¹⁴ John Burke, *Roscommon: The Irish Revolution* (Dublin, 2021), *passim*; Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2004), pp 181-183, 219, 231-232; Pauric Travers, 'The conscription crisis and the general election of 1918' in John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, and Mike Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2017), pp 323-329.

¹⁵ Owen Davies, *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith During the First World War* (Oxford, 2018), p. 24.

¹⁶ 'The Black Pig', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 15-16); 'The Black Pig', Thomas Flanagan, Cloonahee, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 14).

¹⁷ See Appendix 11.

perhaps second only to the Templemore miracles. The pig appears in memoirs, witness statements, newsprint, the SFC, and even contemporary academic publications.¹⁸

Key to the intense interest in the appearance of the Black Pig in Kiltrustan was the broader cultural climate that had developed over the preceding decades, which included not just anxieties about the First World War, but crucially, an ongoing interest in prophetic literature, namely prophecies attributed to St. Columba. Sources concerning the pig used in this study mention that the appearance of the pig was interpreted as a sign signifying the fulfilment of St. Columba's prophecies.¹⁹ Newsprint carried headlines such as "'The Black Pig' of the Prophecies!'", and explicitly drew connections between the apparitions and the prophecies of St. Columba.²⁰ However, curiously, in folkloric, journalistic, and scholarly versions of these prophecies, the appearance of the Black Pig specifically as a sign is not explicitly mentioned.²¹

This raises the question of how exactly this connection between St. Columba's prophecies and

¹⁸ For a complete list of relevant newsprint articles, see Appendix 11. Eleanor Hull, 'The Black Pig of Kiltrustan' in *Folklore*, xxix, no. 3 (1918), pp. 226-237; Ernie O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound* (Cork, 2013), pp 105-106; Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1086), pp 5-7. **National Folklore Collection sources:** 'A Song, 23-11-1938.-', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0250, pp 33-34); 'Brook-Lodge', Michael Connor, Carrowndangan, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0263, p. 96); 'Care of Farm Animals', Nell Washington, Drumman More, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0255, pp 256-257); 'Folklore - Strange Story', Michael J. Mc Namara, Culliagh Upper, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0255, p. 438); 'Jimmy Plunket's Memorial Slab', An tSr. M. Pádraig, Abbycartron, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0251, p. 13); 'My Home District', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 3) 'My Home District', Mary Mulvey, Lisheen, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 5); 'My Home District', Nora Hughes, Creta, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 8-10); 'No title', Lynda Shannon, Tansyfield, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0249, p. 270); 'Story', Mrs Fallon, Ballyhubert, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0255, p. 445); 'Story of the Black Pig', Nancy Roland, Clooneen (Hartland), Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0255, p. 436); 'The Black Pig', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 15-16); 'The Black Pig', Thomas Flanagan, Cloonahee, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 14); 'The Care of Our Farm Animals', Mrs. Tom Brady, Annaghbeg, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0252, p. 43); 'Travelling Folk', Peter Fitzmaurice, Cloonfad More, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0249, p. 123).

¹⁹ The Roscommon Herald, *The "prophecies" of Columbkille. Some amazingly good forecasts. What will happen in the "Valley of the Black Pig." Some extraordinary shots foretelling present day events.* (Boyle, 1918), pp 2-5; O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, pp 100-106.

²⁰ *Irish Times*, 27 Apr. 1918; *Leitrim Observer*, 4 May 1918, p. 5; *Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1918, p. 6.

²¹ Peter Bander, *The prophecies of St Malachy & St Columbkille* (4th ed., Gerrard's Cross, 1979), pp 100-142; 'Colm Cille's Prophecies', Mrs. O'Connor, Lagganstown Lower, Co. Tipperary, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0576, p. 215-217); Roscommon Herald, *The "prophecies" of Columbkille*, pp 2-5; Hull, 'The Black Pig of Kiltrustan', pp. 226-237; O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, pp 100-106; William Francis De Vismes Kane, 'The Black Pig's Dyke: The ancient boundary fortification of Uladh' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, xxvii (1908/1909), p. 328; 'E. H. Ussher, The true story of a revolution. Or what one of my reviewers called "The rushing tragedy of Munster life"', 1925, (Church of Ireland, Representative Church Body Library, MS 70), pp 9-10.

the Black Pig came about. The answer is that the connection is geographic; some versions of the prophecies popularly in circulation in 1918 refer to a great sectarian slaughter to take place in the 'Valley of the Black Pig', an area which had been delineated over the past decade by the archaeologist William Francis De Vismes Kane during his researches into a series of Iron-age fortifications commonly known as the 'Worm Ditch' or the 'Black Pig's Dyke.'²² Kane and his work had been appearing in Irish newsprint over the previous decade.²³ Crucially, a point along the line of fortifications as defined by Kane at Rooskey in county Roscommon was very close to Kiltrustan, where the pig would make its appearance in April 1918; folklorically, this area was thought to be the same place where the pig was first slain 1,400 years earlier.²⁴ Kane's work was cited in reportage on the Black Pig.²⁵ Further solidifying the presence of Kane in the public eye was his death, which coincidentally occurred on 22 April 1918, just as the Black Pig made its appearance in Kiltrustan. Kane's death was reported on in the *Anglo-Celt*, a report which mentioned his work on the 'Race of the Black Pig.'²⁶ Considering this discursive priming, it was natural that the Valley of the Black Pig would become connected with apparitions of a Black Pig in the same area.

It was in this fertile soil that the seeds of the Black Pig craze were sown. Famous writers such as W. B. Yeats had contributed their opinions on the Black Pig and its associated mythology and their connection to popular prophecies; in 1900, Yeats had even written a poem titled 'The Valley of The Black Pig'.²⁷ Other writers recalled the prophetic discourse of the time. In her memoir of 'life at Cappagh from the Spring of 1914, to the spring of 1925' Emily Ussher of Ellesmere, Shropshire, recalled the excitement of interpreting prophecies of St.

²² Roscommon Herald, *The "prophecies" of Columbkille*, pp 2-5; Kane, 'The Black Pig's Dyke', pp 317-318.

²³ *Anglo-Celt*, 10 Jun. 1911, p. 7; *Irish Times*, 4 May 1918, p. 6; *Northern Standard*, 2 April 1910, p. 5.

²⁴ Roscommon Herald, *The "prophecies" of Columbkille*, pp 2-5; Kane, 'The Black Pig's Dyke', pp 317-318.

²⁵ *Leitrim Observer*, 4 May 1918, p. 5; *Nenagh Guardian*, 4 May 1918, p. 4; *Roscommon Herald*, 4 May 1918, p. 1.

²⁶ 'Death of Mr. W. F. De V. Kane', *Anglo-Celt*, 27 Apr. 1918, p. 6.

²⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1918, p. 6.

Columba during the early years of the First World War while she did volunteer work making medical supplies for the war effort:

We always had tea after our making of shirts and swabs, and Kate Cullinene [sic] used to tell us our fortunes in our tea leaves. Then used to follow the prophecies of Columcille. After the Great War (which he had foretold) the war in Ireland would begin. At this point, I regret very much to be writing after an interval of ten years, because nobody will believe me. How much more poignant and striking this tale would be if I had jotted it down from day to day! And then to watch from page to page the striking fulfilment of many of these folk-sayings! A story grows comparatively cold, too, in retrospect. It misses the agony of daily uncertainty, the horror of things unfulfilled. On the other hand, things seem important at the time, which turn out trivial, or even irrelevant, in the long run. And trifles of the hour sometimes attain no [sic] meaning. If I had been writing at the time, would I have ever troubled to record the phantasies which follow?²⁸

Ussher's account continues with a lengthy overview of some of the prophecy's predictions. As Ussher was particularly involved with the war effort, it makes sense that she might be particularly interested in prophecies of its outcome and the implications for her country. Additionally, her account touches on central tensions in the historical interpretation of prophecy memorates: that those who write retrospectively about fulfilled prophecies are always open to outside assertions that the prophecy in question is only prophetic because the writer is writing from the perspective of the future, and that such retrospective writings often omit fearful prognostications that never came to pass. Ussher's account sidesteps the second issue through admitting that such prognostications were common, and symptomatic of a particularly fear-inundated social environment. This anxiety, the 'agony of daily uncertainty', would escalate over the war years, and particularly in Ireland when conscription was threatened in spring 1918. This effectively created a paranormal powder keg which would be sparked by a series of apparitions.

With this context in mind, we can turn to the apparitions themselves. Most accounts agree that the pig was first seen by several schoolgirls in the parish of Kiltrustan, county Roscommon

²⁸ 'E. H. Ussher, The true story of a revolution', pp 9-10.

on 18 April 1918. Where the accounts begin to diverge is in the name and number of the girls. Some say it was first seen by a twelve-year-old girl with the surname of Beirne, others say it was seen by two girls with the surnames Kelly and Dowd, along with an unnamed younger friend. Though we cannot be certain, the most likely sequence of events was that it was first seen by Beirne, who later told her older friends Kelly and Dowd who lived nearby. After this, word began to spread, and sightings of the pig became common amongst schoolchildren in the area. Shortly thereafter, adults began to investigate, including the schoolmaster, local clergy, and prominent people in the neighbourhood.²⁹ One of these adults was Patrick Mullooly, who would later become the quartermaster of the Roscommon brigade ASU.³⁰ His second witness statement to the BMH gives a vivid first-hand account of a local person living in the early stages of the Black Pig sightings with a great degree of detail (including mythological context), that merits quoting at length:

When St. Patrick was having the church built³¹ he had a workman named 'Essian' who with a white horse conveyed the material. Every day at dinner Essian threshed the sheaf of oats for his horse and as he threshed, a black pig ate [sic] up the oats. At length he complained to St. Patrick, who told him to tell him when it happened again. He did so and the Saint told him to strike it with his flail, which he did, and immediately the black pig [sic] vanished and gave no more trouble, old people maintained that tradition had it, he would return again before disaster would overwhelm the world; hence when he appeared in 1918 during the conscription crisis, people flocked from all directions to pay him their compliments, only to be laughed at for their pains. Nevertheless, clerical and laymen who ought to know took more serious views.

From my personal experience on one occasion when engaged by the parents of two children to accompany them to school the following morning, the children were at first quite normal and then suddenly one of them said: "Do you see him; he is there standing on the white stone". Of course, we saw nothing but the children's eyes dilated in such a manner that surely something was the cause. The other children who came along also pretended to see him could easily be detected as actors and little imps out for a good joke. Suffice it to say that both Father Roddy and Dean Gearty gave it serious thought and regarded it as a messenger of evil.³²

²⁹ *Roscommon Messenger*, 25 May 1918; *Roscommon Messenger*, 4 May 1918.

³⁰ Patrick Mullooly statements (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1086, WS 0955), title pages.

³¹ This is the church from which the town of Kiltristan derives its name.

³² Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1086), pp 5-6.

These investigations by prominent adults and Fr. Roddy are corroborated by contemporary articles in the *Roscommon Messenger* and folkloric accounts from the school's collection that would be gathered in the Kiltrustan area twenty years later.³³ Though Mullooly did not see the pig himself, the odd behaviour and dilation of some of the children's eyes seemed convincing, and he draws a distinction between children who appeared to authentically see the pig, and those who were 'actors and little imps out for a good joke.'³⁴ Mullooly goes on to describe the reactions of local people and the prevailing atmosphere of tension:

At this time the threat of conscription was at its height and things seemed to be drifting day and night towards disaster. Peter Carlon, the local blacksmith, asked some of us to accompany him to where the pig was appearing. On arriving at the spot Peter produced from his inside pocket a large cross and started to pray. He held a belief that blacksmiths had some supernatural powers and hence his request and religious fervour; but alas for Peter, we had more faith in the pig than we had in Peter and raising a wild cheer departed from the scene. Shocked and downcast, Peter followed in the rear.³⁵

This gives the impression that a throng of people was beginning to congregate, a throng which would only continue to grow as the weeks went on, spreading its tendrils to Strokestown and beyond. Peter Carlon's attempts to banish the pig are echoed in folkloric accounts, which describe a variety of attempts by different adults to do the same.³⁶ The pig began to take on different forms, and connections were drawn between it and other supernatural beings:

Another incident, rather humorous and ridiculous, if not irreligious in its way, of which I was witness, also happened a little later when, instead of the pig with its seven bonhams there appeared to the children a fair-haired lady with sandals on her feet accompanied by seven children - six boys and a little girl. There lived a very religious

³³ *Roscommon Messenger*, 4 May 1918; 'My Home District', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 3) 'My Home District', Mary Mulvey, Lisheen, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 5); 'My Home District', Nora Hughes, Creta, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 8-10); 'No title', Lynda Shannon, Tansyfield, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0249, p. 270); 'Story', Mrs Fallon, Ballyhubert, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0255, p. 445); 'The Black Pig', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 15-16); 'The Black Pig', Thomas Flanagan, Cloonahee, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 14).

³⁴ Mullooly statement, p. 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ 'My Home District', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 3) 'My Home District', Mary Mulvey, Lisheen, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 5); 'My Home District', Nora Hughes, Creta, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 8-10); 'No title', Lynda Shannon, Tansyfield, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0249, p. 270); 'Story', Mrs Fallon, Ballyhubert, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0255, p. 445); 'The Black Pig', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 15-16); 'The Black Pig', Thomas Flanagan, Cloonahee, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 14).

decent upright man, a bachelor, close by, but of rather a nervous temperament, who called to a neighbour's house for some Holy Water. When asked what he wanted it for he replied that he had nothing to ward off danger if the Red Woman called during the night. The old lady of the house told him she had none to give him until next time she went to Strokestown, that the supply in the local church was exhausted when she had called thereat. He turned away depressed and more nervous than ever when her son, equal to any emergency and pitying the poor man, called him back and said there was plenty and gave him a vessel of ordinary water mixed with goat's milk. Thus armed, the old religious - smilingly and with profuse thanks and blessings, retired to his home and bed safe in the belief that he was properly fortified against all corners - woman, red or black, man or devil.³⁷

The motif of the pig shapeshifting into the form of a red woman occurs throughout other sources.³⁸ After this initial batch of sightings, a variety of other paranormal events were reported and linked to the Black Pig; two men who cut a tree on a nearby rath were sickened, lights and a red woman were seen in a nearby haunted plantation, a man with two right thumbs was seen walking the roads of Leitrim (unfortunately which hand or hands the thumbs were seen upon is left unspecified), a group of cardplayers travelling home for the night were accosted by the pig, screams were heard echoing from the caves beneath Rath Cruachan, and a group of workmen in Galway were scared away when the pig appeared in their midst.³⁹

All the while, the developing situation was reported in the brevities of numerous newspapers, with varying degrees of credulity.⁴⁰ Many who wrote on the pig were sceptical, but the closer the writers were to the apparitions geographically, the more they tended to believe in their veracity. One reporter for the *Roscommon Messenger* went so far as to explain the invisibility of the pig to adults as due to the supposed ability of children, horses, and dogs to

³⁷ Mullooly statement, pp 6-7.

³⁸ 'No title', Lynda Shannon, Tansyfield, Co. Roscommon, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0249, p. 270); 'My Home District', Mary Mulvey, Lisheen, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 5); Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1086), pp 5-7; 'The Black Pig', Bridget Murphy, Grange, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, pp 15-16); 'The Black Pig', Thomas Flanagan, Cloonahee, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS 0250, p. 14);

³⁹ *Irish Times*, 27 Apr. 1918, p. 4; *Roscommon Messenger*, 25 May 1918; *New Ross Standard*, 31 May 1918, p. 3; *Wicklow People*, 1 Jun. 1918, p. 3; 'No Title', W. Mullaney, Culleenaghmore, Co. Roscommon, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0256, p. 52); O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, p. 105. See Appendix 11.

⁴⁰ See Appendix 11.

see ultra-violet rays which adults could not.⁴¹ More distant evaluations from dense urban areas tended to see the porcine apparitions in a sceptical light; one writer for the *Londonderry Sentinel* interpreted them as a hysterical symptom of people ‘living in the mental atmosphere of the Middle age, if not the pre-patrician times’ being fed a diet of ‘mythical tradition and the lives of Saints’.⁴² This proximity based difference might be explained in part by the peculiarities of the Kiltrustan townland. Recent satellite images show that the area surrounding the Kiltrustan school is rich in fairy forts, suggesting a relatively high degree of respect for local place-lore; six different ringforts can easily be seen within one kilometre of the school.⁴³ Accounts from the SFC associated with Kiltrustan townland corroborate both this respect for local beliefs in fairy lore and the variety of ruins located nearby.⁴⁴



Figure 12: Satellite Image of Fairy Forts Nearby Kiltrustan National School⁴⁵

⁴¹*Roscommon Messenger*, 4 May 1918.

⁴²*Londonderry Sentinel*, 7 May 1918.

⁴³ See figure 12, forts are circled in red.

⁴⁴ ‘My Home District’, Christina Geelan, Kiltrustan, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0250, p. 7.); ‘My Home District’, Mary Mulvey, Kiltrustan, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0250, p. 5.); ‘The Local Patron Saint’, Nora Hughes, Kiltrustan, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0250, p. 17.); ‘Local Place Names’, Nora Hughes, Kiltrustan, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0250, p. 18.)

⁴⁵Google Maps, ‘Kiltrustan National School’, (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/@53.8157866,-8.1055158,17z?entry=ttu>) (accessed 23 Jun. 2023). Red circles have been added to the original satellite image.

Ernie O'Malley, who was living under Slieve Bawn in county Roscommon in the summer of 1918, described the panic of the Black Pig at length in his memoir *On Another Man's Wound*. He described how the people were afraid of walking the roads at night for fear of encountering the dreaded swine. He heard the prophecies told around fires portending war. Having heard his fill of a variety of rumours and legends, he personally visited the now notoriously haunted parish of Kiltrustan to investigate:

A man near Strokestown told me of the pig. Words went away from him as he stumbled in description '...as big as a house. Man, dear, and a back... God help us... I wouldn't be seen near the place for all the gold in the Bank of Ireland ... take my advice, now, like a good gossoon and don't meddle with it.' He had talked to someone who had seen the pig at the back of the schoolhouse. If I went there at midnight and called three times the pig would appear...The pig had wound its way in and out of pagan and Christian belief. It meant something now, whatever it was, and, though a series of debates with myself did not give any logic to my action, I was going to call it out.

One dark night I walked down towards the schoolhouse, my hobnailed boots for company in the stillness. I was nervous enough, even though I put my hand a few times to the handle of my .38, yet I felt inclined to laugh at myself for being a bigger fool than I thought I was. I was at the school, before midnight. At twelve o'clock I shouted, 'Come forth.' Silence. 'Come forth,' then a pause. I heard my own voice when it had gone away. 'Come forth,' but no ridge of spines or yellow eyes came out to frighten me.⁴⁶

O'Malley's version of events reflects a fearful people, further demonstrating how such phenomena are facilitated by prevailing atmospheres of tension. This escalation associated with tension appears as well in the case of the previously discussed Templemore miracles, where a series of assassinations and burnings preceding the apparition sightings contributed to their mass appeal.⁴⁷ O'Malley himself was decidedly more cynical concerning the pig, though not because he was generally cynical of paranormal activity (as his previously discussed reports of other paranormal phenomena have shown), but because he personally went to check, and nothing came of it. O'Malley and Mullooly would later be imprisoned together, and O'Malley

⁴⁶ O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, pp 105-106. The 'schoolhouse' referenced here is probably the Kiltrustan schoolhouse, but O'Malley's account doesn't explicitly specify.

⁴⁷ John Reynolds, *The Templemore Miracles: Jimmy Walsh, Ceasefires, and Moving Statues* (Cheltenham, 2019), pp 133-138.

described their conversations with each other as ‘strange’ and ‘cabalistic as any magic ritual being made up of place names, personal names, nicknames and the hidden life and history of North Roscommon as I had seen and gathered into my web.’⁴⁸ It is unclear if O’Malley attributes this strangeness to Mullooly particularly or Northern Roscommon more generally. Though neither of them mentions it specifically in their accounts of these conversations, it is likely that the Black Pig would have come up, easily falling under the category of ‘hidden life and history of North Roscommon’.

The appearance of the Black Pig was undoubtedly caused in part by fears of conscription and sectarian conflict prevalent in the area at the time, but as this discussion has demonstrated, this is not the entire story. Other paranormal occurrences would continue to manifest in the area throughout the following year, including an invisible preacher, and a bizarre livestock-devouring seal-monster in nearby Drumshanbo, causing one journalist to remark that it was a ‘silly season’ for county Roscommon.⁴⁹ Oddities such as these would, under less stressful circumstances, be laughed off, but the atmosphere of fear induced by the prospect of conscription gave the Black Pig sightings greater emotional impact, and they built up enough momentum to induce throngs of onlookers and sensational newsprint; some similarly bizarre paranormal sightings whose reputation never received this amplification from the fearful atmosphere of the conscription crisis include a ‘Chicken with three legs’ and the so-called ‘Wild Man of Skryne.’⁵⁰ Sources explored here show how the literary diet and rich folklore of the people in the area gave a far greater depth and mythological significance to these paranormal rumours than such reports would have otherwise gathered. Effectively, the deeper significance of the pig, particularly in its connections with folk-literature on prophecy and

⁴⁸ Ernie O’Malley, *Rising Out* (Dublin, 2015), p. 109.

⁴⁹ *Irish Independent*, 11 Oct. 1919; *Herald and County Down Independent*, 19 Apr. 1919.

⁵⁰ Some similarly bizarre paranormal sightings whose reputation never received this amplification from the fearful atmosphere of the conscription crisis include a ‘Chicken with three legs’, *Kilkenny Moderator and Leinster Advertiser*, 12 Apr. 1919; ‘The “Wild Man of Skryne”’, *Drogheda Independent*, 26 Apr. 1919, p. 2.

particular archaeological sites, was collectively synthesized from a variety of inputs, a synthesis fuelled by a rising atmosphere of tension and fear. The Black Pig inspired an enormous amount of public discourse on the topic of prophecy and, crucially, injected mythological dimensions to speculation about Ireland's relationship to the British Empire and the growing sectarian tensions in the north.⁵¹

Prophecies

Of the varieties of precognition present in recollections of the revolutionary period, prophecy is the most diverse and easily the most influential. Like all varieties of precognition, prophecies demonstrate an uncanny relationship with time by providing information about events which have yet to occur, but unlike the more personal and primal premonitions, prophecies must be articulated in words and witnessed. As a result, prophecies are the most easily corroborated variety of precognition. What distinguishes prophecies from the more mundane predictions is the perceived supernaturality of their sources. If a prediction is believed by witnesses to be inspired by forces beyond ordinary human faculties of foresight, it will often acquire the prophetic mantle. Gifted, famous, or well-informed individuals can often generate prophecies unintentionally as their successful attempts at foresight are given supernatural quality by their admirers. Due to their public nature and clustering around prominent individuals, prophecies are also the most political of the varieties of precognition. They lend themselves to intentional deployment as a method of motivating political action, most spectacularly as an epitaphic task delivered by a prophet facing an imminent demise. Prophecies might further be used to explain or contextualize political events, especially in cases where the prophet was long-dead or semi-mythological. Prophecy is a very common type of precognition, and a great deal of evidence is

⁵¹ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, pp 271-272; Sean Prendergast statement (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS755), pp 245-249. Here, Prendergast references several articles in contemporary newsprint which describe sectarian rioting in various parts of Northeastern Ireland.

present in BMH witness statements, revolutionary memoirs, folklore collections, and newsprint; this section will analyse some of this evidence. Prophecy in the culture of Irish Republicanism is presented here in its most immediate context, wherein the divinity communicating to the prophet is often the Republican ideal itself; sometimes through received sub-altern oral traditions, and sometimes through inspired intuition. This section will first discuss prophecies related to the fates of specific individuals through an examination of the prophetic literature associated with Charles Hurley and Cathal Brugha. Following this, a variety of prophecies foretelling outcomes more generally applicable to the Irish people and their political causes drawn from the SFC will be discussed. After this, prophecies associated with St. Columba with relevance to the Irish Revolution will be discussed. Finally, a quantitative overview of prophetic memorates will be provided with an aim to addressing the particular positions in the historiography of prophecy concerning contingency, marginalization, and political involvement.

Prophecies on the Fates of Individuals

A little more than a third of the prophecies (thirty-seven out of 110) identified by this study concern the fates of specific individuals.⁵² A variety of individuals such as John Quinn, Brian Fagan, Jeremiah Delaney, Patrick Pearse, and James Connolly (among many others) were given the prophetic mantle in the reminiscences of writers who recalled uncannily accurate forecasts made by these ‘prophets’ during or preceding the conflict.⁵³ These types of prophecies are obviously similar in many ways to the premonitions discussed in chapter two, but are distinct in the way they engage with politics and memory; they often contain a great deal of

⁵² See Appendices 15A, 15B, 16A, 16B, 16C, and 16D for relevant lists.

⁵³ Patrick J. Casey statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1148), appendix A, p. 3; Maurice Forde statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 719), pp 10-11; Joseph O’ Connor statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 157), pp 22, 31; Seamus Ua Caomhanaigh statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 889), pp 104-105; James O’Shea statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 733), p. 35; Sean Prendergast statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 755), pp 213-214.

prescriptive weight, and are typically described from an external or post-mortal point of view. Many of the sources identified in this study do not speculate in detail about the supernatural sources from which these prophets' gifts are drawn, though there are of course exceptions. Two of the most well-corroborated examples of this with wide-ranging implications will be discussed here, prophecies delivered by Charles 'Charlie' Hurley and Cathal Brugha. These two examples demonstrate that the sources from which prophecy might be drawn did not solely consist of mythology, folklore, or divine revelation, but could also include a mystical understanding of the national spirit (or national faith) itself.

A well attested prophecy was delivered by Charlie Hurley concerning his own death. Hurley died attempting to fight his way out of Humphrey Forde's house in Ballinphellic, county Cork, on the morning of 19 March 1921. He was isolated from his comrades, recuperating from wounds received at the Upton ambush.⁵⁴ In 1935 Tom Barry wrote a tribute to Hurley titled 'Charlie Hurley Remembered' which would later be printed in the *Kerryman* newspaper under the title 'Death of a Patriot', subsequently copied by collectors into the SFC, and included as an appendix in his memoir.⁵⁵ In it, Tom Barry described how commandant Hurley prophesied his demise: 'He had a premonition of his death, for several times he told me that he would die alone fighting against the English when none of us were near. And he died just in that way.'⁵⁶ In his memoir, Barry provides some more detail: 'He had died in the manner which we expected. He had foretold it himself. One day, as I was chaffing him, he turned to me and said quite gravely "When I am killed by them I shall be alone. I shall die fighting them, but none of you will be with me." And so it was.'⁵⁷ Michael Crowley's statement to the BMH corroborated

⁵⁴ Eunan O'Halpin & Daithí Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (New Haven & London, 2020), p. 344.

⁵⁵ Tom Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland* (Cork, 2013), pp 370-371; 'Death of a Patriot', Clonakilty, Co. Cork, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore collection, MS 0311, pp 153-154); 'Death of a Patriot', *Kerryman*, 12 Mar. 1938, p. 7.

⁵⁶ Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, pp 370-371; 'Death of a Patriot', Clonakilty, Co. Cork, (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 0311, pp 153-154).

⁵⁷ Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, p. 224.

Barry's account when he recalled Hurley's prophesied death: 'he died, as he himself had previously prophesied, alone and, I knew, as he would have desired, guns in hands fighting his country's foes ... this man whose love of country and preparedness to sacrifice everything for its sake transcended all mortal things. Hence, I know that he himself died as he would have wished.'⁵⁸ When Hurley's brother Liam died of typhoid, Crowley recalled how Charlie did not weep at the fact that his brother had died but wept that he had not died 'fighting on an Irish hillside.'⁵⁹ This numinous fanaticism for the national cause was also described by Tom Barry in his memoir, where he wrote:

There was a stubbornness in him on the issue of Ireland's freedom which was not based on any material factor but on a mysticism which one only got a glimpse of on rare occasions. That mysticism of the Celt made Charlie's love of country a religion – a faith – which only allowed him to visualise two ends, either his country's freedom or his own death in attempting to achieve that freedom.⁶⁰

This 'mysticism of the Celt', or national faith, is the source from which Barry and Crowley believe Hurley to have drawn his supernatural gift of prophecy. Without this quality, Hurley's death could be construed as somehow intentional, perhaps even suicidal. He did not need to resist arrest in Ballinphellic, but he chose to do so against overwhelming odds, in accordance with his previously expressed wish to die fighting. What elevates this death from being a case of suicide or bad luck, in the recollections of Hurley's comrades, is his mystically Celtic national faith, which transformed the death-wish Hurley fatefully uttered to Tom Barry into a prophecy.

Cathal Brugha died fighting in a similar fashion; Daithí Ó Corráin and Gerard Hanley have even gone so far as to say that he 'prophetically' remarked upon his own death in 1919.⁶¹ Though Tom Barry did not describe him as a prophet, he did describe Brugha as appearing 'to

⁵⁸ Michael J. Crowley statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1603), p. 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, p. 370.

⁶¹ Daithí Ó Corráin & Gerard Hanley, *Cathal Brugha 'An Indomitable Spirit'* (Dublin, 2022), p. 14.

be the very reincarnation of one of those Irish warriors of yore'.⁶² Brugha's extreme dedication to his republican beliefs was renowned even before his death, and afterwards it would become even more legendary.⁶³ Commemorative writing on Cathal Brugha's death in the 1930's described his death as prophesied; one journalist for the *Irish Press* wrote the following in 1934:

On this day twelve years ago, when he rushed from the burning Republican headquarters in O'Connell Street to meet the death *he knew was awaiting him*, his act was the perfect summary of his life ... To the assertions of those who were for accepting the "Treaty" ... he replied ... that even if the nation were spent and unarmed the people bravely led would still resist spiritually and be unconquerable. His death was, as it were a fulfilment of that prophecy.⁶⁴

Similarly, in a poem titled 'Cathal Brugha' which appeared in the *Kerry Champion* in 1936, Brugha's death was described by another writer with bloody and fiery prophetic language:

Blood upon the streets of Dublin,
dip your 'kerchiefs in it too,
Never nobler blood flowed on them
Than the blood of Cathal Brugha.

Into the grey-walled street he
stepped, undaunted, fearless,
brave,
Stirred once more his Easter
wounds to *prophecy* the
grave;
Fires of death before him, with un-
flinching courage too,
Strode a thin-lipped immolation
And its name was Cathal Brugha.⁶⁵

Here, the poem's author 'Niall' portrays Brugha's blood and wounds as having great spiritual power and prophetic qualities, hearkening back to his near death during the Easter Rising (similar tropes used about the Loughnane brothers are mentioned in chapter two). Brugha's

⁶² Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, p. 303.

⁶³ John Turpin, 'Portraits of Irish patriots by Oliver Sheppard, 1865–1941' in *Éire-Ireland*, xxx, no. 4 (1995), p. 151; Ó Corráin & Hanley, *Cathal Brugha 'An Indomitable Spirit'*, pp 13-14; James Quinn, 'Brugha, Cathal', Dictionary of Irish biography, (<https://www.dib.ie/biography/brugha-cathal-a1077>) (accessed 9 November 2022).

⁶⁴ *Irish Press*, 7 Jul. 1934, p. 8. My emphasis added.

⁶⁵ *Kerry Champion*, 26 Dec. 1936, p. 5. My emphasis added.

detractors noted how Brugha's followers, 'those forbidding zealots', saw him as a prophet.⁶⁶ William T. Cosgrave's statement to the BMH describes how following Brugha's wounding during the Rising, Rev. Fr. Gerhardt, wearing a stole, led a procession which carried the delirious Brugha to the Union Hospital; this would seem to suggest that even then his blood had a holy quality, even from Cosgrave's perspective (Cosgrave would later be an enemy of Cathal Brugha during the Civil War).⁶⁷

The cornerstone of the evidence for interpreting Brugha's death as self-prophesied were some particular remarks he made during the closing hours of the treaty debates on the evening of 7 January 1922:

Why, if ... our last cartridge had been fired, our last shilling had been spent, and our last man were lying on the ground and his enemies howling round him and their bayonets raised, ready to plunge them into his body, that man should say—true to the traditions handed down—if they said to him: "Now, will you come into our Empire?"—he should say, and he would say: "No! I will not." That is the spirit that has lasted all through the centuries, and you people in favour of the Treaty know that the British Government and the British Empire will have gone down before that spirit dies out in Ireland.⁶⁸

A note containing this extract from the debates was found in Brugha's pocket by his wife Caitlín after his demise.⁶⁹ Recently, Daithí Ó Corráin and Gerard Hanley, having carefully reviewed the evidence, conclude that for Cathal Brugha the cause of the Republic 'was sacrosanct, a holy mission for which he was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.'⁷⁰ This 'spirit' of which Brugha spoke in the debates was what distinguished the note he kept in his pocket from a suicide note, much like how the death wish Charlie Hurley uttered to Tom Barry was recollected as a prophecy. For these men, the national faith transformed their morbid statements into prophecies.

⁶⁶ *Daily News (London)*, 8 Nov. 1926, p. 10.

⁶⁷ William T. Cosgrave statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0268), p. 9.

⁶⁸ Cathal Brugha, 'Dáil Éireann debate - Saturday, 7 Jan 1922' (<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1922-01-07/2/>) (accessed 11 Nov. 2022).

⁶⁹ Ó Corráin & Hanley, *Cathal Brugha 'An Indomitable Spirit'*, p. 158.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

The political use of prophetic language, and the attribution of prophetic statements to especially ‘holy’ people, is hardly unprecedented; prophecy has long been entangled with questions of national identity in the English-speaking world, particularly the idea of ‘Christian nationhood.’⁷¹ In the early modern period, prophecy proved itself markedly flexible as a political language in part because of ‘the identification of prophecy with particular prophet-authors’, and in part because of the obscurity of the supernatural authority from which the prophets words are derived.⁷² This flexibility and obscurity allowed for political actors both elite and popular to utilize the prophecies for their particular purposes, augmenting and editorializing them as necessary.⁷³ Through this discourse prophets, particularly martyred prophets, accrued a host of supernatural gifts in popular consciousness; a motif common amongst these supernatural gifts was the prediction of their own deaths.⁷⁴ In the Irish revolutionary context, echoes of this can be clearly seen with the portrayals of Charlie Hurley and Cathal Brugha explored above, and also in various witness statements to the BMH describing prominent Irish revolutionary figures from the Easter Rising like Thomas MacDonagh and Patrick Pearse.⁷⁵

Prophecies of General Trouble

There are at least forty-eight prophecies with relevance to the Irish Revolution in the SFC; in the main, these are associated with a variety of prominent prophets including St.

⁷¹ N. Hitchin, ‘The evidence of things seen: Georgian churchmen and biblical prophecy’ in Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton (eds), *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300-2000* (Gloucestershire, 1997), p. 127; T. Thornton, ‘Reshaping the local future: The development and uses of provincial political prophecies, 1300-1900’ in Taithe & Thornton (eds), *Prophecy*, p. 51.

⁷² T. Thornton, ‘Reshaping the local future’ in Taithe & Thornton (eds), *Prophecy*, pp 53-54.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp 53-56; Mare Kōiva, ‘The last minutes of our Earth’ in *Folklore*, xlv (2010), pp 140-141.

⁷⁴ G. Games, ‘To justify the ways of God to men’: The prophetic role of ministers in early New England’ in Taithe & Thornton (eds), *Prophecy*, p. 92.

