

The Hungry Forties

The chrononym the ‘Hungry Forties’ was not used by contemporaries but was invented in 1903, some sixty years after the decade it described. It became a leading propaganda device in the Edwardian political contest between free trade (following the abolition of Britain’s Corn Laws in 1846), and tariff reform, the attempt, led by Joseph Chamberlain, to re-impose protective duties on goods entering Britain. In this context, the phrase the ‘Hungry Forties’ sought specifically to recall the 1840s as a period of hunger and distress from which the British people had been emancipated by the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. That struggle had been led by the radical Richard Cobden, and significantly not only did 1904 mark the widely-celebrated centenary of his birth but ‘The Hungry Forties’ was publicised, if not invented, by Cobden’s daughter, the leading Liberal suffragist and campaigner, Jane Cobden Unwin.¹ In close association with her husband, the noted progressive publisher, Thomas Fisher Unwin, Jane Cobden Unwin published in early November 1904, *The Hungry Forties: Life under the Bread Tax: Descriptive Letters and Other Testimonies from Contemporary Witnesses*, based on the recollections of many who had lived through what they recalled as a period of starvation and poverty. As the electoral battle over free trade was refought in Britain after 1903, this tract became an immediate bestseller and went through numerous editions in the pre-war period. As a result, the term ‘Hungry Forties’ became deeply entrenched in political and social memory, such that into the late twentieth century it was used as if a contemporary one, even in the age of the ‘linguistic turn’.²

The invention and success of this chrononym therefore presents a number of questions for the historian. For some the primary issue has been simply the material reality behind the expression, namely ‘how hungry were the 1840s?’ Historians have

long debated the extent of poverty, and the relationship between hunger and popular politics in the 1840s. The first historian to analyse precisely the ‘Hungry Forties’, Chaloner in 1957, pointed out its inexactness, for hunger was arguably much greater between 1837 and 1842 than it was in the period of economic recovery from 1843;³ more recently Trentmann has agreed.⁴ Somewhat against the current consensus, Gurney has reasserted ‘the political centrality of the debate on hunger and consumer issues in general at this time’, seeking to reopen debate on the ‘Hungry Forties’ by considering how both the Chartists and the Anti-Corn Law League ‘made sense of hunger and mobilized around consumption’.⁵ Ireland, the part of the United Kingdom that did experience intense, sustained, and widespread hunger during the ‘Great Famine’ did not feature prominently in Jane Cobden Unwin’s tract, nor did the Irish famine play a significant part in the mainland debate on the ‘Hungry Forties’.⁶ Rather, the memory of the famine in Ireland developed its own language, mythology, and historiography, with a very different political and cultural trajectory within a nationalist framework.⁷ Hence, by the 1960s, as the usage and memory of the English ‘Hungry Forties’ receded, when the term was used occasionally in the English media it tended to be in the context of the successively-reinvented cultural memory of the Irish famine.⁸ Even later, as historians explored the background to the 1848 Revolutions in Europe, and became more aware of the continental-wide food scarcity, the term has become more geographically extensive, if even more remote from its original significance.⁹

The continued academic usage of the ‘Hungry Forties’ remains as testimony to its evocative power after more than a century. In order to understand both its popularity and longevity, we may break down the history of this chrononym into the following stages: genesis; diffusion; cultural permeation and political persistence;

scholarly revision and transmutation. Such an analysis will reveal the distinctive manner in which the decade of the 1840s was invested with a deep cultural and social significance, and politicised in a highly effective and lasting way, becoming a self-evident reality, a ‘natural’ division of time and history, rather than a particular historical construct. The overriding aim will be to understand the social, political, and cultural conditions which gave rise to this chrononym and to trace the contours of its subsequent usage and circulation.

Inventing *The Hungry Forties*

The first appearance of the term ‘Hungry Forties’ may be traced to a letter written by Jane Cobden Unwin to a meeting to be held in Manchester to oppose ‘food taxes’ in the wake of Joseph Chamberlain’s announcement of his campaign to reimpose tariffs on an array of goods entering Britain.¹⁰ Fuller content was given to the phrase following a letter to *The Times* from the leading Liberal politician (and former Prime Minister) Lord Rosebery, to the effect that ‘those who remembered the miseries of Protection should lose no opportunity of telling their fellow-countrymen their experience’.¹¹ This was taken up by Thomas Fisher Unwin who issued in February 1904 a call to the press for testimonies from those with relevant documents or as a result of ‘age and experience’, personal recollections which he undertook to publish as a volume ‘in the interests of Free Trade’.¹² In a widely circulated letter, he suggested ‘Tradesmen’s bills and private housekeeping accounts of the “Hungry Forties” would also be of interest and useful for comparative study’.¹³ In fact little if any such archival or documentary material informed the subsequent vigorous propagandistic deployment of the ‘Hungry Forties’ in the free trade versus tariff reform debate; rather it was dominated by letters based on personal recollections of

