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# Remembering a 'multicultural' future through a history of emigration: Towards a feminist politics of solidarity

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## Abstract

This article investigates the workings of empathy, identification and solidarity across difference and argues that these represent urgent theoretical and political concerns for feminist politics today. It also points to the affective power of memory in political discourse, its potential to bolster identity, and its centrality to differentiation, all of which render the deployments of memory critical to understanding the politics of differentiation and belonging. These topics are addressed via a discussion of selected pro-immigrant discourses in the Republic of Ireland at the turn of the twenty-first century and how these discourses invoke the ethical potential in memorialising past emigration from Ireland. Three questions are addressed: first, what kinds of analogies are drawn between new immigration to Ireland in the present and a past marked by emigration? Second, what can the notion of a 'repressed national memory of emigration' contribute to the promotion of a critical multiculturalism and solidarity with immigrants? And finally, what can debates about difference and identification within feminist theory tell us about how ethnic, familial or national ties might ground or inhibit the development of an ethical relationship to the other? The article concludes with a discussion of the possibilities for feminist solidarity in contexts of the multicultural and the global.

**Introduction**

Immigration and asylum seeking have become important social phenomena and subjects of debate in Ireland since the mid-1990s. About 200,000 non-Irish immigrants (approx. 5 per cent of the population) have arrived in Ireland since 1996 with close to 57,000 of these being from non-EU countries (MacÉinrí and Walley, 2003, p. 10). Returning Irish nationals represent another category of immigrants, accounting for almost 55 percent of all in-migration in 1999 (*ibid.*), and falling to just over 35 percent of in-migration in the twelve months to April 2003 (CSO, 2003). While the gender ratio of immigrants has been more or less equal for most of the years since 1996, women accounted for well over half of all immigrants in the year to April 2002 (CSO, 2003). Overall immigration levels peaked at 66,900 in the year to April 2002 and fell back to 50,000 in the year to April 2003. Immigration is therefore a demographically and socially significant aspect of social change in Ireland since the mid-1990s. Based in no small part on the issuing of work permits tied to specific jobs and employers[1], immigration has become an officially sanctioned response to the labour shortages arising in the Irish 'Celtic Tiger' economy[2] and is expected to continue in the foreseeable future, although maybe not at the high levels of recent years.

The numbers seeking asylum in Ireland have also increased over the past decade or so with applications amounting to between 10,000 and 11,600 approx. per annum from 2000 to 2002 compared with thirty-nine applications in 1992. Applications for asylum began to decline again in 2003 largely as a result of EU and state tightening of border controls and changing conditions of asylum in Ireland.[3] Until 2003, asylum seekers who were parents of an Irish citizen child could apply for residency based on their parentage of that child,[4] and just over 6,000 non-national, non-EU applicants have been granted residency in Ireland on the basis of having Irish-born children since 1998 (Kennedy and Murphy-Lawless, 2003). Asylum seeking women giving birth in Ireland have become the focus of a moral panic about asylum-seekers and new immigrants since 2002 largely as a result of government attempts to remove this right and the calling of a referendum to this end for

June 2004.[5] While asylum-seeking women's bodies have become objects of surveillance and ridicule, immigrant women working in domestic, child-care and carer's work are rendered invisible and many are excluded from the provisions of equality legislation and other employment rights (Kelly, 2004). Immigrant women are further disadvantaged if they become pregnant and encounter difficulties in getting family reunification (*ibid.*).[6] It is evident therefore that migration and asylum seeking are not only gendered but that their gendered dimensions are often exploited to naturalise state practices of surveillance, exclusion and marginalisation.

Having sketched an outline profile of immigration and asylum seeking in Ireland in recent years, I now want to turn to the specific focus of this article. The presence of women and men labour migrants, asylum seekers and refugees 'in every sector of the Irish economy and in every part of Ireland' (MacÉinrí and Walley, 2003, p. 12) has evoked a variety of public responses, which can be located along an anti/pro-immigration continuum. Taking *pro-immigrant discourses* as its starting point, this article critically analyses those discourses that invoke Ireland's history of emigration as the basis for an ethical response to immigrants. For the purposes of this essay I am using the term ethical response to mean the interrogative practices that facilitate the building of 'other possibilities from what already is' (Diprose, 1994, p. 131-2). More specifically, selected responses to immigration and the hierarchical (re)production of difference in Ireland are interrogated in this essay with a view, not just to examining other possibilities, but more just possibilities that recognise both the specificity of the immigrant other and that this specificity can never be fully present or knowable. The article sets itself the task of examining the kinds of responses authorised by particular pro-immigration discourses and ends by drawing on feminist theories of solidarity to consider how feminist politics around immigration and difference might be developed.

Although the facts of immigration can inform, they cannot, as Bonnie Honig argues, 'resolve the question of whether immigrants are good or bad for the nation because the question is not, at bottom, an empirical question' (2001, p. 6).[7] The facts of immigration, she argues, are mobilised and shaped by every regime at the symbolic level not least via political and media discourses of immigration (2001, p. 127). These discourses increasingly constitute immigration through appeals to values emerging out of the contradictions within and between the economic imperatives of global capitalist restructuring and the political imperatives of citizenship and belonging (Lowe, 1997). These contradictions have brought about reformulations of the categories of nation, 'race', class and gender with new implications for the politics of migration (*ibid.*). My focus here then is on how such categories themselves are being (re)constructed and framed anew as well as how power works through these with particular material and political effects.

Many have noted that new ethical, policy and societal issues are raised by Ireland's change of status from a sending to a receiving country (MacÉinrí and Walley, 2003, p. 19).[8] In a related way, the suggestion is often made that Ireland has shifted from a familiar moral context of out-migration to an unfamiliar moral context of in-migration where received moral language and codes no longer easily apply. Nonetheless, there appears to be a recognition that immigration is an issue with moral dimensions even if these are contested. Indeed, the recent government appointed *Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants* report (2002) identifies national experiences of immigration and emigration as mutually informative stating that

> [t]he more we appreciate the needs of foreign nationals coming to Ireland, the better we will be able to respond to the challenges facing our own emigrants abroad. Conversely, we can learn from the successes and failures of our emigrants how best to assist the integration of foreign immigrants into our society (para 1.5).[9]

It is interesting that when the focus is on emigration (as in this report), it is the needs of immigrants to Ireland that are identified as potentially informing the response of the Irish

state to the welfare of Irish emigrants. However, when the focus is on immigration, as in the examples discussed later, it is the experience of emigration that is to inform immigration policy. Over the past decade government policy agendas began to address the fate of emigrants and some policy objectives were articulated through the perceived connections between the welfare of socially excluded emigrants in Britain and the USA and the need to integrate new immigrants and returning emigrants in Ireland.[10] It is my contention here that the social and cultural politics of new immigration are inflected by Ireland's history of emigration and the recent refiguring of Irish identity as diasporic (Gray 2003a). For example, Ireland's experience as a sending country is repeatedly represented in the pro-immigrant discourses considered below as a resource for the development of a multicultural notion of the national.

