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## Race, difference, and Irish identity in Cartoon Saloon's 2009 film, *The Secret of Kells*

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### ABSTRACT

Cartoon Saloon's 2009 film, *The Secret of Kells*, about the making of the ninth-century illuminated manuscript, the *Book of Kells*, directed by Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey, was widely promoted on its release as the first feature-length animation with an Irish setting and Irish themes. Created in the last decade of the Celtic Tiger and set in Ireland's early medieval past, the film engages with contemporary and medieval discourses about race and otherness. This discussion examines the film's interpretation of these discourses for the implied child viewer in twenty-first century Ireland. It begins by contextualising *The Secret of Kells* as a piece of medievalist children's fantasy, addressing the historiography of race and difference in the medieval period, before exploring Moore and Twomey's engagement with these ideas in the context of twenty-first century Ireland. It analyses *The Secret of Kells*' ambivalent representation of racial and cultural otherness in the early Middle Ages, expressed through the child protagonist's encounters with a variety of racial, national, and supernatural "others," and argues that this representation reflects contemporary conversations about immigration and multiculturalism in Ireland in the 2000s.

### KEYWORDS

Animation; Irish cinema; children's film; race; immigration; medievalism

## Introduction

In the audio commentary track for the DVD release of their debut feature animated film, *The Secret of Kells* (2009), about the making of the ninth-century illuminated gospel manuscript, the *Book of Kells*, director Tomm Moore and art director Ross Stewart defend their decision to populate their fictionalised version of an eighth-century Irish monastery with a racially diverse group of monks from around the world:

Moore: People often think that we're being PC with all those monks from all over the world, but we weren't trying to be PC. Our research showed that there was [sic] influences in the *Book of Kells* from all over the world, so we thought it was a neat way to wrap those influences up in the monks.

Stewart: Yeah, the lapis lazuli that they used came from Pakistan and stuff, didn't it?

Moore: Afghanistan, as far as I know. Yeah, they had influences in the designs anyway from Morocco and stuff, so that's where Brother Assoua came from. Italy, for Leonardo —

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Stewart: And here's some hurling, for people who don't know what hurling is.<sup>1</sup>

The subject is then dropped as the discussion turns to the sport of hurling which is briefly featured in the film. Taken together, these comments are indicative of the film's well-meaning but somewhat shallow approach to representing issues of race and Irish identity, as the potential discussion about race in Ireland is cut short and the Irish credentials of the film are reaffirmed by referencing a traditional Gaelic sport. The monks – Brother Assoua from Morocco, Brother Tang from China, Brother Sergei from Russia, Brother Leonardo from Italy, Brother Friedrich from Germany, and Brother (Frère) Jacques from France – are figured as an important aspect of the *Book of Kells'* provenance but are also dismissed as a “neat” add-on to the film that some viewers may find too “PC.” Indeed, film scholar Thomas Walsh sees the monks as evidence of the film's “distortion of Ireland's Christian past [...] in the spirit of neo-liberal consumerism.”<sup>2</sup> While it is inaccurate to describe the presence of non-Irish and non-white monks at Kells as a “distortion” of history, it is true that their treatment by the filmmakers and reception by certain critics has more to do with social and cultural attitudes towards race, immigration, and Irish identity in the 2000s than with the 800s. *The Secret of Kells'* production coincides with the last decade of the Celtic Tiger boom, but it was released in the early years of the recession in Ireland that followed the 2008 financial crisis. This context is crucial to understanding the representation of race, ethnicity, and otherness in the film, which responds to the boom in immigration into Ireland in the early 2000s as well as the cultural response to this boom and the reactionary and restrictive reforms to the country's immigration policy that followed.<sup>3</sup>

*The Secret of Kells*, directed by Moore and Nora Twomey, has been promoted since its release as “the first Irish animated feature film based on Irish history and legends.”<sup>4</sup> It is the first of three animated children's fantasy films from the Cartoon Saloon studio, along with *Song of the Sea* (2014, directed by Moore) and *Wolfwalkers* (2020, directed by Moore and Stewart), that would later be repackaged as Cartoon Saloon's “Irish Folklore Trilogy.” The promotion of the film as authentically Irish in production and subject matter differentiates it from previous feature animations created in Ireland, most notably the output of the Sullivan Bluth studio, which was established in the 1980s in Dublin by ex-Disney animator Don Bluth and which will be discussed further below. The promotion of the film has also tended to highlight its status as a “transnational” co-production; Moore notes that although principal animation took place in Ireland, the finished product is the “work of over 200 artists in 5 countries” (Ireland, France, Belgium, Hungary, and Brazil).<sup>5</sup> Ruth Barton observes that international co-productions have become “the backbone of the Irish film industry” in the twenty-first century, problematising the question of “what constitutes a national cinema.”<sup>6</sup>

“Transnationalism,” according to Barton, has emerged as a critical term that recognises “the need to reposition the national under conditions of globalisation.”<sup>7</sup> As a transnational collaboration that focuses on themes of Irish identity and national myth making, *The Secret of Kells* can be seen as a conscious attempt both to develop a uniquely Irish animation aesthetic and to claim a place for Ireland in the global animation industry. As a children's film that features a child focaliser and places children at the centre of an important moment in Irish history, it also implicitly serves to educate its target audience on what it means to be Irish. Set in early medieval Ireland, the film is essentially an origin narrative for the *Book of Kells*: a manuscript described by Bernard Meehan (Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College Dublin where

the Book is on permanent exhibition) as “Ireland’s greatest cultural treasure.”<sup>8</sup> The film imagines the Book’s impressive Chi Rho folio – a full-page illumination of the overlapping Greek letters *chi* (X) and *rho* (P) denoting the monogram of Christ – to be the work of Brendan, the orphaned twelve-year-old nephew of Cellach, the abbot of Kells. While Cellach is preoccupied with building a wall to fortify the monastery against an imminent Viking invasion, Brendan is fascinated by the newly arrived Brother Aidan of Iona and his unfinished illuminated manuscript. Over the course of the film, Brendan comes of age as a skilled illuminator under the guidance of Aidan and the aforementioned group of ethnically diverse monks who work in the Scriptorium. He also befriends Aisling, a forest spirit, who opens his eyes to the magic of the natural world. All these influences – natural and supernatural, Christian and pagan, global and local – are incorporated into Brendan’s Chi Rho page, revealed at the end of the film in a visually stunning animated sequence. The impulse to identify a single author of a manuscript of this period is an anachronism typical of popular medievalism<sup>9</sup>; however, as a piece of historical fantasy, this film is less about the past than it is about the cultural, political, and social contexts in which the film was produced. As Jerome De Groot argues, historical fiction is rarely about rigidly adhering to an “authentic” historical reality, since writing history is itself subjective:

The historical novel fundamentally challenges subjectivities, offering multiple identities and historical story lines. Far from being a rigid, ordering structure History seems to provide a set of potentialities and possibilities. [...] History is challenged, both by the telling of dissident stories and by the positing of alternative realities.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, in his study on race and medievalism Jonathan Hsy argues, “medievalism is always polemical. When anyone invokes the Middle Ages, they are making an argument about the past or its meanings for the present.”<sup>11</sup> Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Wiesel likewise argue that the fantasy genre further collapses distinctions between past and present, noting that even in realist children’s fiction, the Middle Ages themselves often function as a fantasy locale:

Much “medieval” literature for young readers follows the assumptions of medieval romance, in which liminal spaces open up the possibility of magic, of rules and expectations turned upside down. [...] [T]hese liminal fantasies do not provide young readers with an authentic view into an historical past, unmediated by contemporary sensibilities, but a medievalized mode of reading, in which the space between past and present collapses and the two are bound together.<sup>12</sup>

With this in mind, this article begins by contextualising *The Secret of Kells* as a piece of medievalist children’s fantasy, addressing the contemporary historiography of race and difference in the medieval period, before exploring Moore and Twomey’s engagement with these ideas in the context of twenty-first-century Ireland.

### Race, medievalism, and children’s fiction

Most studies of medievalism take their cue from the definition proposed by the journal, *Studies in Medievalism*, defining “medievalism” as “the study of responses to the Middle Ages at all periods since a sense of the medieval began to develop.”<sup>13</sup> Pugh and Wiesel expand this definition further, defining medievalist

works as those that “turn to the Middle Ages for their subject matter or inspiration, and in doing so, explicitly or implicitly, by comparison or by contrast, comment on the artist’s contemporary sociocultural milieu.”<sup>14</sup> In examining medievalist texts, then, the point is not to assess the accuracy of a text’s representation of the medieval period – which would certainly miss the point of a highly stylised animated fantasy film like *The Secret of Kells* – but rather to analyse what the setting reveals about contemporary values, ideologies, and preoccupations. Since the late nineteenth century, medievalism has frequently been employed in service of national origin myths and “nation-building initiatives,” especially in Europe.<sup>15</sup> This period of course coincides with the so-called Golden Age of British children’s literature, in which medievalist narratives such as retellings of Arthurian legends, Robin Hood stories, and Shakespeare’s history cycles, were ubiquitous and explicitly linked to British nationalism, as well as with the Gaelic Revival movement in Ireland, which was concerned with reclaiming “a glorious (imagined) pre-colonial past.”<sup>16</sup>

Pugh and Wiesl note that medievalist children’s literature “frequently construct[s] the Middle Ages as a lost time of innocence, which corresponds with a widespread cultural desire to view children themselves as avatars of innocence.”<sup>17</sup> Pugh and Wiesl go on to describe three ways these parallels typically present themselves, all of which can be seen in *The Secret of Kells*: “a simpler time of clearer values”<sup>18</sup> (seen in the film’s depiction of the monastic community at Kells and the need to protect and preserve culture and knowledge, symbolised by the Book); “a violent, dangerous era of tribal conflict and familial strife”<sup>19</sup> (seen in the ever-present threat of Viking invasions); and “a place of potential, where the lack of central authority and traditional restraints on adolescent life, such as parents and schools, permits various types of exploration”<sup>20</sup> (seen in the orphaned Brendan’s exploration of the forest with Aisling). Bettina Bildhauer likewise observes in medievalist cinema a “perceived close relationship between the Middle Ages and the equally present-minded childhood, often expressed in the idea of the Middle Ages as Europe’s childhood.”<sup>21</sup> In this context, by engaging with an image of early medieval, pre-colonial Ireland as an idealised “land of saints and scholars,” *The Secret of Kells* can be said to depict Ireland’s childhood, with Brendan standing in for the nation as a whole. In this reading, the Viking invasion at the film’s climax signals Brendan’s (and Ireland’s) loss of innocence and coming of age.

*The Secret of Kells* was released in the midst of an academic reckoning within the disciplines of Medieval Studies about the extent to which race ought to be considered in academic discussions of medieval history, literature, and culture. From its inception in the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, Medieval Studies has earned a reputation as a conservative, traditionalist, and homogenous community of scholars that until recently managed to avoid engaging with progressive, identity-based theoretical models like gender and queer theory and critical race theory.<sup>22</sup> The result, according to Matthew Vernon, has been a continued “disciplinary practice of framing ‘questions of medievalism and the Middle Ages’ as if they were ‘the province of whiteness,’”<sup>23</sup> which at best silences non-white voices and at worst enables the use of medievalism to defend white supremacy and justify acts of racial violence.<sup>24</sup> In the introduction to her influential 2011 book, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, Geraldine Heng reflects on

the state of affairs for medieval race studies in the late 2000s, contemporaneous with *The Secret of Kells*' production and release:

In 2008, medievalists in general were not convinced the concept of race had any purchase for the medieval period. Race theorists also deemed the project [a proposed edited collection on medieval race] presentist, convinced that race was a *modern* phenomenon and that they could safely ignore the Middle Ages, which they saw as a prepolitical era with scant relevance for the cultures of modernity that followed, and thus a period of little interest to them.<sup>25</sup>

Lynn Ramey likewise describes grappling with “the ever-present, though contested, desire to place a dividing line between the modern and the ancient, seeing the modern period as plagued by racial troubles and the earlier periods as free from that particular concern.”<sup>26</sup> There is a lack of scholarly consensus on the question of how Europeans in the Middle Ages actually understood race, with many historians noting that religion and cultural practices may have been a stronger factor than skin pigmentation in demarcating differences between people in medieval Europe.<sup>27</sup> Ramey, for example, finds that although “the first hints of ways that the Christian Bible would later be used to justify slavery and racism” can be found in medieval texts, “the idea that all Christians are part of a universal (and equal) brotherhood of believers held sway on many medieval communities.”<sup>28</sup> Other scholars have noted the increasing racialisation of the native Welsh and Irish by English colonisers during the late medieval and early modern period respectively; Coral Lumbley argues that the former is evidence of “the long history of the desire of colonizers to locate physiognomic markers of essential difference in peoples who are socioculturally different from them.”<sup>29</sup> Regardless of the extent of skin colour being used as a marker of difference, Heng makes the case for using modern critical race studies as a means of understanding other forms of difference and alterity in the Middle Ages:

“race” is one of the primary names we have – a name we retain precisely for the strategic, epistemological, and political commitments it recognizes – attached to a repeating tendency, of the gravest import, to demarcate human beings through differences among humans that are selectively essentialized as absolute and fundamental, in order to distribute positions and powers differentially to human groups. [. . .] My understanding, thus, is that *race is a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences, rather than a substantive content*.<sup>30</sup>

While it would certainly be inaccurate to suggest that non-white people did not participate in medieval society, it is equally misleading to suggest that the period was free from systemic racial prejudice. Ramey cautions against “[i]magining the Middle Ages as a period completely free of racial consciousness,” which “erases the history of prejudice that was present from what many consider to be the foundation of European civilization.”<sup>31</sup> In medievalist fiction, this erasure fuels what Ebony Elizabeth Thomas describes as an “imagination gap” in which creators are seemingly unable to conceive of people of colour as either protagonists or implied audience members, resulting in the exclusion or marginalisation of non-white characters within the stories.<sup>32</sup> For the purposes of this analysis, then, it is less relevant how racial discourses actually operated in medieval Ireland than how these discourses are understood and presented to the implied child viewer in twenty-first-century Ireland. “Race” in *The Secret of Kells* is usefully understood in terms of Heng’s definition, as “a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences,” filtered for the implied child viewer through a series of encounters between the child protagonist and various people and entities who are

presented as “Other” to him. This includes characters who are explicitly understood to be of a different race or ethnicity to Brendan, as well as those who are othered based on national, religious, and/or cultural differences. As the first Irish feature-length animation for children, *The Secret of Kells* establishes conventions – that would be expanded in Moore’s subsequent films – for showing contemporary Irish children (and their international counterparts) what it means to be “Irish” and how Ireland relates to the rest of the world.

### Cartoon Saloon and “indigenous” Irish animation

As noted above, the establishment and production of Cartoon Saloon was shaped by and in response to the legacy of the Sullivan Bluth studio from the generation before. Taking advantage of the tax incentives offered by the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), Sullivan Bluth trained and employed Irish artists – including the founding members of Cartoon Saloon – to create animated films for the international market.<sup>33</sup> Nineteen years after the studio shut its doors, Sullivan Bluth is still looked on somewhat disparagingly within the Irish animation community. The studio’s presence has been credited with disrupting the organic development of an “indigenous” Irish animation aesthetic, as Irish artists were required to divert their talent to the production of Hollywood films.<sup>34</sup> Colonisation metaphors are regularly employed by artists and scholars reflecting on the legacy of Sullivan Bluth; Walsh, for example, emphasises the “erasure of indigenous practices in the face of an imported American commercialism” and its parallels with “a broader colonial discourse where cultural identity can be compromised by the dismissal of indigenous history.”<sup>35</sup>

Walsh is one of many scholars who use the word “indigenous” to describe what they perceive as an authentically Irish national cinema (here used to describe pre-Bluth Irish animation).<sup>36</sup> Walsh elaborates on his use of the term, defining “indigenous” animation practices as those “that are connected to the performative experiences of Irish life underlying pedagogical aspects of national identity.”<sup>37</sup> However, it is somewhat curious that “indigenous” has become the accepted term for such practices, given its frequent (and less nuanced) use by white nationalist and neo-fascist groups in Europe and America engaging in racist “white ‘heritage politics’”<sup>38</sup> through “the appropriation of Indigenous victimhood and rights language.”<sup>39</sup> Sierra Lomuto has demonstrated how an imagined “indigenous” Irish/Celtic identity in particular has been deployed in service of white nationalism outside Ireland. Recalling a conference presentation by a tattoo artist who “translates Celtic iconography from medieval manuscripts, such as *the Book of Kells*, into body art,” Lomuto writes:

the artist explained that her clients are white people looking for a heritage to celebrate during a time when “being white is bad.” Her answer echoed the white supremacist rhetoric we find in places like Stormfront, a white nationalist online community whose tagline reads, “We are the voice of the new, embattled White minority” and whose emblem is the “sun-cross” version of the Celtic cross.<sup>40</sup>

The use of Celtic design elements for this purpose is particularly ironic given the myriad of multicultural influences on Celtic artwork, including in the *Book of Kells*, which will be further discussed below. Because of this pattern of appropriation of Celtic indigeneity, the use of the term “indigenous” to describe Irish filmmaking highlights Ireland’s ambivalent

position as a country with a history that includes colonisation, systemic racism, and mass emigration, but whose citizens have also benefitted, and continue to benefit, from white privilege at home and abroad.<sup>41</sup> In this context, the directors' choice of a precolonial setting, in which fantasy and history are interwoven, for their first feature film, takes on additional significance. Ciara Ní Bhroin observes a tendency in Irish children's fantasy novels written during the Celtic Tiger period to invoke Irish myths and legends in the service of Irish nationalism in a manner similar to those of the Gaelic Revival.<sup>42</sup> Such texts tend to look to pre-colonial myth and legend in particular to inspire "a regenerative collective vision" in "a nation that, in recent decades and at great cost, has privileged the individual over the community and the economy over society."<sup>43</sup> There is similarly an implied reclamation of a pure, untainted Irish collective identity in the decision to set Ireland's first "indigenous" animated feature in the precolonial period. The film heralds the arrival of a studio credited with "revolutionizing" home-grown Irish animation as well as "revitalizing" interest in Irish folklore.<sup>44</sup> To this end, the choice of setting suggests a rejection of the neoliberal capitalist values of the Celtic Tiger in favour of a perceived lost community of shared culture that prioritised art for art's sake.