⁷⁵ Thomas Devine statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0428), pp 7-8; Frank Henderson statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0249), p. 13; James McGuill statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0353), pp 19-20; Liam O’ Briain statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0006), p. 18; Sean Prendergast statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0755), p. 213; Oscar Traynor statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS0340), p. 4.

Columba, Brian Ruaidh, Donal Cam, and Bidy Early, among others of less renown.⁷⁶ Of these prophecies, two particularly outstanding examples will be discussed here which originate from



THE VERY REV. JOHN WHEATLEY.

Figure 13: Photo of Wheatley, 6 August 1919, *The Irish Independent*

more obscure prophets, along with the sizeable complex of prophetic lore which concerns St. Columba. The first prophecy discussed here is Fr. Wheatley's prophecy. Rev. John P. Wheatley, O.C.C., was the prior of the Carmelite Convent in Moate, county Westmeath, from 1898 until his death on 4 August 1919.⁷⁷ Wheatley was born on 27 December 1836 and entered the Carmelite order in 1858, spending the majority of his career in Moate.⁷⁸ Obituaries for

Wheatley would describe him as 'noted' and 'well-known', and that

he was famous 'for his sincere zeal as a preacher and confessor ... and his remarkable energy.'⁷⁹

In 1918 he was described as 'venerable', and 'a prominent figure at Land League, National League, and U.I.L. meetings in the Midlands.'⁸⁰ Wheatley played an important role in the calling of the highly prominent and ardently nationalist priest Peter Elias Magennis to the Carmelite Order in November of 1887 through appearing in a prophetic dream; according to Alfred Isacson (O. Carm.), 'Magennis dreamed one night that a priest dressed in white was a sign of his vocation. Afterwards, John P. Wheatley, a well-known Carmelite preacher, came to Tanderagee for a parish mission. Seeing the preacher in his white cloak, Peter Magennis was inclined to investigate the Carmelites.'⁸¹ In a story titled 'Moate Carmelite Convent' submitted

⁷⁶ 'A Story - Bidy Early', Jenny Moore, Tomás Ó Cuinneagáin, Ballynacally, Co. Clare (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore collection, MS 0604, pp 35, 161); 'Donal Cam', Bean Mhic Oireachtaigh, Carrigeen, Co. Roscommon, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0255, pp 31-32); 'Tairngreacht Bhrian Rua Uí Chearbháin', Séamus Mac Einrí, Inishbiggle, Co. Mayo, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0131B, pp 02_48-51). See Appendix 17 for a complete list.

⁷⁷ 'Prior and Patriot', *Weekly Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jul. 1918, p. 3.

⁷⁸ 'Noted Carmelite Dead', *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 5 Aug. 1919, p. 2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 'Well-Known Carmelite Dead', *Irish Independent*, 6 Aug. 1919, p. 3;

⁸⁰ 'Prior and Patriot', *Weekly Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jul. 1918, p. 3.

⁸¹ Tom Feeney, 'Magennis, Peter Elias', Dictionary of Irish Biography, (<https://www.dib.ie/biography/magennis-peter-elias-a5339>) (accessed 11 November 2022); Alfred Isacson (O. Carm.), *Always Faithful: The New York Carmelites, The Irish People and Their Freedom Movement*, (New York, 2004), p. 14.

to the SFC, teachers S. Ó Ruairc and L. Mac Coiligh would declare that ‘no name is more revered in Moate and the surrounding district than that of Father Wheatley.’⁸² In the same story, Ó Ruairc and Mac Coiligh describe a peculiar sermon delivered by the venerated prior:

One Sunday morning in the early part of the year 1917, the strange manner in which he spoke from the altar is often retold to the younger generation. It has now passed into local history, and is known as "Fr. Wheatley's Prophecy"

As yet, none of these incidents from 1916 onwards, came near Moate. The inhabitants were confident that the 'trouble' would not reach that length. The young people belonged to nothing more dangerous than the G.A.A.; risked nothing more than a few copper at pitch and toss, and, occasionally ran the risk of being caught in a garden out of which rosy apples smiled at them.

Father Wheatley told them of the trouble ahead. Clouds were gathering and their homes and families were in danger. The congregation were stuck by the great emotion of the old priest. It seemed as if he could see the tragedy before him, as he spoke. And then he prayed to our Blessed Lord and our Lady to save all from danger.

The weeks and months passed, but nothing happened. The papers told of the outrages committed daily by the "Black and Tans". Irish youth could not remain in-active. Blood boiled in every breast at the news of each outrage.

Then on one October day the sound of guns was heard as a party of “Black and Tans” were attacked outside the town. Alarm and consternation grew. Soon lorry loads of soldiers began to arrive in the town.

"We will all be shot to-night" the people said. The town was in a state of panic. The shots were fired into every shop but no one was hurt. It was a dreadful night, and it will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

Fr. Wheatley's words came true, and it is to his prayers that all attribute their safety.⁸³

BMH witness statements of former volunteers who operated in the vicinity of Moate describe several incidents in the autumn of 1920 which roughly correspond to what is being described in this SFC memorate, albeit with substantially more people being hurt, and no mention of a Fr. Wheatley specifically.⁸⁴ Records compiled by Eunan O’Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin indicate that, in fact, at least two people, Michael Burke and Martin Lyons, were killed in Moate

⁸² ‘Moate Carmelite Convent’, Moate, Co. Westmeath, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0745 p. 210).

⁸³ ‘Moate Carmelite Convent’, Moate, Co. Westmeath, (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 0745 pp 210-213).

⁸⁴ Thomas Costello statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS1296), p. 19; David Daly statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS1337), pp 17-18; Seamus O’Meara statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS1504), pp 38-39.

between October and November 1920.⁸⁵ Wheatley had caused some public outcry before; his vehement denunciation of ongoing Ulster Independence League (UIL) boycotts in Moate in July 1909 caused ‘intense and bitter feeling in the town which is in a greatly disturbed state’, a state which necessitated the police stations at Moate and Mount Temple to be ‘strongly reinforced.’⁸⁶ It would seem likely that Fr. Wheatley’s prophetic sermon genuinely occurred, considering his local prominence, charisma and political involvement. While this example is particularly lengthy (and involves no maledictions), it well illustrates the belief that prophetic visions would occasionally manifest themselves to priests, and that priests could invoke the power of God to intervene in earthly struggles. It also demonstrates how religious and paranormal beliefs could intersect in a non-antagonistic way; indeed, Wheatley’s prophecy reinforces and validates local piety rather than confusing it. The ability of priests to invoke the power of God is evident in several incidents involving the prophetic curses of priests which can be found in the folklore collection, such maleficent prophecies make up a majority of those in the folklore collection with a priestly origin.⁸⁷

Another category of prophecies in the folklore collection is decidedly less religious, and concerns apparitions of spectral cavalry interpreted as the triggering omens for prophecies which predict the revolutionary conflict. Three vivid examples of this are the stories titled ‘The Lake Horse of Cullane’, ‘A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry’, and ‘The Rider of Ardnagannagh’; the second of these will be discussed in the section on omens, and the last will be discussed here. ‘The Rider of Ardnagannagh’ was a story transcribed into the SFC by Brother Abban O’Donoghue of St Columba’s Abbey in Navan, county Meath. It concerns several fishermen

⁸⁵ O’Halpin and Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, pp 204, 237.

⁸⁶ *Dublin Daily Express*, 21 Jul. 1909, p. 10; *Evening Irish Times*, 21 Jul. 1909, p. 8. For responses to his denunciation, see also *Dublin Daily Express*, 30 Jul. 1909, p. 5.

⁸⁷ ‘The Rochfort Family’, Phyllis O’ Hara, Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0730, p. 516); ‘Scéal’, Máire Ní Ghiollachomáin, Ballygar, Co. Galway, (NFC, SFC, MS 046, p. 247); ‘The Local Landlords’, John Fahy, Ballynakill, Co. Galway, (NFC, SFC, MS 051, p. 51); ‘Local Happenings’, Thomas Clear, Newtown, Co. Carlow, (NFC, SFC, MS 0903, p. 488); ‘Historic Sites – Drumboe Castle’, Dooish, Co. Donegal, (NFC, SFC, MS 1096, pp 253-254).

who were bobbing for eels in the Blackwater River near a place known as Ard na Gainimhe in the mid-nineteenth century:

...they were suddenly startled by hearing the thunder of galloping horses. Looking up the steep slope they saw the figure of a gigantic black horse and an equally huge rider silhouetted against the sky. Down the slope the horse & rider thundered & the men had scarcely time to fling themselves from their path before the huge foam flecked steed paused within a perch of the water's edge. The frightened beholders saw that the rider wore his hair long & was clad in the kilt etc. of ancient Erin. The trappings of the horse glittered as though set with gems as did the raiment of the rider.

Both horse & rider plunged into the river & swam across. Here the story ends.

The oldest man in the party said he had after heard [from?] his grandfather of one of Fionn Mac Cumhail's men who was changed into ten times his normal size & made to ride a horse equally big from "a place in the north of Ireland" to the hill of Uisneach every seven years until three score & seven before the rising that would make Ireland free.

The last person to see him was John McCabe who died 35 years ago who saw him when he was a young lad.

The Narrator reasons as follows:

When McCabe died in 1900-01 he was over 70 he would be in his boyhood about 1849 (ar seisean) & if you take 1849 from 1916 you would have left 67 years or three score mentioned in the old news story!⁸⁸

Stories like these are telling in the way they weave together several different phenomena witnessed by several different percipients into a single narrative; their very nature is a collaborative trans-temporal process. Apparitions of spectral riders have long been known to be a recurrent topic in folklore known as the 'Wild Hunt'; though this case and the others like it aren't explicitly tied to this tradition, they bear some striking similarities.⁸⁹ The folklorist Susan Hilary Houston contends that the wild hunt is a development of the Norse mythological concept of the Valkyries, particularly in their function as messengers of death.⁹⁰ 'The Rider of

⁸⁸ 'The Rider of Ardnagannagh' (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, Vol. 700, pp 165-167).

⁸⁹ Susan Hilary Houston, 'Ghost riders in the sky' in *Western Folklore*, xxiii, no. 3, (1964), pp 153-162; The Histocrat, 'The wild hunt – mythillogical' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hi4VFbf8LI0&t=39s>) (accessed 24 Nov. 2021).

⁹⁰ Houston, 'Ghost riders in the sky', p. 162.

Ardnagannagh’, ‘A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry’, and ‘The Lake Horse of Cullane’ would roughly fit this function transposed onto the Irish cultural milieu. Most notably, these three stories distinguish themselves from the broader Wild Hunt theme in their linkage with prophecies of liberation for the Irish people. They aren’t solely apparitions or haunted places as they have a specific and portentous political significance.

The Prophecies of St. Columba

The final cluster of prophecies to mention are those attributed to St Columba, also known as St Columcille, St Columbcille, St Columbkille, or St Colm Cille. These are very numerous, some more genuinely attributable to the saint than others. Like many of his early medieval counterparts, St. Columba’s ministry had a great deal of magical qualities; he has long been known for delivering curses, performing miraculous cures, and uttering a variety of prophecies.⁹¹ In 1979, Peter Bander remarked that these prophecies ‘have become an integral part of Irish life and folklore. To many Irishmen they are the foundation upon which they build their dreams for the future...Columbkille and Malachy make up the substantial part of the prophetic pre-occupation of the Irish.’⁹² In the century prior to spring 1918, numerous prophecies attributed to St Columba were in circulation amongst the people of Ireland, interest in which reached a remarkable crescendo during the years of the First World War.⁹³ Amongst those prophecies in circulation, there was a great degree of variation in terms of their degree of connection to the original saint. These more dubious versions of the prophecies had been published in print, probably in the 1820s, and were reprinted and propagated over the nineteenth century by a series of writers and pamphleteers; these versions would repeatedly be

⁹¹ O.G.S. Crawford, ‘The magic of Columba’ in *Antiquity*, viii, no. 30 (1934), *passim*.

⁹² Peter Bander, *The prophecies of St Malachy & St Columbkille* (4th Ed., Gerrard’s Cross, 1979), p. 105.

⁹³ Roscommon Herald, *The “prophecies” of Columbkille*, pp 1-4, 12-16.

decried by more critical scholarly commentators over the decades.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, they seeped into the oral tradition, taking on a life of their own and gradually merging into the prophetic folklore surrounding St. Columba.⁹⁵ Both these prophecies and other more ancient ones foretold a liberation of the ‘Gael’ from foreign occupation by ‘Saxon’ ‘Galls.’⁹⁶ Obviously, Columba here is almost certainly not referring to the British Empire of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (the foreign invaders of the sixth century could be more accurately described as Germanic or Danish than they could as English), but that did not stop hopeful Irish men and women in more modern times from identifying these ‘Saxon’ occupiers as the British Empire in order to mobilize Columba’s prophecies for their own political ends.⁹⁷

Such supernatural crazes were not without precedent in Ireland in the nineteenth century; in the wake of a severe cholera outbreak in 1831, rumours of Marian apparitions and the curative properties of a certain ‘Blessed turf’ spread quickly through word-of-mouth communication networks in June 1832, evidencing that we ought to ‘remove any lingering doubts concerning the existence among large sections of the catholic population in this period of a strong and very literal belief in direct supernatural intervention in human affairs.’⁹⁸ The prophecies erroneously attributed to St. Columba were substantially more salacious and morbid

⁹⁴Bander, *The prophecies*, pp 100-105; Hibernicus, *Practical views and suggestions, on the present condition and permanent improvement of Ireland* (Dublin, 1823), pp 146-151; Richard Robert Madden, *Exposure of literary frauds and forgeries concocted in Ireland: spurious predictions designated prophecies of St. Columbkille, etc. etc.* (Dublin, 1866), pp 5-15; ‘The Prophecies of St. Columbkille’ in *The Catholic Layman*, v, no. 54 (1856), pp. 65-66; Nicholas O’Kearney, *The Prophecies of Ss. Columbkille, Maeltamlacht, Ultan, Seadhna, Coireall, Bearcan, Malachy, &c. together with the prophetic collectanea, or gleanings of several writers who have preserved portions of the now lost prophecies of our saints, with literal translation and notes* (Dublin, 1856), pp xx-xxvii.

⁹⁵ ‘Colmcille’, MB Tobin, Kilfinnane, Co. Limerick, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection MS 0510, pp 409-411); ‘Colm Cille’s Prophecies’, Mrs. O’Connor, Lagganstown Lower, Co. Tipperary, (NFS, SFS, MS 0576, pp 216-217); ‘Tairngreacht Cholm Chille’, Loughmuck, Co. Donegal, (NFS, SFS, MS 1050, pp 95-96); ‘Tairngreacht Cholm Chille’, Croaghross, Co. Donegal, (NFS, SFS, MS 1091, pp 24-26); ‘My Home District’, Nora Hughes, Creta, Co. Roscommon, (NFS, SFS, MS 0250, pp 9-10); ‘Folklore – Strange Story’, Josepha Mac Dermott, Culliagh Upper, Co. Roscommon, (NFS, SFS, MS 0255, p. 438). See also ‘Explore by topic >> Colm Cille’, Duchas.ie, (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/tpc/cbes/5192179>), (accessed 17 November 2022).

⁹⁶ Bander, *The prophecies*, pp 140-141.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 105, 136-138.

⁹⁸ S. J. Connolly, ‘The ‘Blessed Turf’: cholera and popular panic in Ireland, June 1832’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii, no. 91 (1983), p. 230.

than their more archaic counterparts in medieval sources like Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba* and included a bewildering array of bizarre and baleful predictions, such as a mass culling of dogs, great decreases in the population of birds and bees, conscriptions on a massive scale, and invasions of the country by Frenchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese, Turks, and rattlesnakes.⁹⁹ These prophecies culminated in the ultimate overthrow of Saxon tyranny amidst a great European war, and an apocalyptically scaled bout of sectarian slaughter in the valley of the Black Pig.¹⁰⁰ Similarly to the cholera-induced 'blessed turf' rumours of 1832, a general climate of fear was crucial to the spread of such supernatural beliefs; the looming threat of conscription for the battlefields of the First World War lent the bloody prophecies added timeliness and legitimacy.

The remnants of this craze for St Columba's prophecies are present in the SFC and their specific relevance to the revolutionary period varies greatly. One of the most specifically detailed and pointedly relevant renditions comes from Mrs. O'Connor of Boytonrath, county Tipperary, who informed the collectors that:

In this locality the people are great for quoting "the Prophecies". These are handed down from father to son and from mother to daughter for the past ten generations until they have come down to our own time. It is the only old custom that has been kept alive through all the generations. These " Prophecies " are being quoted from morning till night in every house in our district from the mud wall cabin to the great mansion and from the baby in the cradle to the old granny in the corner.¹⁰¹

Mrs. John O'Connor is noted in the manuscript as being fifty years of age at the time her story was collected in 1938, which would put her in her late twenties to early thirties during the Irish Revolution; furthermore, the teacher who compiled the notebook, Eoghan Mac Cárthaigh, noted that, concerning customs and stories, she was one of 'the best authorities on the subject

⁹⁹ Roscommon Herald, *The "prophecies" of Columbkille*, pp 6, 8-10.

¹⁰⁰ *Derry Journal*, 10 May 1918, p. 2; *Evening Herald*, 30 Apr. 1918, p. 2; *Evening Telegraph*, 8 Apr. 1919, p. 2; *Roscommon Herald*, 11 May 1918; *Roscommon Messenger*, 11 May 1918, p 4; 'The Black Pig', *Bystander*, 1 May 1918, p. 201; *Drogheda Independent*, 26 Apr. 1919, p. 2; *Irish Independent*, 11 Oct. 1919, p. 6; *Irish Times*, 27 Apr. 1918; *Kilkenny Moderator and Leinster Advertiser*, 12 Apr. 1919; *Sphere*, 27 Sep. 1919, p. 304.

¹⁰¹ 'Colm Cille's Prophecies', Mrs. O'Connor, Lagganstown Lower, Co. Tipperary, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0576, p. 215).

in the locality.¹⁰² Similarly to Mrs. O'Connor, Kathleen Keyes McDonnell noted in her memoir that, in 1915 in the Bandon valley, 'all at once prophecies were being quoted right and left...to people strong in faith, the gift of prophecy or the miracles of the inspired counted for more than all else.'¹⁰³ In addition, as was previously discussed, Emily Ussher corroborated this craze in her memoir.¹⁰⁴ Mrs. John O'Connor's version of the prophecies is unusual in its inclusion of dates specific to the Irish Revolution:

"In 1921 a fight shall rise in Thurles and end in the Valley of the Black Pig which is in Aherlow and it shall be called the nights of the bloody blankets".

In 1921 a certain D.I. was shot at the races of Thurles and this started the fight. The Black-and-Tans killed two brothers dying with Consumption in their beds and the blankets ran red with blood. The fight ended when Denny Lacy was shot in the valley of the Black Pig.

"Fathers shall deny their sons and sons shall deny their fathers."

"There shall be fighting under and over water."

"A dark visaged man shall come from the North, and he shall be a Spaniard, and he shall rule Ireland and win freedom for it and in spite of all John Bull's bribery they shall not succeed in buying him over "

"After the night of the bloody blankets the battles between Ireland and England shall be fought by words and not by weapons. England's enemy shall be Ireland's friend and Ireland shall be free and England shall fall. There shall be war and rumours of war, nations shall rise against nation and the men shall be turned three times in their beds to see if they are fit for service."¹⁰⁵

This version appears to predict the conscription crisis, the primacy of the propaganda battle during the War of Independence, submarine warfare, the ascendancy of Éamon de Valera, and a set of specific murders which took place in Thurles. However there are a few historical inaccuracies here; the district inspector shot at the races of Thurles being referred to here was probably Michael Hunt, who was in fact killed on 23 June 1919.¹⁰⁶ It is unclear who the two

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 215; 'Introduction', Eoghan Mac Cárthaigh, Lagganstown, Co. Tipperary, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0576, p. 155).

¹⁰³ Kathleen Keyes McDonnell, *There Is a Bridge At Bandon* (Cork, 1972), p. 37.

¹⁰⁴ 'E. H. Ussher, The true story of a revolution', pp 9-10.

¹⁰⁵ 'Colm Cille's Prophecies', Mrs. O'Connor, Lagganstown Lower, Co. Tipperary, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0576, pp 216-217.)

¹⁰⁶ O'Halpin & Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, p. 112.

brothers with consumption being referred to are, but it is possible that this incident is a misremembered conflation of the killings of Laurence Hickey and William Loughnane in Thurles on 10 March 1921 or possibly the widely publicized gruesome murders of the brothers Patrick and Henry Loughnane on 27 November 1920; William Loughnane was indeed killed in his bed, but was unrelated to Hickey or the other two Loughnane brothers from Galway.¹⁰⁷

O'Connor's variant of the prophecy does not match verbatim with many of the other versions of St. Columba's prophecies recorded in ecclesiastical or newsprint sources.¹⁰⁸ However, the quotations used here are similar to other prophecies concerning the Irish Revolution attributed to St. Columba in the SFC, though each of these tend to vary in which segments are being quoted to best suit local history.¹⁰⁹ The phrase concerning the night of 'bloody blankets' particularly seems to have been well remembered by those who grew up in county Tipperary.¹¹⁰ The triggering omens in Mrs. O'Connor's version is claimed to be the start of the fight in Thurles and this 'night of the bloody blankets'; in other versions – particularly those originating from counties further north – the trigger omen is the reappearance of the Black Pig.¹¹¹ This version mentions a valley of the Black Pig, but in this case is referring to the Glen of Aherlow where Denis Lacey was shot on 18 February 1923, rather than the Black Pig's

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 238-239, 328-329.

¹⁰⁸ Bander, *The prophecies*, pp 109-142; 'Tairngreacht Choilm Chille', Colm Ó Baoighill, Croaghross, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS1091, pp 24-26); Áine M. Ní Fhuathaigh, 'Tairngreacht Cholm Cille', Loughmuck, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS1050, pp 95-96); Rev. Daniel MacCarthy, D.D., *Life of Saint Columba, or Columbkille* (Dublin, 1861), pp 6-74; The Roscommon Herald, *The "prophecies" of Columbkille*, pp 8-10. See sources in Appendix 11 also.

¹⁰⁹ 'My Home District', Bernard Mc Guire, Lisnacreevy, Co. Longford, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0750, p. 285-288); 'Holy Wells', Matt Nannery, Ballinderry, Co. Westmeath, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0732, pp 376-377); 'Local Place Names', Philip Reidy, Maglass, Co. Kerry, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0444, p. 264); 'Where I Live', Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0846, p. 362). See also 'Explore by topic >> Colm Cille', Duchas.ie, (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/tpc/cbes/5192179>), (accessed 17 November 2022).

¹¹⁰ 'Local Traditions - Historical and Otherwise', Dáithí Ó Ceanntabhair, Croom, Co. Limerick, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0506, p. 540); '(No Title)', Sergeant O' Driscoll, Croom, Co. Limerick, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0507, pp 25)

¹¹¹ 'Tairngreacht Choilm Chille', Colm Ó Baoighill, Croaghross, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS1091, pp 24-26); Áine M. Ní Fhuathaigh, 'Tairngreacht Cholm Cille', Loughmuck, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS1050, pp 95-96); 'St Colmcille's Prophecies', Bernard Mc Eleney, Gortnahinson, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS1121, p. 54); Roscommon Herald, *The "prophecies" of Columbkille*, pp 1-2.

dyke (an archaeological site) situated along the Ulster borderlands.¹¹² The more northerly versions are the ones referred to by Ernie O'Malley's memoir and Patrick Mullooly's witness statement, where they go into depth about their experiences with the prophetic fervour that swept Leitrim and Roscommon during the conscription crisis, as has been previously discussed.¹¹³ Specific years given for the liberation of Ireland attributed to St. Columba vary widely; some say 1910, others 1940, and others 1914.¹¹⁴ Some informants to the SFC such as Frank Maguire expressed scepticism as to the veracity of these prophecies; Maguire would write, 'Always some of the very old men are talking of St. Columkille's prophecies and always it is after a thing has happened that they remember the prophecy... But for all the talk I have never seen the Book and I'm afraid it is the same with the expounders of the prophecies.'¹¹⁵ This unnamed book is also referred to in other SFC memorates concerning St. Columba's prophecies.¹¹⁶

Scepticism concerning the source material for these prophecies is nothing new, and Irish antiquarians and historians have been arguing over this topic since at least 1823, and probably even earlier.¹¹⁷ The chief belligerents in this longstanding debate, through their castigations, illustrate the existence of a sensational subaltern narrative of St. Columba's prophecies which had been present in Irish oral tradition for many decades. In 1856, Nicholas O'Kearney described his opinion on the origin of this subaltern narrative:

¹¹² Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Lacey, Denis ('Dinny')', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (<https://www.dib.ie/biography/lacey-denis-dinny-a4628>) (accessed 17 November 2022); W. F. De Vismes Kane, 'Additional Researches on the Black Pig's Dyke', in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, xxxiii, (1916/1917), pp. 539-563.

¹¹³ Patrick Mullooly statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS1086), pp 5-8; O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, pp 105-106

¹¹⁴ 'Tairngreachtaí Cholm Cille', G.P. Pléimeann, Cashel, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS1045, p. 24); 'Tairngreachtaí Cholm Cille', Proinseas Mac Fhionnlaioich, Cashel, Co. Donegal, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS1045, p. 26); 'Colm Cille's Prophecies', Evyleen Mc Hugh, Cloonkeely, Co. Galway, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0039, p. 309).

¹¹⁵ 'St Columkille's Prophecies', Frank Maguire, Tullybrack, Co. Cavan, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0963, p. 49).

¹¹⁶ 'Extracts from Colm Cille's Prophecy', David Roche, Lavally, Co. Clare, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0606, p. 156).

¹¹⁷ Hibernicus, *Practical views and suggestions*, pp 146-151; Hull, 'The black pig of Kiltrustran', pp 228-231; *The saintly triad, or the lives of St. Patrick, St. Columkille, and St. Bridget, commonly known as the three patron saints of Ireland* (Dublin, 1844), pp 85-86; Madden, *Exposure of literary frauds and forgeries, passim*; O'Kearney, *The Prophecies of Ss. Columkille*, pp xx-xxvii.

There was a custom, however, very prevalent amongst the Irish -- an injurious one indeed in many respects -- to reduce the prophecies of our Saints to metre, in order to suit the language of the age in which they wrote, as well as to render them the more easily to be committed to memory by the people, whose only solace, under their galling bondage, was the hope, held out in those predictions, of their even distant relief from servitude.¹¹⁸

This heterogenous collection of metred phrases is the most probable source from which most accounts of St. Columba's prophecies in the SFC are derived, and likewise the prophecies hearkened to by revolutionaries such as Ernie O'Malley and Patrick Mullooly. That revolutionaries would engage with this sub-altern Columbine prophetic oral tradition makes sense considering the subversive character of that tradition.

The various examples discussed here illustrate that St. Columba's prophecies were mobilised to inspire revolutionary efforts. They were inspirational in that they both foretold the conflict and preordained the success of the Irish cause. Peter Bander put it well when he wrote that 'what makes the Prophecies of Columbkille so topical is the simple fact that history repeats itself, especially Irish history. No country has suffered so long and so cruelly under centuries of oppression as Ireland has. It is therefore not surprising that the simple and pious people turn to their long dead Saints for comfort and hope.'¹¹⁹ Additionally, that the prophecies were remembered in the following decades represents a kind of commemoration and justification of the conflict; if the revolution and its consequent violence are a matter of divinely sanctioned certainty, then speculation as to whether or not the struggle was worthwhile is obviated, because it was predetermined to occur regardless of human efforts. The prophecies of St. Columba served as a balm for the anxieties of the revolutionary generation, both before, during, and after the conflict.

¹¹⁸ O'Kearney, *The Prophecies of Ss. Columbkille*, p. xx.

¹¹⁹ Bander, *The prophecies*, p. 107.

Quantitative Overview of Prophetic Memorates

During the source-gathering phase of this project, memorates describing prophecies were scanned for and collected in a similar way along with the various other varieties of supernatural phenomena. However, to account for the peculiarities of prophecies and to take advantage of the relatively high number of prophetic memorates identified, an additional analytical process was employed in the hope of revealing further insights. This process and the resulting findings will be detailed here in this section, particularly where they concern dominant themes in the historiography of prophecy. Historians typically interpret prophecy as a subversive political language spoken by marginal people to publicly imagine and encourage a vision of the future for their community.¹²⁰ As was previously discussed, the supernatural source of the prophet's message serves a function to simultaneously legitimate it and absolve the prophet of responsibility. Some historians also posit that prophecy has grammatical or poetic qualities, but the specific nature of these qualities varies quite significantly by time and place.¹²¹ Prophecies are posited by some to typically incorporate elements of contingency; prophecies with contingency thereby present a task to be completed by the prophet's audience at some future date. To test to what extent these interpretations apply to Irish revolutionary prophecies, all the 110 prophetic memorates identified during this study have been ranked and classified based on seven metrics, and these subsequent rankings have been graphed on radial charts.¹²²

¹²⁰ B. Taithe and T. Thornton, 'The language of history: past and future in prophecy' in Taithe and Thornton (eds), *Prophecy*, pp 3, 8.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp 4-5.

¹²² See the methodology chapter for a detailed account of how these memorates were identified.

The diversity and looseness in the usage of the term prophecy throughout the source materials has inspired the development of a system of classification for evaluating the ‘prophecies’ identified. This system is based off seven metrics; these are scale (personal to societal), intentionality (accidental to explicitly prophetic), morbidity (Irreverent to apocalyptic), subversiveness (revolutionary to conservative),

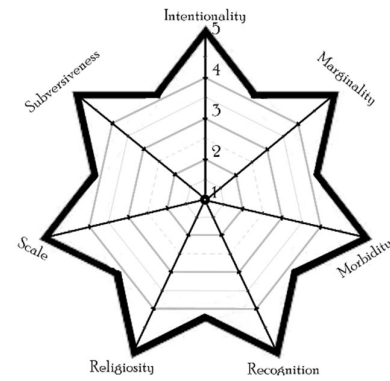


Figure 14: Heptagrammatic Spider Chart Base Format

religiosity (word of God to paranormal sources), recognition (a single individual to an entire society), and marginality (from a complete outcast or outsider to an established figure of authority).¹²³ These metrics have been applied to a series of heptagrammatic spider charts. Each memorate of a prophecy was ranked from one to five on these seven metrics, and additionally evaluated on several other attributes, including the source of prophecy, whether or not it was contingent on specific actions, the gender of both the prophet and the percipient, the medium in which the prophecy was delivered, and the subject matter of the prophecy.¹²⁴

To demonstrate how this ranking and evaluation was conducted, this process as it was applied to a prophetic memorate provided by Michael Kilroy in his statement to the BMH will be explained here. In his statement, Kilroy wrote the following passage describing how he witnessed the fulfilment of one of Brian Ruaidh’s prophecies at Skirdagh, county Mayo on 23 May 1921:

In this parish there had been a well-known prophecy of Brian Ruaidh (a local seer who had an uncanny knack of forecasting events) regarding a big fight in Skirdagh. It runs: "There will be a big fight in Skirdagh, and one of the British party - a red-haired man named McManamon - would jump on a horse and ride bare-backed to Newport for help. When he would arrive in Newport, he would be asked, 'What's wrong?'. His reply would be, 'Unless help arrives quickly, we will be all killed'." Now, every detail of this speech and all particulars took place on that 23rd day of May, 1921.

¹²³ Marginality here pertains to the marginality of the prophet, not the author of the memorate.

¹²⁴ See Appendices 15A, 15B, 16A, 16B, 16C, and 16D for lists of memorates sampled along with the relevant data.

We knew this tall red-haired McManamon well in Newport Barracks for some time before the fighting started. The morning of the fight, he jumped on Pat O'Malley's horse and rode bare-back to town. When he arrived at Newport crane, he dismounted and was asked by Miss Lizzy O'Boyle and Mr. John McGovern, both of whom are now dead, "What's wrong?". The answer was, "Unless help arrives soon, we will be all killed". In addition to the foregoing, when the police returned to Newport, they reported freely that they saw St. Patrick walking around among us all day.

They also reported that they could not put up their rifles but it was ding-ding every time. If that was correct, they must have been very careful of their heads for the eight hours they were under cover during the fight; otherwise, there would have been a lot more casualties.¹²⁵

The rankings given to this memorate can be seen in figure 15. The prophet referred to in this memorate is the seer Brian Ruaidh (AKA Red Brian, or Red Brian Carabine) who was known in parts of county Mayo for deliberately making and recording a variety of pronouncements in the late seventeenth century; this prophecy memorate was therefore given a ranking of five on the metric of intentionality as it was highly likely to have been understood by Kilroy to have been delivered intentionally as a prophecy.¹²⁶ The memorate was given a ranking of three for marginality, as this prophet, though young, relatively poor, and living in a peripheral rural area at the time these prophecies were delivered, was nevertheless male, held in decent standing by his community, and was part of the ethnic and religious majority in the area where he lived.¹²⁷ The memorate was given a ranking of four on the metric of morbidity as it concerns a battle, and foretells the deaths of numerous people, though not so numerous as to include an entire town, army, or locality. The memorate was given a ranking of two on the metric of recognition as it is only known by people local to parts of county Mayo and was only seen in one other prophetic memorate identified, but nevertheless was found in multiple sources (which is more than can be said for many of the memorates found). The memorate was given a ranking of one on the metric of religiosity as both the subject matter of the prophecy and the credentials of the

¹²⁵ Michael Kilroy statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS 1162), p. 57.