the period which were gathered and edited by Jane Cobden Unwin. Such ‘veritable human documents’, she wrote, “‘the short and simple annals of the poor’ – speak for themselves, and bear the indelible proof of their sincerity’.¹⁴ But her selection of material was articulated in the context firstly of ‘rural England’ which she knew from her continued residence of her father’s home at Dunford in the Sussex village of Heyshott, giving her first-hand access to community memories extending back to the 1840s.¹⁵ Secondly, Jane stood ready to prove ‘that agricultural England prefers better clothing and better feeding to all the imaginary benefits to be derived from a policy of Retaliation, Preference, or Protection’.¹⁶ In this vein, by October 1904 she and her husband were ready to publish their documentary testimonies as a ‘practical and effective antidote to the raging, tearing campaign of those who would by legislation bring England back to the times of the Hungry Forties.’¹⁷

The content of *The Hungry Forties* was therefore dominated by popular memory rather the archival record but its didactic efficacy came from its welding a variety of local memories into a national whole, creating a popular narrative of hunger and oppression. Even so, the substance of the work was patchy, organised into six regions (Midlands, East Anglia, South-East, Wessex, North and other) preceded by an introduction by Jane Cobden Unwin and concluded by a chapter by ‘Brougham Villiers’ (a pseudonym, redolent of the politics of the 1840s, disguising the Progressive author, F. J. Shaw), drawing the lessons from ‘The England of the Letters’.¹⁸ The introduction was largely based on interviews conducted by Jane with elderly local residents, as she had been disappointed by the lack of Sussex responses to the newspaper appeal. Such memories endorsed a narrative of popular improvement since the 1840s, with days of deep distress and rick-buring in the countryside now long distant.¹⁹ The content of other chapters was highly variable but

one of the fuller chapters, that on East Anglia, was largely based on a previous collection of local memories, published by a prominent East Anglian Liberal Robert Winfrey under the aegis of the Free Trade Union in 1903.²⁰ This provided a model for Jane Cobden Unwin, with a sizeable number of interviews with elderly residents of Norfolk, many of them women, and with immediacy added by the addition of photographs of the worthy poor. While Winfrey's tract was part of his local campaign to win over the labourers' vote (he was to win the South-West Norfolk seat in 1906) Jane Cobden Unwin's use of his material successfully incorporated the local into the national memory in a highly effective and graphic manner. Other local memories were also similarly incorporated, for example, from 'Wessex', the Reverend W. D. Sargeant, of Stoke Abbott, Dorset, reported the life-story of one of his tenants, while a Miss Benjafield of Stalbridge had interviewed a number of elderly residents and reported back their vivid memories. Other memories were authentically individualistic as in the case of Lucy Buckland, the only direct female respondent, in 1904 an 88 year-old of Westcliff-on-Sea but who we can identify as Lucy Blunt, a milliner married in 1842 to William Buckland of Islington, a gold beater; by 1851 they were to have three children with a household including mother and mother-in-law, whose expenditure Lucy recorded in impressive detail.²¹ More idiosyncratically, we can identify 'James Hawker of Padby' as James Hawker of Oadby, in Leicestershire, who achieved celebrity as a Victorian poacher. Born in 1836, he always attributed his poaching to hunger in early life. His racy memories, written in 1903-4, did not use the term the 'Hungry Forties' but did speak of the 'dark days of Protection' and of the threat to the poor posed by Chamberlain's tariff reform, and Hawker, imbued with a strong class animus, readily spoke in this vein on Liberal platforms.²²

