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Rachel de Courcy

Representations of Charles Stewart Parnell in English and Irish Newspapers
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Representations of Charles Stewart Parnell in English and Irish Newspapers

Introduction

Charles Stewart Parnell became leader of the Irish nationalist movement in May 1880 when he was elected head of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), having already been elected president of the Land League (LL) – a more extreme nationalist organisation - in October 1879. He remained head of Ireland’s nationalist movement until December 1890, when his long-standing affair with Katherine O’Shea came to light. This caused Gladstone, under pressure from English Non-conformists, to force the IPP to choose between retaining Parnell as their leader or preserving the Liberal alliance and implicitly the attainment of Home Rule by constitutional means. During his time as Ireland’s nationalist leader, Parnell achieved three great feats. The first was the overthrow of landlordism which resulted in a dramatic change to the Irish land tenure system. The second was the unification of the divergent strands of nationalism – from the Fenian extremists at home and in America to the moderates – into a highly disciplined, constitutional movement for Home Rule, and, finally, the conversion of the British Liberal Party to the Home Rule cause. Even more impressive was the fact that he led Ireland to the brink of success, with a number of historians, including Hurst and Cruise O’Brien, arguing that had the divorce scandal not erupted when it did, he would in all probability have achieved Home Rule after the next general election. Through these achievements, Parnell secured for himself a place among Irish heroes of the calibre of O’Connell, Wolfe Tone and de Valera. It could, in fact, be argued that his achievements surpassed theirs as he alone was ever acknowledged as the leader of the Irish ‘race’.

Parnell clearly had a complex career, and this dissertation investigates how representations of him varied among different sections of the newspaper press at two particular points in his career. As yet, no historical work addresses this issue, although there are a number of works that skirt around the edges, thereby highlighting the absence of an in-depth approach to this area. Firstly, Loughlin produced an article exploring Parnell ‘the political spectacle’. This, however, focused on how Parnell sought to create and maintain his public image rather than on how he was actually portrayed. It is unlikely that throughout his career he was represented everywhere in Britain in line with the image he tried to construct of himself. Secondly, Curtis, and especially De Nie, both produced books that touched on the topic, by investigating how the Irish were represented in the Victorian British press. Both these books focused on how such representations in the press were largely a consequence of anti-Irish prejudices in Victorian England, based on class, race and religion. Neither De Nie nor Curtis, however, focused on Parnell specifically, instead concentrating on the Irish in general. Having said this, De Nie did dedicate a few pages to the portrayal of Parnell during the Land War of 1879-82. De Nie asserted that:

British journalists spilt most of their ink on the national leaders of the Land League, and on none more than Charles Stewart Parnell. From about 1880 until his premature death in 1891, Parnell’s visage was … a burning subject for some journalists.

3 James Loughlin, ‘Constructing the Political Spectacle: Parnell, the Press and National Leadership, 1879-86’ in Boyce and O’Day (eds.), *Parnell*.
5 De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, p.209.
This was then followed by a few sentences which claimed that Parnell was consistently rebuked and shown as simply another example of Irish demagogues in the British press during these years. If it is true that Parnell attracted significant journalistic attention, then a few pages on one phase of his early career does not seem sufficient to address the issue of how he was represented in the British press. Similarly, to brush Parnell aside as somebody who was consistently depicted in a negative light by all British newspapers would seem like a considerable oversimplification, especially when one bears in mind that he was involved in a number of major events such as the Land War, the fight for Home Rule, the divorce scandal and the party split. It is unlikely that all newspapers would have viewed these events in exactly the same light.

This dissertation, therefore, addresses this ‘hole’ in historical research, through a case study of the editorials and letters to the editor of four newspapers. Editorials and letters to the editor have been chosen as these are the sections in the newspaper in which the opinions of the newspaper are expressed most clearly. The first newspaper that has been made use of is *The Times*, a London-based newspaper that for the majority of the 19th century retained an independent stance although, under its owner John Walter III, it began to drift to the right of the political spectrum, an occurrence that coincided with Parnell’s career. The second newspaper, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, was also London-based, but in complete contrast to *The Times*, it was a radical,

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working-class paper, which usually took up a centre-left republican position. Thirdly, *Freeman’s Journal* was utilised which was a Dublin-based newspaper with liberal-nationalist sympathies. Finally, the Belfast-based *Belfast News-Letter* was used, which adhered to a consistently conservative political position throughout the nineteenth century, while being located in the hub of unionist activity. It is likely that these four newspapers expressed views which were fairly typical of other English conservative, English radical, Irish liberal, and Irish conservative newspapers. This case study, therefore, also enables a comparison to be made between how Parnell was represented in the English and Irish press, as well as a comparison of how he was portrayed by liberal and conservative sections of the press.

The first chapter of this dissertation examines his representation by all four newspapers during the Land War. This was the time when Parnell rose to ascendancy, attaining the title of ‘the uncrowned king of Ireland’, as well as when he flirted most frequently with extremism on his tour of America. The time-frame for this period has been taken from October 1879 when he was elected president of the LL until the end of October 1882 when he formed the Irish National League (INL), effectively severing his link with agricultural agitation and committing himself to the attainment of Home Rule via constitutional means. The second chapter investigates representations of Parnell in the same four newspapers during the most controversial period of his life - the divorce scandal and consequent party split, from December 1889 when Captain O’Shea filed the divorce petition naming Parnell as co-
respondent, until his death in October 1891. Here not only are differences between the newspapers highlighted in both chapters, any changes in their representations of him between the two periods are as well.

When analysing the editorials and letters, not only are the more obvious portrayals of Parnell be studied but special attention is paid to the numerous journalistic techniques that were used to convey certain opinions in a more subtle fashion. Examples of these include the selective use of facts in the editorials or letters, as well as the use of metonyms, metaphors, presumptions and inferences to name but a few.\textsuperscript{11}

Finally, this dissertation attempts to show not only how different sections of the English and Irish press represented Parnell, and therefore implicitly how certain sections of the population viewed him, but will also to analyse how the newspapers used representations of Parnell to pursue their wider political concerns. Reynolds’s Newspaper’s representation of Parnell, for example, if taken as representative of radical working-class opinion in England, will enable Biagini’s thesis of radical support for Home Rule to be tested. He argued that ‘Home Rule was to the Irish working class and lower middle classes what Reform and free trade had been to their counterparts in Britain’ earlier in the century. The fight for Home Rule reminded them of their own past suffering, resulting in their support for it.\textsuperscript{12} If Parnell was represented in an unfavourable light, this would bring into question Biagini’s thesis,

as it would be difficult to argue for radical support for Home Rule if a leading radical newspaper did not see its leading advocate in a positive light.

Through this approach I am attempting to move away what could be considered a saturated area of research on Parnell which has tried to uncover who he really was, what his views really were and why he undertook certain courses of action throughout his career. This literature that exists on Parnell can be divided into a number of different categories. Firstly, there are a large number of biographies written by contemporaries, many of whom knew him personally, such as Barry O’Brien, O’Connor and Harrison, as well as many written by modern-day historians like Lyons, Hurst and Bew. These biographies provide a detailed examination of Parnell’s life, while also attempting an analysis of certain aspects of it, such as whether he was a moderate or extreme nationalist, and where the blame lay for the party split of the 1890s. As well as biographies, there is a wide variety of more specialised material on Parnell. A number of historians, for example, have devoted articles or books to deciphering his political thoughts, explaining his actions during the divorce crisis and party split and exploring his relationship with the IPP or certain colleagues.

Despite all these works, Parnell remains elusive, with different historians coming to different conclusions about aspects of his life and character. For instance, although most modern historians agree that Parnell was a moderate nationalist, forced

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into double-talk by political necessity, there are exceptions, such as Hurst, and a number of Parnell’s contemporaries, like Pearse, who was one of the leaders of the Nationalist Easter Rising in 1916, who believed him to have been an extremist at heart.\(^\text{15}\) Similarly, a significant number of biographers and historians, such as Lyons and Cruise O’Brien, place the blame for the party split on Parnell and discern no rationale behind his actions, while there is a body of historians, which includes Bull and Callanan, who take an opposite line, claiming that there were clearly discernible, rational motives behind Parnell’s actions in his final years.\(^\text{16}\) No consensus has been reached, thereby implying that there is still room for new interpretations of Parnell, and this dissertation will seek to highlight where representations of Parnell in the English and Irish press appear to agree with, or contradict, historians’ conclusions about Parnell.

This dissertation does not raise any of the issues which historians usually encounter when utilising newspapers, such as their potential for factual inaccuracy and bias, because it is the opinions of the newspapers on Parnell which are of interest here. However, it does raise a methodological caveat that requires addressing. This is the question of whether newspapers are actually true reflections of public opinion, and therefore whether, for example, Reynolds’s Newspaper’s representation of Parnell can


\(^{16}\) Bull, ‘Fall of Parnell’ in Boyce and O’Day (eds.), Parnell, p.131, 138-0 and p.143-5; Callanan, Parnell Split, p.2-5, p.61 and p.146-7; Lyon, Charles Stewart Parnell, p.575 and Cruise O’Brien, Parnell and his Party, p.348.
really be seen as representative of English radical working-class opinion in general, and can therefore be used to test Biagini’s thesis. A number of historians such as Taft and Rhodes, as well as the majority of journalists, politicians and readers in Victorian England, subscribed to the idea that the press was indeed an expression of public opinion.\footnote{Hannah Barker, \textit{Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855} (Essex, 2000), p.23; De Nie, \textit{Eternal Paddy}, p. 33 and Alison, Jones, ‘The Many Uses of Newspapers’.
\texttt{<http://dlx.Richmond.edu/d/ddr/docs/papers/useofnewspapers.pdf>} 18 January 2009.} Key to this is the fact that by the period under investigation, newspapers had become commercial ventures reliant on income from sales and advertising for their survival.\footnote{Barker, \textit{Newspapers}, p.94, p.107-8 and p.120; Margaret Beetham, ‘Towards a Theory of Periodicals and Publishing Genre’ in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (eds.), \textit{Investigating Victorian Journalism} (London, 1990), p.21 and De Nie, \textit{Eternal Paddy}, p. 32.} This not only meant that they were largely free from the political interference that dominated the first half of the century, but they were necessarily compelled to pay more attention to the views of their readers, as people generally buy newspapers that are in line with their own way of thinking.\footnote{Richardson, \textit{Analysing Newspapers}, p.80.} This premise is underlined by examples in history where newspapers have been forced to alter their stance in order to prevent a loss of sales. One such example, highly relevant to this study, is when \textit{The Craftsman} attempted to defend a former patron, William Pulteney, during summer 1742. It under-estimated the intensity of popular aversion to him and had to swiftly adjust its political line.\footnote{Barker, \textit{Newspapers}, p.110.} Two other key factors add weight to the use of newspapers to assess public opinion at that time. Firstly, all duties and taxes had been abolished by the period under investigation. Secondly, literacy rates had vastly increased in both Ireland and England - for example, by 1900 only 3\% of the population were illiterate in England and by 1911 only 12\% were illiterate in
Ireland. Both these factors meant that larger numbers of the lower classes could afford to read newspapers, a critical point for any newspaper, such as Reynolds’s Newspaper, that wished to reflect the opinions of the working-class.