¹²⁶ Philomena Cronin, *Traditional Cures and Gifted People with a Translation of Red Brian Carabine's Prophecy* (Crossmolina, 1991), *passim*; 'Tairngreacht Bhrian Rua Uí Chearbháin', Séamus Mac Einrí, Inishbiggle, Co. Mayo, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0131B(2), pp 50-51).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

prophet have nothing to do with religious beliefs or practices (though an apparition of St. Patrick is mentioned in the memorate, this apparition was not an element of the prophecy). The memorate was given a ranking of two on the metric of scale as it concerns more than one person but less than might be found in a local townland or village and in subject matter pertains to just one specific incident. Finally, the memorate was given a ranking of three on the metric of subversiveness as it concerns the defeat of a force of British soldiers but lacks any concrete subversive prescriptions or other linguistic and qualitative features indicating a negative point of view on the British or any other type of authority. These rankings are illustrated in the radial chart in the figure below:

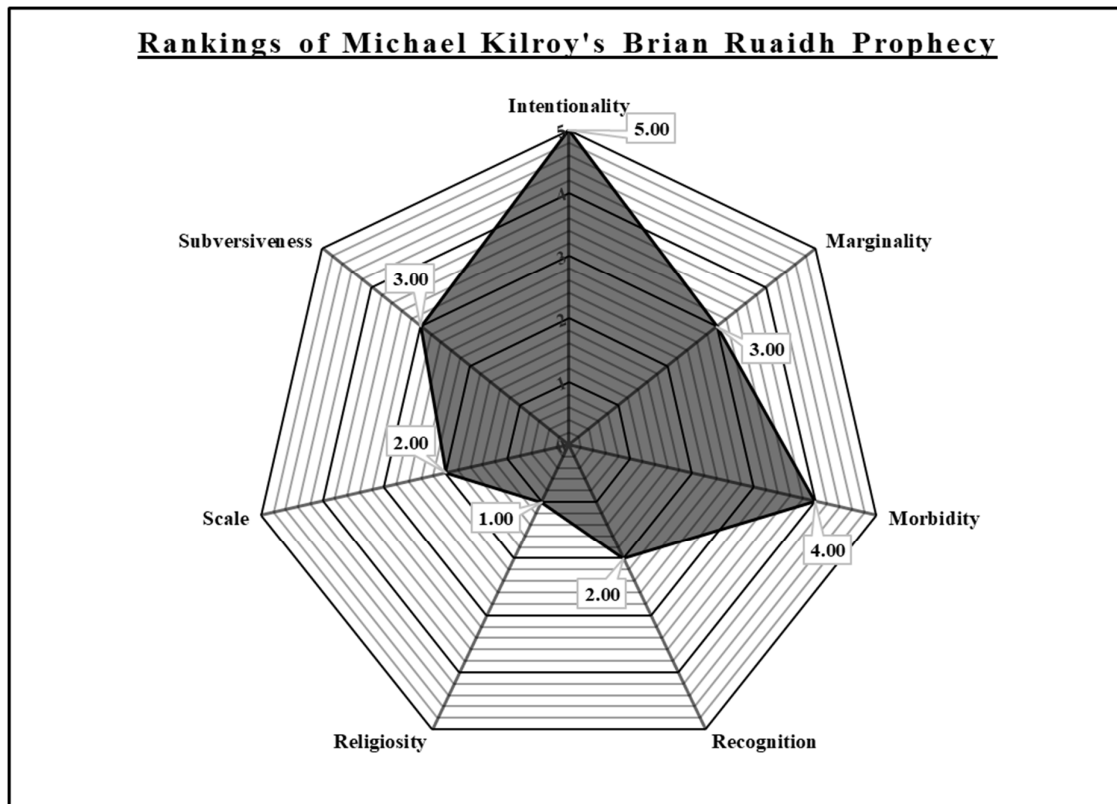


Figure 15: Rankings of Michael Kilroy's Brian Ruaidh Prophecy

Additionally, the memorate was categorized as being prophetically non-contingent, as there are no if/then type statements contained in it, just predictions of events. The memorates supernatural source was categorized as ESP (in Kilroy's words, 'an uncanny knack'), and

additionally, other folkloric sources on Brian Ruaidh describe him as having received his revelations from visions or dreams.¹²⁸ Finally, this prophecy was categorized as bearing a publicly spoken medium of delivery, as having subject matter concerning the fates of individuals, as having both a prophet and percipient of a male gender, and as having been completely fulfilled (as opposed to being partially fulfilled or unfulfilled). Though in this process there is admittedly a small element of arbitrary judgment involved, all the evaluations and rankings were established in supplemental consultation with other corroborating sources if possible, and consistency between different memorates given the same rankings or categorizations on a given metric was maintained as a high priority.

This process detailed above which was applied to Michael Kilroy's prophecy memorate was applied in a similar way to all the other 110 prophetic memorates. Once all the memorates were processed, charts were made by averaging the rankings of the memorates to reflect a variety of different analytical lenses; these charts will be reviewed here. To begin, shown here in Figure 16 are the average ratings among the 110 prophecies; this chart shows that, indeed, on average the prophecies tended to be subversive, morbid, applicable to broad sections of society, and delivered intentionally by people who were marginalized to some extent.¹²⁹ This chart also shows that these prophecies typically were not widely known or recognized. Interestingly, despite the devout religiosity of most of the revolutionaries, religious language or attributions were relatively rare.

¹²⁸ Cronin, *Traditional Cures and Gifted People*, *passim*; Kilroy statement, p. 57; 'Tairngreacht Bhrian Rua Uí Chearbháin', Séamus Mac Einrí, Inishbiggle, Co. Mayo, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0131B(2), pp 50-51).

¹²⁹ See figure 16.

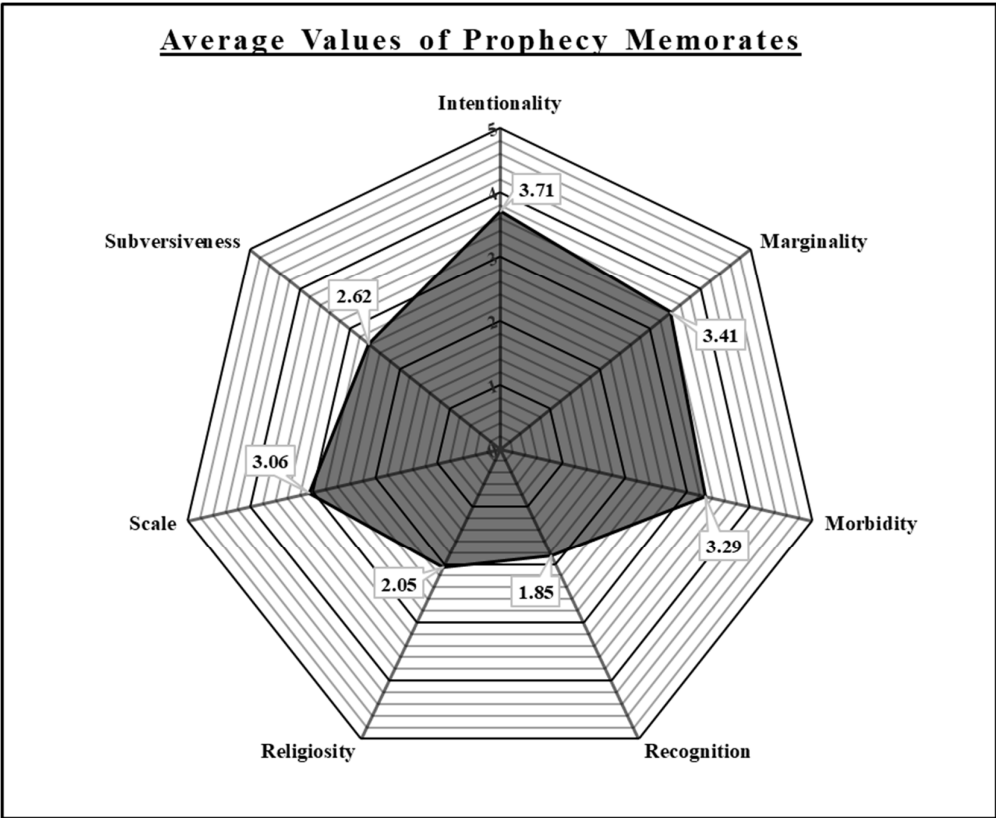


Figure 16: Average Values of Prophecy Memorates

In terms of subject matter, most of the Irish revolutionary prophecies analysed here concern various large scale political conflicts, the rest were much smaller in scope and concerned the fate of specific individuals. In Figures 17 and 18 the average values of prophecies grouped by subject matter are overlaid for comparison; in green are prophecies concerning individual people, they are notably less morbid and subversive, with slightly more religious qualities and marginal prophets, whereas prophecies concerning the Easter Rising had dramatically greater scale, subversiveness, and public recognition, but curiously less explicitly and intentionally prophetic terminology was used.

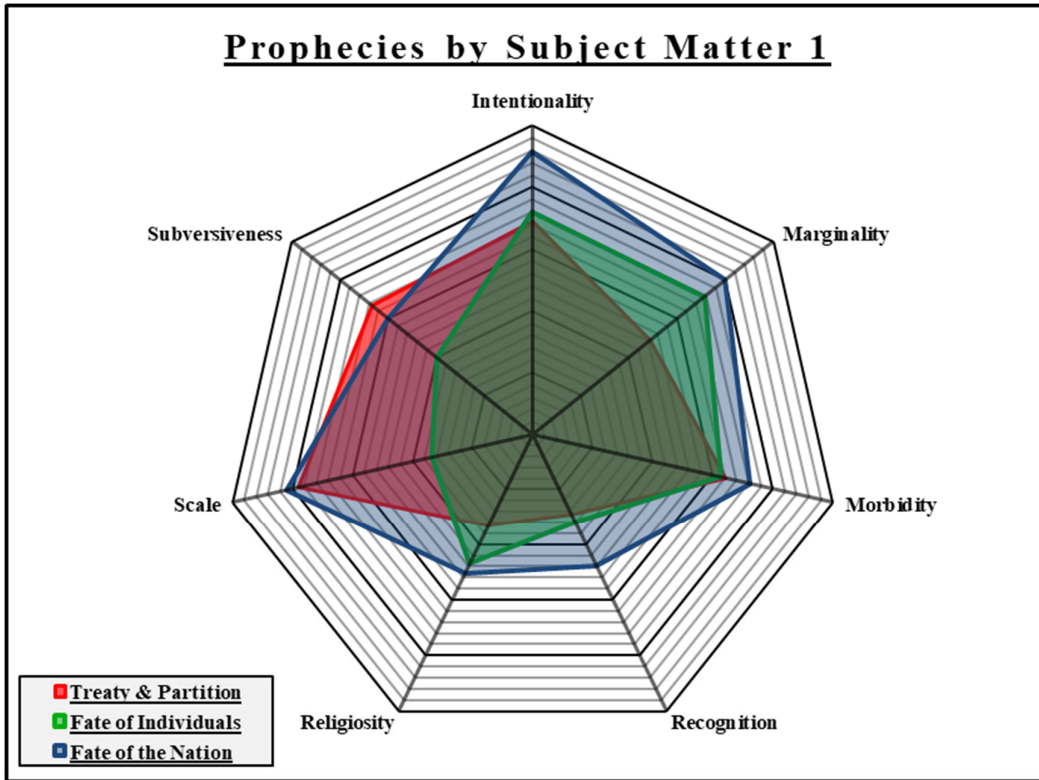


Figure 17: Heptagrammatic Chart #1 of Prophecies by Subject Matter

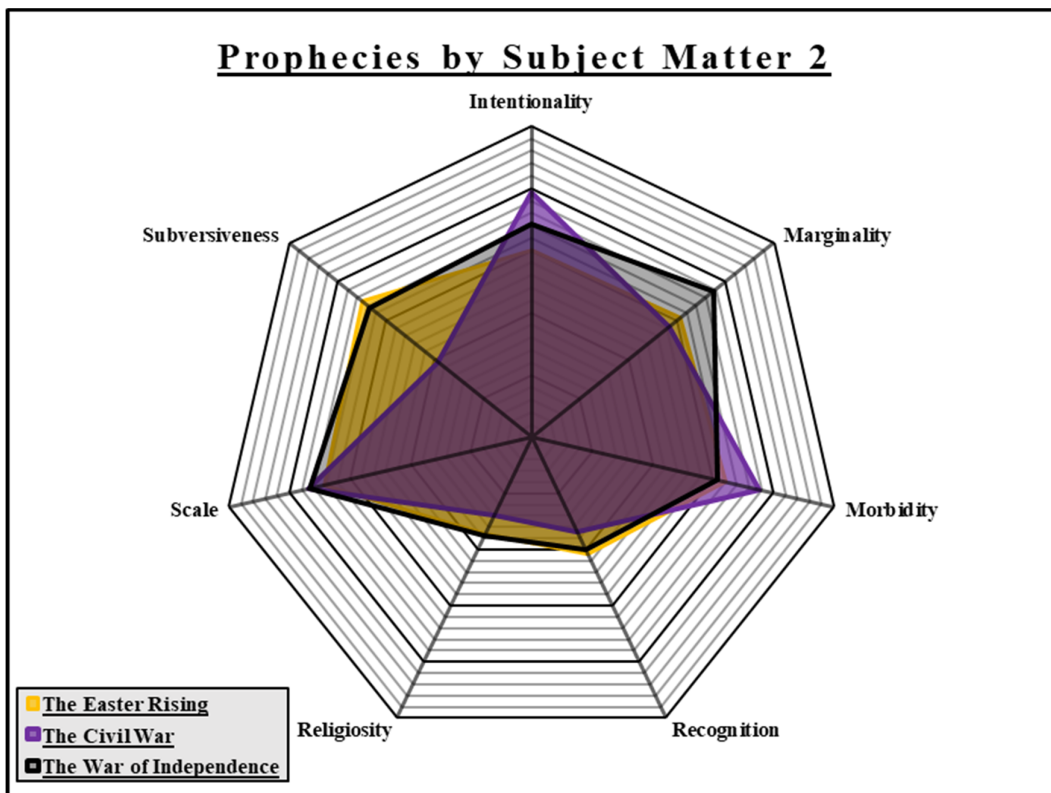


Figure 18: Heptagrammatic Chart #2 of Prophecies by Subject Matter

Comparing the types of supernatural source reveals some interesting insights. Forty-one of the prophecies were attributed either to the national spirit or no specific source and the remaining twenty-three are split between religious and paranormal attributions. Results are displayed in Figure 19; in blue are prophecies with paranormal sources, in green are shown prophecies with explicitly religious sources, and in yellow are shown prophecies attributed either to the national spirit or no specific source.¹³⁰ A comparison of differences between prophecies based on the prophet's occupation can be seen in Figure 20. An illustration of comparisons based on the gender of both the prophets and the authors of the memorates can be seen in Figures 21 and 22.

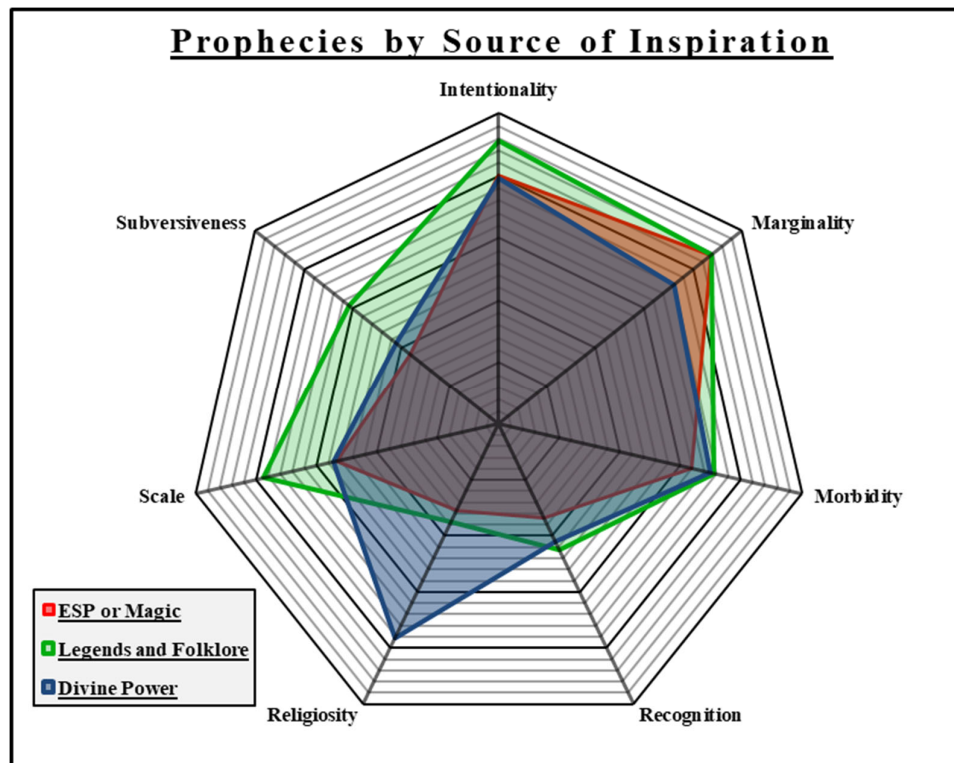


Figure 19: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Source of Inspiration

¹³⁰ See figure 19.

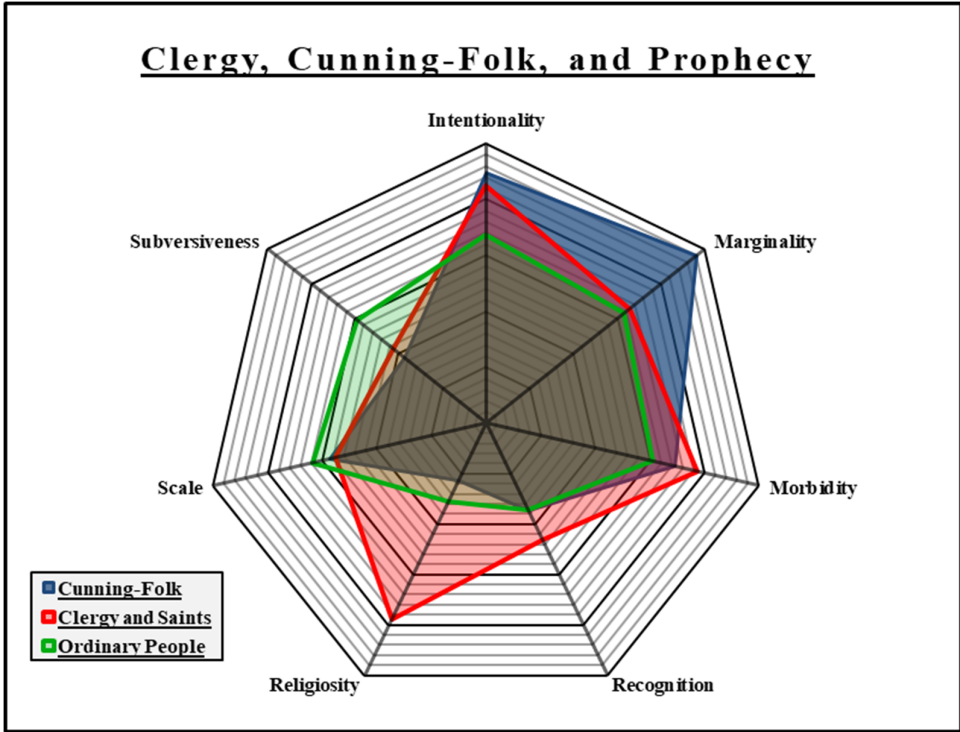


Figure 20: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Prophet Occupation

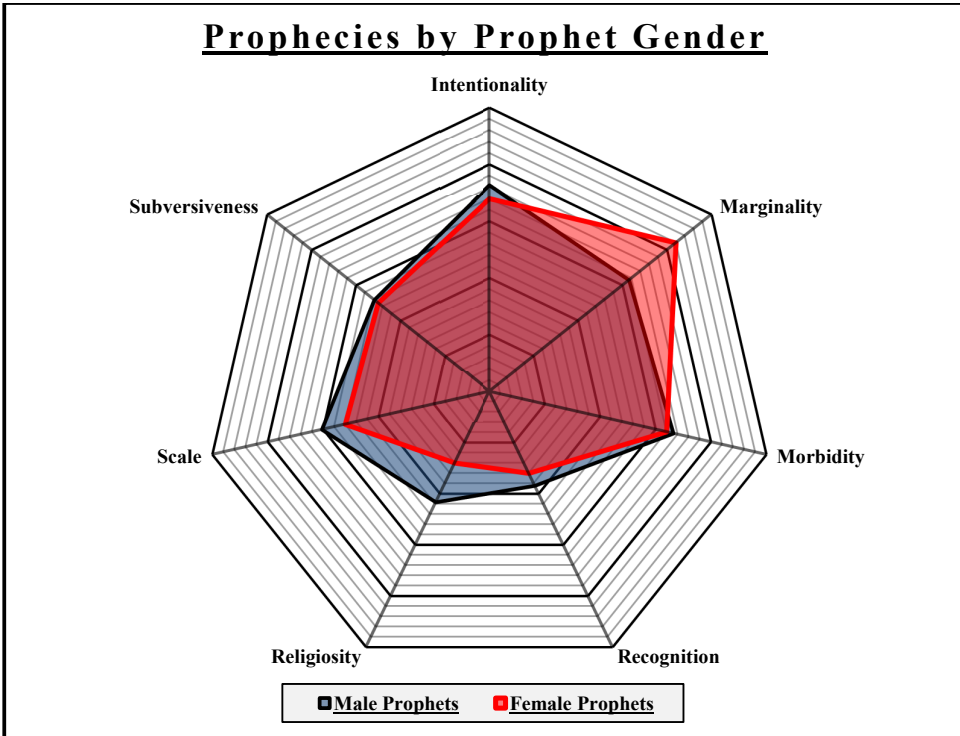


Figure 21: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Gender of Prophet

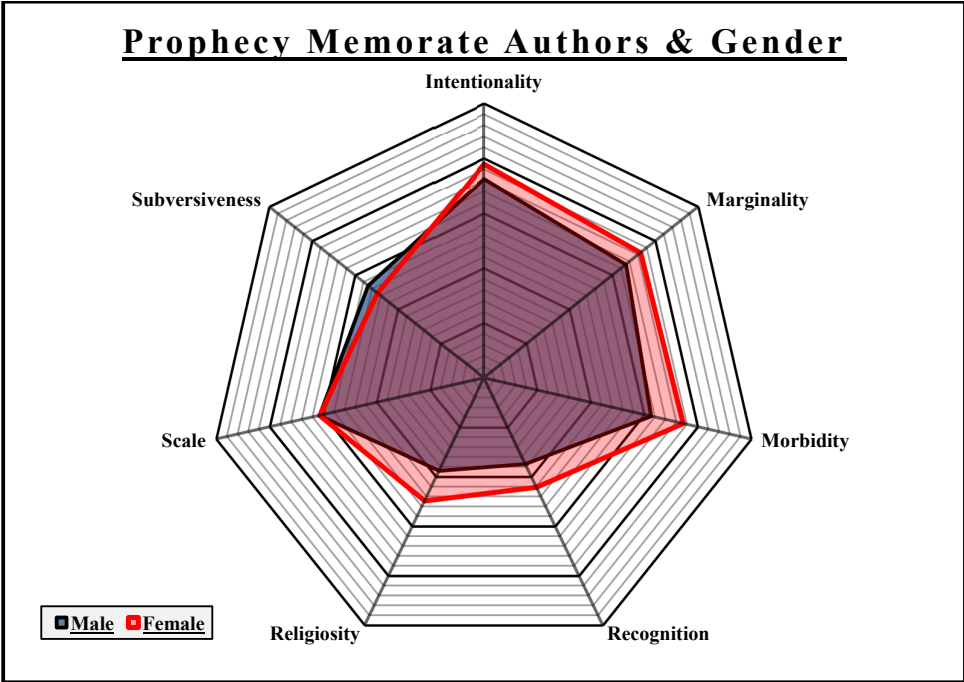


Figure 22: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Gender of Memorate Author

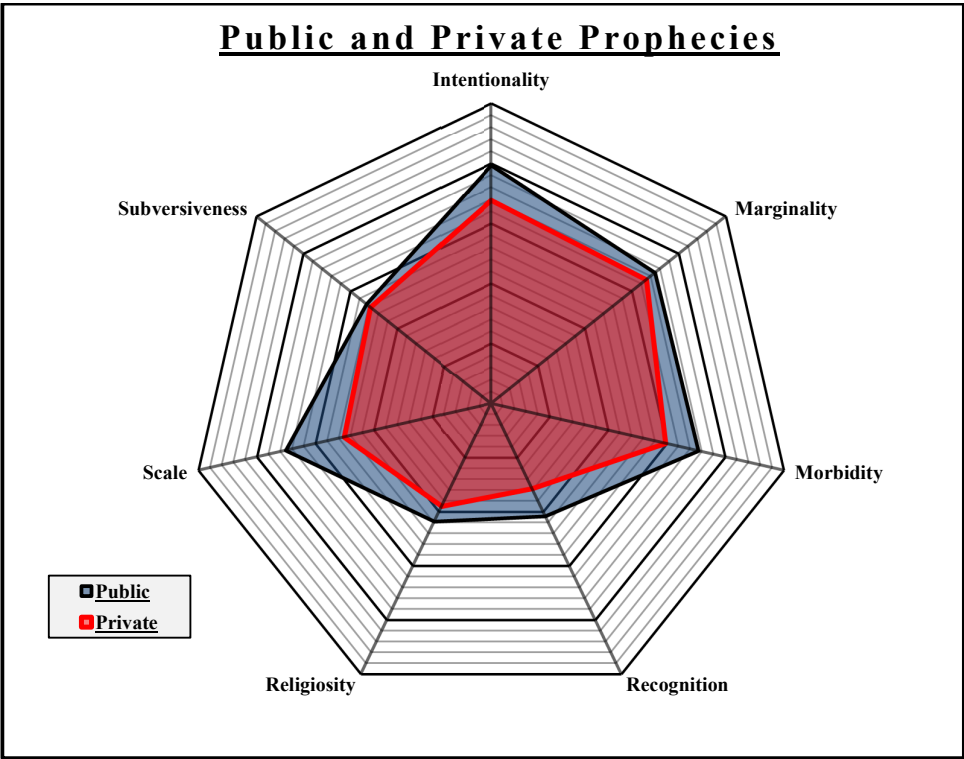


Figure 23: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies Uttered Publicly and Privately

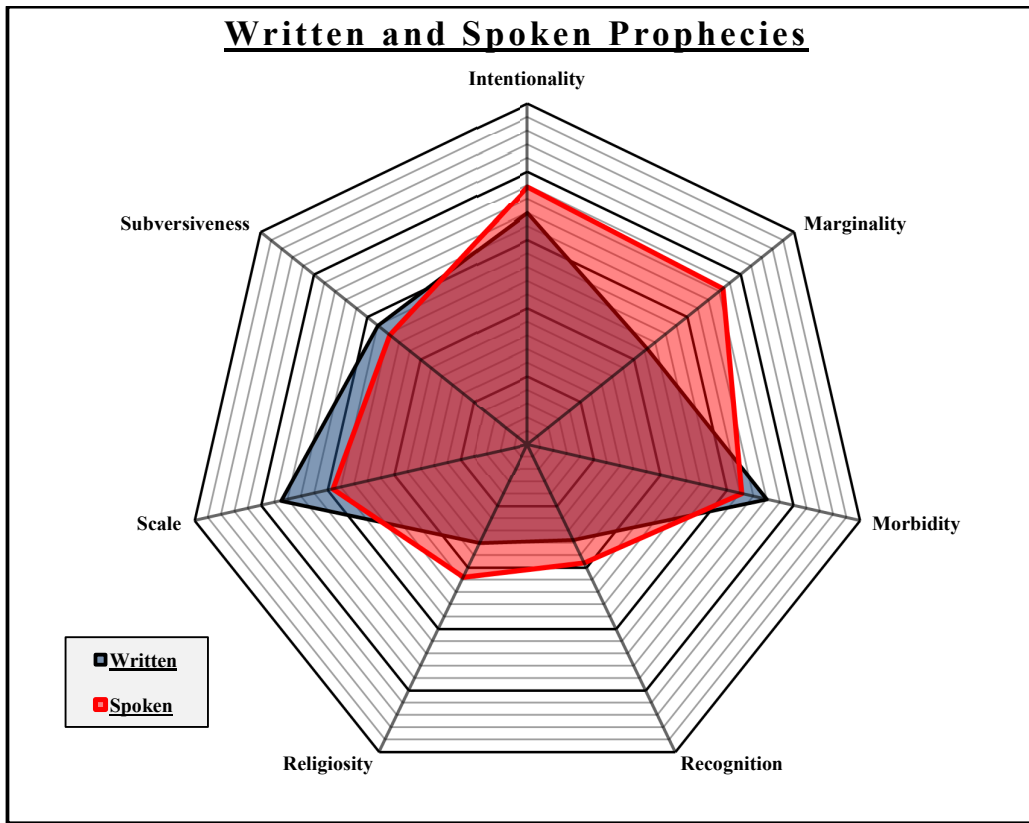


Figure 24: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Method of Delivery

A slight majority of the prophecies, thirty-five of the sixty-four, were spoken or written privately to individuals; Figure 23 illustrates that these private prophecies (in red) were made by more marginal people, and were typically less morbid and smaller in scale than the prophecies made in public (in blue).¹³¹ Furthermore, about a quarter of the memorates' authors applied the prophetic label to themselves and on Figure 25, in blue, the character of these self-described prophets and their prophecies is illustrated: they were morbid, grandiose, less subversive, and markedly less marginal.¹³²

¹³¹ See figures 23 and 24.

¹³² See figure 25.

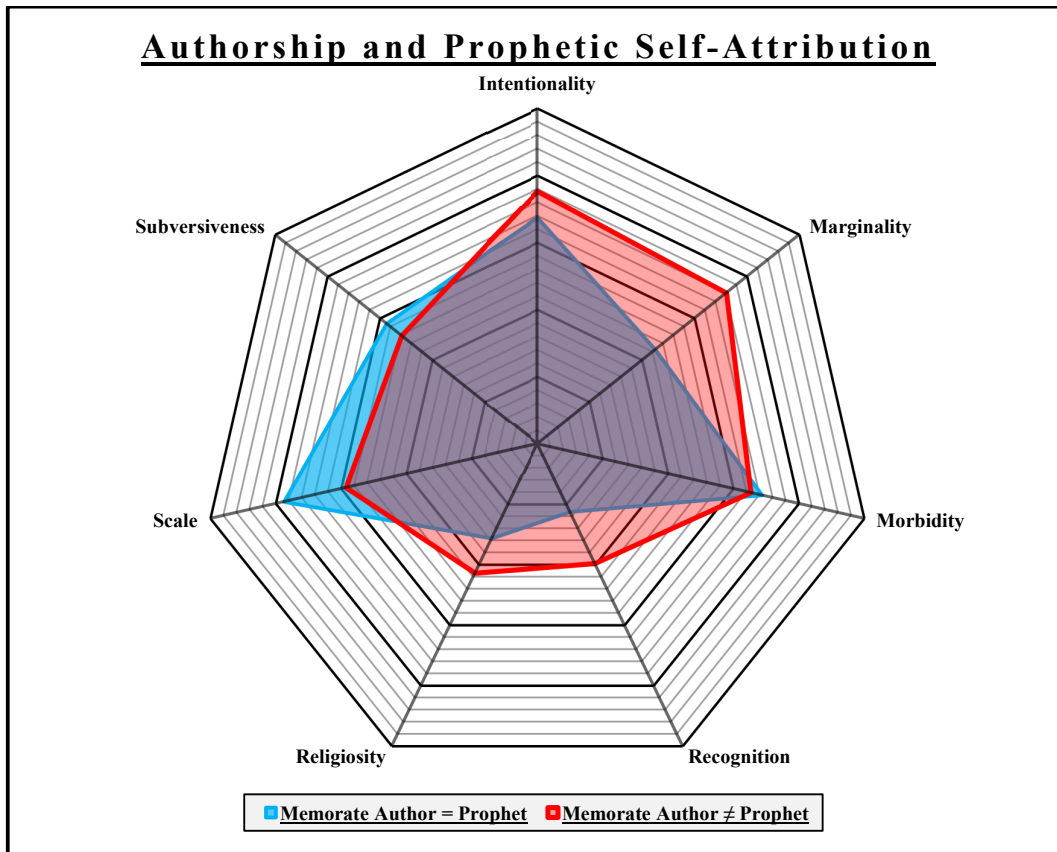


Figure 25: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Prophetic Self-Attribution

In Figure 26, the element of contingency is illustrated. Forty-one of the sixty-four prophecies were not contingent on future action. Those that were (in blue) were made by less marginal prophets, and were much greater in scale, intentionality, and morbidity than their non-contingent counterparts (in red).¹³³

¹³³ See figure 26.

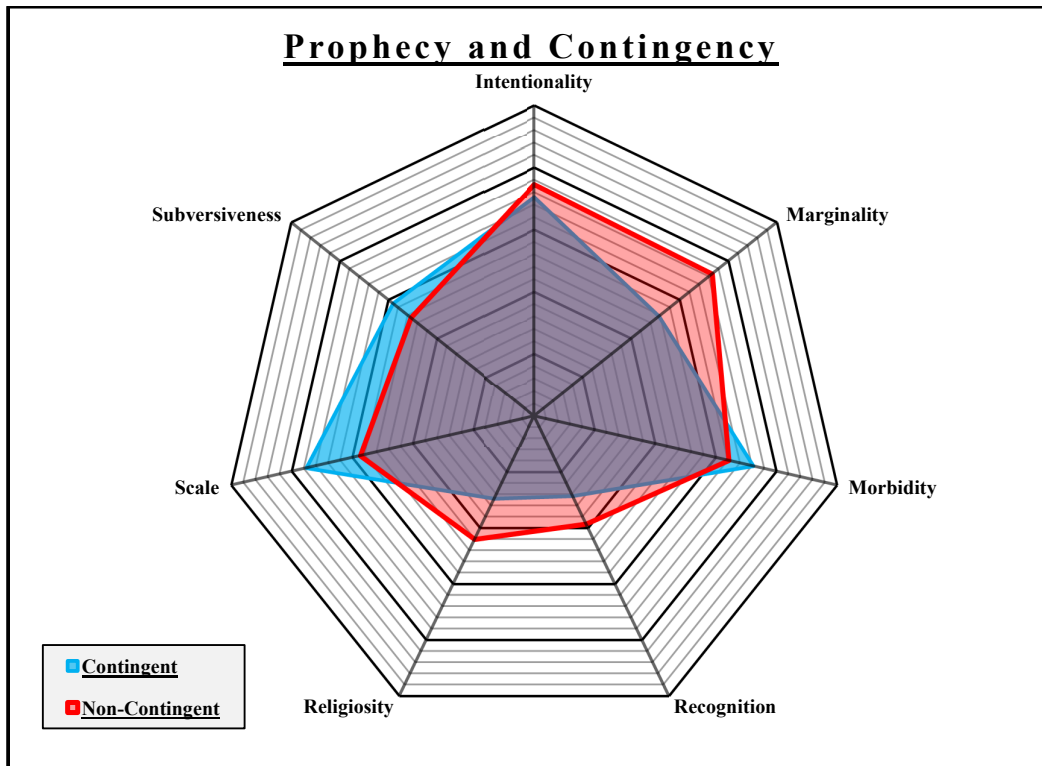


Figure 26: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Contingency

Only one of the prophecies concerning the fate of a specific individual was contingent on future action, and even in that case the contingency of the prophecy is arguable; in their witness statement, Maurice Forde and his comrades described a prophecy delivered by Jeremiah Delaney shortly following the Dillon’s Cross ambush in Cork on 11 December 1920:

After the Dillon's Cross ambush two members of 'E' Company met and accompanied Jeremiah Delaney as far as his door at Dublin Hill out beyond Blackpool and stood discussing events and listening to the shooting and uproar city-wards. Delaney said he had never felt happier in his life for he had that evening been to old Canon Tierney and made a general Confession, a thing he had never done before. Then he urged them to leave him and go home, "for", said he, "there is no use in all of us being shot". Strangely prophetic words, for towards the next morning Jerh. Delaney was murdered in his bed. He was killed outright by a party of masked men who burst into the house. They also shot his brother, who lingered for a fortnight before he died. His aged uncle was also shot and wounded at the same time.¹³⁴

The contingency in this case is implied; Jeremiah’s prophecy essentially amounted to the statement ‘if you do not go home, you will all be shot.’ Delaney did not make this specific

¹³⁴ Maurice Forde, Peadar McCann, Thomas Daly, Sean Kenny, Michael Keogh, Joseph O'Shea and Timothy O'Sullivan statement (M.A.I., B.M.H., WS719), p. 10

claim though. Generally speaking, it seems that once a prophecy was made about a person, their fate was sealed.