From these disparate, and unsystematic but vivid and authentic recollections, *The Hungry Forties* was shaped as a popular narrative in which hunger was not the natural result of the workings of the market nor the unavoidable by-product of Britain's Industrial Revolution, but stemmed from 'bad government', political choices designed to serve the interests of a heartless landed elite, with its subaltern class of hard-nosed farmers. In this way an older moral economy was revived, and the repeal of the Corn Laws was presented as the almost biblical rescuing of the people from oppression, 'an Egyptian bondage from which they have been delivered.'²³ Interestingly too as 'Brougham Villiers' argued, the 'Hungry Forties' became a shorthand term for the whole of the period between 1815 and 1846, i. e. from the imposition of the Corn Law in 1815 until its abolition. This was a common feature of later writing, giving unity to these decades as a period of 'systematic underfeeding of the whole nation' as a result of post-war decision-making. As Brougham Villiers put it, 'the island, since it was not now besieged by its enemies, must be besieged by its rulers. Tariffs must undo the mischief wrought by the peace and make dear the produce of the land'.²⁴ In these conditions the poor (virtually coterminous with the nation) resorted to tea made from burnt crusts, coarse substitutes for bread, turnips often stolen from the field at night, 'a food basis on which it seems impossible that healthy life can be maintained'.²⁵ However this use of the past had very present polemical intentions. For, in highlighting the threatened return to the past, the tract simultaneously and repeatedly emphasised the new pattern of consumption enjoyed by the people (including raisins, wheat bread, meat, sugar, tea) and very successfully stigmatized Tariff Reform as a demonic threat to the poor man's food;²⁶ the 'Hungry Forties' were not evoked as a simple threat of a return to starvation but as a threat to an improved standard of living enjoyed by many Edwardian consumers.

Propaganda Politics in Edwardian Britain

The publication of *The Hungry Forties* proved a masterstroke of propaganda.²⁷ Nevertheless, the impact of the book came more from the context, not from its detailed content. The title alone embodied the effective mobilisation of historical memory in the service of the defence of free trade, while it also embodied a view of history which was already deeply engrained in British political culture. Here in effect the myth existed as part of a ‘democratic imaginary’ before it was articulated linguistically.²⁸ This fitted in well with other popular narratives which had become widespread by the 1900s, for example, works such as John Buckmaster’s *A Village Politician: the Life-Story of John Buckley* (1897) provided a vivid account of the battle against the Corn Laws by one of its more proletarian figures; in 1903 *When I was a Child* by ‘An Old Potter’ (Charles Shaw, 1832-1906) recalled in detail the 1840s, including the Plug Plot of 1842 and the Corn Laws, and was written in part as a warning against the return of protection.²⁹ Other working-class autobiographies reiterated the message that the 1840s had been a decade of popular distress and discontent, for example, the agricultural labourer’s leader Joseph Arch wrote in 1893 of ‘The horrors of those times are clearly and vividly before my mind’s eye even now. It is as if they had been burned and branded into me. I cannot forget them’.³⁰ The threat of a return to protection also unleashed a rash of literature designed to recall the 1840s, especially from the firm of Fisher Unwin. This included not only popular, jubilee and abridged editions of Morley’s canonical *Life of Richard Cobden*, but works such as *Labour and Protection* (1903) emphasising the gains from free trade for the working classes since 1846, and the reprinting of the popular *Corn Law Rhymes* of Ebenezer Elliott.³¹ The common emphasis in these works on the gains

made by the British people since 1846 also chimed in well the wider Victorian and Edwardian understanding of the past, which, without using the term the ‘Hungry Forties’, had been based on a sense of progress from the dark days of the period 1815-1846. This went back to the early histories of the nineteenth century such as Harriet Martineau’s *History of England during the Thirty Years Peace, 1816-1846* (1850).³² It was also a narrative deeply ingrained in standard school text-books in the later nineteenth century, which presented a view of popular progress, once the people had been gradually relieved of oppressive legislation.³³ In this vein, one Edwardian self-styled ‘popular history’ of the Corn laws was based on the premiss that their object ‘was to keep corn as near famine prices as the masses of the people could bear’.³⁴ Similar views of progress had also become popular in a whole range of cultural encounters with history which permeated Edwardian Britain as interest in history boomed.³⁵