There are, however, two main reasons why newspapers may not completely accurately reflect the opinion of their readers. Firstly, politicians often try to influence newspapers by subtle means such as the honours system. This would suggest that some newspapers might be more concerned with the opinion of the government or opposition rather than with a particular section of public opinion. Secondly, newspapers might be said to reflect the opinion of the owners, editors and journalists more clearly than the opinion of the public. Ultimately, there is no consensus on whether newspapers are accurate reflections of certain sections of contemporary public opinion. A number of historians such as De Nie, Beetham and Pykett argue that the press does not merely reflect public opinion but it also produces it. This seems a plausible conclusion, and does not totally discredit the use of newspapers to investigate the views of certain sections of public opinion. It would seem sensible to propose, however, that any conclusions reached which rely on assuming that newspapers’ views represented those of a certain section of the population should only be taken as indicative rather than definitive. This methodological caveat does

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not, however, affect the primary aim of this dissertation, namely to investigate how Parnell was represented by various sections of the English and Irish press, and how this changed during his career.
Chapter 1: Representations of Parnell during the Land War

As stated in the introduction, Parnell first rose to prominence during the Land War. What makes this a period of prime interest for studying how he was represented in various newspapers is that it was a time when his actions were most inconsistent. He espoused moderate, constitutional speeches in the House of Commons but extreme, revolutionary ones in areas of Ireland and America, for example. There was plenty of scope therefore for different newspapers to represent him in different lights. Both *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter* were very similar in their representations of Parnell during this period, highlighting unfavourable characteristics - especially in a public figure - such as extremism, disingenuous patriotism and dictatorial tendencies, while also pointing to his criminal and violent connections and the fact that he was not the leader of the Irish people as a whole. *Freeman’s Journal* and *Reynolds’s Newspaper* were almost the polar opposite in their representations of him.

1.1 An extremist or a moderate?

The term ‘extremist’ refers to a person whose views are perceived to be outside the political centre of society. Like a minority of historians after them, such as Hurst, both *The Belfast News-Letter* and *The Times* represented Parnell as an extremist.25 The first way they did this was through the direct use of such terms when talking about Parnell, his movement, methods and aims. On a number of occasions, for instance, *The Belfast News-Letter* actually referred directly to Parnell as the leader of the ‘extreme Irish party.’26 Similarly, in a number of editorials in both newspapers

Parnell’s movement was directly referred to as a ‘revolutionary crusade.’ The *Belfast News-Letter* even went so far as to call Parnell a Nihilist.

The second way that both newspapers sought to represent Parnell as an extremist almost from the outset of the Land War was by asserting that Parnell’s ultimate aim, for which the Land War was simply a cover, was independence for Ireland. They maintained he was not simply seeking legislative changes to the land laws of Ireland but was trying to overturn the union with Great Britain.

Thirdly, these newspapers on a number of occasions linked Parnell and his movement with Fenianism. The Fenian movement was founded in America in 1858 with the aim of winning independence for Ireland and setting up a republic via armed revolution if necessary. On the 23rd October 1879, for example, a *Times* editorial mentioned the fact that Davitt was a secretary of the Land League, of which Parnell was president. Following this statement, the editorial mentioned that Davitt was imprisoned as a convicted Fenian. This is a clear example of the journalistic...

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31 *The Times*, October 23rd 1879, p.9.
technique of selectively using facts to convey an implicit message. There was no need for the editorial to mention that Davitt was a Fenian, but by doing so it linked Parnell with Fenianism in the mind of the reader. The same editorial asserted that Parnell was more intense than ‘the ex-Fenian Mr. Davitt’ in his denunciations of landlords and rents. 32 Again, through the selective use of facts, The Times connected Fenianism and Parnell in the mind of readers, implying this time that Parnell was more extreme than Fenianism. Similarly, The Belfast News-Letter chose to mention that there were Fenians among those who gave Parnell a warm reception in America. 33

Finally, the newspapers represented Parnell as extreme by referring to others as moderate and then making it clear that Parnell did not fall into this category. 34 A typical example was The Times’ assertion that Parnell was ‘viewed with distrust and dismay by the more moderate section of the home rulers.’ 35 Similarly, The Belfast News-Letter stated in one editorial that ‘whatever may be Mr. Shaw’s personal virtues of moderation and ‘sweet reasonableness’, he is constrained in his political action to follow the lines marked out for the party by Mr. Parnell.’ 36

It should be noted, however, that there were two brief periods during the Land War when Parnell was represented as moderate by these newspapers: when the Land Act was first introduced, and after the Kilmainham treaty. Reference is made, by The Times only, to Parnell’s ‘laudable moderation’ and the ‘return’ of his party to ‘sane

32 Ibid.
35 The Times, October 7th 1879, p.7.
politics’ when Parnell agreed to consider the Land Act. However, such expressions of moderation did soon return to representations of Parnell’s extremism when it became clear that he had no intention of accepting the Act. Similarly, reference was made by both newspapers to his ‘newly assumed moderation’ after his release from prison. These exceptions could be seen to highlight how both newspapers used their representation of Parnell to illustrate their views on wider issues, such as reform and independence in Ireland. They seemed willing to represent him in a more favourable light when it seemed possible that he was only aiming at limited reforms via constitutional means to improve certain conditions in Ireland. However, as soon as it seemed he desired reforms that could damage the interests of their readers, the middle-classes and privileged orders, or lead to great constitutional changes, such as Home Rule, they painted Parnell in a bad light in an attempt to discredit such aims of his.

In line with the majority of modern-day historians such as Bew, Biagini, Boyce and O’Day, Freeman’s Journal and Reynolds’s Newspaper generally represented Parnell as a moderate politician. Freeman’s Journal, when referring to Parnell - but not directly by name - interchangeably used the terms ‘the Irish’, ‘Cork’ or ‘Meath member’, ‘the representative’, ‘the statesman’ and ‘the M.P’.

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37 The Times, April 14th 1881, p.9.
portraying him as a revolutionary, these terms represented him as constitutional. *Reynolds’s Newspaper* simply referred to him directly as ‘Mr. Parnell’.

*Reynolds’s Newspaper* unequivocally separated Parnell and his movement from Fenianism as is evident from this comment: ‘If we were to drive the Land League underground we should only render certain the reappearance of Fenianism.’

When discussing the Phoenix Park Murders, in which the newly appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, Cavendish, and Burke, the most senior Irish civil servant, were murdered, the same newspaper gave three options for their occurrence. One was that the murders were undertaken by extremists, or in other words Fenians, who ‘have never acknowledged [Parnell’s] authority.’ By separating Parnell from Fenianism, they helped to represent him as moderate. *Freeman’s Journal* used a different technique to separate him from the Fenians; it did not mention them in any of their editorials that concerned Parnell, so preventing the reader from connecting the two in their mind.

Both these newspapers also emphasised the genuineness of his portrayal of the situation in Ireland. They represented his demands for reduced rents and fixity of tenure, among others, as reasonable. By deeming his demands reasonable, they implied he was moderate. An excellent example of this was the comparison of Parnell

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*The Protection of Mr. Gladstone*, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, October 23rd 1881.


and his aims with those of Lord Clive. *Reynolds’s Newspaper* recalled that Clive when ‘accused of having despoiled some Indian rajahs exclaimed “by God, I am astonished at my moderation”.’ It added: ‘Those who are fully acquainted with the facts relating to Irish land for the last forty years will not be astonished at the extent of the agitation it has caused, but the moderation of the men who have long endured being cast out upon the world anywhere out of the landlords’ way.’  

Both newspapers also portrayed Parnell’s ultimate aim of independence from Britain in a sympathetic light by commenting in their editorials that Britain had governed Ireland badly. By comparing Ireland’s cause with that of other countries who had struggled for independence like Italy, they represented it not as a revolutionary aim but as a moderate one – more as a natural right which should have been granted years ago.

A *Reynolds’s Newspaper* editorial in October 1882 stated that ‘all Parnell asks is based upon principles for which the Liberal Party fought in days past and upon which they live today...they have simply overlooked the fact they haven’t carried them across the channel.’ Similarly, a *Freeman’s* editorial in September 1881 stated that a similar agitation aimed to ‘regain the right of every free and self-respecting race to govern themselves’ would in any other country have gained ‘nothing but sympathy from England.’

Occasionally, however, *Freeman’s Journal* did display an ambivalence towards Parnell. In March 1880, for instance, it stated that ‘we don’t go with Mr.