Comparing highly subversive, apolitical, and conservative prophecies is revealing. In Figure 28, in green, the average ratings of all prophetic memorates with higher-than-average subversiveness ratings can be seen.¹³⁵ The scale, morbidity, recognition, and prophet marginality were slightly higher than average for highly subversive prophecies, but they were less religious.¹³⁶ In red, the least subversive prophecies can be seen, those which envisioned stability, passivity, and loyalty to the powers that be; the intentionality, scale, and morbidity of these prophecies are quite similar to their subversive counterparts.¹³⁷ It should be noted that of the memorates sampled in this analysis, none were drawn from avowed loyalist authors, and so, despite the large number of low subversiveness rating prophecies (out of 110 there were twenty-three rated one, and thirty-six rated two), this conclusion should be taken with some circumspection to account for the bias. The main differences are that the least subversive prophets are not marginal figures, and their prophecies received much less recognition. In blue, the politically ambivalent prophecies can be seen.¹³⁸ These were noticeably lower in morbidity, subversiveness, recognition, and scale. They were more on the religious side and their prophets were the most marginal. The type of source in which the prophecy was found was correlated with noteworthy differences which are illustrated in Figure 27; prophecies drawn from the folklore collection, despite the relatively marginal nature of the prophets concerned, were substantially more religious and less subversive than prophecies drawn from memoirs and BMH witness statements, illustrating complications in the relationship between prophet identity and likelihood to predict subversive outcomes.

¹³⁵ See figure 28.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

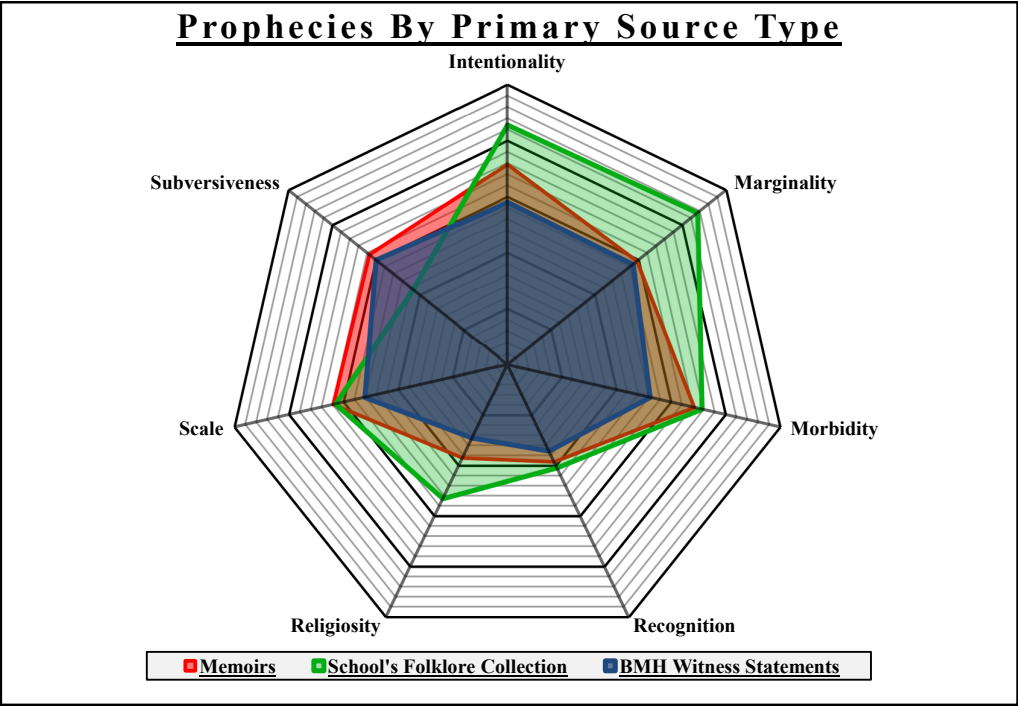


Figure 27: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Primary Source Type

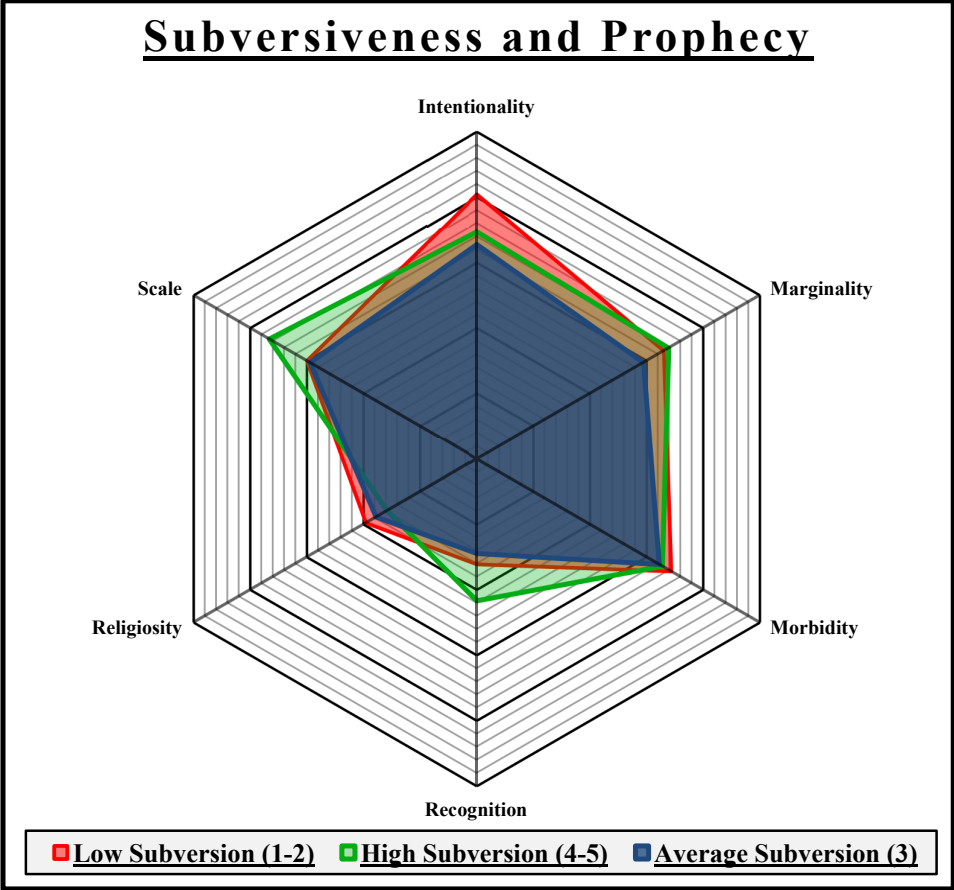


Figure 28: Heptagrammatic Chart of Prophecies by Subversiveness

The quantitative data presented here, though very limited, suggests that the general thesis that prophecies are predominantly subversive and political, a language of power, holds true in the context of the Irish Revolution, with a few caveats.¹³⁹ A substantial minority, about a third, of the prophecies were concerned with the life, death, and fortunes of specific people; these small-scale prophecies are markedly less subversive yet tend to have more marginal prophets. The marginality of the prophets seemed to be correlated with the subversiveness of the prophecy, at least where the subject matter of the prophecy was political. Prophecies varied widely in their intentionality; many only took on the mantle of prophecy many years after they were uttered, many were accidental, and many have unknowable intentions, as their associated prophets died before they could be made clear. These latter, more ambiguously motivated cases were far more politically subversive. Contingency as a linguistic feature was almost exclusively a feature of political prophecies, but such prophecies were not universally contingent: three-quarters of the subversive political prophecies were not contingent on future action. Terms such as fortune, fate, luck, and destiny were often used in the source materials, implying that there was a common belief amongst revolutionaries that the future was in the hands of larger inscrutable forces beyond their control. All the prophecy memorates identified in this study evidence the fact that many revolutionaries believed that some people had access to knowledge of this future. Other than this, it is difficult to draw generally applicable conclusions about prophecy memorates as they contain a great deal of variety both in provenance and qualitative features, as this analysis has shown.

¹³⁹ Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton, 'The language of history: past and future in prophecies' in Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton (eds), *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300-2000* (Gloucestershire, 1997), pp 3-8.

Omens and Divination

As was previously discussed in this chapters' introduction, in 2021 Tyshchenko, Korolyov, and Palchevska defined an omen as 'a stable connection between two objective reality phenomena, one of which is understood as a sign, and the other as its interpretation, usually done in the form of a forecast for the future...As a rule omens include those interpretations that are based on the collective experience and are fixed in the collective memory.'¹⁴⁰ Put differently, omens are events in the percipient's external environment interpreted as presaging a particular outcome or kind of outcome despite having no direct or even indirect causal relationship with it. Data gathered in this study has shown that unlike premonitions, omens typically occur further away in time from combat, and are often informed by folkloric associations and symbols. In Ireland, as in much of world, omens often concern the behaviour of animals, and the examples identified by this study seem to bear this conclusion out.¹⁴¹ In Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *Handbook of Irish Folklore*, it was recommended that folklore collectors inquire about omens in a wide variety of contexts including as portents of the outcomes of journeys, illnesses, marriages, meetings, births, and weather; omens could include discoloured fingernails, unexpected sneezing, or 'dreaming of teeth' among many others.¹⁴² Despite this wide variety of omens in Irish folklore, the memorates identified by this study seem relatively limited, and chiefly concern animal behaviours and the banshee. Mentions of them in memoirs and BMH witness statements are slightly longer on average than mentions of premonitions, but far less numerous.¹⁴³ Unlike premonitions, omens often predicted good as well as bad outcomes. Omens often coexist with other types of supernatural phenomena; for

¹⁴⁰ Oleh Tyshchenko, Igor Korolyov, and Oleksandra Palchevska, 'Cultural and cognitive structure of the omen: Epistemology, axiology and pragmatics' in *Wisdom*, xviii, no. 2 (Yerevan, 2021), p. 138.

¹⁴¹ Niall Mac Coitir, *Ireland's Animals: Myths, Legends & Folklore* (Cork, 2010), pp 4-7, 236-237.

¹⁴² Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Kindle Edition, Dublin, 1942), locations 2769-2783, 3390-3397, 4359, 4373, 4395, 4407-4494, 4765-4824, 5017-5040. The term 'omen' appears 145 times in the handbook.

¹⁴³ There are twenty omens to be found in Memoirs and BMH witness statements which average 115 words in length, compared to the sixty premonitions averaging 111 words in length. See Appendices 12B and 14.

example, prophecies often refer to a particular future event as an omen or portent signifying the prophecy's fulfilment. Examples of this relationship abound throughout world history and the two ideas are often discussed together.¹⁴⁴

It has long been known by folklorists that the banshee figures prominently as one of Ireland's most famous omens of death.¹⁴⁵ She makes several appearances in the source materials investigated by this study. For example, the fatal explosion on 12 October 1920 at an IRA munitions workshop near St. Kearns in Saltmills, county Wexford was presaged by the banshee's cry. Thomas Gleeson, a survivor of the explosion, informed Mary B. Dunphy, a collector for the SFC, that on the Saturday night prior to the explosion he heard the banshee: 'One of the survivors told me he heard her, and knew very well some of the boys were doomed, but knew it would not be he, " Because," he said "If you hear the Banshee you are not the person that is going to die. You would not hear her if you were." Several of the boys were killed the following Monday night at about 10.15p.m.'¹⁴⁶ Gleeson would receive a military service pension for his injuries but would die at the relatively young age of fifty-two.¹⁴⁷ Another informant to the SFC from Ballylosky, county Donegal provided a story concerning a banshee heard by a 'Patrick McGonagle' who was stationed in the Curragh of Kildare after enlisting in the Free State army:

One night as he was on guard he heard a banshee. Another man was to be on guard, the second part of the night and Patrick told him that he heard a banshee, but he would not believe him and when he went out he heard the "caoine" of the banshee. In the morning

¹⁴⁴ Bo Almqvist, 'The Death Forebodings of Saint Óláfr, King of Norway, and Rögnvaldr Brúsason, Earl of Orkney' in *Béaloideas*, xlii (1974), pp. 4-5; Aurore Candier, 'Conjuncture and Reform in the Late Konbaung Period: How Prophecies, Omens and Rumors Motivated Political Action from 1866 to 1869' in *The Journal of Burma Studies*, xv, no. 2 (2011), pp. 231-62; Stephen A. Colston, "'No Longer Will There Be a Mexico": omens, prophecies, and the conquest of the Aztec Empire' in *American Indian Quarterly*, ix, no. 3 (1985), pp. 239-258; Nissinen, *Prophetic divination*, p. 73; Pauline Ripat, 'Roman omens, Roman audiences, and Roman history' in *Greece & Rome*, liii, no. 2 (2006), pp. 155-174; Hanspeter Schaudig, "'Bēl Bows, Nabû Stoops!" the Prophecy of Isaiah XLVI 1-2 as a reflection of Babylonian "Processional Omens"', in *Vetus Testamentum*, lviii (2008), pp. 557-572.

¹⁴⁵ Lady Gregory, *Visions & Beliefs in the West of Ireland* (Gerard's Cross, 1979), pp 170-171; Patricia Lysaght, *The Banshee: The Irish Supernatural Death-Messenger* (Dublin, 1997), p. 15.

¹⁴⁶ 'The explosion at St Kearns', Mr Thomas Gleeson, Kinnagh, Co. Wexford, (NFC, SFC, MS 871, p. 63).

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Gleeson pension, (Military Archives, MSPC, MSP34REF23970).

one of the men who lived in the house beside him came out and told Patrick that his father had fallen down the stairs at the same instant as the banshee was wailing, and was killed.¹⁴⁸

Sometimes the banshee can be seen as a woman or a bird in a white cloak, her most distinguishing characteristic is her mournful wailing and crying, which almost entirely without exception presages an impending death.¹⁴⁹ Memorates of the banshee related to the Irish Revolution are generally consistent with the conclusions offered by folklorist Patricia Lysaght in her research on the subject.¹⁵⁰ In her impressive monograph, Lysaght has concluded that in Irish folklore the banshee, despite the name *bean sí* (fairy woman), is by far most often considered to be the ghost of a human woman, and only very rarely to be a type of fairy.¹⁵¹ The banshee illustrates how apparitions (in this case sonic rather than visual) can in and of themselves be considered omens.

In his memoir *Victory and Woe*, Mossie Harnett described the imprisonment of ‘A’, a suspected spy, and how in spite of his dire situation, ‘A’ was calm until his peace was disturbed by an ominous incident:

This incident was caused by a magpie which came each morning and perched on the windowsill outside the bedroom where “A” slept. The magpie would persistently peck away at the glass of the window in the early morning light. “Do you know”, said “A” to me, referring to the magpie’s strange behaviour, “I don’t like it, and it portends no good.” Stranger still, the magpie came to the window only while “A” slept in the house.¹⁵²

‘A’ was executed shortly thereafter.¹⁵³ In Irish folklore, the appearance of magpies can be portentous, especially a single magpie, which foretells sorrow.¹⁵⁴ This has been believed not

¹⁴⁸ ‘no title’, Ballylosky, Co. Donegal, (NFC, SFC, MS 1115, pp 159-160).

¹⁴⁹ Patricia Lysaght, ‘Irish banshee traditions: a preliminary survey’ in *Béaloides*, xlii (1974), pp. 97-98, 103; Lysaght, *The Banshee*, p. 15; Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *The Lore of Ireland: An Encyclopaedia of Myth, Legend, and Romance* (Cork, 2006), pp 31-32.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Lysaght, ‘Irish banshee traditions’, pp. 97-98, 103.

¹⁵¹ Lysaght, *The Banshee*, p. 52.

¹⁵² Mossie Harnett, *Victory and Woe* (Dublin, 2002), p. 49.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ ‘(no title)’, Michael Casey, Prosperous, Co. Kildare, (National Folklore Collection, School’s Folklore Collection, MS 0773, p. 454; ‘Certain Days’, Mrs Margaret Kitt, Shanballard, Co. Galway, (NFC, SFC, MS 0083,

just in Ireland, but in the Irish and British Isles generally for centuries.¹⁵⁵ In Ireland, the appearance of a bird at your window was a particularly grave omen, and not just magpies, but many other types of birds as well, including wrens, robins, cuckoos, chickens, owls, and ravens.¹⁵⁶ This incident is an example of how omens were often folkloric and animal-oriented in character. Animals are an important aspect of mythology and folklore around the world, and Ireland is no exception.¹⁵⁷ In his memoir *On Another Man's Wound*, Ernie O'Malley described another animal omen: 'In west Clare a butterfly appeared with green, white and yellow stripes. We called it the Republican butterfly; the people said that they had not put much heed on it before and it was looked upon as an omen.'¹⁵⁸ Presumably, the butterfly presaged the coming republic, but O'Malley leaves its precise significance unclear. The original source of the so-called 'Republican Butterfly' can be found in the SFC; according to informants Thomas Carlin and James McLoughlin, the omen originated from a song composed by McLoughlin entitled 'The Tricolour'.¹⁵⁹

Not all omens concerned animals and folklore. One particularly bizarre case is provided in the BMH witness statement of Patrick J. Little, who described how a meeting of various nationalist organizations at no. 6 Harcourt St. in Dublin involving Rory O'Connor and Arthur Griffith was ominously interrupted:

The committee decided in favour of the republican policy. Arthur Griffith was very upset, and very angry. It was late in the evening, and it must have been early in the year, 1917, because it was turning dark, but, at that point, the door burst open, and a woman

p. 337); '(no title)', Miss Matthews, Tobercurry, Co. Sligo, (NFC, SFC, MS 0171, p. 273); 'Bird-Lore - The Magpie', Ballymunterhiggin, Co. Donegal, (NFC, SFC, MS 1026, pp 205-206). 'Through Ireland by motor car: a magpie and a series of mishaps', *The Manchester Guardian*, 25 May 1908, p. 7.

¹⁵⁵ Iona Opie & Moira Tatem, 'MAGPIE bird of ill omen' in Iona Opie & Moira Tatem (eds), *A Dictionary of Superstitions*, (Oxford, 1996), (<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192829160.001.0001/acref-9780192829160-e-874>) (accessed 23 Sep. 2022).

¹⁵⁶ Kevin Danaher, *Irish Customs and Beliefs* (Cork, 2004), pp 49-54; Niall Mac Coitir, *Ireland's Birds: Myths, Legends, And Folklore* (Cork, 2015), pp 29-30, 47, 122, 267, 289.

¹⁵⁷ Mac Coitir, *Ireland's Animals*, pp 4-7, 236-237.

¹⁵⁸ O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, p. 137.

¹⁵⁹ 'The Tricolour', Thomas Carlin and James Mc Loughlin, Tievebrack, Co. Donegal (NFC, SFC, MS 1098, pp. 150-151, 243).

fell into the room, dead. She, apparently, had died of cold and starvation. My comment to Rory was, "What an omen!" But he would not agree with me.¹⁶⁰

Whether this incident can be classified as an omen is somewhat debateable but considering that Little explicitly describes it as one, it seems best to describe it as such as well, even if it seems unlike most omens seen in folkloric narratives. Frustratingly and bizarrely, more context surrounding the death of this woman is not given by Little in his statement, and the event goes unremarked upon for the rest of his narrative. That O'Connor did not find a dead woman falling into the room ominous could indicate several things: that he was so focused on the task at hand that he saw no reason to dwell on the matter, that he was not the sort of person who put much credence in omens, or perhaps that there is some missing contextual information in Little's account. This location at No. 6 Harcourt Street is the same address where a cursed paper tray was located, perhaps suggesting that such ominous or prophetic oriented musings were not entirely uncommon at the Sinn Féin headquarters.¹⁶¹ Though Little invokes the word omen here, it should not be seen in the same way as other more traditionally established omens like the appearance of a magpie, and for this reason it could be argued that this incident is more likely an example of hyperbolic language. The value of including it here lies in the way it highlights the challenges of interpreting this material.

Another republican 'omen' comes from Alice Ginnell's statement to the BMH, where she describes in a diary entry a journey with her husband to Christmas mass in 1921: 'Fr. Gearty drove us to Portela, where he said his second Mass. He had a republican flag on his car, which fell off a few times and he said he hoped that that was not an omen.'¹⁶² This ominous incident was contemporaneous with the treaty debates and here it is implied that it presaged the defeat of the anti-treaty faction. Like the previous example, this is just as likely to be a case of

¹⁶⁰ Patrick J. Little statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 1769), p. 21.

¹⁶¹ James Kavanagh statement (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 0889), pp 104-105.

¹⁶² Mrs. A. Ginnell statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 982), p. 49.

hyperbolic language as it is to be a credulously regarded omen. A more humorous example comes from James O'Shea's statement, wherein he describes how the moonlight shining off the head of Barney Craven provided he and some other members of the Irish Citizen Army with a light-hearted portent as they bedded down for the evening on the first night of the Easter Rising: 'Barney Craven, a Dublin cabby, was trying to make his bed on top of other men in the dark. He was bald and the moon shining through the small window right on to his bald head caused a laugh. Someone remarked that it was a good omen for the fight to see two moons shining together'.¹⁶³ This case is probably more of a joke than a credulously regarded omen, but nevertheless it evidences the presence of omens in the cultural consciousness of the revolutionaries, and like the more serious omens it helped revolutionaries cope psychologically with their situation.

The appearance of omens could easily be interpreted as a coping strategy for feelings of anxiety. Faced with a chaotic and dangerous future, revolutionaries clung to any signs which gave them some sense of orderliness or certainty. Omens provided an externally validated source of control, particularly those omens with traditional roots; as Ellen Badone puts it, they 'provide evidence for the existence of some vaguely defined supernatural force "above us" which directs our lives.'¹⁶⁴ These external loci of control are often more stable, but in the case of omens this is not necessarily the case; when compared with sacramental coping strategies, omens are distinctly chaotic. This places them in a curious supplementary kind of position, where they often appeared in conjunction with another coping mechanism. Peter Berta, in his analysis of Hungarian death omens, has described the alleviatory effects of death omens and their relationship with other ritualized coping strategies as a 'realization-rationalization-preparatory function'; witnessing the death omen establishes certain time coordinates which

¹⁶³ James O'Shea statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 733), p. 39.

¹⁶⁴ Ellen Badone, 'Death omens in a Breton memorate' in *Folklore*, lxlvi, no. 1 (1987), p. 103.

mark the events leading up to death as a gradual process and are able to alleviate the elemental feeling of anxiety connected with the unpredictability of the exact time of the exitus...these temporal reference points may help the relatives to carry out their duties properly...as their observation has an *activating* function, they urge and warn the observers to fulfill their tasks accompanying the final stages of death.¹⁶⁵

For example, Mossie Harnett's suspect 'A' was notified of his impending death by the magpie prior to his execution, allowing him to better prepare for the afterlife with a prescribed set of rituals: 'fully realizing now his terrible predicament, and visibly trembling, he clutched his Rosary in his hands. Near the place of execution, a priest heard his confession; then he shook hands with his executioners and admitted his crime.'¹⁶⁶ 'A' met his fate with the standardized preparatory rituals of confession and recital of the rosary.

Another omen from the SFC demonstrates how the rosary could serve as an actionable ritual making up the final part of a 'realization-rationalization-preparatory' function; collector Dola Ní Dhuibhir of Killorglin, county Kerry provided this memorate concerning the Cahillane family:

Many years ago, a family of Cahillanes lived in Laharn, but they are all dead now. One night when the man and woman were going to bed, they heard footsteps coming up the gravel path and into the house, although all the doors were locked. The footsteps came into a little room, and recited prayers. The woman could hear one of her deceased relatives recite the Rosary. When they had the Rosary said, they went out of the house. The next morning the man and woman got a wire that one of their sons was dead.

It happened again in 1920 - the footsteps came into the house again and the old pair heard their deceased son say the prayers this time. They got out of bed, answered the prayers. Then the footsteps went out of the house again.

The next morning another of their sons came home, and told them he ran into an ambush. He said that he would have been shot only that one of the sergeants said that he was not in the fight at all, so he was saved.

The people said that the son would not have been saved only they had answered the Rosary...Each time one of the family that heard the footsteps would die.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Peter Berta, 'The functions of omens of death in Transylvanian Hungarian peasant death culture (examples from Csikkarefalva and Csikjenofalva)' in *OMEGA*, xl, no. 4 (2000), pp 482, 484.

¹⁶⁶ Harnett, *Victory and Woe*, p. 50.

¹⁶⁷ 'No title', Dola Ní Dhuibhir, Killorglin, Co. Kerry, (N.F.C., S.F.C., MS0434, pp 231-232).

This memorate demonstrates how death omens were preparatory in that witnessing them served an ‘activating function’ prompting the family or other ‘micro-community’ to ‘concentrate their spiritual energy’ and regain a sense of control, thereby alleviating death anxiety.¹⁶⁸ It also supports Ellen Badone’s contention that such omens or ‘intersignes’ are more frequent in unexpected deaths, particularly the deaths of the young.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, this story provides a function for Dola Ní Dhuibhir and the broader Killorglin community in that it reorganizes past events in a way that creates a meaningful pattern where one did not seem to exist before; namely, the disappearance of the entire Cahillane family.¹⁷⁰ This memorate can also be interpreted as conceptually rooted in the wide variety similar familial omen traditions, described as ‘maternal worry work’ by Clodagh Tait in that Irish mothers were saddled with a wide variety of ritualized proscriptions and prescriptions as part of their duty of ‘protecting and retrieving children from supernatural interference.’¹⁷¹

Recounting folkloric omens served a function of reinforcing a sense of cultural identity; this is especially the case for Patrick Mullooly and Ernie O’Malley, whose accounts of the period are peppered with folkloric references. Omens pertaining to the Irish revolutionary period were a more regular occurrence in the SFC than they were in either revolutionary memoirs or the BMH; this study identifies twenty different examples in the SFC.¹⁷² They are on average roughly 130 words in length, about nineteen words (sixteen percent) longer than their counterparts in BMH witness statements or memoirs, and typically comprise a much greater percentage of the narratives in which they are situated; the average narrative weight of a revolutionary omen found in the folklore collection is sixty-two per cent, whereas in memoirs

¹⁶⁸ Berta, ‘The functions of omens of death’, pp 484-485.

¹⁶⁹ Badone, ‘Death omens in a Breton memorate’, pp. 102-103.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104; Berta, ‘The functions of omens of death’, pp 485-486.

¹⁷¹ Clodagh Tait, ‘Worry work: the supernatural labours of living and dead mothers in Irish folklore’ in *Past and Present*, cxxlvi, Issue Supplement 15 (2020), pp 222-228.

¹⁷² See Appendix 12A.

and witness statements the average is 0.56 percent.¹⁷³ This should not be surprising as the folklore collection's remit was explicitly to record phenomena like omens, and each individual informant to the SFC typically provided a much shorter story than the witnesses provided to the BMH. As a result, folkloric memorates of omens tend to be less off handed, more colourful, and more concentratedly focused on the supernatural.

A particularly illustrative example of an omen from the SFC is a story titled 'A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry' which comes from Dan Moran, James McCann, and Pat Clarke of Garrowhill, county Longford. The story concerns a remarkable manifestation which appeared to Dan Moran around 5:30 AM on a September's day in 1915 as he took a break from harvesting some of Clarke's hay to rest atop a haycock. Due to its remarkable synthesis of apparition, fairy lore, and prophecy, this story merits quoting at length:

No sooner had he been seated on the hay-cock than he saw a regiment of soldiers on horseback come along the river bank from the fort direction. It passed along at the bottom of the meadow that he was in and straight to where James McCann and Pat Clarke had been engaged in pulling another cock of hay on a cart also on the Creenagh side of the river.

The regiment passed on both sides of them, and Dan noticed that the hay was swept up in the air all around them, so much so, that he was unable to see them. They saw nothing, but they felt a terrible furl-blast, was the information James McCann and Pat Clarke gave of it.

However, Dan followed the regiment with his eyes, and the next place it entered on its course by the river was a field of oats in stooks. The stooks of oats went topsy-turvy in the air among one another but no sooner had the regiment passed than the stooks were all in their places again as if nothing had happened.

Dan watched the course of the regiment as it crossed the road that leads from Longford to Drumlish, and careered by the river until it reached the source between the townlands of Leitrim and Prucklish; and then, it gradually sank behind the hill towards Ballagh...

When Dan went to his breakfast he related what he had seen. Peter Clarke, then a man of about seventy-five years said that such has not been seen for the past twenty-five years and it is a sign that we shall have a war again.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* Narrative weight here is calculated as the number of words in the story which concern the phenomena in question compared to the length of the story as a whole, formulated as a percentage.

This happened in September 1915, the year before the 1916 uprising.¹⁷⁴

This incident demonstrates how omens can grow in importance over time. Furthermore, it shows that omens often coexisted with (or even consisted of) other kinds of supernatural beliefs and phenomena, in this way, omens function almost meta-categorically. In this case, the apparition of the fairy cavalry riding out from their fort is an omen which signifies the fulfilment of the prophetic tradition invoked by Clarke. This case cannot cleanly be categorized and indeed could be construed as evidence against this project's methodological contention that subdividing the various kinds of supernatural phenomena is worthwhile analytically. However, this memorate should be more accurately seen as three separate phenomena; firstly, the accretion of supernatural tradition which comprises the 'haunting' of the fairy fort; secondly, the emergence of this regiment of fairy cavalry from the haunted fort that comprised the apparition seen by Moran and McCann; and finally, the phenomena that was created through the interpretation of Moran and McCann's experience as an omen through the lens of Clarke's memory of the history of ominous hauntings surrounding the fairy fort. The act of combining all these phenomena into one can be attributed to the teacher who curated this story, P. Mac Aonghusa, who made the editorial decision to weave the stories of Moran, McCann, and Clarke into a single narrative. Despite its outwardly uncategorizable appearance, this case epitomizes why sub-dividing supernatural phenomena is analytically worthwhile in that it gives us a far better understanding of both the metaphysical mechanics of this set of experiences and its provenance.

This suggests that omens can be considered akin to the varieties of ESP; though triggered through sensory stimuli, the lineage of omens can always be traced to either the precognitive faculties of a prophet, or a metaphysical synthesis of a complex of supernatural

¹⁷⁴ 'A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry', Garrowhill, Co. Longford, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0756, pp 406-407).

beliefs and anomalous experiences into a meme ('meme' as in Dawkins' sense of the term) which only exists in the abstract, waiting to be triggered by sensory stimuli which the omen's witness did not themselves determine.¹⁷⁵ An omen is a monument of mythological abstraction with a precognitive function which, unlike the premonition, can be invoked repeatedly. The fairy regiment of cavalry is one example of a repeatedly invoked omen, another is the falling of the 'Ballinagalliagh Rock' from Benbulbin mountain in county Sligo, described by the informant Mr. G. Shaw:

Within living memory part of this rock has been known to fall and each time an amount of twenty of thirty tons of rock falls. This reckoned by the people of the district as a very bad omen, and their reckoning has proved to be correct. On the first time it happened a man named Carroll was killed on the mountain by lightning. The second time it happened a man named Scanlon lost his life under tragic circumstances. The last time it happened was in 1922 and immediately afterwards Brigadier Devins and his comrades were near where the rock fell.¹⁷⁶

According to this informant, Brigadier Seamus Devins and his comrades would just afterwards be involved in the burning of Rahelly house.¹⁷⁷ Additionally, the falling of Ballinagalliagh rock would presage their impending demise; in September 1922 Devins and at least four of his comrades were executed by machine gun fire from Free State forces on Benbulbin mountain.¹⁷⁸

Witnessing the falling rocks, though not an extra-sensory experience, triggers the signification of a communally constructed abstraction, the omen. The omen effectively is this signification, which exists outside the realm of the traditional senses. Though random events like the one described above were more common triggers, such triggering could be made intentional; in some cases, it was ritualized and even systematized into a magical practice.

¹⁷⁵ 'Cultural Evolution', Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evolution-cultural/>), (accessed 6 Mar. 2023).

¹⁷⁶ 'Local Happenings', Mr. G. Shaw, Milltown, Co. Sligo (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0157, p. 284).

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 282-283.

¹⁷⁸ DP2054 Seamus Devins, (M.A.I, MSPA, DP2054 W50), pp 2-3. See also: DP654 Patrick Joseph Banks, (M.A.I, MSPA); DP1029 Henry Benson, (M.A.I, MSPA); DP1563 Patrick Carroll, (M.A.I, MSPA); DP5273 Thomas Langan, (M.A.I, MSPA).

Omen Divination

The most ritualistic, intentional, and magical form of precognition is ritualized omen divination. This takes many forms, and is otherwise known as fortune-telling, soothsaying, haruspicy, or augury, among many other titles. Omen divination consists of ritualized ceremonies whereby a pre-established set of omens are interpreted from a contained chaotic situation to deliver a prophecy. It is, in effect, the use of a ritual practice for interpreting omens. For example, a diviner might identify patterns in the flight of birds (augury), the disembowelled entrails of sacrificed animals (haruspicy), the random movements of lightly grasped rods (dowsing), or the leaves left in the bottom of a cup of tea (tasseomancy). Only a few examples of divination present themselves in the memoirs and BMH witness statements. Most accounts from witness statements or memoirs refer to incidents from the earliest years of the 1900's, well before the founding of the Irish Volunteers in 1914 or the Easter Rising in 1916. Effectively, divination was for most Irish revolutionaries a kind of boundary of credulity, largely due to its requirement for deliberate involved ritual and its condemnation by the Catholic church.

One early example is provided by Maud Gonne MacBride in her witness statement, where in the wake of a police raid on her house she describes how she became aware that her charwoman, Mrs. Fitz, had used tasseomancy to predict the birth of MacBride's son eleven months in advance:

I heard Mrs. Fitz's voice "You dirty scoundrel, daring to lay hands on a lady; you murderer, you double murderer, daring to touch a lady in her condition", but I was too excited to take in the meaning...It was only then I remembered to ask Mrs. Fitz the meaning of her words "a lady in her condition."

"Didn't you know, Madam, I saw him in his pram in the teacup and he's a grand boy, God bless him?"

My dear char was a witch with the teacup, for that boy in the pram was Sean who was born the following Feb. 7th.¹⁷⁹

Several accounts from the SFC evidence that the use of tea leaves to predict future occurrences was not isolated to rare individuals like Mrs. Fitz, even as late as the 1930s.¹⁸⁰ There is not much in this memorate that directly relates to or predicts events associated with the Irish Revolution; even Mrs. Fitz's prediction of Maud Gonne's pregnancy is only tangentially relevant to the revolutionary struggle. On a broader societal level however, historians such as Stephanie Rains have acknowledged the prevalence of so-called 'alternative literacies' involving divinatory practices like palmistry, graphology, and other forms of fortune-telling in Irish (and particularly Anglo-Irish) culture well past the first world war, despite condemnation from Catholic sources such as magazines like *Irish Rosary* and some Lenten pastorals printed in the *Irish Times*.¹⁸¹ Further evidence of the prevalence of divination can be found in the newspaper record.¹⁸²

More closely relevant examples to the Irish Revolution can be gleaned from Ernie O'Malley's memoir. In *On Another Man's Wound*, O'Malley references fortune telling several times, at one point even referring to himself as 'a very competent fortune-teller.'¹⁸³ In the introductory chapters he describes the divinatory prowess of his nanny:

Nannie could tell fortunes with tea-leaves: 'In the space of three you'll get a letter you won't expect... there's a red-haired man has a great wish for you.' She looked at the sky last thing night to find out the direction of the wind and the chances of rain. The sun-wise turn was important, we should pass the salt that way, or whatever was wanted at table. A Connachtman had leave to speak twice and to poke the fire, she said. Thunder

¹⁷⁹ Maud Gonne MacBride statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 317), pp. 8, 13.

¹⁸⁰ '(no title)', Allenwood, Co. Kildare, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, MS 0775, p. 9); 'Halloween Customs', James O' Regan, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo, (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 0119, p. 212); 'Superstitions', Kathleen Doyle, Cranny, Co. Clare (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 0603, p. 46); 'Visitors to the District', Joseph Quinn, Shanballymore, Co. Galway, (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 0037, pp 178-179).