In the film itself and in Cartoon Saloon's establishment, there is a sense of returning to an imagined "golden age" of "pure" Irish identity that pre-exists both British colonisation and American capitalism. This idea is present in some form in the content of all three films in the studio's Irish Folklore trilogy. Each of the three films concerns an ordinary child focaliser encountering a supernatural female child, with the latter associated with Irish mythology and representing a link to Ireland's pagan past. Furthermore, in each instance, the suppression of the supernatural other is figured as an allegory for the historical suppression of native Irish culture in various guises. For example, in *Song of the Sea* which is set in Donegal and Dublin in the 1980s, the protagonist Ben discovers that his younger sister Saoirse is the last of the selkies, creatures who take the form of women on land and seals in the water. Saoirse's song is the only way to release the *daoine sídhe*, the ancient gods of Ireland who are gradually being turned to stone. The plight of the *sídhe* is used here as a metaphor for the threatened erasure of traditional stories and culture in the face of the imminent globalisation and industrialisation of the Celtic Tiger period.<sup>45</sup> A key figure in the film is the "Great Seanchaí," based on famed storyteller Eddie Lenihan, whose long hair is a repository of the stories of the *sídhe*. He tells Ben that each strand holds a story, but that "very few hairs still grow because very few of us are left."<sup>46</sup> The importance of keeping traditional stories alive is reinforced at the end of the film when Ben is briefly reunited with his selkie mother and she implores him to "remember me in your stories and in your songs."<sup>47</sup> Culture is preserved, the film suggests, by passing stories and songs from one generation to the next and continually adapting them for contemporary audiences (not coincidentally, this is exactly what Moore attempts to do with his film). While the film is accessible to international as well as domestic audiences, the emphasis here is on Irish children understanding and appreciating their own cultural heritage.

The exploration of the threatened erasure of traditional Irish culture is perhaps most pronounced in *Wolfwalkers*, which explicitly addresses the colonialist conception of the native Irish as racialised other. The film, set in seventeenth-century Kilkenny, merges the historical incident of Oliver Cromwell's removal of wolves from the region with the local legend of the wolves of Ossory, pagans who chose to transform into wolves rather than be

converted to Christianity by Saint Patrick.<sup>48</sup> The Wolfwalkers in the film stand in for native Irish people who refuse to assimilate under British rule, highlighting the ongoing racial discrimination against the native Irish in colonial Ireland. The focaliser of *Wolfwalkers* is Robyn Goodfellowe, the daughter of an English hunter who has been tasked with eliminating the wolves from the adjacent forest so that it can be repurposed as farmland. In the forest, Robyn meets Mebh Óg Mac Tíre, a Wolfwalker who lives in the woods as a feral child when she is awake and a wolf while she is asleep (“óg” meaning “young” and “mac tíre” meaning “wolf” in Irish). Mebh bites Robyn, turning her into a Wolfwalker and an ally. Eventually Robyn’s father Bill is also bitten and turned, and the Wolfwalkers unite to defeat Cromwell. The choice of Kilkenny as the setting for *Wolfwalkers* is significant not only because it is the home of Cartoon Saloon’s studio, but also for its historical significance as the locale of the 1366–7 Statutes of Kilkenny, a series of Acts which codified the structural racism against native Irish people under British rule. The Statutes included sumptuary laws, discriminatory land and property laws, the banning of the Irish language and Irish pastimes (most notably hurling), and restrictions on marital and sexual relationships between the English and Irish that reveal thinly-veiled anxieties about miscegenation and “going native.” The introduction to the Statutes explicitly rationalises them in these terms:

many English of the said land, forsaking the English language, manners, mode of riding, laws and usages, live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion, and language of the Irish enemies; and also have made divers marriages and alliances between themselves and the Irish enemies aforesaid; whereby [...] the Irish enemies [are] exalted and raised up, contrary to reason.<sup>49</sup>

This is essentially what happens, first to Robyn and eventually also to her father, as they come to identify with the wolves they have been hunting. When Robyn verbally defends the Wolfwalkers at the film’s climax, she tells her father, “I’m one of them” before rallying the wolves by shouting, “We are wolves. [...] They’re in our forest,” identifying with the Irish wolves rather than the English soldiers.<sup>50</sup> By the end of the film, we see that both Robyn and her father have “gone native,” assimilating into Mebh’s pack and forming a blended family with Mebh and her mother Moll. Moore describes the film’s plot in terms of racial othering and cultural genocide:

there was a certain identification with the wildness and with the wolves that went far back in Irish history, and from then on when they were eliminated we kind of changed ourselves as a culture. [...] There was a long history of Irish people being called “wild” and “animal-like” and stuff during the colonisation.<sup>51</sup>

Once Robyn and Bill are in a position to empathise with those they have been oppressing, literally seeing through the eyes of the Wolfwalkers, they can no longer justify hunting them. However, the film’s ending is somewhat ambivalent; the final frames depict the new family leaving Kilkenny with the wolf pack to start a new life elsewhere. The image of the united family escaping the oppressive urban setting for the freedom of the wild, untamed Irish landscape is a positive one, set against bright skies and upbeat music. However, for the knowing viewer, it is clear that this is only a temporary respite, as wolves in Ireland would be extinct less than a century later. Furthermore, Mebh and Moll are visually coded as Irish Travellers, through their dress and the caravan in which the family leave Kilkenny in the final frames of the film, a reference more likely to be understood by Irish audiences

than by their international counterparts. Barton notes that Travellers have historically been depicted in Irish cinema as either “disruptive presences” or “romantic, pre-modern nomads.”<sup>52</sup> *Wolfwalkers* falls firmly into the latter category, as the ending depicts the family’s nomadic lifestyle as an alternative to the oppressive and ecologically destructive industrialisation represented by Cromwell and the city authorities. However, for viewers familiar with the historical and contemporary positioning of Travellers in Irish society and culture, the ending may appear more ambiguous, as it is a reminder of the continued marginalisation and oppression of ethnic minority groups in contemporary Ireland.

### **The Secret of Kells: encountering the other**

Although *Wolfwalkers* is arguably the film in the trilogy most overtly concerned with questions of race and ethnicity in Ireland, my focus here is on *The Secret of Kells* precisely because of its conscious self-positioning as the first Irish animated film and its context at a particular moment in history when Ireland’s self-identity was being reconfigured in relation to norms and ideas of belonging and difference. The early 2000s was a period marked by increasing hostility towards the so-called “new Irish,” a term that ostensibly described the large number of immigrants who had settled in Ireland in the preceding decade, but which in practice was applied almost exclusively to non-white residents, regardless of their country of birth.<sup>53</sup> The 2005 Citizenship Act, approved the previous year in a referendum by 79% of the electorate, revoked the right to automatic citizenship of children born in the State to non-Irish parents, and in so doing “drew a line between children who could claim full Irishness and those who had to prove their legitimacy before being allowed access.”<sup>54</sup> This was followed in 2011 by a short-lived Department of Foreign Affairs scheme whereby members of the Irish diaspora outside Ireland could purchase a “certificate of Irish heritage.”<sup>55</sup> There was clearly a perceived need in the early 2000s, both inside and outside Ireland, to define and enforce the boundaries of who was allowed to call themselves “Irish” and who was not.