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Parnell to a great many extremes.\textsuperscript{48} In May of the same year another one stated that it hoped his chairmanship of the IPP ‘will carry with it a moderating influence.’\textsuperscript{49} The same month it referred to Shaw’s followers as moderate and Parnell’s as advanced.\textsuperscript{50} These few early representations of him as more extreme than moderate could be explained by a number of things. Firstly, Parnell and the proprietor of \emph{Freeman’s Journal} – Edmund Dwyer Gray - had a famous dispute in 1879, which although settled, meant that they were never close. Until May 1881 therefore, when Parnell threatened to turn \emph{United Ireland} into a daily newspaper which would have resulted in its becoming a direct competitor to \emph{Freeman’s Journal}, unequivocal support of Parnell was not guaranteed.\textsuperscript{51} Secondly, Gray never disassociated himself from the leadership of Butt, a more moderate politician than Parnell.\textsuperscript{52} Therefore, at times, Parnell was likely to seem extreme to him, and as he played a major role in the management of the paper, it is not surprising that this came across in its pages sometimes until Parnell’s threat forced it to toe a sympathetic line.

\subsection*{1.2 A patriot?}

A second key representation of Parnell by the two conservative-leaning newspapers was as unpatriotic. They did this in three different ways. Firstly, throughout their editorials, an effort was made to portray Parnell’s advice and actions as detrimental to both Ireland and its countrymen.\textsuperscript{53} There were a number of generic

\textsuperscript{48} ‘Dublin: Saturday, March 20’, \emph{Freeman’s Journal}, March 20\textsuperscript{th} 1880.
\textsuperscript{49} ‘Dublin: Tuesday, May 18’, \emph{Freeman’s Journal}, May 18\textsuperscript{th} 1880.
\textsuperscript{50} ‘Dublin: Tuesday, May 18’, \emph{Freeman’s Journal}, May 18\textsuperscript{th} 1880 and ‘Dublin: Wednesday, May 19’, \emph{Freeman’s Journal}, May 19\textsuperscript{th} 1880.
\textsuperscript{51} Smith and O. Day, ‘Gray, Edmund Dwyer’.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
comments such as the results ‘can’t be but disastrous’ and that his policy ‘would throw back the country for years to come.’\textsuperscript{54} Beyond this, they also set out to show more specifically how he was causing the country to suffer. The editorials of both The Times and The Belfast News-Letter stated that his actions in America were preventing people from donating money to relieve the suffering that existed in Ireland.\textsuperscript{55} Similarly, his policy of obstructionism was portrayed as highly detrimental to the Irish and their cause. Both newspapers, for instance, pointed out that obstructionism merely disrupted the ability of Parliament to pass beneficial legislation for Ireland, such as the restoration of law and order, while the condition of the country continued to deteriorate.\textsuperscript{56} The clear implication was that Parnell was unpatriotic because his actions or advice were injurious to his country.

Secondly, both newspapers depicted Parnell’s reasons for embarking on the land agitation as driven by selfish rather than patriotic considerations.\textsuperscript{57} Historians such as

\textsuperscript{54} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, January 17\textsuperscript{th} 1881; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, September 17\textsuperscript{th} 1881; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, October 14\textsuperscript{th} 1881; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, October 21\textsuperscript{st} 1881; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, May 10\textsuperscript{th} 1882; The Times, October 7\textsuperscript{th} 1879, p.7; The Times, October 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1879, p.9; The Times, January 13\textsuperscript{th} 1880, p.9; The Times, September 19\textsuperscript{th} 1881, p.9 and The Times, October 24\textsuperscript{th} 1881, p.9; and The Times, December 7\textsuperscript{th} 1880, p.9; The Times, January 15\textsuperscript{th} 1881, p.9; The Times February 1\textsuperscript{st} 1881, p.9; The Times, February 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1881, p.9 and E.F. Reed, ‘The Week in History’, The Times, February 10\textsuperscript{th} 1881.

\textsuperscript{55} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, October 4\textsuperscript{th} 1879 and The Times, October 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1879, p.9.


\textsuperscript{57} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, January 17\textsuperscript{th} 1881 and ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, The Belfast News-Letter, January 29\textsuperscript{th} 1881; The Times, January 15\textsuperscript{th} 1881, p.9; The Times February 1\textsuperscript{st} 1881, p.9; The Times, February 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1881, p.9 and E.F. Reed, ‘The Week in History’, The Times, February 10\textsuperscript{th} 1881.
Boyce and O’Day have since similarly argued that at times ‘his actions were less than self-sacrificing’.\(^5\) This is also in line with De Nie’s assertion that Irish nationalist leaders were typically represented in the British press as using distress for their own political careers.\(^6\) The *Belfast News-Letter* argued that Parnell pursued the land agitation, not to benefit the tenants, but to sow discord between them and the landlords in order to make himself popular and powerful.\(^7\) Both newspapers also suggested that the Land League was simply created to prolong the agitation for the political advantage of Parnell instead of to obtain changes to the land laws for the benefit of tenants. They pointed out that had he been serious in his declared objective of improving the lot of the tenants, he would have started by abolishing himself as a landlord.\(^8\) Likewise, his tour to America was depicted as undertaken not in order to help the suffering of his fellow countrymen but to help continue the agitation at home, and therefore advance his parliamentary interests.\(^9\)

A third key example of Parnell’s portrayal as unpatriotic in these newspapers is in relation to the Land Act. Both newspapers presented the Act as beneficial to Irish tenants, and therefore represented Parnell’s dismissal of it as driven by the selfish consideration that its acceptance would quell the discontent and therefore Parnell’s

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60 De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, p.205
power and his source of income. Ultimately it would result in his ‘sink[ing] back into his original obscurity’. It could be said that here they were not only representing him as unpatriotic but as a selfish, power-thirsty, conniving politician.

Both Freeman’s Journal and Reynolds’s Newspaper, on the other hand, represented Parnell as a patriot. Freeman’s Journal at times directly referred to his ‘patriotic attitude’ and ‘patriotic effort’. More often both newspapers portrayed him as patriot in more subtle ways by showing his actions, policies, aims and motivations as being for the good of the country. Historians like Warwick-Haller and Claydon have since shared such a view, with Claydon for example arguing that obstructionism was designed by Parnell to show that the Irish refused to be second-class legislators. Both newspapers described Parnell’s tour of America as primarily being for the relief of his starving country. It was portrayed as a selfless mission, where he endured hardship in order to be the medium through which the Irish asked for relief from their

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64 Dublin: Tuesday, April 12’, Freeman’s Journal, April 12th 1881 and ‘Dublin: Tuesday, May 16’, Freeman’s Journal, May 16th 1882.


distress. The use of selective reporting enhanced his portrayal as a patriot. An editorial in Reynolds’s Newspaper describing his homecoming in March, for example, only included the snippet of Archbishop O’Riodan’s speech which depicted Parnell as a saviour: ‘but for his conduct half of their country would be dying of starvation.’ Parnell’s policy of obstructionism was portrayed by these newspapers as patriotic, aimed at ensuring that his fellow countrymen obtained a full hearing of their complaints and forcing the government into introducing a sufficient remedy for their grievances. His actions with regards to the Land Act were also described in patriotic terms as ‘for the purpose of enabling the tenant farmers to make the best of its provisions.’

During the period of his arrest, Reynolds’s Newspaper attached the term ‘martyr’ to Parnell. While Freeman’s Journal never directly used the term martyr to describe Parnell, it did place him in the company of great patriotic men like O’Connell by saying ‘the fate of every Irishman who sacrificed himself for his country’ is jail.

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68 ‘Return of Mr. Parnell’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, March 28th 1880.
71 Dublin: Saturday, Oct. 22’, Freeman’s Journal, October 22nd 1881.
Interestingly, *Freeman’s Journal* did represent Parnell as unpatriotic and selfish towards the end of February 1880, while he was still in America. At this time he denounced all the other organisations collecting money for the suffering of the poor. A *Freeman’s Journal* editorial stated that ‘no man pretending to do practical service to his country’ could do such a thing.\(^72\) However, part, if not all, of the explanation for this criticism is likely to be the fact that the owner of the *Freeman’s Journal* at the time - Dwyer Grey - was also chairman of the Mansion House Committee, one of the organisations Parnell denounced on his American tour.\(^73\)

### 1.3 A demagogue?

At times both *The Belfast-Newsletter* and *The Times* referred directly and indirectly to Parnell as a demagogue.\(^74\) *The Times*, for example, referred to Parnell in October 1879 as ‘a modern demagogue.’\(^75\) This term has two conflicting meanings. In ancient times it referred to a popular leader who espoused the cause of the people against any other party in the state. Conversely, it can also refer to a political agitator who appeals to people’s passions and prejudices to obtain power or further his own interests.\(^76\) Given the general hostility of both *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter* towards Parnell and his movement, it seems highly probable that they had the second definition in mind when they referred to him as a demagogue. This would seem to be


\(^{73}\) Smith and O. Day, ‘Gray, Edmund Dwyer’.


\(^{75}\) *The Times*, October 23\(^{rd}\) 1879, p.9.

\(^{76}\) ‘Demagogue, n’.  
<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50060328?query_type=word&queryword=demagogue&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=5qOq-tUK014-11297&hilit=50060328> May 2009.
confirmed by comments in their editorials which referred to Parnell’s speeches as appealing to the passions of the ignorant and easily moved people of Ireland, in order to achieve his own ends.

Some caution is, however, needed here. It will be remembered from the introduction that De Nie summed up representations of Parnell in the British press by arguing that they simply portrayed him as another Irish demagogue, in the unpatriotic sense of the word. The above does clearly illustrate that the English conservative press did represent him as such at times; but there were only a few such references throughout the Land War period, and it could be argued that these are too few to warrant De Nie asserting that British newspapers represented Parnell as just a demagogue.