¹⁸¹ Stephanie Rains, 'Reading the Hand: Palmistry, Graphology and Alternative Literacies' in Rebecca Barr, Sarah-Anne Buckley, and Muireann O'Cinneide (eds), *Literacy, language and reading in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Liverpool, 2019), pp 176-190; 'Lenten Pastorals', *Irish Times*, 18 Feb. 1901, p. 5; 'Seancus', *Irish Rosary*, Aug. 1901, p. 5.

¹⁸² 'Fortune-Telling in Dublin', *Irish Times*, 6 Nov. 1915, p. 3; 'Lady palmist: the constable's dark young lady', *Irish Independent*, 4 Jul. 1909, p. 11; 'Seancus', *Irish Rosary*, Aug. 1901, p. 5.

¹⁸³ O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound*, p. 188.

was God's voice in anger, lightning, earthquake or tidal wave punishments visited on the evil. We were afraid of the dark through stories of walking death, black dogs whose eyes were yellow fistfuls of fire, and the *coiste bodhar*, the terrible death coach. A ringing noise in the ear meant a friend dead and shooting stars were souls released from purgatory.¹⁸⁴

O'Malley also describes an incident from his childhood where 'an old woman told my fortune one day as I dried myself at her fire after I had fallen out of a punt. She looked at my feet as well as my hands and kept her hand on my head as she told of fighting; and trouble; but I do not remember the end of her tale.'¹⁸⁵ Evidently, divination was a distinct part of O'Malley's cultural milieu, which supports the contention of scholars such as Rains.

Another memorate comes from the witness statement of Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty. O'Hegarty describes how Dr. J.P. Henry, a member of the Gaelic League's Ard Choisde, consulted a fortune-teller: 'Once at a Gaelic League Seilg at Barnet, he crossed a gipsy's hand with silver, and she foretold that he would marry and have eleven children, though he was then middle aged. He laughed at the prophecy, but he did marry after he went to Galway.'¹⁸⁶ This memorate is probably referring to a variety of palm-reading. Though O'Hegarty labels this a 'prophecy', due to the method used to produce it, it is categorized here as a form of divination; this demonstrates the close linkage between these types of phenomena. Examples from the folklore collection further evidence that travelling persons were often believed to be capable of various forms of divination, and there is a great deal of other kinds of supernatural lore surrounding travelling people which is present in the collection.¹⁸⁷

In summary, divination was a relatively minor part of the precognitive side of the Irish Revolution; little evidence was found of divination being used as part of or against the

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁸⁶ Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty statement, (M.A.I., B.M.H. WS 839), p. 6.

¹⁸⁷ 'Visitors to the District', Joseph Quinn, Shanballymore, Co. Galway, (National Folklore Collection, S.F.C., MS 0037, pp 178-179); Duchas.ie, Explore by topic, Travellers (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/tpc/cbes/4427781>) (24 Nov. 2021).

revolutionary effort, or even to foretell related events. Revolutionaries typically ascribed the techniques and powers of divination to outsiders including older women, witches, and travellers, Ernie O'Malley's self-attribution notwithstanding. Arguably, the collaborative interpretation of some of the dreams and omens discussed previously might be considered a kind of divinatory practice. However, this study contends that there is a crucial difference; divination is ritualistic and premeditated, whereas the interpretation of unexpected dreams and omens is extemporaneous. Revolutionaries were rarely willing to intentionally engage in precognition (intentionality which divination requires), though they were happy to accept it and speculate about it when it was thrust upon them unexpectedly from the outside in the form of a dream, omen, prophecy, or premonition. Divination seems to be the boundary of credulity for Irish revolutionaries when it comes to precognition; up to this point they were willing to entertain the idea, but all save the most confident among them were reluctant to take direct personal responsibility for supernatural prognostications. This was probably more to do with religious objections than scientific ones, and such practices also had some legal ramifications (palmistry violated the 1735 Witchcraft Act and was subject to periodic police crackdowns in the early twentieth century); that being said, it seems unlikely that the prospect of violating British statutes would be the deciding factor in stymying any would-be Sinn Féin palmist.¹⁸⁸

Conclusion

Prophecies (and to a lesser but interrelated extent, omens) were resorted to by the revolutionary generation regularly. This chapter has demonstrated that there is a great deal of evidence for this conclusion present across a wide variety of primary sources. Prophecies were the most typical, diverse, and influential type of precognition. This study hypothesizes three main causes for this. Firstly, the idea and terminology of prophecy was, relative to other intellectual

¹⁸⁸ Rains, 'Reading the Hand', pp 181-187.

frameworks, both credible and readily accessible. In addition to prophetic terminology's widespread use in contemporary newsprint, such terminology was an integral part of both Catholic and Protestant religious tradition, and thus, using prophetic language was considerably more intuitive than terms only recently developed by psychical research societies. Furthermore, prophecy's religious validation left little opportunity for moral objections. Secondly, a wealth of longstanding and well circulated prophetic oral traditions existed in Irish society referring both to the powers of Irish saints and to escaping the yoke of British oppression. These oral traditions synthesized well with narratives of martyrdom and independence disseminated by Republican propagandists, and this synthesis would have been comfortable and even intuitive for Irish writers describing their experiences of the revolution. Thirdly, the hagiographical qualities of Irish history writing in the early twentieth century would easily combine with and encourage applying the prophetic mantle to martyred Republicans and popular Republican political figures. This history writing doubtlessly informed the recollections of revolutionaries describing their experiences in the decades after the conflict; such recollections are the main part of the sources used for this study. With these factors in mind, it is easy to see how prophecy became the predominant terminological framework for revolutionary engagement with precognition. Despite this predominance, there was a great deal of diversity in how prophetic language was used in the source materials presented here. In the public discourse of the time, it was used both in a facetious, hyperbolic fashion, and in an earnest fashion; often it could be difficult to say which fashion was being used in each source. This terminological vagary is compounded by the wide variation in intentionality presented by prophecies; many only took on the prophetic mantle years after their utterance, many were accidental, and many had unknowable intentions.

Nevertheless, clearly prophecy was a highly political variety of supernatural belief. Prophecies were often publicly uttered, would accrue around prominent individuals, and were

easily deployable to motivate political action and explain or contextualize political events.¹⁸⁹ Quantitative data supports this conclusion by demonstrating that the prophecies generally tended to be subversive, morbid, applicable to broad sections of society, and delivered intentionally by people who were marginalized to some extent.¹⁹⁰ Though a substantial minority concerned the fates of individuals, most were more involved with large scale political conflicts such as the Easter Rising, the War of Independence, the Irish Civil War, and partition. There were many subtleties to how prophetic language was deployed depending on a variety of factors including the political cause or event being prophesied about, the marginality of the prophets, and the subversiveness of the prophecy, along with a variety of other factors. This political and institutionally engaged aspect of prophecy is indicative of its externality, a feature which prophecy shares with the other types of phenomena explored in this chapter, namely, omens and divination.

This external aspect provided by lore or traditions drawn from the community of the percipient provided prophecies and omens with a reliable, attestable, and stable way of rationalizing chaotic experiences, a similarity shared with religious beliefs and practices. However, it would be misleading to say the material discussed here was religiously orthodox, clearly it was often institutionally liminal; though prophecies, omens, and divination originated from distinct bodies of myth and practice, they usually remained on some level outside of the religious institutions they coexisted with while simultaneously intersecting in non-antagonistic ways. The literary diet and folklore of the percipients discussed here often provided distinctly irreligious origins for prophecy, this folklore could also be employed to reinforce a sense of ethnic identity. Regardless of their relationship with religion, prophecies, omens, and divination required supernatural sources of inspiration. Terms such as fortune, fate, luck, providence,

¹⁸⁹ This echoes work done on political prophecy in the early modern period. See Taithe & Thornton (eds), *Prophecy*, pp 1-16, 51-70, 85-100, 119-142.

¹⁹⁰ See Appendices 15A, 15B, 16A, 16B, 16C, and 16D.

miracle, and destiny were often used in the source materials, implying that there was a common belief amongst revolutionaries that the future was being determined by larger inscrutable forces beyond their control. Such forces could be relied upon by ordinary people living in a turbulent political climate, providing them with a psychological coping strategy for feelings of anxiety and anger. Faced with this chaos and danger, revolutionaries could cling to signs provided by omens and prophecies to give themselves some sense of orderliness or certainty. This chaotic turbulence on an emotional level poignantly illustrates the general climate of fear within which those who experienced the Irish Revolution lived, a climate which was crucial to the spread of such supernatural beliefs. This conclusion is most obviously evidenced here by the discussion of the Black Pig of Kiltrustan, a complex of omens and prophecies actuated by the panic induced by the conscription crisis.

The Black Pig however was not alone in its phenomenological complexity. All omens, prophecies, and divinations were intrinsically linked; every prophecy or divination ritual was triggered by omens. The invocation of prophecies required triggering omens, omens which could come from the outside environment or from contrived rituals. The linkage of different kinds of supernatural phenomena into a single narrative was common, and indeed calls into question any kind of phenomenological subdivision of these narratives. This study contends that such subdivision is analytically worthwhile because it provides a far better understanding of both the metaphysical mechanics of such narratives and their provenance. The accounts discussed in this and preceding chapters evidence that omens, prophecies, and divination were not only narratives, but also discrete anomalous experiences which interacted with broader bodies of lore. These experiences would become building blocks of testimonies and narratives, and to understand more fully these testimonies and narratives the interrelationship between their constituent components must in turn be understood, such an understanding of this interrelationship requires separating the components in the analytical process.

The prophecies, omens, and divination discussed in this chapter show how both in the immediate experience of witnessing them, and in the later remembering and narrativization of them, they provided a sense of psychological relief from anxiety, and grief for Irish revolutionaries and their opponents, along with reinforcing a sense of Irish identity and serving political ends. Such phenomena had an important role in shaping the remembrance of the revolution, and such phenomena were typically catalysed by trauma. Prophecies were the most prevalent type of precognitive phenomena, and indeed paranormal phenomena in the Irish Revolution. Though the prevalence of omens was decidedly less than that of prophecies, their interrelationship with prophecy was quite strong, and therefore their importance was augmented. The relative scarcity of divination in the source materials investigated here indicates that ritualizing precognition to an occult degree was the boundary of credulity for Irish revolutionaries, supporting the conclusion that externalizing responsibility for the supernatural was common.

Conclusion

On 25 September 1925, Emily Ussher reflected on her experience living in Ireland during the Irish Revolution. From her point of view, the destruction wrought upon the land had been long prophesied, and early in her memoir she quoted a variety of prophetic 'folk-sayings' attributed to 'Colmcille' and 'oral tradition' which her friend Kate Cullinane related to her.¹⁹¹ Near to the end of her memoir, Ussher described how by 1923 these prophecies had largely been fulfilled:

But at last, in March 1923, was held the last meeting of the Field Headquarters at Ballinamult, when rifts were reported in the lute, and soon afterwards, April 10th, 1923, Kate's old prophecy seemed to be fulfilled, for, if not on the Comeraghs, yet on Creogh (the last spur of the Knockmealdowns over the Water Shed which divides from the Comeraghs) the last "battle" took place, and Liam Lynch, Commander in Chief of the I.R.A. was killed. Thus ended the war a few miles from our door...

"When the enthusiast of revolt has stood a thing on its head, there is nothing revolutionary for him to do but to put it on its legs again".

"The Republicans are wishing the English back".

"Ten Irishmen would weep on the grave of one Englishman" said Colmcille.

Much of Kate's prophecy had been fulfilled from the trivial to the tragic. The fine house has indeed been open for anyone to walk in and sleep there. Banks have been raided, closed, shot and broken into, occupied by both sides. The dog tax has been raised, and so have the rates. Each year has seemed to bring the Black Rate which nobody can pay, and yet, with compensation dues added, it still increases. As early as 1922 a machine gun had to help in the collection, and in the "republic of the Nina" [Nenagh] people have been forcibly expelled from their farms who could not pay them (and are cursing the Republican propagandists, who told them not to!). The Duke of Abercorn has long since governed Ulster with heavy breathings concerning law and order. The gentry have fled or been "hunted". A "real Parliament" sits in Dublin, and armed men have indeed walked themselves sore over Cappagh. Their last battle has been fought close by, and they have lost because they recognise they have been fighting their own people, and their own people have turned against them. Twice a relative peace came to us "between the hay and the corn", and those who sowed did not live to reap - their decaying bodies pecked by crows have been found in the cornfields around Clonmel, and every lonely tract holds its unknown graves.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ 'E. H. Ussher, The true story of a revolution. Or what one of my reviewers called "The rushing tragedy of Munster life"', 1925, (Church of Ireland, Representative Church Body Library, MS 70, pp 9-12). Ussher

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp 158-159, 170-171.

As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, many of the people who witnessed or participated in the Irish Revolution expressed sentiments similar to Ussher's, namely, that the conflict and its outcome were predestined and long prophesied. The supernatural was deeply integrated into their understanding, experience, and memories of the Irish Revolution.

This research demonstrates that those who experienced the revolution most directly had worldviews more substantially coloured with interpenetrated supernatural belief systems (religious, paranormal, and political) than has been previously understood, and that these systems had functional relevance to their psychology. Irish revolutionaries affected and were affected by the supernatural in a wide variety of ways, both in their immediate experience and later memory of that experience. This thesis has shown that there is a substantial and statistically significant volume of supernatural material to be found in operationally focused personal narratives of the Irish Revolution, narratives which were not intended to cover supernatural topics. These remembered supernatural experiences were often, though not exclusively, proximate to or intimately intertwined with traumatic experiences like the loss of loved ones, close encounters with death, and enacting, witnessing, or suffering extreme violence. Additionally, this study argues that the experience of precognition should be foregrounded in any study of the paranormal in the Irish Revolution as the data gathered by this research demonstrates that it was the most common variety of paranormal phenomena. The supernatural in the Irish Revolution was both informed by and would become informative to Irish folklore. A substantial volume of supernatural material related to the Irish Revolution was identified in the School's Folklore Collection, and furthermore, the supernatural material identified from non-folkloric sources analysed here is evidently influenced by Irish folklore. As the thesis has shown, the main ways in which supernatural phenomena affected the Irish Revolution were to shape how it was remembered, to provide psychological coping strategies

for trauma, and to provide opportunities for Irish revolutionaries to demonstrate their distinctive Irish identity.

The most prevalent kinds of supernatural phenomena were religious phenomena, followed by paranormal phenomena of various kinds. A more detailed breakdown of these categories and their subcategories can be found in the Introduction, visualized in Figures 2 through 4. This thesis has mostly concerned itself with paranormal phenomena, of which varieties of precognition were the most prevalent single category; as has been detailed in Figure 6 of the methodology chapter, the most prevalent types of precognition were prophecies, followed by premonitions, and omens. Closely following precognition in prevalence were apparitions and hauntings, which, if combined into a single category, would exceed precognition. Though no writer on the subject of the supernatural in the Irish Revolution has specifically made the claim that hauntings or apparitions were the most prevalent type of paranormal experience during the period, the historiography on the subject tends to focus on ghost stories, and the data gathered by this thesis suggests that a reappraisal of this focus should be undertaken in order to better reflect the large numbers of precognitive memorates in the primary source materials. This thesis has made a significant contribution to rectifying this issue. Other prevalent types of supernatural phenomena which deserve further scholarly attention are beliefs and practices associated with luck, and manifestations of civic religion such as oath-swearing rituals, beliefs in a nationalistic ‘spirit-wind’, and the cult-like veneration of nationalist martyrs.¹⁹³

The sheer volume and variety of supernatural memorates in retrospective source materials like BMH witness statements, memoirs, and the autobiographies of Irish revolutionaries identified and explored by this study provide ample evidence that supernatural

¹⁹³ Charlotte Elizabeth ‘Lottie’ MacManus, *White Light and Flame* (Dublin, 1929), p. 14.

phenomena had an important and nuanced role in how the revolution was remembered. The diverse array of supernatural experiences closely associated with traumatic events clearly shows that in many cases trauma did indeed catalyse supernatural experiences, both retrospectively and in the immediate experience of the conflict. The psychological function of retrospective accounts of the Irish Revolution was in part to process traumatic experiences, and in many cases, this involved the integration of the supernatural into narratives of the conflict. This thesis has demonstrated that discussions of supernatural phenomena, both in contemporaneous accounts and retrospective narratives of the conflict, were relevant to Irish revolutionary ideology for four main reasons. One was to emphasize the unique character of Irish national identity through expounding on supernatural beliefs particular to the Irish people, another was to elevate and idolize various prominent revolutionary leaders and martyrs by attributing supernatural qualities to their character or exploits, another was to portray the revolutionary struggle as whole as a divinely ordained and predestined struggle, and the fourth was to emphasize the spiritual dimension of Irish identity in contrast to the perceived diabolically materialistic character of British identity.

If their own words are to be believed, Irish revolutionaries and their communities experienced the supernatural on a regular basis during the Irish Revolution. They experienced it as inexplicable anomalies, as abstract belief, and through the performance of rituals. These experiences are both numerous and detailed enough to merit concerted and concentrated study. As a perspective with which to approach studying the Irish Revolution, investigating accounts of the supernatural reveal the emotional and psychological aspects of what it was like to experience that revolution which remain under-appreciated by most historians of the period. These findings present a challenge to interpretations of the Irish revolutionary generation as being hard-edged, disinclined to credulity, politically fixated gunmen with a thoroughly modern outlook. It also challenges some popular understandings of the IRA as having ‘killed

all belief in the supernatural'.¹⁹⁴ The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that Irish revolutionaries were substantially engaged with the supernatural. The data presented here, and the analysis of that data suggests that the supernatural side of the Irish Revolution was far more diverse, impactful, and historically rich than has previously been supposed, and that it merits further concentrated research.

Further work remains to be done on aspects of religious and supernatural experience during the Irish Revolution. Even during the early stages of this research when the keywords for the BMH witness statement archive were entered, the words which returned the most hits were 'mass', 'holy', 'luck', and 'priest'.¹⁹⁵ Prayers, the performance of sacraments, sectarian violence, miracles, and discussions of religious beliefs were quite common in the source materials. Of the 3,632 memorates identified in BMH witness statements and memoirs, 2,788 (roughly seventy-seven percent) were marked religious, and of these, 925 (roughly twenty-five percent of all memorates) concerned the performance of sacraments. For comparison, just 540 (roughly fifteen percent) were marked paranormal; even fewer, 434 (roughly twelve percent) concerned the national spirit (a kind of egregore-like manifestation of civic religion). It should be emphasized that religious phenomena were by far the most common type of supernatural phenomena collected, and merit further investigation in a future project. Furthermore, a great deal of material on the so-called national spirit was collected as well, and this material also merits further investigation in a future study. In addition, a variety of categories of supernatural phenomena were only briefly touched upon in the analytical phases of this study; these include luck, sacraments, sectarian conflict, oath swearing, curses, and secret societies. These bodies of source materials and categories of phenomena were found to be exceptionally expansive and

¹⁹⁴ 'Scéal V', Bríghid Bean Mhic Niocaill, Kilmaley, Co. Kildare, (National Folklore Collection, School's Folklore Collection, Vol. 0776, p. 197); Peter Somerville Large, *Cappaghglass* (London, 1985), pp 32-33.

¹⁹⁵ See Appendix 6 for a more thorough breakdown.

will repay further investigation. It is suggested that future research efforts on the topic of the supernatural in the Irish Revolution be focused there.

The conclusions tendered here, the data supporting those conclusions, and the processes developed to reach them offer a roadmap to participating in an entirely new frontier of modern Irish military history. This research makes an effort to get inside the heads of the Irish revolutionary generation while still maintaining quantitative rigorousness and shows how supernatural an insurgency can become. The conduct of this project has resulted in the creation of several sizeable databases of memorates, and it is suggested that these might be of use to future scholars, who could offer other interpretations on the various memorates identified here in their future publications.¹⁹⁶ These databases are intended to be freely available to all. As an example of what might be done with them, these databases include geographical information on each of the memorates, and this information could be used to create maps of the prevalence of different types of supernatural beliefs by county. In addition, the databases contain information on the gender of the percipients of supernatural phenomena, and thus, in-depth gender-based analyses could be conducted. To these could be added numerous other interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches, and readers of this thesis are encouraged to apply their own particular expertise to the data offered here.

The material investigated here is clearly highly diverse and can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways through a wide variety of frameworks. As explained in the Introduction and Methodology chapter, the underlying causes of many of these supernatural memorates are by their nature difficult to identify, and readers of this thesis are encouraged to consider various explanations for their occurrence in metaphorical superposition until further evidence can be found. It seems likely however that, for many of these memorates, no further evidence will

¹⁹⁶ For access to a cloud storage folder containing the excel files which represent the entirety of the databases created during the conduct of this project, use the following link: (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1V2fvZCnJgbNtar6ZpDu5hbselNFxpM9T?usp=sharing>).

ever be found, and that they will forever remain unexplained. This should not be taken as a carte-blanche to frame these inexplicable stories for whatever polemical end suits the user, but rather this metaphorical superposition should be seen as an *inherent quality* of supernatural memorates of the Irish Revolution. They have become, on a very fundamental level, neither here nor there. A fundamental sense of liminality is a characteristic shared by a wide variety of supernatural customs and beliefs from around the world, which are often situated along boundaries geographical, social, and psychological.¹⁹⁷ The memorates explored by this study are no exception, and furthermore, due to the passage of time and their often vague provenance, these memorates have become liminal not just in their qualitative features, but on a deep ontological level.

The findings of this study are intended to be a step towards a psychic re-enchantment of the Irish Revolution. Re-enchanting not in such a way as to obfuscate the truth or reinforce dangerous mythologies, but instead to illuminate previously occluded supernatural aspects of the Irish revolutionary mind. To be understood, these aspects require the temporary suspension-in-air of reductive, disciplinarily hidebound, and materialistic outlooks and historical methods. If nothing else, the strange and mysterious stories explored in this dissertation have offered an entertaining, colourful, and thought-provoking journey. It is hoped that this effort will provide starting points for, inform, and inspire future research into this topic. Furthermore, it is hoped that the challenging conclusions of this study will provoke further discourse. The study of the supernatural beliefs of historical actors is a worthy and enlightening pursuit. It

¹⁹⁷ John Björkman, 'The spirit of the place and the place of the spirit: local spirits, boundaries, and social order in southwest Finnish folklore' in *Temenos: Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion*, lvii, no. 2 (2021), pp 209-30; Vito Carrassi, 'Through the Apulian streets: the liminal space-time of the Holy Week's processions' in *Folklore (Tartu, Estonia)*, lxxviii (2020), pp 173-191; Anelise Farris, 'Experimenting with the occult: the role of liminality in slumber party rituals' in *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, vi, no. 1 (2017), pp 154-179; Mikako Iwatake, 'Boundary, the other world and the stranger: liminality and space in Japanese folklore study' in *Temenos: Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion*, xxviii (1992), pp 81-97; Margaret A. Mills, 'Afghano-Persian trickster women: definitions, liminalities, and gender' in *Marvels & Tales*, xxxii, no. 1 (2018), pp. 33-58; Andrei V. Tutorsky, 'Drinking in the north of European Russia: from traditional to totalising liminality' in *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, x, no. 2 (2016), pp 7-18.

provides us with an exciting and entertaining window into some of the most curious and beautiful aspects of the interior experience of our ancestors. In its alien-ness, the history of the supernatural can immerse us into the feeling of what it what like to live in the past in a way that traditional military and political histories cannot. These insights, along with the sacrifice of time and energy which this study represents, are a painstakingly wrought offering to a growing historiography of the supernatural.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Paranormal Phenomena in Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements

Phenomena Type	Number of Memorates	Average Narrative Weight ¹	Average Length in Words	Average Combat Proximity ²
Precognition	200	0.82%	172	1.1
Apparitions	97	0.93%	229	0.9
Hauntings	71	0.90%	238	0.7
<i>Precognitive Apparitions</i>	13	1.26%	303	0.6
<i>Precognitive Hauntings</i>	6	0.61%	280	0.7
<i>Apparitional Hauntings</i>	34	0.90%	334	0.6
<i>Precognitive Apparitional Hauntings</i>	5	0.66%	300	0.4

¹ Narrative weight describes the length of a given memorate in words expressed as a percentage of the length of the entire source in words. The values expressed in this column are the mean average of all the narrative weights of the memorates describing a given phenomenon type.

² Each phenomenon's proximity to combat was evaluated on a scale of zero-three, a value of three was given to phenomena which occurred in the middle of combat, a value of zero was given to phenomena which occurred at least a month away from any personal experience of combat; one was given for a week or more away, two for less than a day.

Appendix 2: Precognition, Apparitions, and Hauntings in the SFC

Phenomena Type	Number of Memorates	Average Narrative Weight	Average Length in Words
Precognition	74	57.09%	158.17
Apparitions	149	63.45%	141.27
Hauntings	132	62.11%	137.55
<i>Precognitive Apparitions</i>	18	73.22%	161.16
<i>Precognitive Hauntings</i>	6	77.77%	240
<i>Apparitional Hauntings</i>	90	64.59%	151.75
<i>Precognitive Apparitional Hauntings</i>	4	82.49%	183

Appendix 3: Gender and Premonitions in Memoirs and BMH Witness Statements

Gender of Percipient	Number of Memorates	Avg. Narrative Weight	Avg. Length in Words	Avg. Combat Proximity	Avg. Credulity	Avg. Religiosity	Avg. Age of Percipient
Female	14	1.10%	185	1.21	3.86	0.1	38.69
Male	71	0.61%	109	1.7	3.52	0.4	24.46

Appendix 4: Premonitions in BMH Witness Statements by Combat Proximity

Witness Name	WS #	Page(s)	Combat Proximity ¹	Death Relation ²
Vincent Byrne	0423	12, 13	3	No
John McCoy	0492	99	3	No
Mary Flannery Woods	0624	62	3	Yes
James Stapleton	0822	62	3	No
John Hayden (Rev. Fr Augustine)	0920	4	3	Yes
John Hayden (Rev. Fr Augustine)	0920	2, 3	3	Yes
John Hayden (Rev. Fr Augustine)	0920	23, 24	3	Yes
Christopher M. Byrne	1014	12	3	No
Sean MacEntee	1052	119	3	Yes
Gerald Doyle	1511	32	3	Yes
Maurice A. McGrath	1701	19	3	No
Mícheál Ó Droighnáin	1718	27	3	Yes
W. P. Travers (Rev. Fr. Aloysius)	0200	16,17	2	Yes
John Flannery	0287	13	2	Yes
Harry Nicholls	0296	9	2	No
Patrick Egan	0327	14	2	No
Rev. Monsignor J.T. McMahon	0362	7, 8	2	Yes
Sean Corr	0458	9, 10	2	No
Michael Lynch	0511	109, 110, 111	2	Yes
Michael Lynch	0511	68	2	No
Sean Prendergast	0755.1	119, 120	2	No
Sean Prendergast	0755.2	386	2	No
Sean Prendergast	0755.2	370	2	No
Michael Sheerin	0803	26, 27	2	No
Seán Moylan	0838	146	2	Yes
James Kilmartin	0881	19	2	No
Mary Leech (Nee O'Meehan)	1034	3	2	Yes

¹ Each premonition's proximity to perilous and severely stressful situations (typically combat) was evaluated on a scale of zero to three; a value of zero was given to phenomena which occurred at least a month away from any personal experience of such a situation, a value of one was given for a week or more away, two for less than a day away, and a value of three was given to phenomena which occurred during a severely stressful and perilous situation.

² This value indicates if the premonition concerned a death.

Geoffrey Ibberson	1307	6	2	No
Michael Davern	1348	52	2	No
Patrick H. O'Dwyer	1432	26	2	Yes
John J. O'Brien	1647	32	2	No
John C. King	1731	39, 40, 41	2	Yes
Jeremiah Mee	0379	22	1	Yes
Vincent Byrne	0423	29	1	No
Sean Kenny	0688	Pamphlet, 17	1	Yes
Frank De Burca	0694	4	1	Yes
James O'Shea	0733	37	1	No
Sean Prendergast	0755.3	619	1	No
Thomas Ryan	0783	55	1	No
Charles Donnelly	0824	3	1	No
Seán Moylan	0838	180, 181	1	No
Sean Leavy	0954	11	1	Yes
Joseph V. Lawless	1043	124	1	No
Andrew Kirwan	1179	9, 10	1	Yes
Art O'Donnell	1322	16	1	No
Daniel O'Shaughnessy	1435	14	1	Yes
John J. O'Brien	1647	18	1	Yes
Frank Robbins	0585	101, 102	0	No
Katherine Barry-Moloney	0731	10	0	Yes
Ina Heron	0919	42	0	Yes
George Chester Duggan	1099	20	0	No
Eamon Broy	1280	7,8	0	No
Joseph McCarthy	1497	77	0	No
Patrick J. Little	1769	81, 82	0	Yes
Totals: 54 Premonitions in 45 Statements			Average Rating: 1.69	Yes: 25 / No: 29

Appendix 5A: Precognition Memorates in BMH Witness Statements

Witness Name(s)	WS#	Page Location(s)	Credulity ³	Narrative Weight ⁴	Word Ct.
Liam O Briain	0006	18	3	1.78%	142
Peadar S. Doyle	0155	7	2	0.19%	23
W. P. Travers (Rev. Fr. Aloysius)	0200	16, 17	4	4.12%	501
Frank Henderson	0249	13	4	0.60%	142
Grace Plunkett (Nee Gifford)	0257	11,12	4	4.90%	235
Liam T. Cosgrave	0268	5	4	0.77%	92
John Flannery	0287	13	4	0.16%	25
Harry Nicholls	0296	9	3	0.24%	9
Maud Gonne MacBride	0317	8,13	4	0.64%	61
Patrick Egan	0327	14	3	0.51%	69
Oscar Traynor	0340	4	4	0.43%	120
Oscar Traynor	0340	4	4	0.32%	89
James McGuill	0353	19, 20	4	0.78%	289
Rev. Monsignor J.T. McMahon	0362	7, 8	4	1.32%	156
Robert Holland	0371	26, 36	2	1.86%	250
Jeremiah Mee	0379	22	3	0.73%	95
Peig Conlon	0419	3	4	2.22%	99
Vincent Byrne	0423	12, 13	4	0.09%	25
Vincent Byrne	0423	29	4	0.41%	108
Thomas Devine	0428	7, 8	4	3.13%	150
Sean Corr	0458	9, 10	4	2.26%	166
John McCoy	0492	99	3	0.36%	194
Michael Lynch	0511	109, 110, 111	4	1.04%	579
Michael Lynch	0511	68	2	0.05%	28
Michael Lynch	0541	Appendix A p. 2	3	0.11%	12
Frank Robbins	0585	101, 102	4	0.16%	80
Frank Robbins	0585	20	4	0.41%	206
Mary Flannery Woods	0624	Appendix C p. 2	4	0.60%	198
Mary Flannery Woods	0624	62	4	0.18%	59
Sean Kenny, Michael Keogh, and Joseph O'Shea	0688	Pamphlet p. 17	2	0.49%	100
Frank De Burca	0694	4	2	0.32%	29
Patrick J. Bermingham	0697	1, 2	4	8.44%	459

³ Credulity was evaluated on a scale from zero to four, with zero representing explicit doubt of the witness as to the supernaturality of the phenomenon, and four representing the witness's explicit belief in its supernaturality.

⁴ The percentage of words in the primary source document dedicated to describing the memorate.