*The Secret of Kells* is explicitly concerned with situating Irish childhoods in relation to various forms of racial, ethnic, and cultural difference. Throughout the film, Brendan develops his identity and his voice as an artist by defining himself in relation to a series of iterations of the “Other” in various guises. The first notable example of this is when he enters Aisling’s forest, his first time outside the walls of the monastery. Aidan tells him, “you will learn more from the woods, from trees and rocks, than from any other place,”<sup>56</sup> and his entry into the forest represents an opening up of his world, in contrast to the confined spaces of the monastery. New shapes appear all around him, including the lozenges, spirals, knots, and trefoils that will reappear later in his completed Chi Rho page.<sup>57</sup> Aisling fulfils the role described in the previous section of the female mythical figure as supernatural counterpart to the focalising child character, who learns from and is changed by this otherworldly encounter. Her name is a reference to the eighteenth-century “Aisling” poem genre in which “a woman representing Ireland appears to the dreaming narrator and offers some insight or prophecy, usually about the fate of Ireland.”<sup>58</sup> Like Saoirse in *Song of the Sea* and Mebh in *Wolfwalkers*, Aisling represents the natural world as well as being a personification of pre-Christian belief systems and an avatar of an idealised, “pure” Irish identity. She is the first character to speak in the film, in

a voice-over narration that emphasises her longevity in the face of change and social upheaval:

I have lived through many ages, through the eyes of salmon, deer, and wolf. I have seen the Northmen invading Ireland, destroying all in search of gold. I've seen suffering in the darkness. Yet I have seen beauty thrive in the most fragile of places. I have seen the book. The book that turned darkness into light.<sup>59</sup>

It should be noted here that Christian and pagan beliefs are not presented as incompatible in these films, nor is "Irishness" portrayed as monolithic or homogenous. It is not that Aisling is more Irish than Brendan is, but rather that she represents an aspect of Irishness that has not previously been accessible to him due to his sheltered upbringing in the monastery. Irish identity in the film includes the Christians within the monastery, the spirits and animals in the forest, and the "pagans [and] Crom worshippers"<sup>60</sup> living outside Kells whom the Book is intended to educate and/or convert. It is therefore not a question of Christian vs. pagan, civilisation vs. nature, native vs. immigrant, urban vs. rural, settled vs. nomadic: all of these are included in the Irish identity that needs to be protected, and all are eventually reflected in Brendan's illuminations.

### **The Book of Kells as multicultural product**

At this point, it is instructive to return to the supporting cast of international monks who work in the Scriptorium: Brother Assoua, Brother Friedrich, Brother Jacques, Brother Leonardo, Brother Sergei, and Brother Tang. Although they are implied to be immigrants, they are fully assimilated into the monastery, reflecting the notion of a Christian "brotherhood of believers" that transcends differences in appearance or country of origin.<sup>61</sup> In other words, the film presents them as *similar to* Brendan and the other residents of Kells by virtue of their Christianity, rather than *different from* them by virtue of their nationalities or physical characteristics. It is notable that there are no named Irish monks in the film, apart from Abbot Cellach and Brother Aidan; the Scriptorium monks are the film's primary means of conveying everyday Irish monastic life, out of which the Book of Kells emerged. This is significant in the context of contemporary Irish cinema, which more often represents Ireland "as a society new to multiculturalism and a place where foreigners come to work rather than to settle down."<sup>62</sup> For Walsh, as noted above, the monks are evidence of the filmmakers' "distorting" history by portraying a contemporary "multi-cultural Ireland, brought about by economic migrants during the economic boom."<sup>63</sup> Maria O'Brien, on the other hand, sees the monks as evidence of the film's subversive qualities, claiming that their presence "undermines the purity of the origins of the nation of Ireland" in order to illustrate "the multiplicity of elements that are required to form the concept of the nation."<sup>64</sup>

Although their conclusions differ, it is notable that both Walsh and O'Brien characterise early medieval Irish monasteries as homogenous monocultures and *The Secret of Kells* as a departure from historical fact. However, as other commentators on the film have pointed out, the depiction of a heterogeneous monastic community is not necessarily an inaccuracy.<sup>65</sup> According to Kieran Hayes, by the seventh century, Ireland had become

“a powerhouse of intellectual activity as monasteries became centres of education and learning.”<sup>66</sup> Kells was part of a “family” of monasteries in Ireland, Scotland, and northeast England, centred at Iona (where work on *The Book of Kells* likely commenced), “with connections to a network of monastic centres internationally as distant as Egypt, Syria, and Eastern Church.”<sup>67</sup> International travel between monasteries by monks and scholars was commonplace, and therefore it is plausible that Kells could have housed visitors from these regions.

The inclusion of Aidan’s cat Pangur Bán as a character is also a testament to the international quality of monastic activity during this period: “Pangur Bán” is a reference to an old Irish poem, frequently found in anthologies of Irish-language poetry. Its first written appearance is in a ninth-century Irish monastic student’s copybook currently housed at St Paul’s Abbey in Carinthia, Austria but likely originating in Germany, where the author is presumed to have been studying.<sup>68</sup> Celia Keenan argues that although the poem’s afterlife in Irish children’s literature is “firmly grounded in some favourite Irish essentialist tropes, such as the Irish language, nature, and the land of saints and scholars,” its history is more international: it is “a story of multiple journeys across Europe fleeing wars or persecution or simply seeking and exchanging knowledge.”<sup>69</sup> The film takes its tagline “turning darkness into light” from the “Pangur Bán” poem, and, during the end credits, it is recited in voiceover by Mick Lally who voices Brother Aidan, hinting that Aidan might have been the anonymous Irish monastic student in Germany who wrote the poem.