*Reynolds’s Newspaper*, in contrast defended him against the claims of demagoguery from newspapers like *The Times.* This would seem to support the idea that De Nie’s summing up of British press representations of Parnell during this period was too general. *Reynolds’s Newspaper* showed how characters from history such as Washington, Gambetta and Garibaldi, who used to espouse similarly popular causes, were portrayed as demagogues until they were successful.77 *Freeman’s Journal*, on the other hand, never directly defended Parnell against such claims, preferring, as in the case of the allegations of Fenianism, to remain silent rather than to mount an active defence.

1.4 A dictator?

At times during this period, both The Belfast News-Letter and The Times represented Parnell as a dictator. The Times explicitly used the word in association with Parnell on his return from America, stating that ‘Mr. Parnell has suddenly leaped into importance as a dictator in Irish politics.’ The majority of his representation as dictatorial in the two newspapers was, however, implicit. The Belfast News-Letter, for instance, highlighted Parnell’s response to people who did not toe his policy line. One editorial mentioned that Parnell attacked them, and ensured that they would never be re-elected. They represented him as only wanting “yes men” around him, allowing people no leeway for independent thought and action - classic characteristics of a dictator. The Times wrote about how he created a ‘ready cut and dry’ list of candidates that he imposed on the constituencies, which again implied that he wished to control the men around him. The newspapers also referred to the Land League as ‘a tyranny’, and so by implication Parnell was a dictator. Historians such as Connor Cruise O’Brien have since similarly represented him as at the least, ‘a dictator in the making.’

Both Freeman’s Journal and Reynolds’s Newspaper disassociated Parnell from representations of him as a dictator, just as historians such as Biagini have done, viewing him as exercising power on the basis of a popular mandate. A number of editorials in Freeman’s Journal used terms that conjure up a dictatorial image to refer

78 The Times, March 23rd 1880, p.9.
80 The Times, March 23rd 1880, p.9.
82 Cited in Biagini, British Democracy, p.299.
83 Biagini, British Democracy, p.23.
to the objects Parnell was fighting against like the landlords and the British government. His arrest, for example, was referred to as ‘dictatorial’ and ‘despotic’, while the government’s attempt to quash the movement in January 1881 was represented as ‘a tyrannical law of conspiracy’. Both newspapers referred to his followers as ‘companions’, ‘colleagues’, ‘allies’ and ‘co-workers’ which are not words one would associate with the subjects of a dictator. An editorial in *Reynolds’s Newspaper* combined the illustration of him as popular with denunciations of the accusation that he was tyrannical: ‘the heads of this tyrannical thraldom the Irish are so anxious to shake off would be worshipped from one end of the country to the other.’ *Freeman’s Journal* used a similar approach when it included a quote from *The Times* which called the Land League a tyranny and Parnell by implication a dictator, and then went on to state ‘if so, no man ever saw the multitude so enamoured of their tyrant and so kiss their chains.’

### 1.6 Linked to crime and violence?

Parnell was represented by *The Belfast News-Letter* and *The Times* as linked with criminality and violence. At times such a representation was explicit, referring to him as a ‘criminal’ and an ‘apostle of disorder’. On a far greater number of
occasions, though, the newspapers represented him in this light implicitly. Firstly, their editorials often linked the movement of which Parnell was leader with criminal and lawless acts. For instance, one *Times* editorial stated that only when the Land League was dissolved would there be a chance of law, order and peace being *restored*. The word restored is very important here. It directly links crime with the Land League in readers’ minds by implying that up until its inception there was law and order in Ireland. There was much reference in both newspapers to the unwritten law of the Land League being in force in Ireland, while simultaneously there was much discussion of the anarchy and turmoil in Ireland and the numerous barbarous crimes. The effect of this was to equate the law of the Land League with crime and violence. Likewise, in many editorials the Land League was referred to as a ‘conspiracy’, while its existence in Ireland was also referred to as ‘a reign of terror’. By linking the Land League to criminal and violent acts, both newspapers were representing Parnell, its president, as at the very least tacitly agreeing with crime and violence.

At times the editorials went further, suggesting that Parnell in fact encouraged, caused and endorsed acts of criminality and violence, a suggestion the historian Hurst

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91 *The Times*, 30th September 1881, p.7.

expands on in his work on Parnell. One Belfast News-Letter editorial, for example, stated that it had become a common formula for prisoners to allege in court that they were only following Mr. Parnell’s advice. It also stated on a number of occasions that up until the Phoenix Park Murders, neither Parnell, nor any of his colleagues, ever explicitly condemned any of the crimes and violence that were occurring, therefore implying that Parnell endorsed such acts. The editorials on numerous occasions also argued that Parnell’s speeches had ‘their logical result’ in crime and violence and they were the ‘straws of the current agitation.’ They even went further than this, stating that Parnell knew that this was exactly the effect such speeches would have. An editorial in The Belfast News-Letter in May 1882, for example, stated that Parnell boasted that he knew the Irish nature – that when excited by speeches like his they would assert themselves through criminal and violent means. This boast, according to the editorial, was the equivalent of accepting responsibility for the shedding of innocent blood that had occurred since the first utterances of the Land League chiefs. This representation of Parnell was in line with one of the ways De Nie asserted that the Irish were generally represented by the British press.

95 The Times, October 4th 1880, p.9 and The Times, September 19th 1881, p.9.
96 ‘Mr. Parnell’s Speeches and their Logical Results’, The Belfast News-Letter, October 30th 1879 and The Times, October 4th 1880, p.9.
99 De Nie, Eternal Paddy, p.6 and p.21.
Reynolds’s Newspaper and Freeman’s Journal, on the other hand, represented Parnell as free from criminal and violent association, which is how some of Parnell’s contemporaries, such as T.P. O’Connor, viewed him. The first and most obvious way these newspapers did this was by portraying him as innocent of the charges of unlawful acts brought against him. Freeman’s Journal, for example, argued that the case brought against Parnell in January 1881 rested simply on speeches delivered by Parnell and that ‘anything might be proven by isolated extracts’, such as that the Holy Bible is an improper publication or Hamlet a dull mass of nonsense. Similarly, in October 1881 Reynolds’s Newspaper asserted that the government had to alter the law in order to arrest him, and that they did so simply due to his popularity and refusal to see things, namely the Land Act, in the same light as them. A more subtle way the newspapers supported his innocence was by always referring to him in these situations as ‘suspect’ or ‘traverse’. Reynolds’s Newspaper referred to his arrest as a ‘kidnapping’ which implied Parnell’s innocence.

Reynolds’s Newspaper utilised the language of crime and violence not in connection with Parnell and his movement, but in connection with the British government, the agency against which Parnell was acting. One editorial argued, for

100 Boyce, ‘Portrait of the King’, in Boyce and O’Day (eds.), Parnell, p.287.
103 ‘The Imprisonment of Mr. Parnell’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, October 16th 1881 and Gracchus, ‘Moral Complicity, or ‘Reasonable Suspicion’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, October 30th 1881.
105 ‘The Imprisonment of Mr. Parnell’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, October 16th 1881.
example that ‘crime and blunder heretofore seem to have been the only means resorted to for governing the sister Ireland’, while another stated that ‘brute force...violence...[and] intimidation’ have been the weapons utilised by the British government. 106 Similarly, in contrast to *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter* which time and again mentioned the decay of law and order and the huge numbers of crimes occurring, both newspapers argued against the high prevalence of crime. 107 One editorial, for example, wondered ‘that there is such an absence of crimes of an agrarian character in Ireland,’ while a number of others in *Reynolds’s Newspaper* stated that accounts of violence in newspapers like *The Times* were exaggerations. 108 Similarly, an editorial in *Freeman’s Journal* referred to the ‘alleged’ agrarian crimes 109 It then stated how such alleged crimes disappeared on even a basic examination. 110

Not only did these newspapers play down the crimes but they blamed those that did occur on another source, separate from Parnell. The Phoenix Park Murders, for example, were blamed by *Freeman’s Journal* on ‘some foreign spirit...but it is confined only to a few desperate men, the heart of the nation is untouched’. 111 Similarly, *Reynolds’s Newspaper* blamed the Phoenix Park Murders on a ‘party of

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assassination’, totally independent of Parnell. It also pointed to the continuance of crime while Parnell was in prison which implied he was not the cause of it.  

1.7 Leader of the Irish Race?

As stated in the introduction, Parnell has been represented by historians such as O’Day and Boyce as the only Irish nationalist hero to be commonly recognised as the leader of not only the Irish nation, but the Irish race. In contrast, both The Belfast News-Letter and The Times during this period did not even represent him as the leader of the Irish nation, let alone the race. This is most clear in the way he was referred to variously as being ‘the leader of the active party’, ‘the leader of agitation’, ‘the leader of pernicious faction’, ‘the leader of Irish disaffection’ and ‘the leader of the Land League’. None of these equate to being the leader of the Irish people, but simply the leader of a fraction of the population. The only time he was referred to as the leader of the ‘popular party’, quotation marks were used, implying disagreement with any suggestion of him representing the Irish people as a whole.

In contrast, both Reynolds’s Newspaper and Freeman’s Journal often represented Parnell as, at the very least the leader of the nation. Especially towards the end of the Land War, he was represented by them as the leader of the Irish people as a whole, and not just a fraction of them. For example, he was referred to as the ‘master of Ireland’, ‘a great national leader’, ‘the foremost man of a great nation’ ‘leading

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115 The Times, October 7th 1879, p.7.
man of Ireland’ and ‘chief of the Irish people’.\textsuperscript{116} On one occasion he was also referred to as the ‘idolised chieftain’ of the Irish race.\textsuperscript{117} The fact that there was only one reference to him as the leader of the Irish race among his supporters, seems to imply that by this stage in his career, although he was generally recognised as the leader of the Irish at home (only by his supporters though), his reach had not been extended to those abroad.