It is now accepted within the academic study of migration that emigration and immigration, migrant labour-force opportunities, settlement practices, state and media responses to immigrants and asylum-seekers are deeply gendered (see other contributors to this issue). But the gendered dimensions of immigration cannot be addressed alone because women's bodies and women's work within the global economy are sites in which 'several axes of domination intersect' (Lowe, 1997, p. 357). Feminist politics in Ireland are at an early stage in responding to what has been identified as the 'racialised feminisation' (*ibid.*) of the global labour market as it now manifests itself in Ireland. By analysing pro-immigration discourses that invoke 'our' history of emigration as a basis for solidarity with immigrants, I want to 'set the (local) scene' for addressing the complex interactions of the local and the global in developing a 'multicultural' feminist politics in Ireland. Questions of solidarity and difference have received considerable attention in feminist debates about multiculturalism, and the global labour market (e.g. Ahmed, 2000; 2002; Dean, 1997; Mohanty, 2000; Tronto, 1994), and I want to draw on these debates to develop a framework for thinking about contemporary immigration to Ireland and the implications for feminist politics.

In this article then I pursue three lines of enquiry: first, I examine how parallels are drawn between new immigration to Ireland in the present and a past marked by emigration, and how emigration is itself constituted anew by these pro-immigrant discourses. To this end, I discuss broadsheet media commentaries, which take a pro-immigrant position. Second, I turn to Ronit Lentin's (2002) discussion of what she sees as a repressed national memory of emigration that must be accessed if pro-immigrant politics are to emerge. Lentin's intervention raises questions about how emigration is remembered and how particular public uses of memory might bring about solidarity with immigrants. I argue that the media commentaries suggest the possibility of empathy and/or identification through which solidarity with new immigrants might be forged. This argument is developed by a discussion of how Lentin's essay, by calling for an interrogation of 'the disavowed migratory past' (2002, p. 234), locates the potential for pro-immigrant politics in remembering a national past marked by emigration and thereby reinscribes an assumed national 'we'. My line of enquiry is to consider the nature and complex workings of memory, empathy and identification and their contested relationships to a politics of solidarity with reference to recent debates within feminism. Debates about difference and identification within feminist theory are considered with reference to how ties of ethnic, familial or group relations might ground or inhibit the development of an ethical relationship to the other. By examining pro-immigrant discourses in Ireland and the political work that they do, I aim to open up again the feminist debate about solidarity and politics across difference. At a time when the primary foci of feminist thought and activism in Ireland are shifting from the nation and the state to issues of difference, multiculturalism and gendered global politics, this is a debate that needs to take place.

**Pro-immigration discourses and the print media**

The news media, as Benedict Anderson (1991; 1992; 1994) argues, are the most important sites in which the national is imagined and as the national is renegotiated in response to

immigration, the media play a central role in its re-imagining. Moreover, media discourses represent key sites in which the discursive framing of immigration can be traced. They set ideas in circulation that 'form a kind of backdrop' in which a 'feel of everyday life' in the community is produced and reproduced (Vukov, 2003, p. 339). Indeed, Habermas (1989), in his discussion of the formation of the bourgeois public sphere, argues that the press, because it allows for privacy of thought, enables a connection with others through empathy. The press is identified as mediating between the social and the personal, and, therefore, deserving of consideration with regard to the kinds of empathic identification that are made available (*ibid.*).

Numerous discourses of immigration circulate in the Irish print media with anti-immigrant discourses outnumbering pro-immigrant discourses. However, as already noted, my focus here is on pro-immigrant discourses and how these invoke Irish experiences of emigration as a legitimising ethical basis for developing inclusiveness. This discursive formation is noteworthy for its repeated appearances in the pages of the *Irish Times* and *Sunday Tribune* (quality broadsheets) over the past decade or so. I include below excerpts from these newspapers separated in time over a seven-year period in order to emphasise the continuity of this discourse over time, and the ways in which it is repeatedly structured via analogies with Irish emigration. Even some of the words and phrases used to produce these analogies are repeated in the commentaries. I think it is possible to suggest that through these pro-immigrant discourses a specifically Irish cultural politics of multiculturalism is emerging, but one that requires some investigation. The following commentaries, which start with the most recent and track a similar discursive framing of immigration back to 1997, offer some evidence of how these pro-immigrant discourses are structured.

> This state needs immigrants. Just as the efforts of Irish emigrants helped to build the economies of Britain and the US, so these workers have created wealth here. In the past, many Irish emigrants were rewarded with citizenship of a new

country. In the same way, these workers deserve a stake in our society. (*Irish Times* editorial, December 13, 2003)

We in Ireland should be ashamed of how the thousands of people who come to this country every year to seek asylum here, are treated…Their lives in many cases may not be fleeing conflict but they are fleeing economic penury – in the same way that millions of Irish people have done over the past 150 years. They deserve the right to build new lives for themselves in a country where there is opportunity. (Coleman, *Sunday Tribune,* November 25, 2001)

Now that the Supreme Court has found that the *Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Bill* (1999) is not repugnant to the Constitution, the deportations of illegal immigrants will soon begin…There is…an obligation on those who oppose the Government's approach to do so more vigorously. That would keep faith with Ireland's own history of emigration and with the urgent need to create a multicultural society capable of accommodating a wide variety of cultures and skills. (*Irish Times,* editorial, August 29, 2000)

A recent survey indicated that the majority of asylum seekers are well educated and capable of providing for their own needs. They should be encouraged to contribute in a full and positive way to this society. Our own history of emigration demands such a response. (*Irish Times*, editorial, July 8, 1998)

A little more compassion and less vitriol is essential from all sectors of our society, a society which has benefited immensely over the past 150 years from the generosity of spirit and kindness of other nations in accepting into their countries our relatives and friends and offering them the opportunity for happiness and prosperity. (Niall Andrews MEP letter to the editor, *Irish Times*, July 20, 1998)

While we fear economic migrants to our "tiger" economy, it is ironic that in the 1980s a generation of Irish saw the Morrison and Donnelly visas as passports to economic well-being and opportunity in the USA. (Maura Lean, 'Ireland has a moral duty to welcome the displaced', letter to the editor, *Irish Times*, September 16, 1997)