Benjamin Tilghman demonstrates that the *Book of Kells* has “a distinctly ‘global’ aesthetic that would have carried with it an aura of ecumenical orthodoxy and evangelical righteousness,” as the combination of “images and ornament from Egypt and the Holy Land” with “indigenous Irish and Pictish styles” encouraged the viewer to draw connections between their own locale and “a wider Christian cosmography.”<sup>70</sup> Central to the film’s reimagining of the *Book of Kells* is the idea that it is the product of a diverse range of influences – including the natural world, Celtic paganism, and the contemporary Eastern Church – and that this is part of what makes it special. For example, Spartz notes that many of the shapes and motifs that are now associated with Celticism, including the Byzantine “interlaced knots and weaving designs” that evolved into the “Celtic knot,” have been traced to “external influences,” represented in the film by the monks of diverse backgrounds.<sup>71</sup> Elaborating on his director’s commentary, quoted above, Moore writes, “the Book of Kells [*sic*] has artistic influence, and ink, from all over the medieval world so we decided to represent this with monks who have travelled from as far away as Asia and Africa to work in the Scriptorium.”<sup>72</sup> Barton links this central conceit to the “transnational practices” employed in the film’s production and the resultant “merging [of] Irish Celtic tropes” with a range of international cinematic references.<sup>73</sup> Eithne Massey’s novelisation of *The Secret of Kells* (2009) reinforces this idea, as seen in the introduction of the monks:

Brother Tang was small and round and very kind. He had come to Kells from far in the east, travelling mile after mile in his search for wisdom. [. . .] Brother Assoua was large and black. He had come to Kells from the south, from Africa. [. . .] He told Brendan marvellous tales of his country – about the beasts there that you could never find in Ireland: huge elephants, and monkeys that swung from the branches of trees and seemed almost human, and about the great golden lions who wandered over the sun-baked plains.<sup>74</sup>

The novelisation of the film not only introduces the idea of monks coming from abroad to live and work at Kells but also foreshadows the diverse cultural influences that will eventually make their way into the Book as well as providing an explanation for its inclusion of elements not found in Ireland. These influences are made even more explicit at the end of the novel, when Brendan finally finishes the Chi Rho page and incorporates aspects of his friends from the monastery, including the lions described by Assoua (although the narrator wryly notes that Brendan “could not remember [Assoua’s] description all that well”).<sup>75</sup> The representation of monks from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the film’s version of Kells, then, is entirely in keeping with what is known about early medieval monasticism.

However, that does not mean that the conception of these characters is unproblematic. They are somewhat more developed as characters in the novelisation than they are in the film, as the latter includes details of their personality traits and relationships with each other and with Brendan. For example, we are told that Brother Leonardo and Brother Assoua “often squabble”<sup>76</sup> and that the Abbot trusts Brother Tang “more than anyone else in the monastery.”<sup>77</sup> The novel also lapses into stereotype, for example when we are told that “Leonardo was a brilliant cook, even if he was a little over-excitab[le].”<sup>78</sup> Within the film itself, though, these characters are essentially tokens, representing an idea of diversity rather than a genuine sense of cultural interchange or exploration of difference. Their purpose is primarily to support Brendan and inspire his art; they provide practical assistance to Brendan and Aidan, for example by covering for Brendan’s absences with the Abbot, but they are never seen creating their own art for the Book. Furthermore, their direct influence on the Book is only implied in the film, not stated explicitly as it is in the novel. Their presence contributes to the depiction of Kells as an important international centre of learning and promotes an idealised vision of Ireland as a diverse and creative population united by the pursuit of knowledge, but their actual contribution remains vague.

### Human immigration vs. dehumanised invasion

As noted above, all three films in the Irish Folklore Trilogy depict the threat of Irish identity being lost or erased at the hands of outside forces. In *Wolfwalkers*, this is the parallel invasion and cultural genocide of Ireland by the British in general, and of the *Wolfwalkers*’ forest by Cromwell’s army in particular. In *Song of the Sea*, the invasion is that of a modern, globalised monoculture crowding out traditional Irish stories and songs. Meehan praises *The Secret of Kells*’s “depiction of a monastic world which is both open to visitors from abroad yet at risk from outside forces,”<sup>79</sup> and the film draws a clear line between benevolent and malevolent outsiders entering Ireland. However, in so doing it participates in harmful narratives about “good” and “bad” immigration, in which “only particular categories of immigrants are seen as problematic.”<sup>80</sup> “Good” immigration is personified by the Scriptorium monks and by Brother Aidan, who is introduced as the latest of a steady stream of refugees who have been welcomed into Kells after fleeing from the “Northmen” (Vikings). In the film’s opening montage, as Aisling’s voiceover speaks of “the Northmen invading Ireland,” we see a brief sequence depicting Aidan’s dangerous escape from Iona in a small boat, clutching the unfinished manuscript that will become the Book of Kells as the Vikings pursue him. When Cellach chastises Aidan for putting the Abbey in danger by

seeking sanctuary, Aidan replies, “Was I to stay and be killed? [. . .] When they come, all we can do is run and hope that we are fast enough.”<sup>81</sup> This statement is reinforced by the wordless interstitial sequences that periodically interrupt the main plot, which depict the Vikings drawing nearer to Kells as well as a series of new arrivals knocking at the gate and being grudgingly admitted by Cellach.

The refugees in Kells are rarely alluded to in the film’s dialogue, but they are a constant visual presence, represented by the growing number of makeshift huts within the walls of the monastery. Although Cellach expresses anxiety over housing these new residents (perhaps echoing contemporary media and policy concerns about the increasing number of immigrants in Ireland), they are shown to contribute to the community of existing villagers who farm and keep animals to support the growing population. Aidan is likewise presented as an asset to the monastic community, bringing his skill as an illuminator and his first-hand knowledge of the Northmen. “Good” immigrants, the film suggests, work to contribute to the community, a distinction that reflects contemporary reforms to Irish immigration and citizenship policy, including residency requirements that favour “highly skilled” workers.<sup>82</sup>

The Vikings, by contrast, are racialised and dehumanised as dark, faceless invading hordes coming to destroy the Irish people’s way of life. Moore and Twomey describe the design of the Vikings in the film as a “subjective idea of how the Vikings might have seemed to people at the time, more like demons. [. . .] They’re an embodiment of fear.”<sup>83</sup> The Vikings are seen primarily from Brendan’s perspective; even before their actual arrival in Ireland, Brendan hears stories from Aidan and the other monks about the devastation they have wrought at Kells’ sister monastery on Iona, from which Aidan has fled. Early in the film, Brendan has a vision of the destruction of Iona by the Vikings, who appear as black, boxy shapes marching against a red background, rendered in 2D Flash animation. Visually, the Vikings in this sequence recall Brendan’s earlier vision of the “sinners” who are “blinded” when they look at the Book of Iona: black, horned demons withered by the bright light emanating from the Book.<sup>84</sup> Flash animation is used for Brendan’s early dream sequences to convey his simplified view of the world; despite the lack of depth, perspective, or detail, when he fearfully recounts the vision to his uncle he insists, “it was so real.”<sup>85</sup> Brendan experiences dreamlike visions such as this throughout the film, with the animation becoming more sophisticated as the film progresses and Brendan’s artistic skill develops alongside his broadened understanding of the world beyond the walls of the monastery.<sup>86</sup> Moore notes that the film’s early scenes<sup>86</sup> are intentionally flat in order to mimic the lack of perspective in medieval artwork; perspective and depth are introduced in the scene where Brendan first enters the forest, and they increase gradually until the climactic scene where the Vikings break through the walls of Kells.<sup>87</sup> Brendan gains perspective, both literally in his artwork and figuratively in his relationship to those around him, culminating in the final moments of the film, in which the artwork on the completed Chi Rho page is animated.