Michael Noyk	0707	3, 4	0	0.09%	34
Maurice Forde, Peadar McCann, Thomas Daly, Sean Kenny, Michael Keogh, Joseph O'Shea, and Timmy O'Sullivan	0719	10	4	1.09%	70
Desmond Ryan	0725	10	4	3.03%	122
Katherine Barry-Moloney	0731	10	4	0.40%	10
James O'Shea	0733	37	2	0.43%	92
James O'Shea	0733	35	4	0.37%	79
James O'Shea	0733	39	0	0.19%	41
Thomas J. Meldon	0734	16, 20	4	1.68%	484
Thomas J. Meldon	0734	22	4	0.39%	112
Sean Prendergast	0755	119, 120	4	0.10%	197
Sean Prendergast	0755	386	4	0.05%	103
Sean Prendergast	0755	370	4	0.02%	49
Sean Prendergast	0755	213	3	0.09%	175
Sean Prendergast	0755	619	3	0.02%	34
Patrick Moylett	0767	30, 31	4	0.76%	226
Patrick Moylett	0767	5	4	0.53%	158
Thomas Ryan	0783	55	4	0.25%	94
Michael Sheerin	0803	26, 27	4	0.70%	146
Mary Clancy	0806	5	4	0.40%	28
James Stapleton	0822	62	4	0.07%	21
Charles Donnelly	0824	3	4	1.25%	36
Seán Moylan	0838	146	4	0.10%	90
Seán Moylan	0838	196, 197	2	0.12%	110
Seán Moylan	0838	180, 181	3	0.46%	412
Seán Moylan	0838	196	4	0.10%	87
Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty	0839	6	3	1.54%	143
James Kilmartin	0881	19	4	1.09%	112
Seamus Ua Caomhanaigh	0889	104, 105	4	0.38%	178
Edward Moane	0896	3	4	0.52%	52
Mary MacGeehin	0902	9, 10	2	4.40%	183
James Larkin Jr.	0906	2, 3, 10	3	7.22%	288
Ina Heron	0919	42	4	0.16%	71
John Hayden (Rev. Fr Augustine)	0920	23,24	4	7.53%	699
John Hayden (Rev. Fr Augustine)	0920	4	4	3.06%	284
John Hayden (Rev. Fr Augustine)	0920	2,3	4	2.29%	213
Ernest Blythe	0939	89, 90	4	0.12%	77

Ernest Blythe	0939	67	0	0.10%	64
Sean Leavy	0954	11	4	0.66%	55
Alice Ginnell	0982	49	3	0.15%	36
Alice Ginnell	0982	74, 75	4	0.43%	105
Alice Ginnell	0982	59	4	0.24%	58
Christopher M. Byrne	1014	5	2	2.67%	130
Christopher M. Byrne	1014	12	3	0.78%	38
Mary Leech (Nee O'Meehan)	1034	3	4	9.87%	126
Joseph V. Lawless	1043	126	4	0.15%	205
Joseph V. Lawless	1043	124	3	0.03%	43
Sean MacEntee	1052	119	4	0.29%	114
Patrick Mullooly	1086	34	4	0.20%	47
Michael J. Kehoe	1092	11	4	0.44%	38
George Chester Duggan	1099	20	2	0.10%	15
Patrick J. Casey	1148	Appendix A p. 3	4	0.25%	32
Michael O'Kelly	1155	51	4	0.95%	225
Michael Kilroy	1162	57	4	1.28%	295
Andrew Kirwan	1179	9, 10	3	1.79%	109
Eamon Broy	1280	7,8	4	0.17%	94
Geoffrey Ibberson	1307	6	4	0.48%	25
Art O'Donnell	1322	16	4	0.14%	31
Seamus Doyle	1342	9	4	0.24%	13
Michael Davern	1348	52	4	0.53%	112
Patrick H. O'Dwyer	1432	26	3	0.66%	59
Daniel O'Shaughnessy	1435	14	3	0.40%	171
James Leahy	1454	41, 42, 43, 44, 46	0	3.42%	941
Joseph McCarthy	1497	77	3	0.94%	231
Gerald Doyle	1511	21, 22, 29	4	0.55%	171
Gerald Doyle	1511	92, 93	4	0.25%	78
Gerald Doyle	1511	32	4	0.25%	78
Gerald Doyle	1511	38	4	0.08%	25
Edward Brennan	1514	3,4,	4	2.49%	56
Pádraig Ó Fathaigh	1517	3,4	4	7.71%	247
Michael J. Crowley	1603	19	4	1.84%	163
John J. O'Brien	1647	32	4	0.54%	69
John J. O'Brien	1647	18	4	0.22%	28
Henry O'Mara	1652	9	4	3.60%	184
Maurice A. McGrath	1701	19	4	0.15%	27
Mícheál Ó Droighnáin	1718	27	4	1.94%	242

Séumas Robinson	1721	33	0	0.31%	77
John C. King	1731	39, 40, 41	2	2.19%	329
Cahir Davitt	1751	87, 88, 100	4	0.83%	321
Daniel Breen	1763	94, 95	4	0.39%	233
Andrew McDonnell	1768	64,65,66	4	2.40%	561
Patrick J. Little	1769	21	4	0.15%	59
Patrick J. Little	1769	81, 82	4	0.61%	238
Kevin R. O'Shiel	1770	131, 132	4	0.25%	121
115 Memorates / 86 Statements		Averages:	3.48	1.17%	146 words

Appendix 5B: Precognition Memorates in the SFC

Vol. #	Page(s)	Type	Title	Informant	Location	Words
0038C	(10) 16	Prophecy	Béaloideas	Máirtín Ó Riain	Shrulle, Co. Galway	155
0046	247	Prophecy	Scéal	Máire Ní Ghiollachomáin	Barnacurra, Co. Galway	106
0051	51	Prophecy	The Local Landlords - The Burkes of Marblehill	John Fahy	Curragh, Co. Galway	80
0057	160-161	Omen	A Story	Mr J. Burke	Portumna, Co. Galway	46
0131B	(02) 48-51	Prophecy	Tairngreacht Bhrian Rua Uí Chearbháin	Séamus Mac Einrí	Inishbiggle, Co. Mayo	285
0138D	(03)19	Prophecy	Mooney	Ted Hastings	Tawnyslinnaun, Co. Mayo	31
0152	395	Prophecy	Our Local Patron Saint	Tomás Ó Léonard	Killacorraun, Co. Mayo	47
0157	282-284	Omen	Local Happening	Mr G. Shaw	Ballynagalliagh, Co. Sligo	320
0157	238	Omen	Historical Tradition - Another Version of the Shooting	Henry Currid	Lugatober, Co. Sligo	26
0167	103-105	Prophecy	Donaghtrane Bridge	John Mc Hugh	Farranmacfarrell, Co. Sligo	275
0188	229-230	Omen	Fairy Fort	None Specified	Sroove, Co. Sligo	302
0225	338	Prophecy	Superstitions	Francis Michael Mc Govern	Cloverhill, Co. Leitrim	28
0225	338	Prophecy	Superstitions	Francis Michael Mc Govern	Cloverhill, Co. Leitrim	15
0243	283-285	Prophecy	The Hanging Tree	Tomás Mac Mághnuis	Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon	399
0250	9-10	Prophecy	My Home District	Nora Hughes	Creta, Co. Roscommon	196
0252	43	Omen	The Care of Our Farm Animals	Mrs Tom Brady	Annaghbeg, Co. Roscommon	40
0255	31-32	Prophecy	Donal Cam	Bean Mhic Oireachtaigh	Carrigeen, Co. Roscommon	94
0255	438	Prophecy	Folklore - Strange Story	Michael J. Mc Namara	Kilglass, Co. Roscommon	113
0255	117	Dream	Local Happenings	None Specified	Carrigeen, Co. Roscommon	148
0257	384-385	Prophecy	No Title	Patrick Coffey	Ashbrook, Co. Roscommon	161
0300	33	Prophecy	Tairngreacht Mac Amhlaoibh ós na hAonta	Eamonn Mac Fírbisig	Drimoleague, Co. Cork	82
0302	40-41	Prophecy	Tairngreacht Mhic Amhlaoibh	Bean Uí Dhrisceoil	Drimoleague, Co. Cork	105
0311	143-144	Premonition	The Fall of Rosscarbery Barracks	None Specified	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	124
0311	165-166	Dream	The Story of the Fight at Burgatia House	Mr Jack Corkerry	Bandon, Co. Cork	98
0311	153-154	Premonition	Death of a Patriot, Idol of the West Cork Brigade	None Specified	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	35

0311	156	Premonition	Death of a Patriot, Idol of the West Cork Brigade	None Specified	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	44
0326	208-209	Prophecy	An Creachaillin Éithigh	Seán Ó Liatháin	Slieveveagh, Co. Cork	397
0364	171	Prophecy	Local Poets	Denis Cremin	Bweeng, Co. Cork	46
0382	142-143	Prophecy	Cloyne - County Cork	Muiris Ó Spealáin	Cloyne, Co. Cork	165
0405	425	Omen	Mionrudai Suimiúla	None Specified	Listowel, Co. Kerry	60
0405	463	Omen	Piseoga	None Specified	Listowel, Co. Kerry	74
0434	230-232	Omen	No Title	None Specified	Killorglin, Co. Kerry	117
0440	136-137	Prophecy	Historical Tradition	Mrs M. Lambe	Ballyvelly, Co. Kerry	76
0444	264	Prophecy	Local Place Names	Philip Reidy	Maglass, Co. Kerry	89
0462C	(08) 28-29	Omen	Bealoideas	None Specified	Drinagh, Co. Kerry	138
0465	71	Omen	No Title	None Specified	Blackwater Bridge, Co. Kerry	87
0468	20-21	Prophecy	Derryquin	Muiris Mac Gearailt	Sneem, Co. Kerry	129
0471	107	Prophecy	Lucht Siúil	Diarmad Ó Donnchadha	Carhoonahone, Co. Kerry	128
0473	4, 5	Prophecy	Caisleán Uinn	Mícheál Ó Fóghludha	Letter East, Co. Kerry	141
0473	361-362	Prophecy	An Seanchaisleán	Máire Bean Uí Riordáin	Kilnabrack Lower, Co. Kerry	55
0489	218-219	Dream	Hidden Treasure	Pádraig O Tuama	Ballynoe, Co. Limerick	190
0521	25-26	Prophecy	Glenstal	Brighid Ní Riain	Cappamore, Co. Limerick	116
0576	216-217	Prophecy	Colm Cille's Prophecies	Mrs O' Connor	Boytonrath, Co. Tipperary	248
0583	318	Dream	No Title	None Specified	Glenough Lower, Co. Tipperary	98
0592	461	Prophecy	Cánach na Tarngaireachta	Ss. Ó Muineóg	Kilclaran, Co. Clare	49
0596	95	Prophecy	The Lake Horse of Cullane	Pat Clune	Quin, Co. Clare	68
0604	35	Prophecy	A Story - Biddy Earley	Jenny Moore	Ballynacally, Co. Clare	80
0604	161	Prophecy	A Story - Biddy Earley	Tomás Ó Cuinneagáin	Ballynacally, Co. Clare	43
0678	7	Prophecy	No Title	Bean Uí Chonchobhair	Tullyallen, Co. Louth	31
0700	165-167	Prophecy	The Rider of Ardnagannagh	Br. Abban O' Donoghue	Navan, Co. Meath	303
0730	516	Prophecy	The Rochfort Family	Phyllis O' Hara	Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath	137
0743	132	Omen	Bird-Lore	None Specified	Moyvoughly, Co. Westmeath	39
0745	210-213	Prophecy	Moate Carmelite Convent	S. Ó Ruairc, L. Mac Coiligh	Moate, Co. Westmeath	410
0749	12, 13	Prophecy	A Story	Mrs Curley	Athlone, Co. Westmeath	214
0750	286-288	Prophecy	My Home District	Bernard Mc Guire	Lisnacreavy, Co. Longford	381
0756	406-407	Omen/Prophecy	A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry	P. Mac Aonghusa	Garrowhill, Co. Longford	404
0761	220-225	Dream/Prophecy	No Title	Patrick Connolly	Aghnaclyff, Co. Longford	963
0774	30	Premonition	The Black and Tans	None Specified	Staplestown, Co. Kildare	93

0821	303-304	Prophecy	Archaeological	Jack Heelion	Ballygaddy, Co. Offaly	93
0846	362-363	Prophecy	Where I live	Mrs Winnie Murphy	Ballyfoile, Co. Kilkenny	190
0871	63	Omen	Old Stories - An Anglo-Irish War Story	Mr Thomas Gleeson	Kinnagh, Co. Wexford	110
0898	23-24	Omen	An Old Story	Mrs D. O' Neill	Chapel Lane, Co. Wexford	63
0960	122-124	Dream	Burke's Dream	Mr James Mc Kenna	Tamlat, Co. Monaghan	249
0964	220	Prophecy	Warriors	Owen Mc Govern	Carrowmore, Co. Cavan	227
0995	167-168	Omen	Strange Animals	Mrs Reilly	Dungummin Lower, Co. Cavan	76
1039	212-213	Omen	Strange Happenings on Halloween	Mrs K. Gallagher	Cashelcummin, Co. Donegal	269
1050	95-96	Prophecy	Tairngreacht Cholm Chille	Aine M. Ni Fhuathaigh	Loughmuck, Co. Donegal	315
1054	62	Omen	Tobar Beannaithe	Seamus Mac Cnaimhsighe	Derryhenny, Co. Donegal	85
1091	24-26	Prophecy	Tairngreacht Choilm Chille	Colm Ó Baoighill	Croaghross, Co. Donegal	395
1096	316-318	Prophecy	Story of Drumboe Castle	None Specified	Dooish, Co. Donegal	309
1098	243	Omen	The Tricolour	James Mc Loughlin	Tievebrack, Co. Donegal	209
1098	150	Omen	Local Poets	Thomas Carlin	Dungormon, Co. Donegal	11
1115	159-160	Omen	No Title	None Specified	Ballylosky, Co. Donegal	121
1122	101	Prophecy	The Palm and the Shamrock	Patrick Kelly	Urrismenagh, Co. Donegal	59

Premonitions: 4

Average: 158.17

Dreams: 5

Omens: 19

Prophecies: 44

Omen-Prophecies: 1

Dream-Prophecies: 1

Appendix 5C: Precognition Memorates in Memoirs, Diaries, and other sources written by contemporaries and veterans.

Author	Title	Publication	Page(s)	Narrative Weight	Words
Darrell Figgis	<i>A Chronicle of Jails</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	26-27	0.17%	35
Frank Gallagher	<i>Days of Fear</i>	(London, 1928)	100-101	0.60%	189
Frank Gallagher	<i>Days of Fear</i>	(London, 1928)	20	0.11%	36
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	(Dublin, 1979)	233-234	0.11%	158
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	(Dublin, 1979)	197	0.06%	89
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	(Dublin, 1979)	207	0.02%	27
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	(Dublin, 1979)	112	0.10%	135
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	(Dublin, 1979)	200	0.05%	68
Caroline May Woodcock	<i>Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland</i>	(London, 1921)	80-81	1.17%	270
Caroline May Woodcock	<i>Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland</i>	(London, 1921)	119-120	0.39%	89
Padraig de Burca, John F. Boyle	<i>Free State or Republic?</i>	(London, 1922)	12	0.36%	90
Padraig de Burca, John F. Boyle	<i>Free State or Republic?</i>	(London, 1922)	8	0.14%	34
Padraig de Burca, John F. Boyle	<i>Free State or Republic?</i>	(London, 1922)	18	0.11%	27
Tom Barry	<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	(Cork, 2013)	204-205	0.13%	111
Tom Barry	<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	(Cork, 2013)	224, 370-371	0.10%	82
Tom Barry	<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	(Cork, 2013)	319	0.06%	51
Tom Barry	<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	(Cork, 2013)	59	0.05%	39
Tom Barry	<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	(Cork, 2013)	315	0.05%	39
Tom Barry	<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	(Cork, 2013)	310-311	0.05%	41
Sir Henry Robinson	<i>Memories Wise and Otherwise</i>	(London, 1943)	332	0.21%	57
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	(Cork, 2010)	140	0.29%	198
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	(Cork, 2010)	154	0.15%	99
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	(Cork, 2010)	168	0.05%	33
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	(Cork, 2010)	153-154	0.04%	28
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	(Cork, 2010)	127	0.03%	23

Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	(Cork, 2010)	144-145	0.13%	91
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	(Cork, 2010)	178	0.26%	176
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	21	0.10%	132
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	26	0.03%	42
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	105	0.01%	18
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	136	0.09%	125
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	137	0.08%	102
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	141	0.09%	125
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	188	0.01%	14
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	254	0.03%	34
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	272	0.03%	34
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	328	0.01%	18
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	387	0.02%	28
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	105-106	0.25%	342
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	105, 107	0.13%	171
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	(Cork, 2013)	398-400	0.08%	104
Liam Mellows	<i>The History of the Irish Boy Scouts</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	45	1.12%	149
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	(London, 1923)	391-392	0.70%	465
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	(London, 1923)	404	0.21%	140
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	(London, 1923)	430-431	0.16%	105
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	(London, 1923)	435	0.13%	88
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	(London, 1923)	415, 420	0.10%	67
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	(London, 1923)	371	0.05%	35
Sir John Lavery	<i>The Life of a Painter</i>	(London, 1940)	226-227	0.17%	144
P.S. O'Hegarty	<i>The Victory of Sinn Fein</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	133-151	13.59%	7598
P.S. O'Hegarty	<i>The Victory of Sinn Fein</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	44-45	0.48%	270
Michael Brennan	<i>The War in Clare</i>	(Dublin, 1980)	94	0.10%	34
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	17	0.31%	260
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	37	0.17%	147

Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	41	0.07%	55
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	172-173, 175-176	0.37%	308
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	137-138	0.25%	210
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	135-136	0.05%	45
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	23	0.11%	95
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	(Cork, 1972)	213	0.05%	40
Maurice Harnett	<i>Victory and Woe</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	20	0.08%	48
Maurice Harnett	<i>Victory and Woe</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	67-68	0.06%	41
Maurice Harnett	<i>Victory and Woe</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	49	0.14%	90
Maurice Harnett	<i>Victory and Woe</i>	(Dublin, 2015)	115	0.03%	18
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	(Dublin, 1998)	70	0.04%	31
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth Was Mine</i>	(Dublin, 1998)	187	0.12%	102
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	(Dublin, 1998)	244	0.03%	22
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	(Dublin, 1998)	250	0.11%	92
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	(Dublin, 1998)	211-212	0.07%	57
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	(Dublin, 1998)	54-55	0.51%	443
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	92-93	0.32%	189
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	62	0.29%	174
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	53-55	0.93%	548
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	86-87	0.14%	83
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	110-112	1.15%	680
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	109-110	0.37%	216
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	112	0.35%	205
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	122-123	0.22%	130
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	88	0.20%	119
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	162	0.05%	32
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	103-104	0.37%	216
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	136	0.06%	38
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	197	0.09%	54
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	83-84	0.11%	65
Charlotte 'Lottie' MacManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	(Dublin, 1929)	98	0.10%	59
			Averages:	0.35%	207

Appendix 6: List of Keywords for BMH Search

Key term	Hits
Mass	628
Priest	532
Luck*	446
Holy	442
Funeral	421
Impossible	410
Catholic	361
Strange	328
God	327
Spirit	317
Protestant	269
Grave	257
Priests	210
Confession	209
Fate	181
Grace	181
Procession	169
Extraordinary	164
Hell	163
Burial	161
Imagine	161
Orange	161
Curate	144
Rosary	143
Terror	138
Cemetery	137
Mental	134
Graveyard	133
Mad	132
Spirits	127
Fort	126
Coffin	122
Peculiar	119
Powers	111
Religious	111
Clergy	109
Communion	108
Prayers	106
Prayer	104
Ruins	104
Initiated	102

Clerical	101
Catholics	93
Cat	92
Blessing	91
Confessions	90
Nerves	88
Candle	84
Ceremony	79
Orangemen	77
Blessed	76
Nuns	76
Spiritual	75
Sin	74
Clergyman	73
Bone	72
Horror	71
Altar	70
Funny	70
Religion	68
Mystery	67
Dream	65
Medium	65
Coincidence	64
Fancy	61
Pray	60
Praying	60
Churchyard	58
Graves	58
Evil	56
Vision	56
Imagined	54
Imagination	53
Presbytery	53
Astonished	52
Devil	52
Ruin	52
Absolution	51
Alien	51
Bless	50
Sacred	50
Bones	49
Candles	49

Rath	49
Queer	48
Funerals	47
Spell	46
Strangely	46
Orangeman	44
Rites	44
Coffins	42
Damned	42
Fantastic	42
Statue	42
Impossibility	41
Nun	41
Saint	40
Astonishment	39
Miraculous	39
Act of Contrition	38
Madness	38
Unluck*	38
Shades	37
Ghost	36
Miracle	36
Mysterious	36
Secret Society	35
Ordained	34
Out of the Ordinary	33
Shamrock	33
Corpse	31
Bible	30
Bonfires	30
Divine	30
Skull	30
Shade	29
Destiny	28
Providence	28
Baptism	27
Lunatic	27
Ordination	27
Presbyterian	27
Dreams	26
Forecast*	26
Foreseen	26
Sectarian	26
Sins	26

Haunted	25
Oath-bound	25
Pilgrimage	25
Bonfire	24
Initiation	24
Sacraments	24
Secret Societies	24
Pogrom	23
The good people	23
Unseen	23
Cracked	22
Fairy	22
Foresight	22
Initiate	22
Magic	22
Nightmare	22
Orange Order	22
Outrageous	22
Prophetic	22
Terrifying	22
Angelus	21
Dreaming	21
Foresaw	21
Masonic	21
Sacred Heart	21
Saints	21
Tinkers	21
Ancestors	20
Crucifix	20
Curates	20
Devils	20
Freemasons	20
Hymns	20
Mortuary	20
Predict*	20
Abnormal	19
Angel	19
Benediction	19
Freemason	19
Off the wall	19
Resurrection	19
Spine	19
Charm	18
Ceremonies	17

Extraordinarily	17
Legend	17
Sacrament	17
Sacristy	17
Tinker	17
Tomb	17
Creep	16
Fancied	16
Gods	16
Hymn	16
Prophecy	16
Unbelievable	16
Aliens	15
Corpses	15
Hovering	15
Manifestation	15
Mysteriously	15
Visions	15
Cleric	14
Martyr	14
Premonition	14
Spells	14
Spheres	14
Weird	14
Anointed	13
Demented	13
Eerie	13
Fey	13
Hereafter	13
Immoral	13
Pogroms	13
Sect	13
Mythical	12
Paraphernalia	12
Shrine	12
Beliefs	11
Confessor	11
Holy Water	11
Martyred	11
Notions	11
Phenomenon	11
Samhain	11
Uncanny	11
Unnatural	11

Consecrated	10
Exorcise	10
Infinite	10
Manifestations	10
Pagan	10
Presentiment	10
Ritual	10
Unholy	10
Unorthodox	10
Clerics	9
Demon	9
Foretold	9
Holiness	9
Off his head	9
Priestly	9
Relic	9
Willed	9
Catholicism	8
Cryptic	8
Ghosts	8
Idol	8
Mysteries	8
Omen	8
Pilgrims	8
Rite	8
Seer	8
Sent for a priest	8
Underworld	8
Angels	7
Chant	7
Deacon	7
Devilish	7
Disinterred	7
Holy Well	7
Ministrations	7
Penance	7
Prophet	7
Skulls	7
Tombstone	7
Blood sacrifice	6
Fairies	6
Ghostly	6
Imaginations	6
Martyrdom	6

Mystical	6
Pageant	6
Presbyterians	6
Sinner	6
Spectre	6
Strange Feeling	6
Supernatural	6
Unreal	6
Witch	6
Chanting	5
Enshrined	5
Heresy	5
Holy Horror	5
Intuition	5
Methodist	5
Our Father	5
Purgatory	5
Purgatory	5
Relics	5
Resurrect	5
Robes	5
Unearthly	5
Wizard	5
Anomalous	4
Apparition	4
Bealtaine	4
Bizarre	4
Blasphemous	4
Blasphemy	4
Cemeteries	4
Conjure	4
Desecrated	4
Elf	4
Fancies	4
Freak	4
Freemasonry	4
Godly	4
Guardian Angel	4
Hellish	4
Imaginings	4
Irreligious	4
Legends	4
Manifesting	4
Mascot	4

Myth	4
Outlandish	4
Pervert	4
Pilgrim	4
Prophesied	4
Psalm	4
Sacrosanct	4
Scapulars	4
Viaticum	4
Altars	3
Anoint	3
Anomaly	3
Bibles	3
Ceremoniously	3
Charms	3
Damnation	3
Divine Providence	3
Extra-ordinary	3
Gollywog	3
Haunting	3
Intuitive	3
Legendary	3
Magical	3
Mass Path	3
Mesmer*	3
Mystic	3
Orangism	3
Pageantry	3
Penitent	3
Perversion	3
Perverted	3
Phantom	3
Pilgrimages	3
Prophecy	3
Reinterred	3
Robe	3
Rosaries	3
Satan	3
Scapular	3
Sinners	3
Telepathy	3
Troll	3
Unbelievably	3
Wise-man	3

"Second Sight"	2
Archangel	2
Biblical	2
Coincidences	2
Crucifixion	2
Crypt	2
Defile	2
Demoniacal	2
Elves	2
Evil Spirit	2
Foretell	2
Goddess	2
Graveyards	2
Grim reaper	2
Grotto	2
Hail Mary	2
Hallucination	2
Heathen	2
Heretical	2
Heretics	2
Horseshoe	2
Idols	2
Immorality	2
Limbo	2
Magician	2
Methodists	2
Miserere	2
Occult	2
Pattern day	2
Penitential	2
Premonitions	2
Psalms	2
Repentant	2
Sacramental	2
Sacrilege	2
Sanctified	2
Satanic	2
Seers	2
Sidhe	2
Spirit of the dead	2
State of Grace	2
Uction	2
Visionaries	2
Abnormality	1

Angelic	1
Antichrist	1
Apparitions	1
Augur	1
Augury	1
Auto Suggest	1
Auto Suggestioning	1
Banshee	1
Charmer	1
Clairvoyance	1
Clairvoyant	1
Creepy	1
Dead Spirit	1
Deathly	1
Defiled	1
Demoniac	1
Dream-like	1
Enchanting	1
Enchantment	1
Entombed	1
Exorcism	1
Exorcist	1
Fantastically	1
Fantasy	1
Goblin	1
Heretic	1
Hindu	1
Horriying	1
Hypnotism	1
Idolatry	1
Infidel	1
Lughnasa	1
Malediction	1
Mana	1
Mausoleum	1
Miraculous cure	1
Mythology	1
Myths	1
Nightmares	1
Off her head	1
Omens	1
Phantasmagoria	1
Phenomena	1
Profaned	1

Prophecies	1
Psalmist	1
Psychic	1
Reincarnated	1
Resurrecting	1
Sacrilegious	1
Shaman	1
Sheenie	1
Shrines	1
Spooky	1
Statuette	1
Superstitious	1
Touch wood	1
Ungodly	1
Visionary	1
Wise-men	1
Wise-woman	1
Witchcraft	1
Wizards	1
Abnormalities	0
Aether	0
Aetherial	0
Afterlife	0
Alienist	0
Anointment	0
Anoints	0
Apostasy	0
Apostate	0
Arcana	0
Arcane	0
Astrological	0
Astrology	0
Auto Suggestion	0
Bean Si	0
Bean Sidhe	0
BlaspHEME	0
Blasphemer	0
Catacomb	0
Catacombs	0
Ceremonious	0
Changeling	0
Changelings	0
Chants	0
Consecrate	0

Crucifixes	0
Crypts	0
Deacons	0
Defiler	0
Deities	0
Deity	0
Demonic	0
Desecrate	0
Discarnate	0
Disincarnate	0
Divination	0
Divine Mandate	0
Eerily	0
Elven	0
Enchant	0
Entombment	0
Extra-Sensory Perception	0
Faeries	0
Faery	0
Fumsup	0
Goblins	0
Goddesses	0
Gremlin	0
Hauntings	0
Heresies	0
Holy oil	0
Holy Wells	0
Horoscope	0
Horoscopes	0
Hypnosis	0
Hypnotic	0
Hypnotise	0
Idolatrous	0
Imbolc	0
Imprecation	0
Infinity	0
Intuit	0
Magics	0
Mediumship	0
Methodism	0
Mystics	0
Mythic	0
Mythological	0
Mythologies	0

Necromancy	0
Nymph	0
Occultism	0
Odic	0
Otherworld	0
Otherworldly	0
Paganism	0
Pagans	0
Palmistry	0
Paranormal	0
Pattern days	0
Perverts	0
Phantasm	0
Phantoms	0
Prana	0
Preternatural	0
Priestess	0
Priestesses	0
Profane	0
Psychical	0
Psychist	0
Puca	0
Purgatorial	0
Reichenbach	0
Reincarnate	0
Reincarnation	0
Revenant	0
Revenants	0
Ritualistic	0
Rituals	0
Sacramentals	0
Sanctifier	0
Sanctify	0
Sanctifying grace	0
Satanist	0
Séance	0

Sepulcher	0
Seraphim	0
Shamanic	0
Sorcerer	0
Sorcerers	0
Sorcerous	0
Sorcery	0
Spectral	0
Spiritism	0
Spirits of the dead	0
Spiritualism	0
Spook	0
Spooked	0
Spooks	0
Superstition	0
Table rapping	0
Taibhse	0
Talisman	0
Tarot	0
Tea leaves	0
Tea-leaves	0
Telepath	0
Telepathic	0
Thought transference	0
Touchwood	0
Touchwud	0
Trolls	0
Underworldly	0
Unholiness	0
Vasty deep	0
Warlock	0
Weirdly	0
Wise-women	0
Witches	0
Wizardly	0

Appendix 7A: Hauntings and Apparitions in Bureau of Military History

Witness Statements

Witness Name	WS #	Page Location(s)	Memorate Type/Description
William Kent	0075	2	Mysterious light follows funeral procession
Ailbhe Ó Monacháin	0298	27-28, 32	Mysterious Presence
Thomas Pugh	0397	17	Haunting
Geraldine Dillon	0424	5	Devil Possession
Frank Hynes	0446	75	Apparition
Brigid O'Mullane	0450	9-10	Haunting
Joseph O'Connor	0544	17	Prayer, Angel
Mary Flannery Woods	0624	App. B, p. 1	Apparition
Edward Boyle	0647	22	Haunted house and Apparition
Patrick Rankin	0671	5	Devilish vehicle
Frank De Burca	0694	17	Ghostly experience
James O'Shea	0733	40	National Spirit, Apparition
Colm O'Lochlainn	0751	5	Mythological trance
Micheal O Laoghaire	0797	55	National Spirit, Haunting
Micheal O Laoghaire	0797	58	National Spirit, Haunting
Sean Prendergast	0802	38-40	Mystical nationalism, haunting
Sean Prendergast	0802	137-138	Apparition trick
Patrick O'Brien	0812	7	Haunted House
Seán Moylan	0838	232-233	Possessed Cannon
Dr. Patrick O'sullivan	0878	5-6	Raid of a haunted house
James Kilmartin	0881	1	Fairy Fort
Seamus Ua Caomhanaigh	0889	104-105	Cursed Object, Prophecy
Dulcibella Barton	0936	7	Apparition, Miracle
George F.H. Berkeley	0994	83	Holy Water, Ghost, Haunted House
Maira Kennedy O'Byrne	1029	5	Haunted house
Joseph V. Lawless	1043	50-52	Folklore, Giant corpse, funeral ceremonies, ancient spirits
Patrick Mullooly	1086	6,7	Use of Holy water to scare off red woman
Patrick Mullooly	1086	6	attempted supernatural banishment of black pig
Patrick Mullooly	1086	31	Black cat jumps thirty feet, plus rosary recitation
Patrick Mullooly	1086	5, 6	Apparition of Black Pig, and
Patrick Mullooly	1086	67-68	Apparition of man living in England
Patrick Mullooly	1086	66-67	Banshee Wail for Dead Rebel
Michael Kilroy	1162	57	Appearance of St. Patrick
Micheal O Ciardubhain	1175	4	Haunted house
George C. Kiely	1182	13-14	Mass path ghosts

Alfred White	1207	11	Mysterious presence
Alfred White	1207	23	Ghost Stories
Stephen Keys	1209	20	Haunted Shop
Sean O'Neill	1219	26-27	Haunted graveyard
Sean O'Neill	1219	64	Hunger strike phantasmagoria
Timothy Tierney	1227	6	Fairy Fort
John Carroll	1258	3-4	Haunted house
Eamon Broy	1280	7	Phantom horsemen belief
Sean Whelan	1294	12-13	Haunted House
James Cullen	1343	3	Haunted house
Michael Davern	1348	15	Providence, Apparition
James Leahy	1454	41-44, 46	Apparitions, Miracles, Prayers, Pilgrimage, Visions
James Leahy	1454	44	Apparition
Sean Scott	1486	7-8	Logistical duty during templemore miracles
Joseph McCarthy	1507	5-6	Last rites and candle anomaly
James Duggan	1510	15-16	Miracles
Pádraig Ó Fathaigh	1517	3-4	Vision finds bodies
Pádraig Ó Fathaigh	1517	4-5	Bodies of martyrs preserved, blood collected
Martin Coneely	1611	18-19	Fairy hauntings
John J. O'Brien	1647	5	Fairy Fort
Thomas Hevey	1668	33-34, 62	Apparition of Woman
Francis Healy	1694	7	Apparition
Sean MacEoin	1716	45	Secret Societies, Catholic reconciliation
Sean MacEoin	1716	149	Fairy Fort
Sean MacEoin	1716	122-124, 126	Apparition
John C. King	1731	42	Feels the grim reaper close at hand
Michael Vincent O'Donoghue	1741	215-217	Sleep paralysis, nightmares, mysterious noises, exorcism
Cahir Davitt	1751	49-52	Unlucky pistol, National Spirit
Andrew McDonnell	1768	64-66	Haunted House, telepathic priest
Andrew McDonnell	1768	37	Fairies

Appendix 7B: Hauntings and Apparitions in Memoirs

Author	Title	Page(s)	Memorate Type/Description
Darrell Figgis	<i>A Chronicle of Jails</i>	108-110	Graves commemoration, Miracle, religious poetry, spirit guardian
Frank Gallagher	<i>Days of Fear</i>	92-99	Apparition, Vision, Religious beliefs
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	249	Spirit
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	82-83	Apparition
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	234	Apparition
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	262	Spirits, Irish mythology
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	197	Auras
Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	281	Apparition
Caroline May Woodcock	<i>Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland</i>	105	Apparition
Caroline May Woodcock	<i>Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland</i>	107-108	Apparition, Dream
Tom Barry	<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	303	Reincarnation, Mythology
Sir Henry Robinson	<i>Memories Wise and Otherwise</i>	225-226	Magical thinking
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	7	Fairy hurling match
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	154	Apparition, premonition
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	79	Miracles, Religious Beliefs, Apparition
Daniel Breen	<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	50-51	Ghosts
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	121	Haunting, soul, old gods, National spirit
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	136	Haunting, mass, Apparition, folklore
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	105-106	Prophecy, Apparition, Folklore, Saints
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	15-16	National Spirit, Fairies, Leprechauns, Sectarian Conflict
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	21	Divination, Souls, Afterlife beliefs, Apparitions, various superstitions
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	122	Ghosts, prayers, afterlife beliefs, folklore, fairies
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	123	Apparition
Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	156	Apparition

Ernie O'Malley	<i>On another man's Wound</i>	136-137	Apparition
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	257-258	Celtic magicality, haunted mountains, Sectarian conflict
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	345-346	National Spirit, ghosts
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	391-392	Ghosts, Prophecy
William O'Brien	<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	338-339	Banshee, National spirit
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	182	Haunted house, ghosts, folklore
Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	172-173, 175-176	Premonition, Diabolism, Caoine, Nightmare, Banshee
Maurice "Mossie" Harnett	<i>Victory and Woe</i>	24	Apparition, rosary
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	55	Folklore, haunted place, cunning folk, ghost
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	70	Folklore, Banshee, Ghosts, Sectarian Conflict
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	101-102	Pilgrimage/Pattern Day, druids
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	54-55	Folklore, Mythology, Pishogues, Fairy Forts, Death omens
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	69-70	Folklore, raths, superstition, funeral practices, mysterious deaths
Jeremiah Murphy	<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	75-76	Apparition, funerary practices
Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	9	Spells, mythology, druids
Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	198-199	Folklore, Hag legend
Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	55-56	Reincarnation, Spirit, Mythology
Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	20	Reincarnation, Spirit, Mythology
Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	<i>White Light and Flame</i>	200	Banshee

Appendix 7C: Hauntings and Apparitions in Ghost Story Compilations

Title	Author	Publication info	Page Location(s)
<i>The Lively Ghosts of Ireland</i>	Hans Holzer	(London, 1967)	108
<i>The Lively Ghosts of Ireland</i>	Hans Holzer	(London, 1967)	81-90
<i>The Lively Ghosts of Ireland</i>	Hans Holzer	(London, 1967)	28-31
<i>The Lively Ghosts of Ireland</i>	Hans Holzer	(London, 1967)	20, 21, 22
<i>The Lively Ghosts of Ireland</i>	Hans Holzer	(London, 1967)	32, 39
<i>The Lively Ghosts of Ireland</i>	Hans Holzer	(London, 1967)	51
<i>Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1973)	30, 31, 32
<i>Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1973)	39
<i>Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1973)	64
<i>The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1979)	47, 48, 49 ,50 ,51
<i>The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1979)	24, 25
<i>The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1979)	25
<i>The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1979)	63
<i>The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1979)	67
<i>The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1979)	41
<i>The Second Book of Irish Ghost Stories</i>	Patrick Byrne	(Cork, 1979)	64

Appendix 7D: Hauntings and Apparitions in the SFC

Volume #	Page	Title	Word Count
0006	50-52	The Fairy Dance	308
0006	131	Dún Moyard	119
0022	228	Hidden Treasure	66
0034	264-266, 268	Local Ruins - Moyode Castle	289
0037	159-160	A Haunted Place	149
0040	508	Cortoon graveyard	30
0044	79	Local Ruins	77
0049	101-102	A Hidden Treasure	246
0054	26-27	No Title	241
0059	525	Stories	36
0095	181	Local Happenings	129
0100	170	Fairy Forts	110
0104	181	Gort na Siog	159
0113	320-321	An Old Story	73
0115	200	Fairy Forts	68
0115	394-395	Forts	136
0117	15	No Title	42
0124	131	Old Forts	90
0128	460-461	Áitainmneacha	483
0128	452	Áitainmneacha	47
0139	410	A Ghost Story	157
0140	560	Old Forts and Ráithíní in Killeen School District	302
0142	291	Hidden Treasure	34
0155	502-505	The Removal of Stones from a Fairy Fort	106
0157	301	Fairy Forts	135
0161	267-269	The Fort	73
0161	247	Local Hills	115
0163	455-456	My Townland	211
0170	15	The Townland I Live in	126
0175	99-100	A Local Happening	99
0188	229-230	Fairy Fort	399
0211	454	No Title	64
0211	270	Local Forges	43
0211	453-455	No Title	196
0217	246	An Old Castle	213
0225	308	No Title	37
0231	262-263	Sheemore and Sheebeg	400
0233	575-576	No Title	74
0233	531-538	Townlands	54
0239	11	Fairy Fort	56