A justificatory discourse of immigration on the basis that immigration is in the national interest and can be understood through the lens of 'our' national narrative of migration is evident in these press commentaries. The first commentary above begins by informing readers that the state/economy *needs* immigrants and goes on to legitimise their presence via their role in the creation of national wealth. So it is through their economic contribution to Ireland that new immigrants are constructed as similar to Irish emigrants in the past and therefore, the argument goes, they should be rewarded with citizenship 'in the same way' as Irish emigrants were in their countries of destination. In the second commentary, immigrants, by fleeing economic penury 'in the same way' as Irish emigrants did over the

past 150 years, are seen as 'deserving' an opportunity to build new lives in Ireland. The *Irish Times* editorial, in the third example, argues for a multicultural society that accommodates diverse cultures and skills on the basis that only by doing so can we honour 'Ireland's own history' of emigration. The fourth excerpt reiterates the call for a positive response to immigrants because 'our own history of emigration' demands it. Irish Member of the European Parliament, Niall Andrews' letter to the *Irish Times* invokes the generosity of other countries to 'our relatives and friends' as the rationale for a compassionate response to new immigrants, while Maura Lean's letter constructs 'our' relationship to economic migrants as a fearful one that betrays hypocrisy given the political lobbying to legalise Irish economic migrants to the USA in the 1980s via various visa schemes.[11]

In each case, the motivations, experiences and entitlements of new immigrants are legitimised because they are 'the same as' those of 'our own' economic migrants. Cultural diversity and enrichment are represented as a secondary benefit in some pro-immigrant discourses (see Gray, 1998), but in most of the above commentaries, migration is located within a narrative of individual economic need and simultaneous economic benefit to the countries of destination. The discourse of national economic gain is predicated on an economy that continues to need migrant workers and has negative effects for asylum seekers who are excluded from the labour market as a result of state asylum policy. Of course, national interests are relevant to immigration policy-making, but it is also necessary to attend to the socio-cultural and political relationships that migration gives rise to and their consequences for migrants and the receiving society. For example, what are the human, social and political consequences of an immigration policy based on temporary work permit status for migrant workers? By not addressing the human and political consequences of migration or critically evaluating the values underpinning state, supra-state and popular responses to migration, the potential bases for the development of ethical relationships to the migrant other is lost.

The appeal in these commentaries is primarily to popular memory and sentiment rather than to state institutions or policies. This popular memory is framed in terms of 'our' national inherited duty and obligation given 'our' experience of emigration. The commentaries have in common the idea that 'the' Irish experience of emigration produces a moral debt or responsibility to new immigrants to Ireland today. A homogenous 'we' of Irish citizenry is constructed here via the assumption of a common memory of emigration. But of course not all Irish citizens come from Irish backgrounds so that a collective memory of emigration cannot be assumed to be shared amongst all of the citizenry.[12] Furthermore, by identifying emigration as 'ours' there is an implicit assumption that 'we' *identify with* or *empathise with* 'our' emigrants. I am not sure that this assumption can be made (see following section). Nonetheless, the sense that forgetting emigration would be a betrayal in some of the commentaries, testifies to the 'ethical dimension in memory' (Geoghegan, 1997, p. 18), which is addressed later in the article. In my reading of these commentaries, the experiences of emigrants are constructed as culturally/ethnically proximate to a homogenised 'us' and, therefore, as a source of 'our' moral obligation to others who might find themselves in the same, or similar positions. A particular historical narrative of emigration is retrieved then to become the motive for action in the present.

By its generalisation in these commentaries, emigration comes to encompass a diverse range of generations, destinations, circumstances, events and contexts of out-migration and settlement. Similarly, the specificities of contemporary immigration, which includes asylum-seekers, economic immigrants, and returning Irish migrants of different gender, ethnic, class, and other backgrounds are elided. The predicaments of contemporary immigrants are constituted as mirroring those of Irish emigrants so that readers are invited to identify with the circumstances, hopes and aspirations of immigrants as *like* those of Irish emigrants. The abstraction and generalisation of both Irish emigration and new immigration, and the invitation to welcome new immigrants as reminders of 'our own' emigrants in the past, locate the encounter with the immigrant other firmly within what is

assumed to be 'our' national homeland, and hospitality is extended primarily within the terms of 'our' national narrative of emigration.

Through the invitation to remember 'our' own experience of emigration, I read these commentaries as inviting the readership, the assumed national 'we', to identify with the migratory experiences of others through empathy. The kind of empathy invoked here projects an assumed Irish experience of emigration onto the experiences of new immigrants. Therefore, the Irish public and state are invited to respond in so far as the experiences of immigrants reflect or are like Irish emigration. The distance between Irish emigration and multiple immigrations to Ireland is collapsed so that empathy is produced at the expense of intersubjectivity. Empathy is evoked only in so far as the experience of the immigrant other is in line with what has already been encountered by 'ourselves' (Bartky, 1997). This kind of empathy has much in common with Max Scheler's notion of 'emotional identification', which eradicates the otherness of the other and assumes it into the self (*ibid.*)[13] The limitations of this kind of empathic identification with the other are discussed later in this article.

In order that empathy might become a means of relating to the immigrant other, the above commentaries imply a conscious memory of emigration that is easily accessed by all readers. Yet, the memory of emigration that is being invoked is framed by a particular emigrant narrative of escaping economic disadvantage, struggling to make a migrant life away from 'home', building up the economies of Britain and the US, and being rewarded with opportunity, citizenship and prosperity. We know, of course, that Irish emigration has been, and continues to be, a more complex and varied experience than this narrative allows for. For example, this emigrant narrative plays down the narrative of emigration as exile, which dominated constructions of emigration until the mid-twentieth century at least (Miller, 1985; 1990), and the construction of emigration in the 1980s and 1990s as a mode of global Irish citizenship (Gray, 2004). Emigrants themselves are both called into memory

as constitutive of the national 'we' and simultaneously forgotten as those who remain on the outside of the nation.[14] Furthermore, emigration as a continuing phenomenon in the present is actively forgotten.[15] Other questions also arise, such as, how experiences of emigration are lived and remembered amongst a population, most of whom have not emigrated themselves, or are the descendents of non-emigrants. (This is not to overlook the fact that large numbers of people living in Ireland are returned migrants and the descendants of return migrants). Moreover, many citizens do not share memories of emigration but have other relationships to and memories of Ireland. The assumption of empathy with emigrants therefore needs some further interrogation and is returned to in the following two sections of this article. My question at this stage in the argument relates specifically to the work done by emigration in the national narrative of the 'we' that emerges in these commentaries. To address this question, I turn to Ronit Lentin's argument that emigration needs to be actively remembered in order that an ethical relationship to the immigrant other might be developed.

**A national repressed memory of emigration and the politics of immigration**

In an essay on discourses of multiculturalism in Ireland, Ronit Lentin argues that these discourses are 'inadequate to the task of deconstructing ethnic power relations' and produce a 'top-down ethnicisation of Irish culture' (Lentin, 2002, p. 228).[16] Following Hesse (2000), she calls for 'a politics of interrogation' of the Irish 'we' as a more productive approach to theorising Irish responses to ethnic diversity. She goes on to argue that an interrogation of this 'we' would have to attend to 'the powerful past of emigration, a wound still festering because it was never tended, and which is returning to haunt Irish people through the presence of the immigrant "other"' (*ibid.*). This move is further justified by Zizek's (1989) exhortation that 'to engage the multicultural we need to work through "the symbolic reality of the past, long forgotten traumatic event, that can no longer evade interrogation"' (in Lentin 2002, p. 233). New immigration to Ireland has, in Lentin's view, heralded the return of 'the national repressed'.