This view of the past, no golden age but the ‘dark days of Protection’, was now given political force by the Liberal party campaign to defend free trade against the growing threat of tariff reform. Survivors of the ‘Hungry Forties’, like those of the Holocaust later, were pressed into service by the Liberal Party, regularly appearing on its platforms – including James Hawker, Joseph Arch and the self-styled ‘old Chartist’ W. H. Chadwick.³⁶ As human embodiments of the ‘Hungry Forties’ they gave an immediacy and resonance among the popular electorate to the message that Britain was threatened with the return to past poverty. Moreover, at the level of policy, rather than the resurrection of the ‘Hungry Forties’ forming a stale cry of the 1840s, the concept helped link the Liberal party to the strong current of land reform and to forward-looking policies on rural poverty, while in urban Britain, the Liberals were able to stand forward as a bastion of working-class welfare against the false promises

of Chamberlain. One of the most effective pictorial representations of the ‘Hungry Forties’, which won a National Liberal Club competition in 1905, was Robert Morley’s poster design, ‘The Hungry Forties’ with the text, ‘Will you go back? Remember the Hungry Forties. Tariff Reform means trusts for the rich, crusts for the poor’.³⁷ The images of the big and the small loaf common in the 1840s were widely reused both on the political platform and in the new cultural media including the huge craze for picture postcards frequently bearing loaves. In this way the motif of the ‘Hungry Forties’ formed part of a wider conceptualization of the 1840s as a struggle between rich and poor, privilege versus industry, monopolists versus the people, oppressed versus the tyrannical, which remained potent discursive appeals in Edwardian Britain.³⁸ Even more influentially this was turned into a message for the Edwardian consumer at the time when growing attention had been paid to working-class budgets in discussions of poverty and in the burgeoning work of social investigators. Tariff Reform was successfully depicted as a potential threat to the carefully balanced budgets of working-class households, threatening family life, and undermining the gendered household, and its moral economy.³⁹

The exact effectiveness of the term ‘Hungry Forties’ itself in the Liberal election victory of 1906 is not measurable but there seems little doubt that the deployment of the term achieved its lasting currency from its widespread use between 1904 and 1906.⁴⁰ Even before the publication of *The Hungry Forties*, an excerpt of the Sussex evidence had been circulated to every home in Horsham during the by-election of November 1904.⁴¹ Following the first edition in 1904, a people’s edition appeared in 1905 (priced 6d), re-issued in 1909, an abridged edition in 1910 (reprinted 1910), with a complete one penny edition of 110,000 copies in 1912 with a further 100,000 later that year.⁴² It is also clear that associated terms such as food,

hunger, and bread did achieve a wide electoral currency.⁴³ We have also seen how the Liberal platform deployed advocates such as Arch and Hawker. In parliament MPs effectively evoked the term in debate, for example, Sir Joseph Leese, son of an Anti-Corn Law campaigner, deplored the potential price increases threatened by tariffs, which ‘after sixty years of comparative cheapness and plenty’ ‘was to revive the sad and distant memories of what were called the “hungry forties”’⁴⁴ The leading City banker Sir John Lubbock likewise lamented a policy which he deemed ‘radically retrograde and which would carry us back to the terrible times of the hungry forties’.⁴⁵ In the Lords the radical Bishop of Hereford (John Percival), old enough himself to remember the ‘Hungry Forties’ in the North of England, joined in ‘It is engrained in my memory what a dismal and wretched time it was ... I desire not to see again anything like it.’⁴⁶ Such politicised memory was diffused in a number of ways, for example, the propaganda not only of the Free Trade and Women’s Free Trade Unions as well as other Liberal party organisations, including the Liberal League and Women’s Liberal Association.⁴⁷ It also included the Free Trade Union play entitled *A message from the Forties: A Free Trade masque*, dating from c. 1909, which, as Trentmann has shown, had been devised by the wife of the Progressive employer Alfred Mond.⁴⁸ Paradoxically too, the ‘Hungry Forties’ was an expression which the tariff reformers had to confront, so that repeated but ineffective denials that tariffs signalled a return to the 1840s in some ways reinforced the fact that free traders had captured the terms of debate. Hence, as Morrison Bell put it, ‘Every argument in a way about tariff reform always comes down to the small loaf and the big loaf in the Hungry Forties’.⁴⁹ Significantly, Lord Derby in supporting a change of Unionist policy in 1913 argued that this was necessary because that ‘Hungry Forties’ had proved a ‘very powerful argument in their [opponents’] favour’.⁵⁰ Its power was at the same

time seen in the tariff reformers' attempts to recapture the terms of debate, and in particular to shape arguments which rivalled free trade ones in their appeal to consumers.⁵¹ Nevertheless the tariff reform riposte was itself further evidence of the 'enormous' impact the 'Hungry Forties' had had on Edwardian political discourse.⁵²