0242	78-79	Notable Places in Our School Area - A Fort	164
0243	283-285	The Hanging Tree	53
0249	270	No Title	40
0249	123	Travelling Folk	87
0250	15-16	The Black Pig	20
0250	14	The Black Pig	94
0250	5	My Home District	113
0250	3	My Home District	113
0250	33-34	A Song	149
0250	9-10	My Home District	131
0250	13	The Local Patron Saint	161
0251	11, 13	Jimmy Plunket's Memorial Slab	187
0251	13	Jimmy Plunket's Memorial Slab	342
0252	43	The Care of Our Farm Animals	176
0255	257	Care of Farm Animals	127
0255	309	A Treasure Story	38
0255	31-32	Donal Cam	17
0255	436	Story of the Black Pig	143
0255	445	Story	240
0255	438	Folklore - Strange Story	145
0256	52	No Title	126
0257	384-385	No Title	70
0262	58-61	A Local Burning	38
0263	13-15	Teach tré Thine	168
0263	49-50	Seanfhothrach Roinn a' Mhóta	50
0263	96	Brook-Lodge	81
0265	231-232	Strange Animals	589
0267	138	Old Monuments	169
0267	111-112	Strange Animals	93
0275	179	A Lios	60
0284	220-221	A Song	74
0288	18	Forts	68
0289	240-241	Fairy Forts	109
0289	246	Fairy Forts	43
0300	157-159	Kilbarry Church Ruins	117
0305	38-39	Old Graveyards	142
0306	258	Religious Stories	176
0317	148	Why the Red Strand Got its name	167
0343	68-69	The Women of Ireland - Their Share	101
0345	373	Famous Stones	65
0348	220	Penal Times	64
0353	472	Fairy Forts	53
0358	502-505	No Title	75
0361	727-728	Local Forts	121

0361	727	Local Forts	91
0361	727	Local Forts	87
0383	22-23	The Forts	85
0387	21-22	No Title	180
0405	425	Mionrudai Suimiúla	51
0405	229-230	Local Place Names	81
0405	463	Piseoga	112
0411	136	Local Place Names	109
0414	35	Fairy Forts	181
0416	253	Fairy Forts	195
0417	439	An Old Fort	412
0434	230-232	No Title	128
0438	136-137	Folklore and Tradition	192
0439	123-124	Payne's fort	139
0440	355-356	A Story of Ballybeggan	69
0442	202	Hidden Treasures	34
0442	170	The Dog with the Tail Six Feet Long	57
0442	216	Funny Stories and Ghost Stories	190
0447	152	Turgeen Garrab	31
0450	51	Piseoga	11
0451	104-105	Rathmore Parish According to Station Districts	109
0451	103	Rathmore Parish According to Station Districts	125
0451	105-106	Rathmore Parish According to Station Districts	131
0456	169-170	Aglis	72
0459	131	Forts	68
0459	126	Forts	140
0465	71	No Title	168
0497	97	A Funny Story	210
0497	216-217	Fairy Forts	12
0504	151-152	Local Forts	39
0510	406	Fanningstown Castle	435
0514	17	No Title	138
0514	18	No Title	132
0514	15	No Title	77
0518	153	Folk-Lore Story	131
0520	276-278	Fairy Forts	203
0520	115	Hidden Treasure	69
0523	137	Fairy Forts	174
0528	126	A Fairy Fort	130
0533	285-286	Two Local Stories	115
0533	294-295	A Ghost Story	52
0534	389	Fairy Forts	92
0542	40	No Title	101
0543	224	The Leprechaun	464

0557	506	Local Place Names	17
0557	500	Forts	26
0573	295	No Title	129
0575	171-172	Story of a Well	128
0586	26	The Ambush	220
0590	19	A Ghost Story	303
0590	175	The Black and Tan Time	174
0593	436-437	The Ambush of Glenwood	67
0593	445	No Title	134
0596	95	The Lake Horse of Cullane	50
0596	360	Story	200
0599	542-543	Local Ruins	203
0599	545-546	Local Ruins	381
0603	423-424	A Funny Story	73
0605	68	Cruatan	404
0615	201	No Title	82
0615	219-221	No Title	82
0620	334-335	No Title	93
0621	306-307	No Title	258
0621	223-224	Moy Castle	99
0622	33	Old Tales told Locally	48
0622	29-30	Old Tales told Locally	49
0622	6, 7	Moy Castle	96
0640	233-234	Liosanna	31
0640	96-97	Shean Castle, Tallow Co. Waterford	35
0660	5	Baile Mhic Scanláin – Village	154
0660	13, 16-17	Ravensdale Park	148
0660	8	Ballymakellet	324
0660	33	Bellurgan - Deerpark	28
0660	14, 15	Ravensdale Park	137
0660	35	Bellurgan - Deerpark	90
0672	226	Rathdrummion Moat	125
0678	9-10	No Title	120
0680	475-478	No Title	87
0681	53	No Title	61
0681	35-36	No Title	66
0681	54	No Title	209
0693	31-33	Local Folklore Stories	148
0699	321-323	A Ghost Story	64
0700	165-167	The Rider of Ardnagannagh	21
0703	482-483	Old Forts	159
0704	114	Moat	63
0716	100-101	A Haunted House	140
0725	373	Grennanstown	108

0726	165-166	Old Ruins	404
0733	7, 9	Local Roads	83
0737	64	Reynella Fort	282
0743	69-70	Folklore - Traditions Connected with the Present School and Old Police Barracks, Moyvoughly	315
0746	438-439	Old Road	101
0750	286-288	My Home District	36
0751	260-261	A Lone Bush	76
0756	406-407	A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry	167
0756	69	No Title	106
0760	127-133	Historical Tradition - The Battle of Ballinamuck	105
0765	317-318	The Loan	269
0766	70	The Ambush of Clonfin	32
0768	367	Local Place Names	148
0774	30	The Black and Tans	309
0776	412-414	Stories	113
0776	197	Scéal V	194
0776	171	Scéal N	42
0776	414	Stories	308
0780	256	Halverstown House	119
0781	243	Ghost Story	66
0794	412	Ghosts	289
0800	234	My Home District - Springfield	149
0807	72-73	No Title	30
0818	109	No Title	77
0827	47-50	No Title	246
0845	93	The Black Corner	241
0846	319	Archaeological and Buried Treasure	36
0853	27	A Local Happening	129
0854	185	A Story	110
0856	82-83	A Hero	159
0857	496	Local Place Names	73
0862	169	Bóithre Áitiúla Cuimhneacháin Cloch- The Old Gouran Road	68
0864	169-170	Old Castles	136
0864	170	Old Castles	42
0864	140-141	A Good Trick	90
0869	94	Stories of the Locality	483
0870	271-272	A Headless Man	47
0885	34	Eden Vale	157
0885	41	My Home District - Butlerstown	302
0896	37-38	Local Ruins - The castle	34
0897	49	Hidden Treasure	106
0898	23-24	An Old Story	135
0903	211	Hidden Treasure	73

0917	187	Forts	115
0929	42	No Title	211
0929	53-54	Fairy Forts	126
0929	55	Fairy Forts	99
0936	152-154	The Giant's Grave	399
0939	120	Local Ruins	64
0950	374-375	A Story	43
0977	88	Local Forts	196
0988	74-75	A Hidden Treasure	213
0990	164-165	Local Place Names	37
0990	171	Penal Times	400
0995	167-168	Strange Animals	74
1003	369	A Story	54
1008	173	A Fort	56
1025	5-6	Castlesaunderson	164
1039	212-213	Strange Happenings on Halloween	53
1073	114	Haunted House	40
1096	316-318	Story of Drumboe Castle	87
1096	260	Historic Sites	20
1123	12	Story 4	94
0271B	9-11	Composition - Autobiography of a Ruined Castle	113
0417D	5/11-5/12	Mucan na gCat	113
		Average:	134.33

Appendix 8: Memorates involving Fairy Forts and the Irish Revolution in the SFC

Volume Number	Page Location	Story Title
0006	131	Dún Moyard
0049	101-102	A Hidden Treasure
0100	170	Fairy Forts
0104	181	Gort na Siog
0115	200	Fairy Forts
0115	394-395	Forts
0117	15	No Title
0124	131	Old Forts
0128	452	Áitainmneacha
0128	460-461	Áitainmneacha
0140	560	Old Forts and Ráithíní in Killeen School District
0155	502-505	The Removal of Stones from a Fairy Fort
0157	301	Fairy Forts
0161	267-269	The Fort
0161	247	Local Hills
0163	455-456	My Townland
0188	229-230	Fairy Fort
0239	11	Fairy Fort
0242	78-79	Notable Places in Our School Area - A Fort
0275	179	A Lios
0288	18	Forts
0289	240-241	Fairy Forts
0289	246	Fairy Forts
0345	373	Famous Stones
0353	472	Fairy Forts
0361	727	Local Forts
0361	727	Local Forts
0383	22-23	The Forts
0405	229-230	Local Place Names
0414	35	Fairy Forts

0416	253	Fairy Forts
0417	439	An Old Fort
0417D	05: 11-12	Mucan na gCat
0439	123-124	Payne's fort
0440	355-356	A Story of Ballybeggan
0442	202	Hidden Treasures
0451	103	Rathmore Parish According to Station Districts
0459	131	Forts
0459	126	Forts
0497	216-217	Fairy Forts
0504	151-152	Local Forts
0520	276-278	Fairy Forts
0523	137	Fairy Forts
0528	126	A Fairy Fort
0534	389	Fairy Forts
0557	506	Local Place Names
0557	500	Forts
0640	233-234	Liosanna
0640	96-97	Shean Castle, Tallow Co. Waterford
0660	33	Bellurgan - Deerpark
0660	14, 15	Ravensdale Park
0672	226	Rathdrummion Moat
0703	482-483	Old Forts
0704	114	Moat
0733	7, 9	Local Roads
0737	64	Reynella Fort
0751	260-261	A Lone Bush
0765	317-318	The Loan
0766	70	The Ambush of Clonfin
0776	171	Scéal N
0846	319	Archaeological and Buried Treasure
0853	27	A Local Happening
0854	185	A Story
0857	496	Local Place Names
0917	187	Forts

0929	53-54	Fairy Forts
0929	42	No Title
0929	55	Fairy Forts
0977	88	Local Forts
0988	74-75	A Hidden Treasure
1008	173	A Fort

Appendix 9: Hauntings in the SFC directly attributed to Irish Revolutionary

Violence

Volume	Page	Title	Informant	Location
0049	101-102	A Hidden Treasure	Patrick Fallon	Kinvarra, Co. Galway
0054	26-27	No Title	John Flaherty	Ballyargadaun, Co. Galway
0095	181	Local Happenings	None Specified	Balla, Co. Mayo
0142	291	Hidden Treasure	John Malley	Rathfran, Co. Mayo
0170	15	The Townland I Live in	None Specified	Moylough, Co. Sligo
0211	270	Local Forges	Michael Lee	Tawnycurry, Co. Leitrim
0217	246	An Old Castle	Patrick Reilly	Aughry, Co. Leitrim
0225	308	No Title	Peter Brady	Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim
0233	531-538	Townlands	None Specified	Behy, Co. Roscommon
0255	309	A Treasure Story	Joseph Thompson	Ballyfeeny, Co. Roscommon
0263	96	Brook-Lodge	Michael Connor	Carrowndangan, Co. Roscommon
0411	136	Local Place Names	Maurice Whelan	Ballynageragh, Co. Kerry
0439	123-124	Payne's fort	Mícheál Ó Mainín	Cloon More, Co. Kerry
0442	170	The Dog with the Tail Six Feet Long	Mary Hanlon	Gortatlea, Co. Kerry
0447	152	Turgeen Garrab	John Riordan	Barna, Co. Kerry
0504	151-152	Local Forts	Patrick Giltenan	Coolbeg, Co. Limerick
0520	276-278	Fairy Forts	Seán Ó Donncha	Clogher, Co. Limerick
0520	115	Hidden Treasure	None Specified	Cappamore, Co. Limerick
0573	295	No Title	None Specified	Ballyporeen, Co. Tipperary
0586	26	The Ambush	None Specified	Belvoir, Co. Clare
0590	175	The Black and Tan Time	None Specified	Glendree, Co. Clare
0593	436-437	The Ambush of Glenwood	None Specified	Clooney, Co. Clare
0599	545-546	Local Ruins	None Specified	Parteen, Co. Clare
0605	68	Cruatan	None Specified	Tonlegee, Co. Clare
0615	201	No Title	Michael Jordan	Ballyvelaghan, Co. Clare
0621	306-307	No Title	Pat Garrahy	Dough, Co. Clare
0622	29-30	Old Tales told Locally	Michael Kinnane	Tullygarvan West, Co. Clare
0622	33	Old Tales told Locally	John Whelan	Aillbrack, Co. Clare
0681	54	No Title	None Specified	Drogheda, Co. Louth
0693	31-33	Local Folklore Stories	Mat Murray	Clondalee Beg, Co. Meath
0699	321-323	A Ghost Story	Peg O' Reilly	Moat, Co. Meath
0746	438-439	Old Road	Patrick Mara	Tullywood, Co. Westmeath
0756	69	No Title	None Specified	Cloontagh, Co. Longford
0774	30	The Black and Tans	None Specified	Millicent North, Co. Kildare
0776	414	Stories	Joseph Meade	Poplar Square, Co. Kildare
0780	256	Halverstown House	None Specified	Kilcullen, Co. Kildare
0781	243	Ghost Story	None Specified	Skerries North, Co. Kildare
0794	412	Ghosts	None Specified	Brittas, Co. Dublin
0800	234	My Home District - Springfield	John Delaney	Springfield, Co. Offaly

0827	47-50	No Title	Matthew Collier	Carrowreagh, Co. Laois
0845	93	The Black Corner	Ellen Barry	Rochestown, Co. Kilkenny
0864	170	Old Castles	John Conway	Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
0864	169-170	Old Castles	John Conway	Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
0869	94	Stories of the Locality	Patrick Hughes	Ballyspellan, Co. Kilkenny
0870	271-272	A Headless Man	None Specified	Ballycullane, Co. Wexford
0885	34	Eden Vale	Mrs Brennan	Ballyboggan Lower, Co. Wexford
0885	41	My Home District - Butlerstown	Kathleen Murphy	Butlerstown, Co. Wexford
0897	49	Hidden Treasure	Mrs Reid	Garranbehy Little, Co. Kilkenny
0903	211	Hidden Treasure	John Coady	St. Mullin's, Co. Carlow
0988	74-75	A Hidden Treasure	Mrs Sheridan	Cloncovet, Co. Cavan
0990	164-165	Local Place Names	None Specified	Bellananagh, Co. Cavan
0990	171	Penal Times	None Specified	Bellananagh, Co. Cavan

Appendix 10: BMH Investigators and Paranormal Memorates

Investigator ¹	Paranormal Memorates	Hauntings	Apparitions	Precognition	Other
Seán Brennan	42	9	11	16	10
M. F. Ryan	36	2	2	17	16
Jane Kissane	26	2	2	14	8
William Ivory	17	2	1	8	6
J. Kearns	15	1	2	9	3
Matthew Barry	15	0	6	5	4
J. V. Lawless	13	2	0	4	7
J. Grace	12	2	2	5	3
John McCoy	11	2	2	5	4
Charles Saurin	8	3	0	5	0
J. P. Briody	6	0	2	3	1
J. V. Joyce	6	1	0	5	0
Con Moynihan	4	1	1	1	1
D. Griffin	4	0	2	2	1
J. J. Conway	4	1	1	1	1
Seumas Robinson	4	0	2	2	0
P.J. Brennan	3	1	1	1	1
J. M. McCarthy	2	1	0	1	1
John J. Daly	2	0	0	0	2
Patrick Quinn	2	1	0	0	1
T. O'Gorman	2	1	0	1	0
Florence O'Donoghue	1	0	1	0	0
Michael McDunphy	1	0	0	0	1
R. J. Feely	1	0	0	1	0
Totals:	237	32	38	106	71

¹ While perusing this table it should be borne in mind that many paranormal memorates occupied multiple categories at once, for example, many haunting memorates involved apparitions.

Appendix 11: Irish Newsprint Concerning the Black Pig of Kiltrustan

Newspaper	Date	Page
<i>The Irish Times</i>	27 Apr. 1918	5
<i>The Irish Times</i>	27 Apr. 1918	4
<i>Evening Herald</i>	30 Apr. 1918	2
<i>Londonderry Sentinel</i>	30 Apr. 1918	4
<i>The Irish Times</i>	30 Apr. 1918	4
<i>The Irish Times</i>	01 May 1918	2
<i>The Irish Times</i>	02 May 1918	4
<i>The Liberator (Tralee)</i>	02 May 1918	1
<i>New Ross Standard</i>	03 May 1918	4
<i>Nottingham Evening Post</i>	03 May 1918	2
<i>The Manchester Guardian</i>	03 May 1918	4
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	04 May 1918	1
<i>Kilkenny Moderator</i>	04 May 1918	3
<i>Leitrim Observer</i>	04 May 1918	5
<i>Nenagh Guardian</i>	04 May 1918	4
<i>Roscommon Messenger</i>	04 May 1918	4
<i>The Irish Times</i>	04 May 1918	6
<i>The Manchester Guardian</i>	04 May 1918	6
<i>The Strabane Chronicle</i>	04 May 1918	3
<i>Weekly Irish Times</i>	04 May 1918	3
<i>Wicklow People</i>	04 May 1918	5
<i>Aberdeen Evening Express</i>	06 May 1918	3
<i>Freemans Journal</i>	06 May 1918	5
<i>Irish Independent</i>	06 May 1918	4
<i>Aberdeen Press and Journal</i>	07 May 1918	4
<i>Londonderry Sentinel</i>	07 May 1918	2, 3
<i>The Manchester Guardian</i>	09 May 1918	8
<i>Derry Journal</i>	10 May 1918	2
<i>New Ross Standard</i>	10 May 1918	3
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	11 May 1918	5
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	11 May 1918	11
<i>Kildare Observer and Eastern Counties Advertiser</i>	11 May 1918	3
<i>Roscommon Messenger</i>	11 May 1918	3
<i>The Roscommon Herald</i>	11 May 1918	1
<i>Weekly Freeman's Journal</i>	11 May 1918	2
<i>Wicklow People</i>	11 May 1918	3
<i>Leinster Reporter</i>	18 May 1918	4
<i>Roscommon Messenger</i>	18 May 1918	4
<i>Weekly Freeman's Journal</i>	18 May 1918	1
<i>Roscommon Messenger</i>	25 May 1918	3

<i>Weekly Freeman's Journal</i>	01 Jun. 1918	8
<i>Weekly Irish Times</i>	01 Jun. 1918	3
<i>Westmeath Examiner</i>	01 Jun. 1918	2
<i>The Irish Times</i>	05 Jun. 1918	3
<i>Dundalk Democrat</i>	08 Jun. 1918	6
<i>Roscommon Messenger</i>	22 Jun. 1918	3
<i>Dublin Evening Telegraph</i>	08 Apr. 1919	2
<i>Freemans Journal</i>	09 Apr. 1919	6
<i>The Irish Times</i>	09 Apr. 1919	6
<i>Dundee Evening Telegraph</i>	10 Apr. 1919	5
<i>Kilkenny Moderator</i>	12 Apr. 1919	6
<i>Nenagh News</i>	12 Apr. 1919	3
<i>Weekly Irish Times</i>	12 Apr. 1919	2
<i>Belfast Newsletter</i>	17 Apr. 1919	8
<i>Drogheda Independent</i>	26 Apr. 1919	2
<i>Westmeath Independent</i>	06 Sep. 1919	2
<i>Irish Independent</i>	11 Oct. 1919	6
<i>Londonderry Sentinel</i>	01 Jun. 1920	3
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	03 Jul. 1920	3
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	21 Oct. 1922	3
<i>Sligo Independent</i>	21 Oct. 1922	2
<i>Freemans Journal</i>	03 Nov. 1922	4
<i>Weekly Freeman's Journal</i>	11 Nov. 1922	4
<i>Tipperary Star</i>	09 Dec. 1922	3
<i>Sligo Independent</i>	14 Apr. 1923	5
<i>Freemans Journal</i>	19 Apr. 1923	4
<i>Sligo Independent</i>	21 Apr. 1923	6
<i>Weekly Freeman's Journal</i>	28 Apr. 1923	6
<i>Irish Independent</i>	21 Jan. 1927	9
<i>Fermanagh Herald</i>	29 Jan. 1927	6
<i>The Longford Leader</i>	01 Apr. 1931	2
<i>New Ross Standard</i>	25 Sep. 1931	7
<i>Kerry Champion</i>	13 Jun. 1936	8
<i>Irish Press</i>	05 Nov. 1936	17
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	04 Sep. 1937	5
<i>Irish Press</i>	27 Sep. 1939	5
<i>Irish Press</i>	28 Dec. 1939	2
<i>Western People</i>	08 Oct. 1940	1
<i>Offaly Independent</i>	03 Jan. 1942	4

Appendix 12A: Omens in the SFC

Volume	Page	Story Title	Word Count	Narrative Weight
0057	160-161	A Story	46	19.09%
0157	282-284	Local Happening	320	75.83%
0157	238	Historical Tradition - Another Version of the Shooting	26	47.27%
0188	229-230	Fairy Fort	302	100.00%
0252	43	The Care of Our Farm Animals	40	10.10%
0405	425	Mionrudáí Suimiúla	60	100.00%
0405	463	Piseoga	74	100.00%
462C	(08) 28-29	Bealoideas	138	100.00%
0434	230-232	No Title	117	55.19%
0465	71	No Title	87	28.16%
0743	132	Bird-Lore	39	9.75%
0756	406-407	A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry	404	100.00%
0871	63	Old Stories - An Anglo-Irish War Story	110	26.00%
0898	23-24	An Old Story	63	100.00%
0995	167-168	Strange Animals	76	60.80%
1039	212-213	Strange Happenings on Halloween	269	100.00%
1054	62	Tobar Beannaithe	85	12.69%
1098	243	The Tricolour	209	100.00%
1098	150	Local Poets	11	4.87%
1115	159-160	No Title	121	100.00%
		<u>Averages:</u>	129.85	62.49%

Appendix 12B: Omens in Memoirs and Bureau of Military History Witness

Statements

Title/BMH WS Number	Author/Witness	Page	Edition	Words
<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	Todd "C.S" Andrews	233-234	(Dublin, 1979)	158
<i>Free State or Republic?</i>	Padraig De Burca & John F. Boyle	8	(Dublin, 2015)	34
<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	Tom Barry	310-311	(Cork, 2013)	41
<i>On another man's Wound</i>	Ernie O'Malley	105	(Cork, 2013)	18
<i>On another man's Wound</i>	Ernie O'Malley	137	(Cork, 2013)	102
<i>On another man's Wound</i>	Ernie O'Malley	105-107	(Cork, 2013)	171
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	William O'Brien	371	(London, 1923)	35
<i>The Victory of Sinn Fein</i>	P. S. O'Hegarty	44-45	(Dublin, 2015)	270
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	Maurice Harnett	20	(Dublin, 2015)	48
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	Maurice Harnett	49	(Dublin, 2015)	90
<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	Jeremiah Murphy	244	(Dublin, 1998)	22
<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	Jeremiah Murphy	54-55	(Dublin, 1998)	443
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte 'Lottie' Macmanus	136	(Dublin, 1929)	38
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte 'Lottie' Macmanus	83-84	(Dublin, 1929)	65
0268	Liam T. Cosgrave	5	N/A	92
0371	Robert Holland	26, 36	N/A	250
0733	James O'Shea	39	N/A	41
0906	James Larkin Jr.	2, 3, 10	N/A	288
0982	Alice Ginnell	49	N/A	36
1769	Patrick J. Little	21	N/A	59
			Average:	115

Appendix 13A: Curses in Bureau of Military History Witness Statements

Statement Number	Witness	Page
0158	Seamus Kenny	7
0200	Fr. Aloysius	9
0207	Fr. Aloysius	12
0647	Edward Boyle	17
0734	Thomas J. Meldon	24-25
0755.3	Sean Prendergast	560
0889	Seamus Ua Caomhanaigh	104-105
1086	Patrick Mullooly	15
1280	Eamon Broy	4
1751	Cahir Davitt	88

Appendix 13B: Curses in Revolutionary Memoirs

Memoir Title	Author	Page	Edition
A Chronicle of Jails	Darrell Figgis	6	(Dublin, 2015)
A Chronicle of Jails	Darrell Figgis	90-91	(Dublin, 2015)
Dublin Made Me	Todd Andrews	92	(Dublin, 1979)
Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland	Caroline May Woodcock	90	(London, 1921)
Free State or Republic?	Padraig De Burca & John F. Boyle	53	(Dublin, 2015)
Free State or Republic?	Padraig De Burca & John F. Boyle	48	(Dublin, 2015)
Guerilla Days in Ireland	Tom Barry	187-189	(Cork, 2013)
My Fight for Irish Freedom	Daniel Breen	98-100	(Cork, 2010)
My Fight for Irish Freedom	Daniel Breen	40	(Cork, 2010)
On another man's Wound	Ernie O'Malley	129	(Cork, 2013)
On another man's Wound	Ernie O'Malley	290	(Cork, 2013)
On another man's Wound	Ernie O'Malley	379	(Cork, 2013)
The Irish Revolution and How it came About	William O'Brien	256	(London, 1923)
Victory and Woe	Maurice Harnett	153-154	(Dublin, 2015)
Victory and Woe	Maurice Harnett	156	(Dublin, 2015)
Victory and Woe	Maurice Harnett	84	(Dublin, 2015)

Appendix 14: Premonitions in Memoirs and Bureau of Military History

Witness Statements

Title/BMH WS Number	Author/Witness	Page	Edition	Words
0200	Fr. Aloysius	16-17	N/A	501
0287	John Flannery	13	N/A	25
0296	Harry Nicholls	9	N/A	9
0327	Patrick Egan	14	N/A	69
0362	Rev. Monsignor J.T. McMahon	7-8	N/A	156
0379	Jeremiah Mee	22	N/A	95
0423	Vincent Byrne	12-13	N/A	25
0458	Sean Corr	9-10	N/A	166
0492	John McCoy	99	N/A	194
0511	Michael Lynch	109-111	N/A	579
0585	Frank Robbins	101-102	N/A	80
0624	Mary Flannery Woods	62	N/A	59
0694	Frank De Burca	4	N/A	29
0755	Sean Prendergast	119-120	N/A	197
0755	Sean Prendergast	386	N/A	103
0755	Sean Prendergast	370	N/A	49
0755	Sean Prendergast	619	N/A	34
0783	Thomas Ryan	55	N/A	94
0822	James Stapleton	62	N/A	21
0824	Charles Donnelly	3	N/A	36
0838	Seán Moylan	180-181	N/A	412
0838	Seán Moylan	146	N/A	90
0881	James Kilmartin	19	N/A	112
0919	Ina Heron	42	N/A	71
0954	Sean Leavy	11	N/A	55
1014	Christopher M. Byrne	12	N/A	38
1034	Mary Leech (Nee O'Meehan)	3	N/A	126
1043	Joseph V. Lawless	124	N/A	43
1052	Sean MacEntee	119	N/A	114
1179	Andrew Kirwan	9-10	N/A	109
1307	Geoffrey Ibberson	6	N/A	25
1322	Art O'Donnell	16	N/A	31
1348	Michael Davern	52	N/A	112
1432	Patrick H. O'Dwyer	26	N/A	59
1435	Daniel O'Shaughnessy	14	N/A	171
1497	Joseph McCarthy	77	N/A	231
1511	Gerald Doyle	32	N/A	78
1647	John J. O'Brien	18	N/A	28
1647	John J. O'Brien	32	N/A	69

1701	Maurice A. McGrath	19	N/A	27
1769	Patrick J. Little	81-82	N/A	238
Days of Fear	Frank Gallagher	20	(London, 1928)	36
Dublin Made Me	Todd "C.S." Andrews	207	(Dublin, 1979)	27
Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland	Caroline May Woodcock	80-81	(London, 1921)	270
Guerilla Days in Ireland	Tom Barry	204-205	(Cork, 2013)	111
Guerilla Days in Ireland	Tom Barry	224, 370-371	(Cork, 2013)	82
Guerilla Days in Ireland	Tom Barry	319	(Cork, 2013)	51
Guerilla Days in Ireland	Tom Barry	315	(Cork, 2013)	39
My Fight for Irish Freedom	Daniel Breen	140	(Cork, 2010)	198
My Fight for Irish Freedom	Daniel Breen	154	(Cork, 2010)	99
On another man's Wound	Ernie O'Malley	272	(Cork, 2013)	34
On another man's Wound	Ernie O'Malley	328	(Cork, 2013)	18
On another man's Wound	Ernie O'Malley	387	(Cork, 2013)	28
The Life of a Painter	Sir John Lavery	226-227	(London, 1940)	144
There is a Bridge at Bandon	Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	41	(Cork, 1972)	55
There is a Bridge at Bandon	Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	172-173, 175-176	(Cork, 1972)	308
There is a Bridge at Bandon	Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	135-136	(Cork, 1972)	45
When Youth was Mine	Jeremiah Murphy	250	(Dublin, 1998)	92
White Light and Flame	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	109-110	(Dublin, 1929)	216
White Light and Flame	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	197	(Dublin, 1929)	54
			Average:	111.12

Appendix 15A: Heptagrammatic Rankings of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis from Memoirs and Bureau of Military History

Witness Statements

Title of Source/BMH WS Number	Page/Date	Intentionality	Marginality	Morbidity	Recognition	Religiosity	Scale	Subversion
0006	18	3	3	4	3	2	4	4
0155	7	1	1	3	1	1	3	4
0157	22, 31	3	3	3	1	1	1	4
0249	13	3	3	4	3	1	4	4
0268	5	1	1	4	1	2	2	2
0340	4	3	3	2	1	1	4	4
0340	4	3	3	2	3	1	4	4
0428	7-8	3	3	4	3	1	3	4
0541	App. A p. 2	2	3	1	1	1	3	3
0719	10-11	2	3	3	1	2	2	2
0733	34-35	3	4	4	2	1	3	4
0734	22	3	3	2	2	1	3	4
0755	22	3	3	3	1	1	2	2
0755	213-214	3	3	1	3	2	3	4
0806	4, 5	4	3	1	2	3	1	2
0839	6	5	3	1	2	1	1	2
0889	104, 105	3	3	3	1	1	1	3
0896	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	3
0939	89-90	2	3	1	1	3	2	3
0982	59	4	2	3	2	1	4	2
0982	74-75	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
1043	126	2	2	1	1	1	4	3
1092	11	3	3	4	2	1	5	4
1148	App. A p. 3	3	3	3	1	1	1	3
1162	57	5	3	4	2	1	2	3
1511	38	2	3	4	2	1	3	4
1511	21-22, 29	3	4	3	3	1	3	4
1652	9	4	4	3	2	4	2	2
1751	86-87, 100	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
1763	94-95	3	2	2	2	4	2	2
1769	81-82	5	4	4	1	1	4	2
<i>Free State or Republic</i>	12	3	1	4	2	1	4	4
<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	224, 370, 371	4	3	3	3	1	1	4
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	127	4	3	4	1	1	4	4
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	168	4	3	4	1	1	4	4

<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	178-179	4	3	2	2	4	2	2
<i>New Ireland</i>	14/01/1922	4	1	4	1	1	4	1
<i>New Ireland</i>	17/12/1921	4	1	4	1	2	4	3
<i>Old Ireland</i>	21/02/1920	4	2	4	1	2	4	3
<i>Old Ireland</i>	19/03/1920	4	2	4	1	1	4	4
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	105, 106	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	254-255	5	4	2	2	1	4	4
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	398-400	4	4	3	1	2	1	2
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	26	5	5	3	1	1	1	2
<i>The History of the Irish Boy Scouts</i>	45	3	4	4	2	1	4	5
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	435	4	2	4	1	3	4	3
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	415, 420	3	2	4	1	1	4	3
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	430-431	5	2	1	2	1	3	4
<i>The Separatist</i>	15/04/1922	4	1	4	1	2	4	1
<i>The Separatist</i>	20/05/1922	4	1	4	1	1	4	1
<i>The Separatist</i>	25/03/1922	4	1	4	1	2	4	1
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	213	2	1	3	2	1	1	3
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	23	3	3	4	2	1	3	4
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	37	5	3	4	4	4	4	4
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	115	3	2	2	2	1	3	3
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	67-68	2	4	2	1	1	2	2
<i>When Youth Was Mine</i>	187	3	2	4	2	1	4	1
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	112	4	5	4	2	4	4	2
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	162	4	4	3	3	4	2	2
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	88	1	4	4	1	1	4	3
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	98	5	1	5	3	3	5	1
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	103, 104	3	2	4	1	3	4	4
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	109, 110	3	3	4	2	1	3	4
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	122, 123	2	4	4	2	1	4	4
	Averages:	3.297	2.719	3.094	1.719	1.625	3.000	2.953

**Appendix 15B: Heptagrammatic Rankings of Prophecies Sampled for
Quantitative Analysis from the SFC**

SFC Volume	Page Location	Intentionality	Marginality	Morbidity	Recognition	Religiosity	Scale	Subversiveness
38C	(10) 16	3	4	4	1	4	2	2
46	247	4	4	4	1	4	1	2
51	51	3	4	4	1	4	2	1
131B	(2) 48-51	5	5	3	2	1	4	1
138D	(3) 19	4	5	3	1	1	2	2
152	395	4	3	1	1	4	2	1
167	103-105	3	5	2	1	1	2	1
225	338	5	5	1	2	1	5	4
225	338	4	5	3	2	3	5	4
243	283-285	4	5	4	2	2	5	4
250	9-10	4	5	3	3	4	4	4
255	31-32	5	5	5	2	1	4	2
255	438	5	3	5	3	4	4	1
257	384-385	5	5	5	2	1	3	1
300	33	5	5	5	2	1	4	4
302	40-41	5	5	5	2	2	4	3
364	171	1	5	2	1	1	4	5
382	142-143	5	5	3	2	2	3	3
440	136-137	5	5	4	3	1	4	2
444	264	5	3	4	3	4	2	2
468	20-21	4	4	5	2	4	2	3
471	107	4	5	2	2	1	4	1
473	361-362	3	4	4	2	4	1	2
473	4, 5	3	4	4	2	4	1	2
510	409-411	5	3	4	4	4	4	4
521	25-26	5	5	2	1	1	1	2
576	216-217	5	3	5	3	4	4	3
592	461	5	5	4	2	1	4	1
596	95	5	5	3	2	1	4	1
604	35	4	5	4	2	1	2	1
604	161	4	5	4	2	1	2	1
678	7	5	5	5	3	1	4	2
700	165-167	5	5	3	2	1	4	4

730	516	3	4	4	2	4	1	1
732	376-377	5	3	4	3	4	3	2
745	210-213	4	4	4	2	4	3	2
749	12, 13	3	4	3	2	4	3	2
750	286-288	5	3	4	3	4	4	2
756	406-407	5	5	3	1	1	4	1
761	220-225	3	5	3	2	3	4	4
821	303-304	5	5	3	2	4	4	2
846	362-363	5	3	4	2	4	2	1
1050	95-96	5	3	4	3	4	4	2
1091	24-26	5	3	4	3	4	4	2
1096	316-318	5	4	4	1	4	2	1
1122	101	3	5	1	2	4	4	2
	Averages:	4.28	4.35	3.57	2.04	2.65	3.15	2.17

Appendix 16A: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis From Memoirs and Bureau of Military History