> [T]his national repressed is the pain of emigration, returning to haunt the Irish, through the presence of the immigrant 'other' and in its wake invoking the unseemly presence of the 'less than fully Irish' indigenous and non-indigenous racialised ethnic groups, such as the Traveller, the Asian, the Black, the Jew… (2002, p. 233).

Lentin's argument references Freud's two positions on memory here i.e. memory as a process analogous to archaeological excavation, and memory as endless revision and retranslation (King, 2000). Her essay takes the first position on memory by seeming to suggest that an emigrant past exists 'somewhere' unaffected by the time that has elapsed waiting to be remembered by the national collectivity and once remembered can be reworked into the national narrative. This construction of memory is based on Freud's notion of memory as like archaeological excavation whereby repressed memories can be discovered and faced up to. Through this process, Lentin implies that (re)identification can take place with kin lost through emigration and the pain of emigration might be 'worked through' thereby opening up the potential for a moral and imaginative expansion of the national community. Such a construction of memories of emigration in the past suggests that the 'truth' of past experiences of emigration can be accessed and used as a 'truth' of identity in the present. But Freud also saw memory as involving continuous revision, so that memory traces are reworked in the light of subsequent events and experience (King, 2000, p. 4). This notion of memory is also evident in Lentin's essay when she suggests that the unregistered traumatic event of emigration only gains its force when another event forces a repossession of what has been lost or repressed. This re-memory is always marked by 'afterwardness' because there is now an awareness of what wasn't known then (King, 2000, p. 12). The second position suggests that the past can never be remembered as it was and cannot therefore act as the 'truth' of identity in the present.

It is only in and through its inherent forgetting that trauma 'is first experienced at all…[in] another place, and in another time' (Caruth, 1991: 187). The presence of new immigrants is seen by Lentin as staging the recognition of the original trauma of emigration

and thereby creating a space for the reworking or integration of emigration into the national story. [17] The implication is that a collective repressed memory of emigration is preventing an open response to immigrants because the pain of emigration is unconsciously avoided and, therefore, cannot be publicly acknowledged. By working through this repressed memory, the Irish citizenry would thus be emancipated from the latent and unacknowledged power of this disavowed pain, making them potentially less prone to racism and other modes of discrimination and exclusion. Although some argue that 'working through', healing and moving-on suggest closure (Bold *et al*., 2002), this view needs a bit more consideration.

The process of 'working through', although suggestive of healing and moving on, also has other dimensions. For example, 'working through' involves the work of the imagination to produce a recognisable narrative - a narrative that makes sense. Freud's notion of memory as involving continuous revision recognises that imagination and fictionalising are present at the moment of narrative memorialising. Experience can be remembered and narrated only 'in and through fictionalising and forgetting…', therefore, remembering emigration involves imagination, fantasy and fiction so that the 'truth' of emigration as remembered in narrative requires imagination (Robson, 2001, p. 125). Memory traces are reactivated in the present, but 'there is never simple correspondence between past and present' because many changes have taken place in the intervening period (Geoghegan, 1997, p. 22). The memory narrative then represents 'a point of tension between memory and amnesia, between "truth" and fiction and between psychotherapy and fiction' (Robson, 2001, p. 128).[18] How then can memory be put to use for an ethical political project in ways that do not efface imagination, forgetting and difference, or undermine the need to keep contestation and negotiation at the heart of how memory operates in the present? Instead of proceeding to address this question directly, I need to take a brief detour through some of the literature on 'lived' versus 'postmemory' and

questions of collective memory as they impact on collective memories of emigration in Ireland today.

The idea of *a national* repressed memory of emigration in Lentin's essay implies that this is true for all nationals including a younger generation, which did not experience/witness emigration at least on the same scale as previous generations. However, remembering the experience of previous generations is described by Marianne Hirsch (1999) as 'postmemory', which she sees as potentially more powerful than first generation, or lived memory[19]. Postmemory is based, not on recollection, but is mediated 'through projection, investment and creation' as the traumatic experiences of others are adopted as one's own (1999, p. 8). Hirsch also suggests that this mode of remembering produces an ethical relationship to the other because by remembering her parents' memories (Eastern European survivors of Nazi persecution during World War II) she suggests that she can also remember the sufferings of others. For Hirsch then, postmemory enables an extension of identification among generations and circumstances to 'less proximate groups' (1999, p. 9). In a similar vein, Esther Faye suggests that a past traumatic event can be repressed in one generation and be experienced as a traumatic memory a generation later (2003, p. 162). Memories that have not been 'lived' or do not belong to an individual or generation can be characterised as ghosts that haunt the collectivity (Bold *et al*., 2002, p. 130). These memories cannot be stated and psychoanalysed as *their* memories but are available only in relation to how they *become their memories* via social and historical discourse. There is a difference here between collective memory over time, and living memory, both of which are important to projects of memorialising and the politics of memory in the present.

It is possible to argue that Irish emigration became naturalised, or in Paul Connerton's (1989) terms, it became embodied and internalised through ritual practices and habitual action. These largely non-reflexive customs and practices sustain a sense of recognisable collective identity at cognitive and symbolic levels (*ibid.*).[20] The repetition

ensures a sense of continuity between generations (*ibid*.), but can also 'impose stasis, halting the impulse to extend outwards towards the fleeting, tumbling motion of the ongoing world and thus to incorporate new experiences. Within its grasp, all stories are reduced to the 'same story' (McAllister 2001, p. 99-100). The 'same story' of Irish emigration is one of the pain of exile (Miller, 1990), but also of opportunity and success, so that emigration was and is available only through socially 'prescribed' narratives, performances and habits of memory (Gray, 2003b). Given the centrality of denial and repetition to repressed memory, these prescribed modes of memorialising may be symptomatic of the repression Lentin refers to. The repeated acknowledgement of emigration in popular culture can be seen as leaving emigration largely outside of spaces of engagement and contestation. This remembering, or memorialisation in song, film and commemorative events, instead of making emigration a matter of public consciousness, can numb awareness of its meaning. Songs, films and commemorations, although different genres and forms of memorialising, are located in 'an aestheticised realm', the very safeness of which can have the effect of undermining their 'expressive capacity' (Allison, 2000, p. 59).[21] My aim here is not to empty aestheticised genres of provocative or progressive memorialising possibilities (see Crewe, 1999)[22] but to suggest that such repeated and in some cases obsessive cultural practices of memorialisation can have a sanitising effect.