In this context, it is noteworthy that the depiction of the Vikings does not change substantively over the course of the film. The animation is more sophisticated in later sequences, but the Vikings remain essentially large, dark, boxy, and faceless figures marching against a red background. The Viking attack on Kells at the end of the film is the only sequence to employ 3D animation,<sup>88</sup> but, rather than adding nuance, this has the effect of further dehumanising them, as they seem even more otherworldly, demonic, and

larger than life. They are depicted as incapable of human emotion, understanding, and even of coherent speech – the only distinctly audible word uttered by a Viking in the film is “gold.”<sup>89</sup> Crucially, they are also shown to be ignorant of the true value of the *Book of Kells*, tearing off its cover for the gold and jewels but leaving the pages behind.

### “Darkness into light”

Brendan’s encounters with those who are different from him – whether supernatural figures or racial, national, or religious “Others” – are rendered literally as a set of binary oppositions in white and black or light and shadow, which represent not only good and evil but also enlightenment and ignorance, respectively, in keeping with medieval theology’s equation of blackness with Satan and whiteness with salvation.<sup>90</sup> Throughout the film, white is consistently associated with “good” and black with “bad.” Aisling and Brother Aidan are pale with white hair and white clothing and are perpetually bathed in bright light, while their counterparts – Crom Cruach, referred to as “the Dark One,”<sup>91</sup> in the forest and the Vikings in the monastery – are looming black, angular figures shrouded in darkness. The repeated “darkness into light” metaphor from the “Pangur Bán” poem is played out through these opposing forces in both the monastery and the forest. This begins with the early comical sequence in which Brendan imagines a black demon being destroyed by the light emanating from the Book and continues in the forest when the white Aisling uses her powers to help Brendan defeat Crom Cruach, imploring him to “turn the darkness into light” as the darkness engulfs her.<sup>92</sup> Brendan faces Crom, whose eye is a magnifying crystal that he needs for his illumination work, in what Roscoe describes as an allegorical “scribal battle:”

Crom’s abode is shrouded by mists and darkness, only to be dispelled by Brendan, an illuminator. [...] He needs the crystal eye for his artwork, and through artwork he defeats Crom and claims the eye. As a result, the mists vanish and the darkness becomes light.<sup>93</sup>

Visually and thematically, the ancient god Crom Cruach is to Aisling’s forest what the Vikings are to Kells: a dark, invasive presence. Just as Aidan tells Brendan, “The Northmen left no one on Iona,” Aisling tells him, “Crom Cruach took my people. He took my mother. It takes everything.”<sup>94</sup> Crom is thus figured from the outset as a supernatural parallel to the Vikings, a destructive and faceless invader so powerful that the only response is flight. Abbot Cellach’s character arc is also figured as a battle between darkness and light. He is typically rendered in greys and browns, signalling his moral ambiguity as one who wants what is best for his flock but who is misguided and close-minded as to the best way to achieve this. He spends a lot of time in shadow, locked in his cell making plans for the fortifications. The wall that has obsessed him throughout the film proves to be no match for the Vikings, who break through the gates easily. The pure white landscape of the snow-covered monastery is gradually overtaken by blacks and reds as it becomes clear that Kells has fallen. At the end of the film, Cellach – having survived the attack, seen the error of his ways and undergone a long repentance – is swathed in white light as he is absolved by Brendan and looks at the completed *Book of Kells*.

Despite the fact that *The Secret of Kells* is about the creation of a religious text, many scholars and commentators have noted the relative absence of overt religiosity within the film.<sup>95</sup> The message is a secular, post-Enlightenment one of bringing knowledge, art, and

culture to the masses, with “darkness into light” substituting for Christianity as the central morality of the film. Barton notes that the film manages to sidestep an overtly Christian message by elevating “craftsmanship and learning to the position of cultural identifiers” and using the book as signifiers of these ideas.<sup>96</sup> The final act of the film includes a montage in which Brendan works on the book in a beehive hut under Aidan’s guidance, as Brendan grows into a man and Aidan approaches the end of his life. Aidan and Brendan are then seen sharing the book with a group of people in an unspecified rural location in Ireland. The book is the only source of light in an otherwise dark frame, forming a protective barrier around those viewing it. They huddle around the book as if around a campfire, basking in its literal glow as choral music plays. The viewer does not see inside the Book or hear Aidan’s or Brendan’s conversation with the people to whom they have been showing it. However, this frame is followed by a voiceover in which Aidan says:

The Book was never meant to be hidden away behind walls, locked away from the world which inspired its creation. Brendan, you must take the book to the people so that they may have hope. Let it light the way in these dark days of the Northmen.<sup>97</sup>

The emphasis on giving people “hope” in “these dark days” allows the implied viewer to overlook the fact that Brendan and Aidan are essentially missionaries in this sequence, using the word of God to convert non-believers and to see it instead as what Barton describes as a “thematic exploration of the triumph of civilisation over savagery.”<sup>98</sup> More difficult to overlook, however, is the fact that phrases like “civilisation over savagery” and bringing “light” to the “darkness” are racially loaded in the twenty-first century, when they uncomfortably call to mind the rhetoric of settler colonialism. The simplistic black-and-white coding of the major supporting characters further highlights this association. As Brendan is the focaliser for most of the film, this arguably reflects his naïve black-and-white view of the world around him, but it should be noted that even as he develops and matures into adulthood, these binary oppositions remain in place in service of the “darkness into light” metaphor.

## Conclusion

As a work of historical fantasy, *The Secret of Kells* engages with Ireland’s early medieval past and national mythology, but it is also a product of early twenty-first-century Irish culture, and as such it both responds to and contributes to contemporary discourses of race, immigration, and cultural identity. Pugh and Wiesel argue that “[m]edievalism in children’s and Young Adult (YA) literature teaches young readers about the past, as it domesticates that past in order to explore the present.”<sup>99</sup> The film’s release coincides with a social and cultural reconfiguring of Irish identity exemplified by the increase in immigration into the country in the 1990s and early 2000s, the 2004 referendum and 2005 Citizenship Act, and successive immigration reform policies. The film presents two parallel versions of Ireland’s relationship with outsiders, symbolised by the conflict between Brother Aidan and Abbot Cellach: for Aidan, and for Brendan, malevolent forces like the Northmen and Crom Cruach are neutralised by the spread of knowledge and the harmonious integration of disparate cultural influences represented by the Book.