For the most part, the representation of Parnell in all four newspapers during this period of his career is as one would expect from those particular sources, reflecting the views and prejudices of their readers and backers. Both The Belfast News-Letter and The Times, for instance, had a privileged, propertied readership.\textsuperscript{118} It is therefore unsurprising that they viewed and represented Parnell negatively during this period as his policies of land reform and peasant proprietorship were directly aimed at attacking landlords and private property. Reynolds’s Newspaper, in contrast, had a working-class readership, who would have supported any attack on the privileged and any man who championed such policies.\textsuperscript{119} Freeman’s Journal was the oldest nationalist newspaper in Ireland; it was frequently read to the illiterate population of Ireland by priests and teachers who were the sections of the population Parnell was trying to help.\textsuperscript{120}
The newspapers’ representations of Parnell can therefore be seen to reflect the political views of those who read them. Firstly, all were aware that Parnell’s ultimate aim was Home Rule, even if during this period he was not directly striving for it. The newspapers’ representations of Parnell therefore provide insights into their views on the issue of Home Rule, not simply on how they saw Parnell or the land issue. It could be argued that by representing him in a negative light, both *The Belfast News-Letter* and *The Times* were effectively trying to discredit Home Rule by showing he, one of the most talented Irish politicians, did not have the characteristics to govern the country. In contrast, both *Freeman’s Journal* and *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, by representing Parnell in a generally positive light, were, trying to show both his, and the Irish nations’ good qualities, and so prove their ability to govern themselves. This is, therefore, in line with Biagini’s assessment of radical support for Home Rule.

Finally, it could be argued that *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, in particular, utilised its representations of Parnell and the Irish question to further its own English radical agenda of anti-establishmentarianism and republicanism. By representing Parnell as free form crime and violence and turning the language of crime and violence on the government, it attacked the established order to try to further its own views about the need for radical reform. *The Times*, in contrast, could be said to be following its own agenda, in line with its conservative leanings and support for tradition and slow organic change, through it representations of Parnell as extreme, unpatriotic, dictatorial and linked to crime and violence.
Chapter 2: Representations of Parnell during the Divorce Crisis and Party Split

This next chapter examines representations of Parnell seven years later. In those seven years, Parnell had been involved in an alliance with the Liberal Party, in a struggle for Home Rule and had won a legal battle against The Times over a forged letter linking him unequivocally with the Phoenix Park Murders. During 1890-1891, Parnell was involved in a divorce scandal; he was named as the co-respondent in the divorce between Captain O'Shea and his wife, Katherine. After he was found guilty, the Non-conformist reaction in England resulted in Gladstone warning Parnell that if he remained as leader of the IPP, the alliance would be over and Home Rule jeopardised. Parnell did not convey this warning to his followers at the annual party leadership election on the 25th November 1890. Once Gladstone had made his warning public, the IPP members demanded another meeting. This meeting in Committee room 15 at the beginning of December resulted in a party split when Parnell refused to compromise and at least temporarily retire. The majority of 44 walked out on the 6th December to form a new organisation, which many of his close associates such as Dillon, O’Brien and Davitt supported. The rest of Parnell’s life was spent fighting a fierce battle for re-instatement as leader. As with the Land War period, there was plenty of scope for different representations of his actions in newspapers during this period too. A number of the ways Parnell was represented were the same as during the Land War, but perhaps not surprisingly, the newspapers were more concerned with his morality or dishonesty during this period than they were during the Land War. There was also more variation between the different newspapers, including those on the same side of the political spectrum. Reynolds’s Newspaper, for example, almost without exception represented Parnell in a positive
light during the Land War period but after the revelation of his guilt in the divorce court proceedings it did a 180° turn.

2.1 A Patriot?

Both *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter*, in line with their representation of Parnell during the Land War, represented him as unpatriotic during this period of his life. However, in direct contrast to its portrayal of Parnell during the Land War, *Reynolds’s Newspaper* represented him as unpatriotic as well during this period of his life. The most obvious way each newspaper did this was in the choice of terms they used to refer to him and his opponents. *Reynolds’s Newspaper* directly referred to him as a ‘traitor’ on a number of occasions. An editorial in December 1890, for example, stated that a number of the Irish people were ‘fighting his battle as fiercely as if he were a patriot of the first water, instead of the foul-mouthed traitor he is.’

Similarly, *The Belfast News-Letter* used quotation marks around the word ‘patriot’ when referring to him, so implying the exact opposite. The *Belfast News-Letter* and *Reynolds’s Newspaper* referred to his opponents on a number of occasions as patriotic. When discussing the Kilkenny election in December 1890, for instance, a *Reynolds’s Newspaper* editorial talked about ‘the Parnell candidate’ and then ‘the patriotic candidate.’ It also referred to the men of ‘the patriotic party’ and then ‘the

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121 ‘Parnell, Balfour and Co’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, December 21st 1890; ‘The Truth of Irish Patriotism’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, December 28th 1890; ‘Our Duty to the Irish Crisis’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, January 18th 1891; Gracchus, ‘Parnell, the Curse of Ireland’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, February 1st 1891 and ‘How Mr. Parnell is Hurting Ireland’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, February 8th 1891 and ‘Traitor, n.’.


122 ‘Parnell, Balfour and Co’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, December 21st 1890.


adherents of Parnell'. By describing his opponents as patriots, it implied that Parnell was not.

As with *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter* during the Land War, all three newspapers portrayed his actions during this period as driven by selfish rather than patriotic motivations. A number of historians, such as Lyons, Cruise O’Brien and Harrison, later agreed with such representations of his motives, arguing that his actions in this period of his life had more to do with passions, personal pride and desperation than patriotism. *The Belfast News-Letter* stated that his willingness to consider the Bologna conference, for example, was because ‘he had purposes of his own to serve’, not because of a desire to heal the rift in the IPP and so further the cause of his country. Similarly, a *Times* article suggested that his decision not to retire was based on his assessment of what could personally be gained by either course of action. An editorial in *Reynolds’s Newspaper* in December 1890 stated that ‘Parnell not Ireland is the real objective’ when referring to his actions during this period. *Reynold’s Newspaper* went so far as to portray his actions as detrimental to the cause of Ireland and its people. Much focus was placed in its editorials on how his

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127 Bull, ‘Fall of Parnell’ in Boyce and O’Day (eds.), *Parnell*, p.129.
129 *The Times*, November 28th 1890, p.7.
130 ‘Parnell or Ireland’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, December 14th 1890.
refusal to resign from the leadership of the IPP was detrimental, if not fatal to the attainment of Home Rule.\textsuperscript{131} One editorial, for example, stated that his retention of the leadership ‘will result in incalculable damage to the cause so dear to the Irish’, while another stated that ‘his obstinacy under these circumstances in retaining the post he holds must and will procrastinate the advent of Home Rule for many years.’\textsuperscript{132} Interestingly, neither \textit{The Belfast News-Letter} nor \textit{The Times} tried to portray him as unpatriotic by focusing on his retention of leadership as being detrimental to Ireland. This is likely to be because neither newspaper viewed Home Rule as beneficial to Ireland in the first place, so did not view his damaging the Home Rule cause as detrimental to Ireland. On a few occasions, however, some editorials did mention that through his recent actions he was destroying the cause of Home Rule.\textsuperscript{133} In December 1890, for example, \textit{The Times} made reference to the fact that no British government could ever propound an Irish policy on the guarantee of Parnell’s good faith again.\textsuperscript{134} In other words, Home Rule or a similar policy could not be considered while Parnell remained the leader of IPP.

In contrast, \textit{The Belfast News-Letter} - but not \textit{The Times} - focused not on how his present actions were detrimental to the cause of Ireland, but on how his leadership
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over the past decade had not benefited Ireland.\textsuperscript{135} One editorial, for example, argued
that during the past ten years (effectively the entire time Parnell was the leader of the
IPP) ‘the interest of Ireland has been sacrificed, the energy of Ireland has been
paralysed and the moral and material condition of the people in the three provinces
has been injured.’\textsuperscript{136} Similarly, it stated that it could not see any benefit that the
country had gained from his services, illustrating the point further by comparing the
poverty of the home rule districts with the prosperity of the unionist districts.\textsuperscript{137}

\textit{Reynolds’s Newspaper} did not go down this route. It opposed his retention of the
leadership but in a number of editorials reference was made to his ‘past services....to
the Irish cause’ and the fact that ‘he has done more for Ireland than any other
Irishman of the century.’\textsuperscript{138}

\textit{Freeman’s Journal}, in line with its representation of Parnell during the Land
War, represented Parnell as patriotic during this final period of his career. It did this
firstly through selective use of terms when referring to Parnell and those in opposition
to him.\textsuperscript{139} A number of editorials, for example, referred to those who desired his
resignation as ‘traitors’, and their action as ‘treachery’.\textsuperscript{140} In contrast, Parnell was
called an ‘Irish patriot’, while it was stated that standing by him was ‘the patriotic

\textsuperscript{135} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, \textit{The Belfast News-Letter}, November 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1890; ‘The Belfast News-
Letter’, \textit{The Belfast News-Letter}, November 27\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, \textit{The Belfast News-
Letter}, December 11\textsuperscript{th} 1890 and ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, \textit{The Belfast News-Letter}, January 6\textsuperscript{th} 1891.
\textsuperscript{136} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, \textit{The Belfast News-Letter}, January 6\textsuperscript{th} 1891.
\textsuperscript{137} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, \textit{The Belfast News-Letter}, November 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1890.
\textsuperscript{138} ‘Mr. Parnell and the Leadership’, \textit{Reynolds’s Newspaper}, November 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1890 and ‘Mr. Parnell and
his Parasites’, \textit{Reynolds’s Newspaper}, November 30\textsuperscript{th} 1890.
\textsuperscript{139} ‘Dublin: Saturday Jan. 6’, \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, January 6\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Wednesday, Nov. 26’,
\textit{Freeman’s Journal}, November 26\textsuperscript{th} 1890; S. Cove, ‘A Parnell’, \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, January 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1891;
‘Dublin: Tuesday, June 30’, \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, June 30\textsuperscript{th} 1891; ‘Dublin: Wednesday, July 8’,
\textit{Freeman’s Journal}, July 8\textsuperscript{th} 1891.
\textsuperscript{140} ‘Dublin: Saturday, Jan. 6’, \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, January 6\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Tuesday, June 30’,
\textit{Freeman’s Journal}, June 30\textsuperscript{th} 1891.
course’. Secondly, it drew attention to how Parnell’s past actions had not only benefitted Ireland, but how they had been driven by purely selfless motives. An editorial in November 1890, for example, stated that he had ‘ably, faithfully, successfully served his country….. [and] saved his country once and again.’ There was also reference to his services to Ireland having been greater than any other Irishman’s that century. His selflessness was summed up in a number of editorials throughout this period which referred to his labours, struggles, defamation, imprisonment and the trials which he endured simply for Ireland’s sake. Finally, his decision not to resign was portrayed as driven by rational, selfless considerations of his duty to the Irish people. This is the line also taken by historians such as Callanan and Bull who have both argued that his actions during this period of his life