While Lentin suggests that the pain and loss of emigration has been repressed, in many ways, it has been precisely through a rhetoric of pain and loss (as well as opportunity and success) that Irish cultural understandings of emigration have been passed down in these cultural forms and from generation to generation in the homeland and in the diaspora.[23] Indeed, through the repeated invocation of the idea of emigration as loss and pain and/or opportunity it is possible to suggest that a form of forgetting about the actual fate of emigrants took place. This would suggest less a refusal to continue speaking of the phenomenon of emigration than a refusal to continue interpreting it (Antze and Lambek, 1996, p. xix). My question then relates to whether the forgetting of emigration can be put

down only to repressed national memory or whether particular technologies of collective memorialising are also at work? Emigration has been invoked and re-invoked in different contexts and times as an experience to be remembered in specified ways and in line with specific socio-political agendas (see Miller, 1985; 1990; Gray, 2003b; 2004). However, the workings of memory are never totalising because memory has the capacity to retain traces of what has not been incorporated into conscious narratives, so memory always has the potential to defetishise dominant memory narratives (Jedlowski, 2001).

Because we enter the future and inhabit the present with reference to particular collective memories, it is important to consider the uses of memory within the political domain and the role of memory in imagining (and achieving) better futures. Memory and how it is lived is 'a continuing historical force in the present' (Jedlowski, 2001: 20) and the power 'to create and stabilize' certain memories is 'a sign of power at all levels of social organisation' (Cavalli, 1991:34 in Jedlowski, 2001, 34). Lentin calls for a particular form of memory work that involves excavation of repressed memory so that collective responsibility is assumed for the past and through this for the present and future. This might be characterised as a call for 'cultural countermemorializing' that advocates alternative ways of remembering emigration as 'our best chance of changing the future' (Bold *et al*, p. 126).[24] While memories of the past can be excavated for ethical guidance in the present, we need to be conscious that they do not access the past as it was and that memories are framed and indeed constituted anew by the context in which they are narrated as well as the narration itself.

My aim in this section has not been to dismiss Lentin's argument, because I am largely in support of her project, but to argue against the identification of Irish relationships to emigration with a repressed national memory for a number of reasons. First, such a move identifies emigration as historical trauma and it is hard to see how this is the case for all experiences of emigration from Ireland. To locate the whole history of Irish emigration

under the sign of trauma (via repressed memory) is to overlook the differentiated nature of emigration and to elide the banal means by which it is simultaneously forgotten and remembered in specific ways, which are revised and reconstructed to reflect contemporary socio-cultural and political concerns. Second, the concept of a repressed national memory evokes the notion of a 'national psyche', and the monolithic and essentialist connotations evoked by this notion can block critical engagement with the politics of memorialising emigration and the development of ethical relationships to the immigrant other. Third, the transfer of psychoanalytic analyses to the socio-political domain can move the lens away from discursive and structural factors in the reproduction of collective memory. A more socially located analysis might consider the kinds of emigrant and immigrant selves permitted (and disallowed) by accepted discourses of migration and what is occluded or pushed beyond the discursive by the discourse of the 'repressed national memory of emigration' and wider public political discourses of belonging. While seeming to be revelatory it is important to consider how all discourse is also complicit with ongoing processes of concealment. A critical and reflexive approach to memory practices in the present is necessary if we are to open up the psychoanalytic promise of 'working through' to questions about narrative memorialising and the politics of memory. This would also require ongoing critical reflection on the changing conditions of hegemonic and oppositional memory-making. Why is it, for example, that in western societies at present, memory is increasingly invoked under the sign of trauma? (Berlant, 2001). And what are the possibilities and limits of this trend? While recognising the necessity of the other to the self, how come it is only through the other that 'we' can face the repressed memory of emigration in order to 'be' 'ourselves' through an 'authentic' relationship to our emigrant past? What is at stake in the call to remember emigration as a means of developing a more ethical and just relationship to immigrant others? How can memories be made to work in imagining and realising an ethical relationship to new immigrants in Ireland now and in the future? What might be the limitations of framing pro-immigrant discourses in relation to 'our' local experience of emigration? Can we rely on empathy as a means of identification

with the marginalized and oppressed for a feminist multicultural political project? And what has feminist theory to tell us about beginning from the local, empathy, identification and an ethical politics of solidarity? These questions are taken up in the following section of the article.

**Memories of emigration and a feminist politics of solidarity with new immigrants in Ireland**

Empathy and identification and how these are constituted through particular modes of memorialising are considered in this section with a view to how they might be put to work in developing a multicultural feminist politics for the new century. Empathy introduces affect and subjectivity to debates about solidarity across difference. For Jill Bennett the significance of empathy lies in its 'peculiar combination of affect and intellectual inquiry', which means that experience itself is pursued 'rather than affinity or identity' (2003, p. 193). It is the affective aspect of empathy, she argues, that produces the greater imperative to 'engage with the trauma of others' (*ibid.*). Taking a similar position on empathy, Sandra Bartky argues that empathic feelings 'fuel the search for a more adequate knowledge of the Other;…[and] give shape and form to this knowledge' (1997, p. 180). She sees empathy as adding an affective dimension to the feminist search for 'better kinds of intersubjectivity that can contribute to better solidarities' (*ibid.*). Empathy, or 'feeling with', is also evidence of the relational character of the individual and reminds us of the fact that we exist primarily in connection with others (Brison, 1997). As noted earlier, empathy can involve identification that assimilates the other into the self, or identification that maintains the distance between the self and the other. When discussing empathy therefore, the question of identification also arises. Identification as it operates across discourses and cultural differences has been a central concern of feminist theory for some time because of its centrality to politics, solidarity and action (Fuss, 1995; Butler, 1990 and 1993; Sedgwick 1990). In a discussion of the role of identification in feminist politics, Diane Fuss argues

that '[t]o the extent that every social group is constituted for Freud through identification between its members, through social ties based on perception of similarity and shared interests, there can be no politics without identification' (Fuss, 1995, p. 10). However, she notes that Freud's description of the political bond as conscious seems to contradict his earlier view that identifications are rooted in the unconscious, and argues herself that identification 'is both voluntary and involuntary…the point where the psychical/social distinction becomes impossibly confused and finally untenable' (*ibid.*). This interplay of the conscious and the unconscious contributes to the complexity of debates about identification.

The relationship between empathy and different forms of identification referred to above is examined by Kaja Silverman (1996), who identifies two main forms of empathic identification; idiopathic identification and heteropathic identification. She suggests that the seeing of the self in the image of the other, or, indeed, the other in the image of the self leads to 'idiopathic identification'. This form of identification takes place along 'a trajectory of incorporation' because it involves assimilating the other to the self; that is, the experience of the other is interpreted only with reference to one's own prior experience (Bennett, 2003). The effect is the annihilation of 'the other' because she is deprived of her specificity, her unique existence and character (Silverman 1996). Furthermore, the motivation is not to engage with, or 'encounter' the other for herself but, in the case under consideration here, to begin with the question how her/their experience of immigration/asylum seeking is *like* or *the same as* 'our' experience of emigration.