Cellach’s reaction to these threats, by contrast, is to close ranks and secure the borders to protect the insular community within. The film ultimately validates Aidan’s position,

promoting an idealised image of Ireland as an enlightened melting pot, welcoming of other races, and inclusive of diverse beliefs. However, this utopian message is complicated by the “darkness into light” metaphor that evokes colonial and missionary discourses as well as reinforcing existing tropes of “good” and “bad” types of immigration and assimilation, revealing an underlying insularity and distrust of outsiders. This tension exemplifies the film’s ambivalent representation of racial and cultural otherness and reflects the tensions in Ireland’s perception of itself and its relationship with the rest of the world in the early 2000s.

## Notes

1. Moore, Stewart, and Twomey, “Audio Commentary with Filmmakers,” n.p.
2. Walsh, “*The Secret of Kells*,” 94–5.
3. See Ruhs and Quinn, “Rapid Immigration,” n.p.
4. Moore, quoted in Ramey, “Immediacy,” 117. See also Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 53; and Walsh, *The Secret of Kells*, 91.
5. Moore and Stewart, *Designing*, 8.
6. Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 1.
7. *Ibid.*, 11.
8. Quoted in Moore and Stewart, *Designing*, 222.
9. See Utz, “Academic Medievalism and Nationalism.”
10. De Groot, *The Historical Novel*, 139–40.
11. Hsy, *Antiracist Medievalisms*, 18.
12. Pugh and Wiesel, *Medievalisms*, 52–61.
13. Quoted in Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History*, 1.
14. Pugh and Wiesel, *Medievalisms*, 1.
15. Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History*, 3–4.
16. Ní Bhroin, “Mythologizing Ireland,” 7; and See also Harvey, “Shakespeare’s History Plays.”
17. Pugh and Wiesel, *Medievalisms*, 7–8.
18. *Ibid.*, 52.
19. *Ibid.*, 52.
20. *Ibid.*, 52.
21. Bildhauer, “Medievalism and Cinema,” 57.
22. Chan, “Medievalists, Recoiling,” n.p.
23. Quoted in Hsy, *Antiracist Medievalisms*, 20.
24. See Hsy, *Antiracist Medievalisms*; and Miyashiro, “Our Deeper Past.”
25. Heng, *The Invention of Race*, 3 (italics in original).
26. Ramey, *Black Legacies*, 4.
27. See Heng, “The Invention of Race I” and *The Invention of Race*; and Ramey, *Black Legacies*.
28. Ramey, *Black Legacies*, 2.
29. Lumbley, “The Dark Welsh,” 2; and See also Baker, “Men to Monsters.”
30. Heng, “The Invention of Race I,” 324–5 (italics in original).
31. Ramey, *Black Legacies*, 3.
32. Quoted in Hsy, *Antiracist Medievalisms*, 6.
33. Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 52.
34. Walsh, “*The Secret of Kells*,” 92. See also Walsh, “Re-animating the Past”; Connolly, “Theorizing Irish Animation”; and Barton, *Irish Cinema*.
35. Walsh, “Re-animating the Past,” 134.
36. See also Barton, *Irish Cinema* and *Irish National Cinema*; and Connolly, “Theorizing Irish Animation.”
37. Walsh, “Re-Animating the Past,” 135.
38. Miyashiro, “Our Deeper Past,” 4–5.

39. Goodluck, "Far-Right Extremists," n.p.
40. Lomuto, "White Nationalism," n.p. (my emphasis).
41. See Asava, *Black Irish Onscreen*; Joseph, "Wages"; and McVeigh and Rolston, *Anois ar Theacht*; Kearns et al., "Anticolonial Irish History."
42. Ní Bhroin, "Mythologizing Ireland."
43. *Ibid.*, 16.
44. Aguilar, "Small Irish Animation Studio," n.p.
45. Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 59–61.
46. Moore, *Song of the Sea*, n.p.
47. *Ibid.*, n.p.
48. Moore and Collins, "Audio Commentary with Filmmakers," n.p.
49. Anonymous, *Statute*, 3–7.
50. Moore and Stewart, *Wolfwalkers*.
51. See note 48 above.
52. Barton, *Irish National Cinema*, 185; and See also Ó hAodha, "Insubordinate Irish."
53. Asava, *Black Irish Onscreen*, 26–7; and See also Joseph, "Wages."
54. *Ibid.*, 26.
55. *Ibid.*, 26–7.
56. Moore and Twomey, *The Secret of Kells*, n.p.
57. Roscoe, "Making God's Word," 97.
58. *Ibid.*, 109.
59. See note 56 above.
60. *Ibid.*, n.p.
61. See note 28 above.
62. Asava, *Black Irish Onscreen*, 26.
63. See note 2 above.
64. O'Brien, "The Secret of Kells," 36.
65. See Buchelt, "One Beetle"; Ramey, "Immediacy"; and Roscoe, "Making God's Word."
66. Hayes, "Light in the Darkness," 216.
67. *Ibid.*, 218.
68. Keenan, "Hunt for 'Pangur Bán,'" 64–5.
69. *Ibid.*, 72.
70. Tilghman, "Placing," 82–4.
71. Spartz, "The Secret of Kells," 186.
72. Moore, *Designing*, 62.
73. Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 57; and See also Ramey, "Immediacy."
74. Massey, *The Secret of Kells*, 20–1.
75. *Ibid.*, 168.
76. *Ibid.*, 22.
77. *Ibid.*, 20.
78. *Ibid.*, 22.
79. Quoted in Moore, *Designing*, 222.
80. Garner, "Reflections on Race," 186.
81. See note 56 above.
82. See note 3 above; and See also Garner, "Reflections on Race."
83. See note 1 above.
84. See note 56 above.
85. *Ibid.*, n.p.
86. See note 1 above.
87. *Ibid.*, n.p.
88. Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 56.
89. See note 56 above.
90. Heng, "Invention of Race I," 316–8.
91. See note 56 above.

92. Ibid., n.p.
93. Roscoe, "Making God's Word," 100.
94. See note 56 above.
95. See Barton, *Irish Cinema*; O'Brien, "The Secret of Kells"; Ramey, "Immediacy"; and Walsh, "The Secret of Kells."
96. Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 54.
97. See note 56 above.
98. Barton, *Irish Cinema*, 55.
99. Pugh and Wiesl, *Medievalisms*, 47.

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