Finally, even if the 'Hungry Forties' featured primarily in Liberal politics,⁵³ and if the burgeoning socialist analysis was distrustful of many elements in Liberal political economy,⁵⁴ the memory of the 'Hungry Forties' had much support in the labour movement, not only among agricultural labourers but also in industrial areas, especially where the popular memory of the 'Hungry Forties' was still vigorously alive, and largely associated with events such as the Plug Plot of 1842 in Lancashire, the focal point of the revolutionary strand of the Chartist movement, co-inciding with the nadir of depression in the industrial North.⁵⁵ Within this tradition, Allen Clarke, an immensely popular socialist writer and publisher, deeply familiar with the Lancashire folk memory and dialect traditions, and often himself seen as 'the voice of the people' published in 1914, *The Men who fought for us' in the 'Hungry Forties': a tale of pioneers and beginnings* (Manchester: Co-Operative Newspaper Society, 1914).⁵⁶ The moral of Clarke's tale was the eventual victory of cooperation (the Rochdale pioneers featured extensively in his tale) but his epilogue articulated the historical lesson, that the agitations of the past 'are closely paralleled by the ... politicians of our own day'.⁵⁷ Interestingly too in the manner of *The Hungry Forties* Clarke drew lessons for women's involvement in political issues, 'Good, cheap food, happy homes – those are just as much woman's business as well as a man's – nay, more, for the care of the household is the woman's work. Co-operation is not a sex question'.⁵⁸ More generally the co-operative movement saw its mission as that of the defence of consumers and very directly traced its origins back to the 'Hungry Forties'.⁵⁹ Within this institutional

memory, it became customary to see the birth of the co-operative movement as the product of (and part cure) for the ‘Hungry Forties’ – thus the authoritative centenary history of the movement published in 1944 began with a chapter on the ‘Hungry Forties’, and distress of this period featured in a broadcast for the United States and in a popular pageant devised to celebrate the centenary.⁶⁰ As late as 1959, Albert Alexander (1885-1965), the son of a blacksmith, now Earl Alexander of Hillsborough, a long-standing member of the co-operative movement, typically explained its genesis as a response to the ‘famine of the Hungry Forties’.⁶¹

Cultural permeation and political persistence after the First World War

The contest between free trade and protection through which the ‘Hungry Forties’ had been diffused throughout the nation before 1914 became rapidly transformed after the First World War, although it recurred in minor key at several critical junctures, above all, in the political crisis of 1931-2.⁶² Clearly, the term itself remained readily recognisable to the educated public, entering the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1933,⁶³ and it was regularly deployed in a wide number of cultural and literary as well as political contexts. Firstly, it remained a trope which a number of minor literary figures continued to employ. They included, for example the first professor of English Literature at Leeds University, and a keen explorer of folklore and the demotic, who published in 1918 his dialect verse, *The Hungry Forties* in a poem presented tariff reform as an attack on the ‘workers’ food’, threatening to ‘thrust us back to our owd misery’.⁶⁴ But the wider cultural currency of the ‘Hungry Forties’ informed the critical reception of a novel by the much more noted interwar writer, Sheila Kaye-Smith, of whose *Susan Spray* one reviewer wrote, ‘She can convey the very stomach-pain of the “Hungry Forties”; her agricultural labourer’s

budget is not a document, but a human document'.⁶⁵ In 1930 there followed, published by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, *Sons of Want: a story of the hungry 'forties* evoking the 'Hungry Forties' in an exemplary tale in which the defeat of political radicalism (the Chartist Plug Plot), leads to religious regeneration in the form of Christian socialism. Its author Lilian Howard Dalton had since 1913 produced a number of similar hortatory tales relating to slavery and missionary activity but also in 1924 *League of Nations Stories*. Also set against the background of the Plug Plot was the play by *Doctor Scholefield: An incident of the Hungry Forties* (Manchester, Sherratt & Hughes, 1936), first performed at the Manchester University Settlement in December 1934, written by Mary Danvers Stocks, later baroness Stocks, a leading welfare reformer and suffragist, who had read economics at the LSE before the War.⁶⁶ In a somewhat more light-hearted vein, in 1939 there appeared the figure of Uncle Silas created by popular novelist H. E. Bates (1905-1974), depicting a lovable rural rogue 'born at the beginning of the 'Hungry Forties'' in Northamptonshire, loosely based on the life story of a distant forbear of the author, Joseph Betts.⁶⁷ These literary references, however disparate, all suggest that the 'Hungry Forties' retained a recognisability between the Wars, able still to connect the public with increasingly remote memories of the past. Significantly this appeal to memory was also readily mobilised by the new medium of radio, whose programmes included a lively debate on tariffs (followed by a postal ballot) in which several listeners claimed to remember the 'Hungry Forties'.⁶⁸