Jill Bennett offers 'incorporative identification' or 'assimilative identification' as alternative ways of characterising Silverman's 'idiopathic identification' because they emphasise how the experience and subjectivity of the other are domesticated, made like 'ours' (2003, p. 180/181). The incorporative identification, which I want to suggest is invited by the newspaper commentaries discussed earlier, relies on making 'them' sufficiently "'like

us" to enable us to imagine ourselves in their place' (Bennett, 2003, p.181). This 'uncritical mimicry' (LaCapra, 2001) can be read as usurping the positions of immigrants via an emphatic gesture with immigrants that re-enchants the nation through the notion of a national affinity with migration. This mode of empathic identification sutures images of the pain or survival/success drives of immigrant others into particular narratives of a national 'we' (Bennett 2003, p. 183) thereby excluding the potential of other narratives of the national 'we' for developing more ethical responses to new immigrants.

Silverman offers 'heteropathic identification' as a mode of identificatory relationship that preserves the presence of difference and that 'entails identification at a distance with a body that one knows to be, in some sense, alien' (Bennett, 2003, p. 180). In contrast with her account of idiopathic identification, this mode of identification maintains openness to radical difference that may not be easily recognisable, and to 'experience beyond what is known by the self' (*ibid.*). If idiopathic identification fails to attend to the particularity of experience and reaffirms existing cultural hierarchies, heteropathic identification is seen as involving recognition of the distance between the self and the other and of the specificity of the other. In a related discussion, Sara Ahmed warns against attempts to achieve an account of embodied specificity, because such an aim presumes that the difference or specificity of another *can* be accessed. She suggests, instead, that we 'think of particularity in terms of modes of encounter', that is 'the particularity of modes of encountering others' (2002 p. 561). For her, the particularity of another is not to be found on their bodies but in 'the history that the encounter reopens as well as the future that it might open up…' (Ahmed, 2002, p. 568). Thus, particularity emerges as a result of the naming of 'the meetings and encounters that produce or flesh out others', and particularity apprehended in this way potentially reveals the processes of 'differentiation between others and their different function in constituting identity…' (*ibid.*).

In my own research on the gendered subjectivities of migrant and non-migrant Irish women in the 1990s, it was evident that intercultural and intracultural encounters past and present structured their contradictory identifications with Ireland and Irish identity (Gray 2004). Experiences of emigration as loss and opportunity; belonging and not belonging; authentic and inauthentic Irish identity suggested differentiated and conflicting 'experiences' of emigration. These complex articulations of migration, identification and negotiations of belonging were most evident in their narratives of encounters with migrant/non-migrant Irish others, English citizens, and other ethnic groups in England (*ibid*.). If ethics are located in the processes of differentiation that happen at the level of the encounter, then 'rather than thinking of gender and race as something that this other *has*…we can consider how such differences are determined at the level of the encounter' (Ahmed, 2002, p. 562; emphasis in original). All encounters involve relationships between the past, present and future and are inflected by the regulation of citizenship, work, bodies and spaces (*ibid.*) Moreover, encounters repeatedly pose the ethical question of how to develop 'ways of encountering others that are *better*' (*ibid.*, emphasis in original). I see Ahmed's position as similar to Silverman's heteropathic identification as maintaining openness to radical difference, but developing this via an engagement with the workings (and histories) of difference in the encounter between self and other.

In a different way, Marianne Hirsch (1999),[25] in her work on Shoah photographic images, suggests that Silverman's notion of 'heteropathic identification', which leaves room for the distance between the self and other, can best be achieved via strategies of distanciation and displacement. Hirsch takes the position that individual and collective experiences and memories cannot, and perhaps, should not be 'worked through' when understood as laying memories to rest. Instead, she calls for an engagement with past experiences from different perspectives. By locating experiences in different contexts, she suggests that they are brought to memory in different ways; a recontextualisation takes place that opens up new interpretive frameworks and prevents overidentification or fixed

identifications. So, for example, local responses to new immigrants that make connections with the ongoing encounters between Irish settled people and Irish Travellers in Ireland, or that (re)contextualise immigration in relation to how 'whiteness' was/is inhabited in the Irish diaspora (Gray, 2002; 2004; Ignatiev, 1995; Lloyd, 1999; Roediger, 1991), suggest heteropathic identifications that maintain distance and difference. Moreover, such differentiated perspectival memorialising might unsettle any straightforward incorporative empathy with new immigrants and instead open up more ambivalent (dis)identifications with and within the national 'we'/story.

Susannah Radstone (2001) also draws on Kaja Silverman's notion of ' "heteropathic" identification…to describe a memorial relation to the experience of others predicated upon both identification and difference' and links this with '(H)eteropathic memory (feeling and suffering with the other) [which] means…the ability to say "It could have been me; it was me, also," and, *at the same time*, "but it was not me" (1996, p. 9, her emphasis, quoted in Radstone, 2001 p. 63). Radstone supports the maintenance of distance and difference here but it is her attention to other dimensions of identification that I want to attend to. Her reading of Hirsch leads her to call for movement beyond Hirsch's strategies of displacement and distanciation which only do some of the work in her view. She argues for engagement with the ambiguity, unsettlement, and multiplicity of identification, which partly arises out of its combined psychic and social dimensions. Noting Hirsch's focus on identification with victimhood, Radstone calls for a reading against the grain of identification with 'pure' victimhood. She argues that 'scenarios that include the exercise of power and authority arguably prompt a particular identification *with* the wielder of that power, as well as with the object upon whom it is exercised' (2001, p. 65; emphasis in original). These complex power invested webs of identification constitute aspects of personal and public fantasy. At a time when, Radstone argues, the search for victims and villains is rampant, there is a need to undercut 'the sense of an absolute distinction between "good" and "evil" by proffering, or even foregrounding potential identifications with

perpetration as well as with victimhood' (*ibid.*). A form of identification that acknowledges

identification with perpetration as well as with victimhood might, Radstone argues, mitigate

against the self-righteousness that accompanies a dualistic good/evil culture.

Citizens of Irish background living in Ireland are witnesses to both emigration and

immigration. As Radstone argues, the position of witness is a complex one 'that can exceed

an empathic identification with victimhood to include identifications with other positions…

including, especially those of perpetration' (2001, p. 61). Remembering suffering cannot be

assumed to produce a straightforward empathic identification but has a darker side, what

Radstone, after Primo Levi (1989), calls 'an ethical "grey zone". A return to emigration in

an attempt to bear witness to the more complex difficult and equivocal identifications that

constitute its unrealised potential would mean struggling to read it in the 'grey zone' where

neither pure victimhood nor pure perpetration would hold sway. It would complicate any

assumed 'national memory' and acknowledge the potential for domination and exclusion

that emigration represents, alongside the pain, loss, gain and hope that are also part of the

experience. Ireland is no longer so much a place where victims of economic

underdevelopment and social regulation have to leave, as a site of opportunity, but also of

second-class belonging for contemporary immigrants from eastern Europe, African

countries and elsewhere. The condition of migrancy, hitherto understood in relation to 'our'

emigrants, is now lived by non-Irish migrants to Ireland and potentially gives rise to

contradictory identifications by those of Irish background with perpetration and victimhood.