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143 ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Nov. 18’, *Freeman’s Journal*, November 18th 1890.
were based on judgements not about his personal future, but about what was most likely to allow for the advancement of the nationalist movement.\textsuperscript{147} Freeman’s Journal’s representation of Parnell’s actions as selfless and rational can be seen in an editorial in November 1890 which explicitly stated that he ‘came to the decision not to retire as leader exclusively by a sense of responsibility to the Irish people’ and one in December stated that the cause was ‘the only consideration that weighs with him’.\textsuperscript{148} Other editorials implicitly referred to his patriotism, maintaining that his leadership was vital to the furtherance of the cause, and that his determination to hold onto it was driven by this selfless awareness.\textsuperscript{149} Editorials in November and December 1890 referred to the fact that ‘his services are indispensible’ and that the ‘national cause needs him’, while another argued that ‘to lose his splendid prestige and substantial services now would be fatal.\textsuperscript{150} A number of other editorials stated that he was the only living Irishman who could deal with the British on an equal and independent footing and could therefore obtain an outcome genuinely beneficial to Ireland.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{147} Bull, ‘Fall of Parnell’ in Boyce and O’Day (eds.), Parnell, p.141 and Callanan, The Parnell Split, p.100.
\textsuperscript{148} ‘London Correspondence’, Freeman’s Journal, November 18\textsuperscript{th} 1890 and ‘Dublin: Friday, Dec. 5’, Freeman’s Journal, December 5\textsuperscript{th} 1890.
\textsuperscript{149} ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Nov. 18’, Freeman’s Journal, November 18\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Wednesday, Nov 19’, Freeman’s Journal, November 19\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Monday, Dec. 8’, Freeman’s Journal, December 8\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Dec. 9’, Freeman’s Journal, December 9\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Friday, Dec 12’, Freeman’s Journal, December 12\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Saturday, Dec. 13’, Freeman’s Journal, December 13\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Saturday, Dec. 20’, Freeman’s Journal, December 20\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Jan. 20’, Freeman’s Journal, January 20\textsuperscript{th} 1891; ‘Dublin: Monday, Jan. 26’, Freeman’s Journal, January 26\textsuperscript{th} 1891 and ‘Dublin: Tuesday, June 30’, Freeman’s Journal, June 30\textsuperscript{th} 1891.
\textsuperscript{150} ‘Dublin: Wednesday, Nov. 19’, Freeman’s Journal, November 19\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Monday, Dec. 8’, Freeman’s Journal, December 8\textsuperscript{th} 1890 and ‘Dublin: Saturday, Dec. 13’, Freeman’s Journal, December 13\textsuperscript{th} 1890.
\textsuperscript{151} ; ‘Dublin: Thursday, Dec. 11’, Freeman’s Journal, December 11\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Friday, Dec. 12’, Freeman’s Journal, December 12\textsuperscript{th} 1890 ‘Dublin: Saturday, Dec. 13’, Freeman’s Journal, December 13\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘Dublin: Monday, Jan. 19’, Freeman’s Journal, January 19\textsuperscript{th} 1891; ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Jan. 20’, Freeman’s Journal, January 20\textsuperscript{th} 1891; ‘Dublin: Tuesday, June 30’, Freeman’s Journal, June 30\textsuperscript{th} 1891 and ‘Dublin: Wednesday, July 1’, Freeman’s Journal, July 1\textsuperscript{st} 1891.
By the end of July 1891, however, the stance of the *Freeman’s Journal* began to change, as illustrated by a letter from Dwyer Gray, the son of the previous two proprietors of *Freeman’s Journal* and owner of nearly half its shares. He argued that he no longer saw Parnell as the only person who could lead Ireland and that Parnell’s desire to cling to power, was ‘miserable, squalid and most ruinous.’ It stated that he was causing dissention, to the detriment of his country.\(^{152}\) Similar representations of Parnell occurred increasingly frequently up until his death in October 1891. An editorial in September, for example, stated that the ‘leadership of Mr. Parnell means destruction to the Irish cause.’\(^ {153}\)

It should be noted that *The Times*’ did not consistently represent Parnell as unpatriotic during this period. Firstly, unlike in *The Belfast News-Letter* and *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, Parnell’s ex-followers were not referred to as patriots. Instead, quotation marks were used to imply the opposite, while they were also often represented as selfish, along with Gladstone. An editorial in November 1890, for example, referred to Parnell’s followers’ actions as being based on the ‘real or fancied self-interest of the moment.’\(^ {154}\) In two editorials it implied that Parnell’s actions were not detrimental to Ireland by stating that Parnell did not believe Gladstone was essential to the country’s cause.\(^ {155}\) In other words, Parnell did not believe that it mattered for Ireland if the alliance fell through. Similarly, it argued that Parnell did not believe that Gladstone would carry out the threat of ending the alliance and thereby jeopardise the chance for Home Rule, especially in light of Gladstone’s support for Parnell despite far worse crimes, such as the sanctioning of murder during

\(^{152}\) E. Dwyer Gray, ‘Mr. E. Dwyer Gray and Mr. Parnell, *Freeman’s Journal*, July 31\(^{st}\) 1891.
\(^{154}\) *The Times*, November 28\(^{th}\) 1890, p.7.
\(^{155}\) *The Times*, November 26\(^{th}\) 1890, p.9.
the Land War. An article in February 1891 explicitly stated that his retirement would be detrimental to the Irish cause as it would result in the drying up of money from the only place it came from plentifully - the Irish Americans - resulting in starving the tenants, and no funding for the National League and the parliamentary party.

2.2 A dictator?

On a number of occasions, both The Belfast News-Letter and The Times, in line with their earlier representations of Parnell, portrayed him as a dictator. One Belfast News-Letter editorial, for instance, referred to his actions in Committee Room 15 as those of a despot. Another editorial referred to him as having lost his colleagues’ favour due to being too dictatorial. He was also implicitly represented as a dictator because he refused to accept anyone else’s advice or opinions. The Belfast News-Letter, for example, stated that he ‘pursued his own way without paying much attention to his followers’ while The Times stated that he never took any notice of his colleagues’ ideas and views. Reynolds’s Newspaper, along with The Belfast News-Letter and The Times, maintained that the majority of Parnell’s colleagues and countrymen were against him retaining the leadership of the IPP. His fight to stay as leader was therefore portrayed in an undemocratic and dictatorial light.

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156 The Times, November 26th 1890, p.9 and The Times, November 27th 1890, p.9.
157 The Times, February 2nd 1891, p9.
In contrast, *Freeman’s Journal*, just as during the Land War period, used terms such as ‘colleagues’ and ‘allies’ to refer to Parnell’s followers. One editorial also directly countered the claim made by those such as McCarthy who split from Parnell that he was a dictator. It referred to the ex-followers of Parnell as ‘Proteus’, an early sea god in Greek mythology who would change his shape in order to avoid telling the future. The editorial thus implied that McCarthy was simply using this accusation to change his shape in order to suit his own ends, and that the claim had no foundation.

2.3 Linked to crime and violence?

Both *The Belfast News-Letter* and *The Times* used the divorce court revelations to continue to represent Parnell to their readers as someone linked to crime and violence. A key way they did this was to express surprise that his followers, colleagues and allies were calling for his retirement for a social crime like adultery when they had accepted him for so many years, despite his being head of a movement intimately linked with crime and violence. *The Belfast News-Letter* illustrated this point via an excellent metaphor, stating that it believed all would stick with Parnell because ‘Irish nationalism has been saturated with crime as a sponge with water when plunged into that element; that another drop is hardly worth making any fuss about.’ Similarly, both newspapers asked in various ways how the Liberals had been able to

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overlook the violation of nearly all other commandments, including murder, but could not overlook a breach of the seventh.\textsuperscript{166}

_The Times_ represented him as linked to crime and violence by documenting his courting of the extreme elements both in Ireland and America.\textsuperscript{167} Editorials referred to his appeal to ‘the hillside men’, which meant men with Fenian sympathies in Ireland.\textsuperscript{168} There was also reference to his visiting ‘all the chief shrines of Irish sedition of the advanced and active type in order to fan the flames of greed, hatred and sedition’.\textsuperscript{169} In December 1890 it stated that his renunciation of the Liberal alliance restored him to his old popularity among the extremists.\textsuperscript{170} Both _The Times_ and _The Belfast News-Letter_ referred to ‘his removal of the mask of moderation and constitutionalism’ during this period, so implying that extremism, violence and crime were Parnell’s true colours.\textsuperscript{171}

_Freeman’s Journal_, in contrast to both _The Times_ and _The Belfast News-Letter_, portrayed him during this period of his life as a moderating influence in Ireland, bringing the people back from violent and illegal methods, to constitutional ones.\textsuperscript{172} An editorial in December 1890, for example, reproduced a quote from the Archbishop of Dublin which stated that ‘he has brought the people of Ireland back to