Secondly a number of widely-read working-class autobiographies, influenced by the Edwardian debate, were constructed with the 1840s as a significant part of individual life-stories, however marginal that decade was in practice to the individual concerned. For example, one of the most important Lib- Lab MPs who voiced the

demands of the rural labourers before 1914 (and after) was George Edwards, whose autobiography *From Crow-Scaring to Westminster* was published in 1922 (London, Labour Publishing Co.), with the first chapter entitled 'The Hungry Forties'. This recounted the poverty experienced by his parents in rural Norfolk, prior to his birth in 1850. In a comparable urban vein, in Manchester, a Ruskinian social reformer, and founder of the Ancoats Brotherhood in 1878, Charles Rowley (1839-1933) also reconstructed his life story with a first chapter entitled the 'Hungry Forties', noting 'we had abounding distress with suffering' with tea consumed only during his mother's thirteen confinements (his father was a warper and picture frame maker).⁶⁹ Among more local examples were the recollections of James Ashworth of Blackburn, recreating his life-story in a similarly stylised manner,⁷⁰ while a whole range of autobiographies paid deference to this conceptualization in their reminiscences.⁷¹ Thirdly, the 'Hungry Forties' did permeate scholarly discourse as well as popular history between the Wars. For example, in 1919, in what was a detailed, if patriotic, summation of Britain's nineteenth-century economic achievements, William Page (1861-1934), best known as general editor of the *Victoria County History of England*, noted soberly, 'The country was in a state of distress and misery which later gave to the period the sinister name of 'the hungry forties'.⁷² In 1923, an edition of the memoir of Robert Roberts (1834-85), was characterised by its modern editor as 'a vivid description of the economic conditions of the Welsh hill farmers in the "hungry forties"'.⁷³ Arthur Redford's study of labour migration published in 1926 included a chapter entitled 'The Hungry Forties', although this was simply a generic title, not the basis for analysis.⁷⁴ It remained influential in more popular histories, for example, G. D. H. Cole and R.W. Postgate's *The Common People* (London, 1938, 1946) and George Trevelyan's highly influential *English Social History*.⁷⁵ Further light on the

diffusion of the term is also shown by its currency in school textbooks. Here a sample of textbooks designed for different ages suggests that it was still commonly deployed in interwar and immediate postwar Britain in upper school level textbooks but far more rarely at books aimed at those under 13.⁷⁶ It persisted into the 1950s, although the more up-to date texts, making use of recent academic scholarship, no longer used this term.⁷⁷

Fourthly, the ‘Hungry Forties’ retained a marked, if declining, political pertinency – it was a slogan which was regularly deployed in interwar Britain, especially in the context of Liberal and Labour opposition to Conservative economic policy. For example, in the Commons, the ‘father of the House’, T. P. O’Connor in 1925, spoke as an old free trader, ‘I want to save the masses from the wolf of hunger, which free trade drove from their doors in the hungry forties’.⁷⁸ Likewise the Labour MP Robert Richardson recalled in 1925 that as a young man he had lived with a man who remembered ‘he could not have bread in the ‘Hungry Forties’ and as a result ‘All my life I have hated the very name of Protection’.⁷⁹ When the National Government in 1931-2 introduced policies modelled on those of Joseph Chamberlain, its critics regularly recalled the ‘Hungry Forties’, with the Labour leader, Lansbury, forecasting optimistically that ‘when once again the people endure what they endured in the Hungry Forties’, they would turn to socialism.⁸⁰ More generally, as the shadow of hunger extended in the 1930s, concepts of the ‘hungry thirties’ were, as James Vernon has shown, loosely but directly modelled on the memory of the 1840s, extending its message to a new political generation, while making it aware that, in the spirit of ‘Never Again’, British social democracy now guaranteed equality of food supply as it introduced bread rationing in 1946.⁸¹ The post-war currency of the term is well-indicated by its choice in 1949 as one of the BBC’s radio programmes for schools,

which took the form of a dramatic presentation of ‘the story of Richard Cobden’s struggle for cheap bread in the Hungry Forties’.⁸²