[26] The sanitised effects of repeated and aestheticised collective memorialising of emigration

are potentially challenged then by glimpses of familiar, yet unfamiliar, migration practices

being performed by non-Irish migrants in the space of Ireland. These decontextualisations

and recontextualisations of migrations and the complex identification they produce have

the potential to move memorialisation into an 'ethical grey zone' in which remembering

emigration must involve distance and difference. It seems to me that an ethical feminist

approach to the cultural politics of migration in Ireland requires a critical engagement with the complex relationships between memory, empathy and identification.

**Conclusion**

Feminism in western societies today is caught in a difficult relationship between forms of multiculturalism based on the politics of identity and recent poststructuralist critiques of identity and totalised conceptions of difference. As a result, feminists in Ireland (and elsewhere) are faced with questions of how difference can be addressed without falling into a diffuse politics incapable of addressing matters of justice, ethics and belonging. An analysis of the workings of empathy, identification and solidarity across difference is, then, an urgent theoretical and political concern for feminism. Such an analysis also raises questions about memory and memorialising and their workings to reproduce modes of encounter that perpetuate, legitimate, suppress or challenge incorporation/exclusion. Memory operates both as a repository of historical encounters that act on the present and as a basis of belonging and differentiation (Geoghegan, 1997, p. 30/31). The affective power of memory in political discourse, its potential to bolster identity, and its centrality to differentiation, render it critical to understanding the politics of difference and belonging. If, as Ahmed argues, ethics are located in the processes of differentiation that happen at the level of the encounter, and memories of these encounters in the present, then this is where an ethical feminist politics of solidarity across/with difference must be forged.

The call for a more ethical politics of migration through idiopathic identification based on empathy has the effect of re-establishing the Irish national story rather than unsettling or transforming it. I have argued that the rhetorical strategies of newspaper commentaries discussed above invoke an idiopathic identification in which cultural kinship or insiderism values are given sovereignty over other forms of social historical experience and identities (Gilroy, 1993, p. 3). As long as the nation state appropriates the idea of home, such strategies continue to be legitimated (Ahmed, 2000). An assumed communal

Irish experience, or tradition of emigration, produces a pro-immigration position via a 'duty' to a national past, but is in danger of reinstating the national as 'ours' to give. Moreover, appeals to a specific national past or inheritance also put limits on the kinds of injustice that are recognised and responded to (Thompson, 2002, p. 108). The feminist positions discussed above identify the limitations of such a position, which assimilates the other into a narrative of the self, or the nation. This mode of identification can perpetrate the violence of 'appropriation in the guise of an embrace' (Sommer, 1994, in Fuss, 1995, p. 9).

To assume sameness as a basis for solidarity is unproductive because then difference is experienced as conflictual or threatening (Dean, 1997). Perhaps it is possible in a more hopeful vein to return to Irish emigration, past and present, and 'attempt to bear witness to the more complex, difficult and equivocal identifications that together constitute its unrealised *potential*' (Radstone, 2001, p. 75; emphasis in the original). This means acknowledging identification with victimhood, pain and exile, while simultaneously facing identification with oppression, domination and privilege. Such an approach would mean that the multiple, complex and contradictory histories that each encounter opens up could be part of the political agenda in the present. By critically examining the ethical aspects of relationships to the other and how all encounters involve relationships with the past, present and future, accepted or habitual modes of interaction are opened up to scrutiny. The workings of empathy point to the importance of affect in motivating solidarity and political action but also warn against how such affect might be appropriated towards ends which reinstate the same. Heteropathic identification and empathy move us closer to the question of what is to be done and bring ethics and politics together in the ongoing (re) negotiation of agendas for action.

An ethical transnational, multicultural feminist politics demands that feminist agendas are kept open so that 'they may be disputed by those who are yet to come' (Ahmed, 2002, p 569). Such a politics would have to be based on a reflexive solidarity that

would have 'doubt' built into its very foundations (Dean, 1997). Considerable painstaking labour must go into working together in ways that live with doubt and that do not assimilate or overcome distance and difference (Ahmed, 2002). Indeed, Ahmed locates this feminist politics precisely within the distances between us. Such a politics would not start from given commonalities but would develop through a politics of engagement (Dean, 1997) or encounter (Ahmed, 2000). The encounters or 'new proximities' brought about by recent immigration to Ireland do, as Lentin suggests, potentially reopen prior histories of encounter, but it is important that it is prior histor*ies* of *encounters* that are remembered while remaining cognisant of how these continue to produce hierarchical and excluding regimes of difference in the present. Following Ahmed then, a feminist politics of multiculturalism in Ireland would both acknowledge the *proximities* produced through prior histories of encounters and accept that there can be no *transparency of meaning* because there is always mishearing and limits to what can be communicated in any encounter (*ibid*.). Memory, empathy and identification may be central to feminist solidarity across difference but the interrelated workings of these need ongoing reflection in theory and practice if ethical relationships to the other are to be developed and maintained.

## Notes

State-sponsored job-fairs were held mainly in 'white' and Christian countries thereby racialising the work permit system (Loyal, 2003). See Kelly (2004, p. 38-41 for a discussion of sending country patterns and recruitment strategies. Her report also discusses the legislative developments, procedures and practice regarding work permits. Work permits have been issued for all sectors of the economy but particularly in agriculture, horticulture, hotels, child care and domestic work, the catering industry and for a range of unskilled work (Kelly, 2004)

[2] In January 1988 *The Economist* identified Ireland as 'the poorest country in rich north-west Europe' with a gross domestic produce at 64% of the European Community average. However, by 1997, the same magazine was flagging Ireland on its front cover noting that it was 'about as prosperous as the European average, and getting richer all the time' (May 17, p. 15). The term the 'Celtic Tiger' first coined by Morgan Stanley in August 1994, became the neologism for the thriving Irish economy from the mid-1990s to 2000, which is accounted for largely in relation to the Europeanisation and globalisation of the Irish economy. The journal *Foreign Policy's* index of globalisation in 2000 identified the Republic of Ireland as the most globalised country in the world based mainly on economic criteria. It became the world's largest exporter of computer software around the same time. Sean Ó Riain (2000) argues that Ireland was integrated into the global economy in two distinct ways in the 1990s: first, by the partial local embedding of global corporate networks into Ireland and second, by the integration of local networks of indigenous firms into global business and technology networks. He sees the state as a central actor in shaping these developments acting as a kind of 'midwife' and mediating the local and global not least by keeping corporate taxation levels low.