\textsuperscript{166} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, _The Belfast News-Letter_, November 19\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, _The Belfast News-Letter_, November 24\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, _The Belfast News-Letter_, December 4\textsuperscript{th} 1890; ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, _The Belfast News-Letter_, December 12\textsuperscript{th} 1890; _The Times_, November 27\textsuperscript{th} 1890 and _The Times_, December 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1890.
\textsuperscript{167} _The Times_, November 28\textsuperscript{th} 1890, p.7; _The Times_, December 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1890, p.9; _The Times_, December 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1890, p.9; _The Times_, January 13\textsuperscript{th} 1890, p.9 and _The Times_, February 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1891, p.9.
\textsuperscript{168} _The Times_, December 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1890, p.9 and _The Times_, January 13\textsuperscript{th} 1890, p.9.
\textsuperscript{169} _The Times_, February 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1890, p.9.
\textsuperscript{170} _The Times_, December 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1890, p.9.
\textsuperscript{171} ‘The Belfast News-Letter’, _The Belfast News-Letter_, January 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1891 and _The Times_, December 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1890, p.9 and _The Times_, January 13\textsuperscript{th} 1890, p.9.
\textsuperscript{172} ‘Dublin: Monday, Dec. 1\textsuperscript{st}’, _Freeman’s Journal_, December 1\textsuperscript{st} 1890; ‘Dublin: Thursday, Dec. 18’, _Freeman’s Journal_, December 18\textsuperscript{th} 1890 and ‘Dublin: Saturday, Dec. 20’, _Freeman’s Journal_, December 20\textsuperscript{th} 1890.
their lost trust in peaceful, lawful, constitutional methods of action. Similarly, reference was made to the fact that the civilised world of liberty would approve and applaud his methods, implying they must be the opposite of criminal and violent. Finally, it was stated that were he removed, the danger of violence would rise. Also, just as Freeman’s Journal did in its editorials during the Land War, it used the language of violence when referring not to Parnell but to his enemies, such as referring to the violence of the language and conduct of those in opposition to him in Committee room 15.

Interestingly Reynolds’s Newspaper did not either explicitly or implicitly address the issue of Parnell, crime and violence during this period. Given the newspaper’s change of heart in relation to Parnell’s patriotism and his role as leader of the Irish nation during this period (as shown earlier), it would have been unlikely to defend him against negative representations in The Times and The Belfast News-Letter in connection with crime and violence. It probably decided, therefore, that silence was the best course of action on this issue.

2.4 Leader of the Irish Race?

Neither Reynolds’s Newspaper nor The Belfast News-Letter represented Parnell as leader of the Irish nation or race at this stage in his career. This was consistent with his representation by The Belfast News-Letter during the Land War but it was a complete reversal of Reynolds’s Newspaper’s representation of him during that period. Both newspapers stated that he only led a minority or faction, so

174 ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Nov. 18’, Freeman’s Journal, November 18th 1890.
by implication not the whole nation.\(^{177}\) There was also reference to his ‘affecting’ to be leader of the Irish race, and him ‘pretending’ to be the leader of the Irish people.\(^{178}\).


\(^\text{178}\) ‘Special Notes’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, December 14\(^{th}\) 1890 and ‘The Irish Crisis and the English Democracy’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, February 15\(^{th}\) 1891.

\(^\text{179}\) ‘The Truth of Irish Patriotism’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, December 28\(^{th}\) 1890; ‘Our Duty to the Irish Crisis’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, January 18\(^{th}\) 1891; ‘Special Notes’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, February 1\(^{st}\) 1891 and ‘How Mr. Parnell is Hurting Ireland’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, February 8\(^{th}\) 1891.


\(^\text{181}\) The Times, December 10\(^{th}\) 1890, p.9. The Times, November 27\(^{th}\) 1890, p.9; The Times, December 3\(^{rd}\) 1890, p.9; The Times, December 13\(^{th}\) 1890, p.9 and The Times, February 2\(^{nd}\) 1890, p.9.
Freeman’s Journal, as during the Land War, continued to represent him as the leader of the Irish people, referring to him as ‘the leader or chief of the Irish’ on many occasions. In an editorial in December 1890, Parnell was referred to as ‘the leader and beloved captain of the Irish nation’, while in July 1891 he was called ‘leader par excellence of the Irish nation and the Irish race’. Reference was made to the fact that he had brought many of his countrymen ‘of all states of political feeling to camp, and kept them under his banner homogenously,’ which contrasted to the representations of him in other newspapers as simply the leader of a minority faction. As with its representation of Parnell’s patriotism, though, Freeman’s Journal began to change its tune around the end of July 1891, marked by the publication of the letter in July 1891 from Dwyer Gray. The letter made reference to the fact that the Catholic Church opposed Parnell, as did Dillon and O’Brien and three counties, implying he had the support of very little of Ireland, and therefore could no longer be seen as leader of the Irish people. Similarly, an editorial in September discussed what would be necessary in order for Parnell to once again become the leader of the nation.


186 E. Dwyer Gray, ‘Mr. E. Dwyer Gray and Mr. Parnell’, Freeman’s Journal, July 31st 1891.

188 ‘Dublin: Monday, Sept. 28’, Freeman’s Journal, September 28 1891.
2.5 Moral, dishonest and disloyal?

In only one editorial during this period was there any implication that Parnell was a demagogue, unlike during the earlier period of the Land Act. _The Belfast New-Letter_ referred to ‘the propagandists of Home Rule’ in an editorial in December 1890, so implying that Parnell was a demagogue.\(^{189}\) The absence of representations of Parnell as a demagogue later in his life supports the point made earlier in the dissertation that De Nie inadequately deals with Parnell’s representation in the British Press.

There was, however, a new aspect to Parnell’s character that the newspapers dwelt on, namely whether he was an immoral person. Given that during this period it came to light that Parnell had been having an affair, during which he had fathered three illegitimate children, and divorce proceedings were taking place, this probably acted as the catalyst for the newspapers to conduct an investigation into this aspect of his character. Interestingly, this was not an area that subsequently attracted significant attention from historians, who preferred to focus on dissecting and explaining the political aspects of his character and career. A number of his biographers did, however, dwell on his morality. Here there tended to be split, with those who wrote before the divorce, such as Johnston and O’Connor, painting him as ‘the centre of moral earnestness’, while those, like William O’Brien, who wrote after 1890, did not paint him so unequivocally as morally upstanding.\(^{190}\) _The Times, The Belfast News-Letter_ and Reynolds’s _Newspaper_ all represented Parnell during this period as immoral, in line with De Nie’s argument that the Irish were generally represented as immoral, in line with De Nie’s argument that the Irish were generally represented as

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\(^{190}\) “Portrait of the King”, in Boyce and O’Day (eds.), _Parnell_, p.286-97
immoral by the British press. They made many explicit references to his immortality, baseness and turpitude. Editorial in November 1890, for instance, referred to his ‘moral delinquencies’, ‘career of moral turpitude’ and ‘moral defects’. There were also a number of more implicit references to his immorality. The Times, for example, compared him to Lord Connermara and the King of Milan, both of whom it stated had very poor morality.

All three newspapers represented him as dishonest, again in line with De Nie’s assertion that the Irish were often represented in the British press as such. In November 1890, for example, Reynolds’s Newspaper referred to his ‘continuous lying’ and the fact that he had passed an apprenticeship in ‘the art of lying and other deception’. All three newspapers also implicitly represented him as dishonest by referring to his followers as dupes. There were also a number of explicit references throughout the editorials to his efforts to try and misinform his

192 ‘Mr. Parnell’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, November 23rd 1890; ‘Mr. Parnell and his Parasites’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, November 30th 1890; ‘Special Notes’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, November 30th 1890; ‘Special Notes’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, December 14th 1890.
In December 1890 an editorial in Reynolds’s Newspaper portrayed his forced take-over of Untied Ireland, the party newspaper, as being an attempt to ‘keep the peasantry in ignorance of the scorn and indignation his perfidy has aroused’ while in February 1891 an editorial referred to Parnell’s attempt ‘to gull the Irish electors into thinking Ireland can only be saved by him.’ The newspapers also used incidents from this time in his career to show his dishonesty. Firstly, for example, his assurances to his party that he would come out of the divorce proceedings with no stain on his name, were used to illustrate his dishonesty, as he was proved guilty. Secondly, his manifesto, which he issued on the 21st November 1890, revealing private discussions between himself and Gladstone, was argued to be a ‘tissue of falsehood.’

Not only was Parnell represented as dishonest, but also as disloyal. Words such as ‘perfidy’ and ‘treachery’ were used in association with him. References were made to his lack of concern for his former colleagues, followers and allies.


200 ‘Parnell, Balfour and Co’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, December 21st 1890 and ‘How Mr. Parnell is Hurting Ireland’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, February 8th 1891.