Finally, as the centenary of the repeal of the Corn Laws beckoned in 1946, hunger was again high on political agendas, not only nationally but globally. In the dawning age of international governance, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the newly-created United Nations, confronted in 1946 the same problem of hunger, which had faced Peel in 1846, ‘the basic problem of food’. The London publicity department of the FAO looking back to the ‘Hungry Forties’, as period of intense misery but one followed by prosperity and productivity, asked ‘Will our troubled forties end in the same manner.’ But like those who had seen the 1840s as the culmination of discontent between 1815 and 1846,⁸³ post-1945 statesmen also identified a longer-term problem, with the previous twenty-five years in world history characterised by hunger and starvation, as the FAO set out to achieve world food control and ‘freedom from want’ as the basis of future peace.⁸⁴ Significantly, FAO’s first director-general was the long-lived Boyd Orr (1880-1971) whose awareness of poverty and malnutrition had been acquired in the slums of Glasgow in the early twentieth century, and who was to allude knowledgeably to the ‘Hungry Forties’ both on the radio and in the House of Lords.⁸⁵

Revision and Transmutation since the 1950s.

This global extension of the ‘Hungry Forties’ chrononym was nevertheless the prelude to its erosion from national memory, part of the wider disappearance of the central values of nineteenth-century liberal political economy and its epigones.⁸⁶ Already in the 1930s the phrase ‘Hungry Forties’ had been debunked as ‘a priceless myth’, for the 1840s, were ‘not in Britain a time of special poverty or of specially

high prices of food'.⁸⁷ Most economic historians fought shy of the term. Sir John Clapham, the first professor of economic history at Cambridge, did not use it in his great economic history of Britain, and in a Manchester lecture in 1945 pointedly repudiated it, for the 1840s were 'no hungrier than the 1830s or 1850s'.⁸⁸ Similarly, T. S. Ashton, author of a classic history of the Industrial Revolution, but a Free Trade Union lecturer before 1914, also repudiated the term as one which 'fastened on the decade that saw the railway boom and the repeal of the Corn Laws the stigma of the "hungry forties"'.⁸⁹ This revisionism was completed when the expression was authoritatively historicized by a Manchester economic historian, deeply versed in the history of the North-West, the epicentre of the 'Hungry Forties' in reality and fiction. Chaloner became the first historian firmly to describe the Edwardian origins of the usage in *The Hungry Forties* and its transmission to canonical reference works such as the 1910 (but not 1903) edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Suggestively Chaloner traced the Edwardian deployment of the term back to the 'hunger-propaganda of the Anti-Corn Law League', but his main purpose was to dismiss the reality of hunger for most of the decade between 1840 and 1850, concluding on the basis of statistics for wages and consumption, 'Not much remains therefore of the "Hungry Forties"'.⁹⁰ Chaloner's corrective was widely available, having been published in 1957 as the first of a Historical Association series, *Aids to Teachers*, and reprinted six times in the 1960s. It helped signal the end of the 'English' 'Hungry Forties' in popular usage, especially as the conditions in which that debate had thrived seemed increasingly remote from the post-war age of affluence.

This malleable chrononym however proved enduring in a number of ways. For example, despite the emergence of major historical studies of the Irish famine which revealed the irrelevance of the term, the English media loosely applied the term to a

growing number of influential literary and dramatic works which explored the Irish ‘Great Hunger’.⁹¹ Secondly, for British historians it remained useful as a trope to convey the character of the early 1840s as a distinctive period of time typified by the greatest depth of popular distress and discontent in nineteenth-century Britain, and so a legitimate source for later ‘myths’. Finally, as indicated above, the term crossed the Channel, entering the vocabulary of food and hunger in the origins of the 1848 Revolutions. All the more surprisingly, therefore, well into the 1980s the term was still loosely and uncritically used as if contemporary. Even after further recent reassessments of the myth of the ‘Hungry Forties’, historians have been reluctant to abandon such an evocative and powerful, if anachronistic, expression.

In many ways, therefore, the ‘Hungry Forties’ as a term compares to what Hirsch has labelled ‘postmemory’, for those who deployed and were influenced by this phrase were, for the most part, not those who had experienced that decade as a lived experience but a later generation.⁹² Even so its construction depended vitally on the living witnesses assembled in *The Hungry Forties*, whose ‘traumas’ were passed on to and reinterpreted by a later generation. In this process of social and cultural mediation, individuals reinterpreted their own lives and the ‘Hungry Forties’ came to constitute a part of their own identity. But for most, the reality of the ‘Hungry Forties’ soon paled into insignificance by comparison with the fear of its return, a political anxiety generated in a specific political context in early twentieth-century Britain. Yet the narrative in which protection and tariffs endangered popular welfare thereafter constituted a benchmark against which to test economic policies and, in effect, human rights, the freedom from hunger in a national context. Here postmemories generated in the Edwardian period were by no means without future significance, especially as hunger emerged at the centre of global concerns a century later. While therefore the

‘Hungry Forties’ lacked accuracy from its invention, its compellingly constructed memory of oppression and redemption undoubtedly entered the national consciousness from which it only slowly faded, long after its claims to verisimilitude had been falsified. As such, a folk narrative had been effectively relayed as a democratic history of the British people, with fragmentary local memories turned into a collective popular memory with its own images, motifs, and narratives surrounding the ‘People’s Bread’.