Witness Statements Part 1

Source Title/BMH WS Number	Page/Date	Prophetic Contingency	Power Source	Medium of Delivery	Subject Matter of Prophecy	Fulfilment of Prophecy
0006	18	No	National Spirit	Written publication	Easter Rising	Complete
0155	7	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Easter Rising	Complete
0157	22, 31	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
0249	13	No	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Irish Revolution	Complete
0268	5	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Partial
0340	4	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Anglo-Irish Treaty	Complete
0340	4	No	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Irish Revolution	Complete
0428	7-8	No	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Easter Rising	Complete
0541	Appendix A p. 2	No	ESP	Spoken privately	Land League	Complete
0719	10-11	Yes	Faith	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Partial
0733	34-35	No	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Irish Revolution	Complete
0734	22	No	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Irish Revolution	Complete
0755	22	No	ESP	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
0755	213-214	No	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Easter Rising	Complete
0806	4, 5	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
0839	6	No	ESP	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Partial
0889	104, 105	Unclear	Unknown	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
0896	3	No	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Easter Rising	Partial
0939	89-90	No	Faith	Spoken privately	Miscellaneous Trivia	Complete
0982	59	Yes	Unknown	Spoken privately	Anglo-Irish Treaty	Complete
0982	74-75	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Partial
1043	126	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Easter Rising	Complete
1092	11	No	Unknown	Written publication	Irish Revolution	Complete
1148	Appendix A p. 3	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
1162	57	No	ESP	Spoken publicly	Fate of Individuals	Complete
1511	38	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Easter Rising	Complete
1511	21-22, 29	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Easter Rising	Complete
1652	9	No	Dream	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
1751	86-87, 100	No	Unknown	Written privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
1763	94-95	No	Faith	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
1769	81-82	No	ESP	Spoken privately	Civil War	Complete
<i>Free State or Republic</i>	12	Yes	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Anglo-Irish Treaty	Complete

<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	224, 370, 371	No	National Spirit	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	127	Yes	Unknown	Spoken privately	Fate of the Nation	Complete
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	168	Yes	Unknown	Spoken privately	Civil War	Complete
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	178-179	No	Faith	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
<i>New Ireland</i>	14/01/1922	Yes	Unknown	Written publication	Civil War	Partial
<i>New Ireland</i>	17/12/1921	Yes	Unknown	Written publication	Anglo-Irish Treaty	Partial
<i>Old Ireland</i>	21/02/1920	Yes	Unknown	Written publication	Partition	Partial
<i>Old Ireland</i>	19/03/1920	Yes	Unknown	Written publication	Irish Revolution	Partial
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	105, 106	Unclear	Legends/ Folklore	Spoken privately	Final Battle of the Gael	Partial
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	254-255	Unclear	Legends/ Folklore	Spoken privately	Fate of the Nation	Undetermined
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	398-400	No	Dream	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	26	No	Magic	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
<i>The History of the Irish Boy Scouts</i>	45	Yes	Legends/ Folklore	Written publication	Fate of the Nation	Partial
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	435	Yes	Unknown	Written privately	Anglo-Irish Treaty	Complete
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	415, 420	Yes	Unknown	Written privately	Fate of the Nation	Complete
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	430-431	Yes	Unknown	Written privately	Anglo-Irish Treaty	Complete
<i>The Separatist</i>	15/04/1922	No	Unknown	Written publication	Civil War	Partial
<i>The Separatist</i>	20/05/1922	Yes	Unknown	Written publication	Civil War	Complete
<i>The Separatist</i>	25/03/1922	Yes	Unknown	Written publication	Civil War	Complete
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	213	No	Unknown	Written publication	Fate of Individuals	Complete
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	23	Yes	Unknown	Written publication	Easter Rising	Complete
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	37	No	Legends/ Folklore	Spoken publicly	Easter Rising	Complete
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	115	Unclear	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Civil War	Complete
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	67-68	No	Dream	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Partial
<i>When Youth Was Mine</i>	187	Yes	ESP	Spoken publicly	Civil War	Complete
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	112	No	Dream	Written privately	Easter Rising	Complete
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	162	No	Dream	Spoken privately	Fate of Individuals	Complete
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	88	Yes	Unknown	Spoken publicly	Partition	Complete
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	98	Unclear	Legends/ Folklore	Written publication	World War I	Partial
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	103, 104	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Easter Rising	Complete
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	109, 110	No	Unknown	Spoken privately	Easter Rising	Complete
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	122, 123	No	Unknown	Written privately	Civil War	Complete

Appendix 16B: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for Quantitative Analysis From Memoirs and Bureau of Military History

Witness Statements Part 2

Title of Source/BMH WS Number	Page/Date	Prophet Name	Prophet Gender	Source Author	Author Gender
0006	18	Padraig Pearse	Male	Liam O'Briain	Male
0155	7	Peadar S. Doyle	Male	Peadar S. Doyle	Male
0157	22, 31	Michael Malone	Male	Joeph O'Connor	Male
0249	13	Thomas MacDonagh	Male	Frank Henderson	Male
0268	5	Cpt. Douglas French Mullen	Male	Liam T. Cosgrave	Male
0340	4	Dick McKee	Male	Oscar Traynor	Male
0340	4	Thomas MacDonagh	Male	Oscar Traynor	Male
0428	7-8	Padraig Pearse	Male	Thomas Devine	Male
0541	Appendix A p. 2	Anne Parnell	Female	Nancy Wyse-Power	Female
0719	10-11	Jeremiah Delaney	Male	Maurice Forde and others ²	Male
0733	34-35	James Connolly	Male	James O'Shea	Male
0734	22	Thomas MacDonagh	Male	Thomas J. Meldon	Male
0755	22	Commandant Byrne	Male	Sean Prendergast	Male
0755	213-214	Padraig Pearse	Male	Sean Prendergast	Male
0806	4, 5	Unnamed Christian Brother	Male	Mary Clancy	Female
0839	6	A Gypsy Fortune-Teller	Female	Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty	Male
0889	104, 105	Brian Fagan	Male	Seamus Ua Caomhanaigh	Male
0896	3	The O'Rahilly	Male	Edward Moane	Male
0939	89-90	Sean Treacy	Male	Ernest Blythe	Male
0982	59	Laurence Ginnell	Male	Alice Ginnell	Female
0982	74-75	Laurence Ginnell	Male	Alice Ginnell	Male
1043	126	Joseph Lawless' Father	Male	Joseph Lawless	Male
1092	11	Rory of the Gael	Male	Michael J. Kehoe	Male
1148	Appendix A p. 3	John Quinn	Male	Patrick J. Casey	Male
1162	57	Brian Ruaidh	Male	Michael Kilroy	Male
1511	38	Tom Clarke	Male	Gerald Doyle	Male
1511	21-22, 29	Tom Clarke	Male	Gerald Doyle	Male
1652	9	Michael Loughnane	Male	Henry O'Mara	Male
1751	86-87, 100	John Duff	Male	Cahir Davitt	Male
1763	94-95	Mr. Fitzgerald	Male	Dan Breen	Male
1769	81-82	Van Rensberg	Male	Patrick J. Little	Male
<i>Free State or Republic</i>	12	Eamon De Valera	Male	Padraig de Burca, J. F. Boyle	Male
<i>Guerilla Days in Ireland</i>	224, 370, 371	Charlie Hurley	Male	Tom Barry	Male
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	127	Dan Breen	Male	Dan Breen	Male

² Including Peadar McCann, Thomas Daly, Sean Kenny, Michael Keogh, Joseph O'Shea, and Timmy O'Sullivan

<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	168	Dan Breen	Male	Dan Breen	Male
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	178-179	Mr. Fitzgerald	Male	Dan Breen	Male
<i>New Ireland</i>	14/01/1922	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male
<i>New Ireland</i>	17/12/1921	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male
<i>Old Ireland</i>	21/02/1920	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male
<i>Old Ireland</i>	19/03/1920	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	105, 106	St. Columcille	Male	Ernie O'Malley	Male
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	254-255	Unknown	Male	Ernie O'Malley	Male
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	398-400	Mrs. Tobin	Female	Ernie O'Malley	Male
<i>On Another Man's Wound</i>	26	An Old woman	Female	Ernie O'Malley	Male
<i>The History of the Irish Boy Scouts</i>	45	Countess Markievicz	Female	Liam Mellows	Male
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	435	William O'Brien	Male	William O'Brien	Male
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	415, 420	William O'Brien	Male	William O'Brien	Male
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it Came About</i>	430-431	William O'Brien	Male	William O'Brien	Male
<i>The Separatist</i>	15/04/1922	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male
<i>The Separatist</i>	20/05/1922	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male
<i>The Separatist</i>	25/03/1922	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male	P. S. O'Hegarty	Male
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	213	David Lloyd George	Male	Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	Female
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	23	Padraig Pearse	Male	Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	Female
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	37	St. Ultan	Male	Kathleen Keyes McDonnell	Female
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	115	Paddy O'Brien	Male	Mossie Harnett	Male
<i>Victory and Woe</i>	67-68	Larry Ellen Harnett	Male	Mossie Harnett	Male
<i>When Youth Was Mine</i>	187	Eamon De Valera	Male	Jeremiah Murphy	Male
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	112	Relation of Maire de Butleir	Female	Charlotte McManus	Female
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	162	Michael Loughnane	Male	Charlotte McManus	Female
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	88	Charlotte McManus	Female	Charlotte McManus	Female
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	98	The Apocalyptic Writers	Male	Charlotte McManus	Female
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	103, 104	Unnamed Curate in Castlebar	Male	Charlotte McManus	Female
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	109, 110	The O'Rahilly	Male	Charlotte McManus	Female
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	122, 123	Unnamed Protestant friend	Female	Charlotte McManus	Female

**Appendix 16C: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for
Quantitative Analysis from SFC Part 1**

Story Title	SFC Volume	Page Location	Delivery Method	Power Source	Subject Matter
Béaloideas	38C	(10) 16	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of Individuals
Scéal	46	247	Spoken privately	Faith	Fate of Individuals
The Local Landlords - The Burkes of Marblehill	51	51	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of Individuals
Tairngreacht Bhrian Rua Uí Chearbháin	131B	(2) 48-51	Spoken privately	ESP	Misc. Trivia
Mooney	138D	(3) 19	Spoken publicly	ESP	Fate of Individuals
Our Local Patron Saint	152	395	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of Individuals
Donaghtrane Bridge	167	103-105	Spoken publicly	ESP	Civil War
Superstitions	225	338	Spoken publicly	National Spirit	Fate of the Nation
Superstitions	225	338	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Irish Revolution
The Hanging Tree	243	283-285	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
My Home District	250	9-10	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
Donal Cam	255	31-32	Spoken publicly	ESP	Fate of Individuals
Folklore - Strange Story	255	438	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
No Title	257	384-385	Spoken privately	ESP	Fate of Individuals
Tairngreacht Mac Amhlaobh ós na hAonta	300	33	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Fate of the Nation
Tairngreacht Mhic Amhlaobh	302	40-41	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Fate of the Nation

Local Poets	364	171	Written privately	Legends & Folklore	Irish Revolution
Cloyne - County Cork	382	142-143	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Irish Revolution
Historical Tradition	440	136-137	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Civil War
Local Place Names	444	264	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of Individuals
Derryquin	468	20-21	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of Individuals
Lucht Siúil	471	107	Spoken publicly	ESP	Irish Revolution
An Seanchaisleán	473	361-362	Spoken privately	Faith	Fate of Individuals
Caisleán Uinn	473	4, 5	Spoken privately	Faith	Fate of Individuals
Colmcille	510	409-411	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
Glenstal	521	25-26	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Fate of Individuals
Colm Cille's Prophecies	576	216-217	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
Cánach na Tarnгаireachta	592	461	Spoken publicly	ESP	Fate of the Nation
The Lake Horse of Cullane	596	95	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Fate of the Nation
A Story - Bidy Earley	604	35	Spoken privately	ESP	Fate of Individuals
A Story - Bidy Earley	604	161	Spoken privately	ESP	Fate of Individuals
No Title	678	7	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Civil War
The Rider of Ardnagannagh	700	165-167	Spoken publicly	Legends & Folklore	Fate of the Nation
The Rochfort Family	730	516	Spoken privately	Faith	Fate of Individuals

Holy Wells	732	376-377	Spoken publicly	Faith	Civil War
Moate Carmelite Convent	745	210-213	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of Individuals
A Story	749	12, 13	Spoken publicly	Faith	Irish Revolution
My Home District	750	286-288	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry	756	406-407	Spoken privately	Legends & Folklore	Easter Rising
No Title	761	220-225	Spoken publicly	ESP	Partition
Archaeological	821	303-304	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
Where I live	846	362-363	Spoken publicly	Faith	Irish Revolution
Tairngreacht Cholm Chille	1050	95-96	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
Tairngreacht Choilm Chille	1091	24-26	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation
Story of Drumboe Castle	1096	316-318	Spoken privately	Faith	Fate of Individuals
The Palm and the Shamrock	1122	101	Spoken publicly	Faith	Fate of the Nation

Totals:

	Spoken Publicly	35	Faith	24
46 Memorates in total from SFC	Spoken Privately	10	Legends Folklore	11
	Written Privately	1	ESP	10
			National Spirit	1

Fate of Individuals	17
Fate of the Nation	16
Irish Revolution	6
Civil War	4
Easter Rising	1
Partition	1
Miscellaneous Trivia	1

**Appendix 16D: Qualitative Information of Prophecies Sampled for
Quantitative Analysis from SFC Part 2**

SFC Volume	Page Location	Author Gender	Author of source	Prophet Name	Prophet Gender	Contingency
38C	(10) 16	Male	Máirtín Ó Riain	A Priest	Male	No
46	247	Female	Máire Ní Ghiollachomáin	A Priest	Male	No
51	51	Male	John Fahy	A Priest	Male	No
131B	(2) 48-51	Male	Séamus Mac Einrí	Brian Ruaidh	Male	No
138D	(3) 19	Male	Ted Hastings	Mooney	Male	No
152	395	Male	Tomás Ó Léonard	St. Tiernan	Male	No
167	103-105	Male	John Mc Hugh	Flannelly, Goban Mason	Male	Yes
225	338	Male	Francis Michael Mc Govern	Unknown	Unknown	No
225	338	Male	Francis Michael Mc Govern	Unknown	Unknown	No
243	283-285	Male	Tomás Mac Mághnuis	Unknown	Unknown	Yes
250	9-10	Female	Nora Hughes	Unknown	Unknown	Yes
255	31-32	Female	Bean Mhic Oireachtaigh	Donal Cam	Male	No
255	438	Male	Michael J. Mc Namara	St. Columcille	Male	No
257	384-385	Male	Patrick Coffey	Donal Cam	Male	No
300	33	Male	Eamonn Mac Firbisig	Mac Amhlaoibh	Male	No
302	40-41	Female	Bean Uí Dhrisceoil	Sean O'Colleen	Male	No
364	171	Male	Denis Cremin	Denis Cremin Beeing Mallow	Male	No
382	142-143	Male	Muiris Ó Spealáin	Unknown	Unknown	No
440	136-137	Female	Mrs M. Lambe	Unknown	Unknown	No
444	264	Male	Philip Reidy	St. Columcille	Male	No

468	20-21	Male	Muiris Mac Gearailt	Fr. Mangan	Male	No
471	107	Male	Diarmad Ó Donnchadha	Muiris Seóigh	Male	No
473	361-362	Female	Máire Bean Uí Riordáin	A Priest	Male	No
473	4, 5	Male	Mícheál O Fóghludha	A Priest	Male	No
510	409-411	Female	M.B. Tobin	St. Columcille	Male	No
521	25-26	Female	Brighid Ní Riain	Unknown	Unknown	No
576	216-217	Female	Mrs O' Connor	St. Columcille	Male	No
592	461	Female	Ss. Ó Muineóg	A Sligo man	Male	No
596	95	Male	Pat Clune	Unknown	Unknown	No
604	35	Female	Jenny Moore	Biddy Early	Female	No
604	161	Male	Tomás Ó Cuinneagáin	Biddy Early	Female	No
678	7	Female	Bean Uí Chonchobhair	Unknown	Unknown	No
700	165-167	Male	Br. Abban O' Donoghue	Unknown	Unknown	No
730	516	Female	Phyllis O' Hara	A Priest	Male	No
732	376-377	Male	Matt Nannery	St. Columcille	Male	No
745	210-213	Male	S. Ó Ruairc, L. Mac Coiligh	Father Wheatley	Male	No
749	12, 13	Female	Mrs Curley	A Priest	Male	No
750	286-288	Male	Bernard Mc Guire	St. Columcille	Male	No
756	406-407	Male	P. Mac Aonghusa	Peter Clarke	Male	No
761	220-225	Male	Patrick Connolly	Jim Mallon	Male	No
821	303-304	Male	Jack Heelion	John Hanly	Male	No
846	362-363	Female	Mrs Winnie Murphy	St. Columcille	Male	No
1050	95-96	Female	Áine M. Ní Fhuathaigh	St. Columcille	Male	No
1091	24-26	Male	Colm Ó Baoighill	St. Columcille	Male	No
1096	316-318	Unknown	(None Specified)	Father McNulty	Male	No

1122	101	Male	Patrick Kelly AKA	Patrick Kelly	Male	No
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Totals:

Source Authors	Unknown: 1	Male: 29	Female: 16
Prophets	Unknown: 10	Male: 34	Female: 2
Contingency	Yes: 3	No: 43	

Appendix 17: Informant names and locations of Prophecies Relevant to the Irish Revolution in the SFC

Vol.	Page	Title	Informant ³	Location
0038C	(10) 16	Béaloideas	Máirtín Ó Riain	Shrule, Co. Galway
0046	247	Scéal	Máire Ní Ghiollachomáin	Barnacurra, Co. Galway
0051	51	The Local Landlords - The Burkes of Marblehill	John Fahy	Curragh, Co. Galway
131B	(02) 48-51	Tairngreacht Bhrian Rua Uí Chearbháin	Séamus Mac Einrí	Inishbiggle, Co. Mayo
138D	(03) 19	Mooney	Ted Hastings	Tawnyslinnaun, Co. Mayo
0152	395	Our Local Patron Saint	Tomás Ó Léonard	Killacorraun, Co. Mayo
0167	103-105	Donaghtrane Bridge	John Mc Hugh	Farranmacfarrell, Co. Sligo
0225	338	Superstitions	Francis Michael Mc Govern	Cloverhill, Co. Leitrim
0225	338	Superstitions	Francis Michael Mc Govern	Cloverhill, Co. Leitrim
0243	283-285	The Hanging Tree	Tomás Mac Mághnuis	Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon
0250	9-10	My Home District	Nora Hughes	Creta, Co. Roscommon
0255	31-32	Donal Cam	Bean Mhic Oireachtaigh	Carrigeen, Co. Roscommon
0255	438	Folklore - Strange Story	Michael J. Mc Namara	Kilglass, Co. Roscommon
0257	384-385	No Title	Patrick Coffey	Ashbrook, Co. Roscommon
0300	33	Tairngreacht Mac Amhlaoibh ós na hAonta	Eamonn Mac Fírbisig	Drimoleague, Co. Cork
0302	40-41	Tairngreacht Mhic Amhlaoibh	Bean Uí Dhrisceoil	Drimoleague, Co. Cork
0364	171	Local Poets	Denis Cremin	Bweeng, Co. Cork
0382	142-143	Cloyne - County Cork	Muiris Ó Spealáin	Cloyne, Co. Cork
0440	136-137	Historical Tradition	Mrs M. Lambe	Ballyvelly, Co. Kerry
0444	264	Local Place Names	Philip Reidy	Maglass, Co. Kerry
0468	20-21	Derryquin	Muiris Mac Gearailt	Sneem, Co. Kerry
0471	107	Lucht Siúil	Diarmad Ó Donnchadha	Carhoonahone, Co. Kerry
0473	4, 5	Caisleán Uinn	Mícheál Ó Fóghludha	Letter East, Co. Kerry
0473	361-362	An Seanchaisleán	Máire Bean Uí Riordáin	Kilnabrack Lower, Co. Kerry
0510	409-411	Colmeille	M.B. Tobin	Kilfinnane, Co. Limerick
0521	25-26	Glenstal	Brighid Ní Riain	Cappamore, Co. Limerick
0576	216-217	Colm Cille's Prophecies	Mrs O' Connor	Boytonrath, Co. Tipperary
0592	461	Cánach na Tairngaireachta	Ss. Ó Muineóg	Kilclaran, Co. Clare
0596	95	The Lake Horse of Cullane	Pat Clune	Quin, Co. Clare
0604	35	A Story - Bidy Earley	Jenny Moore	Ballynacally, Co. Clare
0604	161	A Story - Bidy Earley	Tomás Ó Cuinneagáin	Ballynacally, Co. Clare
0678	7	No Title	Bean Uí Chonchobhair	Tullyallen, Co. Louth
0700	165-167	The Rider of Ardnagannagh	Br. Abban O' Donoghue	Navan, Co. Meath

³ If the informant's name is unavailable, the collector's name is provided instead, and if that is unavailable, the teacher

0730	516	The Rochfort Family	Phyllis O' Hara	Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath
0732	376-377	Holy Wells	Matt Nannery	Ballinderry, Co. Westmeath
0745	210-213	Moate Carmelite Convent	S. Ó Ruairc, L. Mac Coiligh	Moate, Co. Westmeath
0749	12, 13	A Story	Mrs Curley	Athlone, Co. Westmeath
0750	286-288	My Home District	Bernard Mc Guire	Lisnacreevy, Co. Longford
0756	406-407	A Fairy Regiment of Cavalry	P. Mac Aonghusa	Garrowhill, Co. Longford
0761	220-225	No Title	Patrick Connolly	Aghnacliff, Co. Longford
0821	303-304	Archaeological	Jack Heelion	Ballygaddy, Co. Offaly
0846	362-363	Where I live	Mrs Winnie Murphy	Ballyfoile, Co. Kilkenny
1050	95-96	Tairngreacht Cholm Chille	Áine M. Ní Fhuathaigh	Loughmuck, Co. Donegal
1091	24-26	Tairngreacht Choilm Chille	Colm Ó Baoighill	Croaghross, Co. Donegal
1096	316-318	Story of Drumboe Castle	(None Specified)	Dooish, Co. Donegal
1122	101	The Palm and the Shamrock	Patrick Kelly AKA "An Fidléir Dall"	Urrismenagh, Co. Donegal

Appendix 18A: Memorates concerning visions and visionaries in BMH

Witness statements

BMH WS #	Author	Page
291	William D. Daly	9,10
371	Robert Holland	18, 19
419	Peig Conlon	3
551	Thomas Canon Duggan	3
585	Frank Robbins	16, 17
687	Michael Joseph Curran	59
751	Colm O'Lochlainn	5
755.3	Sean Prendergast	478
802	Sean Prendergast	5, 6
807	Patrick J. Doyle	14
822	James Stapleton	15
838	Seán Moylan	68, 69
838	Seán Moylan	76
1086	Patrick Mullooly	55
1454	James Leahy	41, 42, 43, 44, 46
1517	Pádraig Ó Fathaigh	3,4

Appendix 18B: Memorates concerning visions and visionaries in Memoirs

Source Title	Author	Page	Edition
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	92-99	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	70, 71, 72, 73	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	152-156	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	118, 119, 120	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	35	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	75, 76	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	100, 101	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	174-175	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	39	(London, 1928)
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	38	(London, 1928)
<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	197	(Dublin, 1979)
<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	200	(Dublin, 1979)
<i>Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland</i>	Caroline May Woodcock	119, 120	(London, 1921)
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	Daniel Breen	52	(Cork, 2010)
<i>Revolutionary Woman Kathleen Clarke 1878-1972 An Autobiography</i>	Kathleen Clarke	126, 127	(Dublin, 1991)
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	William O'Brien	257, 258	(London, 1923)
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	Kathleen Keys McDonnell	154	(Cork, 1972)
<i>When Youth Was Mine</i>	Jeremiah Murphy	187	(Dublin, 1998)
<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	Jeremiah Murphy	15	(Dublin, 1998)
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	201	(Dublin, 1929)
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	92, 93	(Dublin, 1929)
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	53,54,55	(Dublin, 1929)

Appendix 18C: Aspect of Morale Effect in Vision Memorates

Source title/BMH WS #	Author	Page	Aspect
0687	Michael Joseph Curran	59	Neutral
0755.3	Sean Prendergast	478	Neutral
0822	James Stapleton	15	Neutral
1454	James Leahy	41, 42, 43, 44, 46	Neutral
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	92-99	Neutral
<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	197	Neutral
<i>Experiences of an Officer's Wife in Ireland</i>	Caroline May Woodcock	119, 120	Neutral
<i>The Irish Revolution and How it came About</i>	William O'Brien	257, 258	Neutral
<i>When Youth Was Mine</i>	Jeremiah Murphy	187	Neutral
0291	William D. Daly	9,10	Inspirational
0419	Peig Conlon	3	Inspirational
0551	Thomas Canon Duggan	3	Inspirational
0585	Frank Robbins	16, 17	Inspirational
0751	Colm O'Lochlainn	5	Inspirational
0807	Patrick J. Doyle	14	Inspirational
0838	Seán Moylan	68, 69	Inspirational
0838	Seán Moylan	76	Inspirational
1086	Patrick Mullooly	55	Inspirational
1517	Pádraig Ó Fathaigh	3,4	Inspirational
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	174-175	Inspirational
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	39	Inspirational
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	38	Inspirational
<i>Dublin Made Me</i>	Todd 'C.S.' Andrews	200	Inspirational
<i>Revolutionary Woman Kathleen Clarke 1878-1972: An autobiograpy</i>	Kathleen Clarke	126, 127	Inspirational
<i>There is a Bridge at Bandon</i>	Kathleen Keys McDonnell	154	Inspirational
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	92, 93	Inspirational
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	53,54,55	Inspirational
0371	Robert Holland	18, 19	Demoralizing
0802	Sean Prendergast	5, 6	Demoralizing
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	70, 71, 72, 73	Demoralizing
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	152-156	Demoralizing
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	118, 119, 120	Demoralizing
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	35	Demoralizing
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	75, 76	Demoralizing
<i>Days of Fear</i>	Frank Gallagher	100, 101	Demoralizing
<i>My Fight for Irish Freedom</i>	Daniel Breen	52	Demoralizing
<i>When Youth was Mine</i>	Jeremiah Murphy	15	Demoralizing
<i>White Light and Flame</i>	Charlotte Elizabeth McManus	201	Demoralizing

Appendix 19: Irish newsprint articles using prophetic language, 1916-1923

Newspaper	Date	Page
<i>Irish Times</i>	6 May 1916	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	19 Mar. 1919	5
<i>Weekly Irish Times</i>	22 Mar. 1919	2
<i>Weekly Irish Times</i>	3 May 1919	3
<i>Weekly Irish Times</i>	20 Sep. 1919	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	16 Jan. 1920	5
<i>Western People</i>	17 Jan. 1920	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	17 Jul. 1920	7
<i>Irish Times</i>	23 Jul. 1920	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	6 Aug. 1920	6
<i>Nationalist and Leinster Times</i>	22 Jan. 1921	3
<i>Western Morning News</i>	21 Feb. 1921	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	10 Mar. 1921	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	27 May 1921	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	27 Aug. 1921	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	7 Oct. 1921	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	19 Oct. 1921	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	21 Dec. 1921	6
<i>Irish Times</i>	23 Jan. 1922	7
<i>Irish Times</i>	1 Feb. 1922	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	6 Feb. 1922	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	10 Feb. 1922	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	17 Feb. 1922	5A
<i>Southern Star</i>	25 Mar. 1922	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	27 Jun. 1922	5
<i>Dundee Courier</i>	27 Jun. 1922	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	7 Jul. 1922	2
<i>Ballymena Weekly Telegraph</i>	8 Jul. 1922	6
<i>Nenagh Guardian</i>	22 Jul. 1922	5

<i>Sligo Champion</i>	2 Sep. 1922	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	9 Dec. 1922	5
<i>Irish Examiner</i>	11 Dec. 1922	6
<i>Irish Times</i>	11 Jan. 1923	5
<i>Nationalist (Tipperary)</i>	20 Jan. 1923	8
<i>Irish Times</i>	16 May 1923	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	17 May 1923	6
<i>Irish Times</i>	16 Jun. 1923	7
<i>Irish Times</i>	21 Jun. 1923	4
<i>Irish Times</i>	11 Aug. 1923	8
<i>Freeman's Journal</i>	13 Aug. 1923	13
<i>Irish Times</i>	28 Aug. 1923	5
<i>Irish Times</i>	4 Oct. 1923	6
<i>Kilkenny People</i>	6 Oct. 1923	8
<i>Irish Times</i>	24 Nov. 1923	8

Appendix 20: List of Fifty-Five Analytical Metrics Used in Phase 3

Metric Name	Description
Investigator	If the memorate was found in a BMH Witness statement, the name of the investigator was included here.
Publication Date	The date when the source from which the memorate was drawn was published.
Birthdate	The birthdate of the percipient of the supernatural phenomena in question.
Approximate Time of Event	The approximate date and time given by the percipient as to when the supernatural phenomena in question occurred.
Season	The approximate season given by the percipient as to when the supernatural phenomena in question occurred.
Province	The province or state given by the percipient as to where the supernatural phenomena in question occurred.
County	The county given by the percipient as to where the supernatural phenomena in question occurred.
Most precise Location of Event	A brief description of any other details given by the percipient as to where the supernatural phenomena in question occurred.
Age at event	The age of the percipient at the time given by the percipient when the supernatural phenomena in question occurred.
Page location	The location of the memorate in the source from which it was drawn.
Type of Phenomena	A brief categorization of the supernatural phenomena described in the memorate (e.g. premonition, haunted house, etc.)
Folkloric?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with folklore.
Funerary?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with funerary practices.
Haunting?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with a haunting.
Sectarian?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with sectarian violence.
Apparition?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with an apparition.
Precognition?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with precognition.
Prayers?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with prayers.
Sacrament?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with the Catholic sacraments.
Oath?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate has a connection with oaths.
Paranormal?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate meets this projects definition of paranormal.
Religious?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate meets this projects definition of religious.
Magical?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate meets this projects definition of magical.
Spiritual?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate meets this projects definition of spiritual.
Mystical?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate meets this projects definition of mystical.
Belief?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate consists of or includes supernatural beliefs.
Practice?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate consists of or includes a supernatural practice.

Anomaly?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate consists of or includes a supernatural anomaly.
Institutional Affiliation of Phenomena	If the phenomena described in the memorate is affiliated with an institution of some kind (religious or secular), this field lists that institution.
Religiosity of Phenomena	A ranking from zero to three of the religiosity of the phenomena described in the memorate.
Object-based?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate is based around a physical object of some kind.
Location-based?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate involves a specific location.
Morale Boost?	A Yes/No metric describing if the phenomena described in the memorate involves a boost to the morale of some actor or group of actors.
Cynical Use?	A Yes/No metric describing if the supernatural phenomena described in the memorate was used to further some objective without that user actively believing in the reality of the phenomena.
Narrative Weight	The percentage that this memorate occupies of the source from which this memorate was identified.
Credulity of Percipient	A ranking from zero to four describing to what extent the percipient believes in the supernatural phenomena described in this memorate.
Proximity of Percipient	A ranking from one to four describing how close the percipient was to directly witnessing the supernatural phenomena described in the memorate (e.g., if they saw it first hand, heard a rumour about it, etc.)
Known Corroborators	The number of known corroborators of the supernatural phenomena described in the memorate in other memorates.
Combat Proximity	A ranking from zero to three describing how closely in time the supernatural phenomena described in the memorate occurred to some kind of life-threatening stress or combat.
Description	A brief description of the memorate.
Gender	The gender of the percipient of the memorate.
Confession?	A yes/no metric filled in if the memorate included or consisted of a catholic sacrament.
Eucharist?	A yes/no metric filled in if the memorate included or consisted of a catholic sacrament.
Matrimony?	A yes/no metric filled in if the memorate included or consisted of a catholic sacrament.
Unction?	A yes/no metric filled in if the memorate included or consisted of a catholic sacrament.
Baptism?	A yes/no metric filled in if the memorate included or consisted of a catholic sacrament.
Ordination?	A yes/no metric filled in if the memorate included or consisted of a catholic sacrament.
Confirmation?	A yes/no metric filled in if the memorate included or consisted of a catholic sacrament.
Clergyman?	A yes/no metric describing if the memorate had something to do with a clergyman of some kind.
Miraculous?	A yes/no metric describing if the memorate consisted of or included a miracle.
Death related?	A yes/no metric describing if the memorate was in some way related to a past or impending death.
Pages in Source	The number of pages in the source from which the memorate was drawn.
Length in pages	The length of the memorate in pages.
Source Type	The type of source from which the memorate was drawn (e.g., a BMH Witness statement, a memoir, a newsprint article, etc.)
Length in Words	The length of the memorate in words.

Appendix 21: List of Keywords Used for SFC Search

Keyword	Total Hits	Date Finished¹
Burned	5576	Unfinished
Burning*	2608	Unfinished
Company	1419	Unfinished
Twenty-years-ago	1310	12-Oct-2021
Barracks	870	Unfinished
Barrack	799	Unfinished
Tans	705	Unfinished
Black-and-Tans	661	1-Oct-2021
Spy*	623	Unfinished
volunteer*	441	Unfinished
Tan	438	Unfinished
Black-Pig	421	Unfinished
Ambush*	407	14-Oct-2021
1920	394	5-Nov-2021
1916	369	14-Oct-2021
1921	364	6-Nov-2021
1918	316	Unfinished
1922	315	3-Nov-2021
Kilmallock	287	Unfinished
Informer*	268	25-Oct-2021
Volunteers	259	29-Oct-2021
Republic*	252	20-Oct-2021
Oath*	251	Unfinished
1917	248	Unfinished
R.I.C.	237	28-Sep-2021
1914	228	Unfinished
Gang	216	Unfinished
Brigade*	209	Unfinished
1923	185	16-Sep-2021
IRA	185	29-Apr-2021
Spies	182	Unfinished
1919	170	Unfinished
troubled-times	160	30-Apr-2021
Black-and-tan	159	24-Sep-2021
Column*	156	12-Oct-2021
1924	149	Unfinished
1912	146	Unfinished
Free-State	136	28-Sep-2021
1915	134	Unfinished

¹ Refers to whether or not close reading of each hit was completed, and if so, when it was completed.

1913	133	Unfinished
Civil-War	130	23-Sep-2021
Sinn Féin	120	8-Nov-2021
Treaty	107	10-May-2021
Pearse	95	22-Sep-2021
Volunteer	86	12-Oct-2021
Rosscarbery	80	Unfinished
Companies	66	28-Apr-2021
De Valera	59	23-Sep-2021
Auxi*	56	23-Sep-2021
Independence	54	20-Apr-2021
Anglo-Irish-War	52	1-Oct-2021
Kilmichael	52	Unfinished
Nineteen-twenty	49	4-May-2021
Irish-volunteer*	38	12-Oct-2021
Battalion*	35	5-May-2021
men-on-the-run	30	22-Sep-2021
Crossbarry	27	Unfinished
Commandant	26	Unfinished
Glencullen	26	Unfinished
Irregulars	18	21-Apr-2021
Stater*	18	21-Apr-2021
Tairngreacht	16	14-Oct-2021
Conscription	15	Unfinished
Nineteen-eighteen	15	Unfinished
Nineteen-sixteen	14	Unfinished
Troublesome-times	13	5-Nov-2021
Nineteen-seventeen	10	Unfinished
Guerilla*	8	21-Apr-2021
Knocksedan	7	Unfinished
regulars	7	21-Apr-2021
Murder-Gang	5	17-Sep-2021
Saorstat	5	20-Apr-2021
I.R.B./IRB	4	20-Apr-2021
Nineteen-nineteen	3	Unfinished
Auxies	0	4-May-2021