203 ‘perfidy’.


during this period of his life.\textsuperscript{204} The manifesto was represented not as a necessary airing of important information for the good of all, but as a breach of confidence.\textsuperscript{205} Similarly, it was stated that his involvement in an affair which he knew could severely damage Ireland’s cause made him ‘guilty of extraordinary unfaithfulness to his followers’ who placed their trust and future well-being in him.\textsuperscript{206} It was argued that he could have made things a lot easier for his followers after the divorce court ruling but he simply displayed ‘characteristic indifference to the trouble of his allies and servants.’\textsuperscript{207} The newspapers made reference to how he ‘laughed scornfully in the very face’ of his former allies and now wished to ‘annihilate both his former colleagues and their political allies’.\textsuperscript{208}

Interestingly, \textit{The Times} only represented him as disloyal until the end of November 1890. While there was no explicit repudiation thereafter, there were implicit hints at it. In December 1890, for example, it was Parnell’s former colleagues who were shown to be disloyal; it stated that not long ago they were slavering him with ‘nauseous eulogy’ whereas now they were ‘loudest in their invectives against him.’\textsuperscript{209} Similarly, Gladstone was represented as disloyal by reference to the fact he threw his friend over but not his policy.\textsuperscript{210}
Both *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter* made it clear that they viewed Parnell’s immorality as a long-standing characteristic, not simply because of his adultery. *The Belfast News-Letter*, for example, stated that the findings of the divorce court should not surprise anyone while an editorial in January 1891 stated that when the Liberals entered into an alliance with the Parnellites they accepted a divorce of morality from politics.\(^{211}\) The alliance was entered into in 1885. Similarly, *The Times* stated that adultery was the *latest* discovered sin in Parnell’s character.\(^{212}\) When *The Belfast News-Letter* stated that his manifesto was a falsehood, it also stated that ‘it is greatly regretted that [everyone] did not discover Mr. Parnell’s capacity in this direction some years ago.’\(^{213}\) It maintained that ‘his career has been one of unscrupulous falsehood from the first’. *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter* stated that the happenings of this period had forced Parnell to throw off his mask, and finally stand before everyone in his true colours.\(^ {214}\) *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, on the other hand, did not view his immorality as a long-term characteristic; it only represented him in this light after the revelations of the divorce court.

*Freemans Journal*, just like most historians subsequently, did not dwell on Parnell’s morality to any great extent. There was little explicit reference to it, just some implicit references. This is not surprising as, on a number of occasions, the newspaper made clear that it believed in the separation of morality from politics, resulting in their business with Parnell simply being political.\(^ {215}\) An editorial in

\(^{212}\) *The Times* November 28\(^{th}\) 1890, p.7.
\(^{215}\) ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Nov. 18’, *Freeman’s Journal*, November 18\(^{th}\) 1890; ‘Dublin: Friday, Nov. 21’, *Freeman’s Journal*, November 21\(^{st}\) 1890; ‘Dublin: Tuesday, Nov. 26’, *Freeman’s Journal*, 26\(^{th}\) 1890; ‘Dublin: Wednesday, July 1’, July 1\(^{st}\) 1891.
November 1890 stated that he had never misled the Irish people, while in December the newspaper stated that it believed Parnell’s assertion that he was repudiating the Gladstonian alliance due to the IPP’s independence having been sapped. Similarly, the Journal represented Parnell’s publication of the manifesto, not as a breach of faith, but as a service to the Irish nation.

As can be seen, this period of Parnell’s career brought about changes, either big or small, in the way all but The Belfast News-Letter represented him. Unsurprisingly, because of its Unionist support base, The Belfast News-Letter continued to represent Parnell in a negative light throughout this period which furthered its anti-Home Rule agenda. The Times, on the other hand, continued to represent Parnell in a negative light most of the time, but occasionally represented him more positively. There would seem to be two possible explanations for this. Firstly, it is possible that The Times was trying to regain the credibility it lost via the Piggott Forgeries by attempting to represent Parnell in a more neutral light. Secondly, Reynolds’s Newspaper put forward an interesting explanation which would also fit with The Times continuing to further its anti-Home Rule agenda, and its defence of the Empire and established order. This was that conservative newspapers were acutely aware that Parnell’s struggle for retention of the leadership would significantly damage, if not destroy the Home Rule cause. With this in mind, they began to represent him in a better light, lulling him into believing he had more support than he actually did so that he would continue the leadership struggle.

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218 ‘The Truth of Irish Patriotism’, Reynolds’s Newspaper, December 28th 1890.
While *Freeman’s Journal* generally stayed true to its positive representations of Parnell, in line with its support for Home Rule, this began to change after Parnell’s marriage to Katherine O’Shea at the end of July 1891. As has been shown, this change was marked by a letter from Edmund Dwyer Gray, son of the previous two proprietors of *Freeman’s Journal* and owner of nearly half its shares. It is unsurprising therefore that *Freeman’s Journal* fell into line with Gray’s views on Parnell, while the gradualness of its falling into line could be explained by the fact that it was a Limited Liability Company, so while Gray may have been the biggest shareholder, there were others involved in dictating the line the *Journal* took. Its change of attitude towards Parnell went against its avowed policy of separating politics from morality and therefore private lives from political lives. It also went against its policy of not raising questions about Parnell’s Protestantism as although the Catholic Church does not recognise the marriage of divorced people, the Church of England does.\(^{219}\)

Finally, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, as has been shown, completely reversed its positive representations of Parnell during the Land War, seeing him during this later period of his life in a wholly negative light. It seems highly plausible that this was due to the upsurge of women’s participation in Liberal politics after the Bulgarian agitation in 1876. Women were seen as morally superior, and they felt that they had a special responsibility to purify the party and uphold moral standards.\(^{220}\) Clearly Parnell’s involvement in a long-standing affair would not have been viewed as acceptable to such women, which would have been reflected in the liberal-based

\(^{219}\) *The Times*, August 1\(^{st}\) 1891, p.9.

Reynolds’s Newspaper. It should be noted, though, that such negative representations of Parnell do not necessarily call into question Biagini’s thesis of working-class support for Home Rule. The newspaper and its readers could genuinely have believed that Parnell was harming the Home Rule cause and so turned against him for this reason, not just because he was morally repugnant to its increasingly moral readership.
Conclusion

What is most clearly illustrated by this research is that the most important division was between the liberal and conservative press rather than between the English and Irish press. The Irish *Belfast News-Letter* was as anti-Parnell as the *The Times*; *Reynolds’s Newspaper* was as sympathetic to Parnell as the *Freeman’s Journal* during the Land War period. However, the English newspapers did show more inclination to change their views on Parnell as circumstances changed, either for the better or worse. For instance, *The Times* praised Parnell for “laudable moderation” when he indicated a willingness to consider the Land Act. *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, on the other hand, moved strongly against Parnell for moral reasons during the divorce crisis.

At times, representations of Parnell fit in with Curtis’ and De Nie’s findings on how the Irish were represented in the British press during the nineteenth century. The representation of Parnell as immoral and dishonest by both *The Times* and *Reynolds’s Newspaper* is an example. However, Parnell was not represented by these English newspapers in many other ways in which De Nie and Curtis found the Irish were portrayed in the British press, such as dehumanized, degraded, less civilized, savage, superstitious, mystical, intellectually stagnant and lunatic.  

This is likely to be because he was not typically Irish; the ‘eternal paddy’ - central to Irish representation in the British press - was Celtic, catholic and a peasant, none of which applied to Parnell. This could explain why De Nie spent so little time addressing Parnell, as De Nie’s book was aimed at looking at how the Irish, as a general category, were represented. As Parnell was an obvious anomaly, he was relegated to a
few pages with the sweeping generalisation that he was represented as a demagogue, which this dissertation has shown to be a huge oversimplification.

It is clear from the analysis of the four newspapers’ representations of Parnell at two important periods in his life that their coverage was heavily influenced by the prejudices and views of each newspaper’s backers and readers and their wider political agenda. This is in line with Cruise O’Brien’s argument that the British Tory and Irish Nationalist press created Parnell in their own image: as hero and demon, which he enabled them to do by playing to both. Both conservative-leaning newspapers utilized their representations of Parnell in order to further their anti-Home Rule agenda. By representing him in a negative light during the Land War, both *The Times* and *The Belfast News-Letter* were attempting to discredit the person to whom the leadership of such government would be granted. This approach was similarly utilized by *The Belfast News-Letter* during the divorce crisis, and by *The Times* during this period though to a slightly lesser extent. Conversely, the liberal-leaning *Reynolds’s Newspaper* and the nationalist *Freeman’s Journal* represented Parnell in a positive light during the Land War in line with their desire to see Home Rule granted. *Freeman’s Journal* continued with this stance until about three months before Parnell’s death, when it followed the views of its majority shareholder and did a 180° turn. When *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, by contrast, joined the conservative-leaning newspapers in representing Parnell in a negative light during the divorce crisis and leadership battles, this was reflecting the views of its readers who supported the increasing feminisation and moralisation of politics. It could be argued that such negative representations were still in line with its previous support for Home Rule as

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223 Boyce, “‘Portrait of the King’” in Boyce and O’Day (eds.), Parnell, p.301-2.
the moralization of Liberal politics had made it impossible for the alliance to continue if Parnell remained leader, thus ending all prospects for Home Rule. *Reynolds's Newspaper* abandoned Parnell, it could be argued, in favour of the more important goal of Home Rule.

At times, particularly during the Land War, the newspapers utilised their representations of Parnell and therefore the Irish question to further a broader political agenda. *Reynolds’s Newspaper’s* representation of Parnell during the Land War, for example, often served to further its anti-establishment and extensive reform agenda. Conversely, *The Times*’ fight against Home Rule, as seen in its representations of Parnell, was part of its wider defence of the established order and the Empire.

The few occasions when *Freeman's Journal* was critical of Parnell appear to have been inspired by the narrow considerations of the proprietor, Dwyer Gray, who had a famous dispute with Parnell in 1879 and thereafter inclined towards Butt, a more moderate politician than Parnell. During Parnell’s American tour, *Freeman’s Journal* became critical of Parnell after he criticized the Mansion House Committee, of which Dwyer Gray was chairman. It was the publication of Dwyer Gray’s anti-Parnell letter in *Freeman’s Journal* in July 1891 that marked the end of the newspaper’s avowed policy of keeping morality and politics separate.

The fact that newspaper representations of Parnell were generally based on the prejudices and views of the newspapers’ backers and readers is theoretically a fundamental difference between newspaper coverage of Parnell and the methodology of objective historians. Nevertheless, the end result seems to be similar - one of
sharply diverging views on Parnell. The newspaper representations do, therefore, offer an insight into why there is so little consensus among historians on who the “real Parnell” was. If it was possible for the newspapers of the time to portray him in such divergent ways, it is perhaps unsurprising that historians have also come to such differing conclusions.
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