[3] The numbers seeking asylum in EU member states dropped by 22 per cent in 2003 with Ireland experiencing one of the largest decreases of any member state at 32 percent (Kelly, O., 2004). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees attributed this to an improvement in conditions in the home countries of asylum seekers (*ibid.*) However, new restrictions including fines of up to 3,000 euro for airline and ferry companies found carrying undocumented migrants and the turning away of asylum seekers at the point of entry (4,800 were turned away in 2003, *ibid.*) also contributed to the decreased numbers coming to Ireland in 2003. Moreover, since 2000 asylum seekers in Ireland have been forced to live where and in the kind of accommodation decided by the Government (dispersal policy), usually hostels and camps under what is known as 'direct provision' with an allowance of 19.05 euro per week per adult and 9.52 per week per child.

[4] The 1998 Good Friday Agreement asserted the right to citizenship of all those born on the island of Ireland confirming the *jus soli* (birth in Ireland) approach to Irish citizenship that existed since the first constitution of 1922. Also, the 1990 Supreme Court judgement (known as the Fajujonu case) held that non-national parents of Irish citizen children had a right to remain in Ireland in the interests of the child. (Kennedy and Murphy-Lawless, 2003). However, in February 2003 the Supreme Court held that deportations of adult non-nationals in the O and L cases could proceed although they were parents of children born in Ireland who were entitled to Irish citizenship. As a result, the Department of Justice abolished the procedure whereby residency could be applied for based on parentage of an Irish citizen child. In June 2004 the government held a referendum to change the constitution so that children who do not have at least one citizen parent will not be entitled to Irish citizenship thereby changing the *jus soli* nature of Irish citizenship.

[5] In the referendum held on June 11 2004 voters were being asked to vote yes or no to amend the provision in Article 9 of the to give the houses of Parliament the power to decide the circumstances and conditions under which people born in Ireland who do hot have an Irish parent are entitled to gain Irish citizenship. The referendum was passed with a four to one majority and the government proposes to legislate to provide that children born to non-national parents who have lived in Ireland for a minimum period of three years consecutively will be entitled to citizenship. And all this at a time when there were 16,604 fewer births in Ireland in 2000 than in 1982.

[6] Under present regulations, the right to family reunification for those on work permits 'is discretionary and overly restricted' (NCCRI and IHRC, 2004, p. 47). Also, the UN International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, which is the most comprehensive set of international human rights standards to protect documented and undocumented migrant workers and their families, has not been ratified by Ireland (*ibid.*).

[7] Arguments that suggest that data collection and ethnic monitoring are central to the development of progressive immigration policies often ignore the fact that policy development is also the result of moral argument and persuasion.

[8] MacÉinrí and Walley (2003) also argue that Ireland's record of addressing differences between the dominant settled community and Travellers is one of prejudice and discrimination and does not bode well for the development of an ethical response to new immigrants.

[9] The recommendations of the Task Force are identified for government action in the Social Partnership Agreement *Sustaining Progress* (2003-2006).

[10] See, for example, the final report of the Commission on the Family, *Strengthening Families for Life*, Chapter 16, 'Family Networks – the Irish Diaspora' and *The National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion* (2003-5) which sets out a policy framework for combating social exclusion and accommodating cultural diversity as well as addressing 'integration issues, racism and interculturalism,…in respect of immigrants, emigrants and returning emigrants' (p. 34).

[11] It is noteworthy that US Senator Bruce Morrison who sponsored the largest visa scheme (1991-1994) which Irish immigrants to the USA took advantage of (48,000) was opposing the citizenship referendum in Ireland and calling

on the Irish government to develop a coherent immigration policy and to maintain citizenship rights based on *jus soli* (i.e. birth in Ireland) need reference here

[12] Thank you to one of the reviewers of this article for reminding me of this point.

[13] Max Scheler in *The Nature of Sympathy* (1970) identified four kinds of 'fellow feeling': he suggests that 'true' fellow feeling is immediate and ultimate with both parties feeling identically. The example he uses to characterise this form of fellow feeling is that of both parents on the loss of a child; his second type is 'emotional infection' which he describes in terms of mass excitement or mob hysteria and dismisses because of what he saw as the absence of directed feeling and potential danger to individual integrity involved; his third form of fellow feeling is 'emotional identification' and takes place when my self disappears entirely into her self, or I take her self into my own. This fellow feeling lacks moral worth for Scheler because it does not work at the level of unique individuality; finally there is 'genuine' fellow feeling which is seen as intentional, having an object, and in which otherness is maintained because an awareness of distance between selves is assumed (Bartky, 1997).

[14] See Gray 2004 and the 'Breaking the Silence' website at http://migration.ucc.ie

[15] 20,700 emigrated in the year to April 2003 (CSO, 2003). (Nearly half of these may be school leavers who have left the country for a 'gap year' in Australia).

[16] Lentin notes that in 2001 public sector bodies including the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), the Equality Authority, and Human Rights Commission were working towards implementing an equality agenda. Also, the government launched its 'Know Racism' public awareness campaign on antiracism and interculturalism so that, she suggests, a 'race relations industry' with an integrationist agenda was developing. Paradoxically she suggests that these top down initiatives gave rise to the establishment of 'bottom up' organisations with different agendas (2002, pp. 226-7). At the same time, the government was implementing more restrictive immigration measures including an increase in deportations (*ibid*.).

[17] Personal correspondence.

[18] I am conscious that the demands of narrative memory silence other forms of memory that are embodied or those memories that re emerge unexpectedly in daydreams, images, bodily reactions and other ways.

[19] Suzannah Radstone (2001) reads 'postmemory' as potentially exceeding the kin and ethnic generational transmission emphasised by Hirsch and operating in the wider cultural domain.

[20] In Weberian terms, memory narratives of emigration as loss or exile can be seen as representing a form of 'traditional legitimation' of the southern state in which emigration was constructed as evidence of colonial underdevelopment and so could not be the responsibility of the new state or its people (see also Miller, 1990).

[21] This forgetting is also intricately bound up with gender as the prescribed narratives and memorial practices surrounding emigration, despite demographic evidence, tend to construct men as the migrants leaving women lovers and mothers behind (Travers 1995).

[22] For example, Cathy Caruth argues that 'the irreducible specificity of traumatic stories requires…the varied responses…of literature, film, psychiatry, neurobiology, sociology, and political and social activism' (1995, p. ix).

[23] The poet, Eavan Boland suggests that songs and poems 'can be "a safe inventory of pain"…[they] tend to "bandage up the history" – suggesting, again, the power of song to assuage grief by aestheticising and distorting experience' (Allison, 2000, p. 59)

[24] See Ann Burlein (1999) for a discussion of the limits of countermemorialising and the potential of Foucault's notion of 'countermemory'.

[25] See Radstone for a critique of Hirsh's essay as one where 'identification with "pure" victimhood holds sway' (2001, p. 75).

[26] Thank you to one of the reviewers for bringing this important point to my attention.

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