¹ ‘This title was the invention of Cobden’s daughter, and the phrase, used every day on political platforms and by the Press, has thus become part of the literary coinage of the English language’, Francis W. Soutter, *Fights for Freedom: the story of my life*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1925, p. 33.

² Thus James Vernon notes, the term became imprinted in the ‘political unconscious’ and ‘historians and novelists have ever since reproduced the phrase as a contemporary description of the 1840s’, *Hunger: A Modern History*, London, Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 256.

³ William H. Chaloner, *The Hungry Forties* (London, Historical Association, 1957).

⁴ ‘the 1840s were no worse than the previous decades or for that matter the 1850s-60s’, Frank Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 40.

⁵ Peter Gurney, ‘“Rejoicing in Potatoes”: The Politics of Consumption in England during the “Hungry Forties”’, *Past & Present* 203 (May 2009), p. 99-136, esp. p.101.

⁶ *Hungry Forties*, p. 242-6.

⁷ Famine memory in Ireland used the terms ‘The Great Hunger’ or ‘The bad times’. See, *inter alia*, Andrew Merry [Mildred Darby, pseud.], *The Hunger: Being Realities of the Famine years: Ireland, 1845-1848*, London, Andrew Melrose, 1910; Cathal Póirtéir, *Famine Echoes*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1995, p. 280; Niall Ó Ciosáin, ‘Famine memory and the popular representation of scarcity’, in Ian McBride, ed. *History and memory in Modern Ireland*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 95-117; Peter Gray and Oliver Kendrick, eds. *The memory of catastrophe*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004.

⁸ For a recent usage with respect to Ireland, Charlotte Boyce, ‘Representing the “Hungry Forties” in image and verse: the Politics of Hunger in early Victorian periodicals’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 40 (2012), 421-49.

⁹ Cormac Ó Gráda, Richard Paping, & Eric Vanhaute (eds.), *When the Potato Failed: Causes and Effects of the Last European Subsistence Crisis*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2007; Mike Rapport, *1848: Year of Revolution*, London, Little Brown, 2008, p.[90].

¹⁰ *Times*, 25 July 1903, p. 12.

¹¹ Dated 12 Jan. 1904, *Times*, 15 Jan.1904, p. 4a.

¹² As Rosebery wrote to Fisher Unwin, ‘nothing could be more effective in stemming the fiscal revolution;’, 5 Feb. 1904, Cobden Papers, CP154, fo. 1, West Sussex Record Office [hereafter WSRO].

¹³ This appeared *inter alia* in *Daily News*, *The Times*, *Westminster Gazette*, *Reynold’s Newspaper*, *Christian World*, and *Methodist Times*.

¹⁴ *Hungry Forties*, p. 20.

¹⁵ *The Hungry Forties* was dedicated ‘To those who in his native village of Heyshott have known and loved Richard Cobden’.

¹⁶ *The Hungry Forties*, p. 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54; Royalty agreement between E. J. C. Unwin and T. F. Unwin, publishers, 28 Oct. 1904, CP 1081, WSRO.

¹⁸ Ireland, Wales, and Scotland were less well represented, with Jane Cobden Unwin regretting ‘the general silence of Scotland’, with the exception of one ‘exceedingly interesting’ account from Aberdeen, *Hungry Forties*, 227, 236-42. Newspaper evidence suggests that the term was commonly

used in Scotland as part of a wider British debate, rather than one which paid attention to the particular experience of famine in Scotland in the 1840s. For the latter, Thomas M. Devine, *The great Highland famine: hunger, emigration and the Scottish Highlands in the nineteenth century* (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1988); for the former, *inter alia*, *Dundee Daily Press* (14 Jan. 1910; 24 Aug. 1911; 20 Jan. 1913); *Falkirk Herald* (29 Jan. 1910; 31 Dec. 1910).

¹⁹ In fact, many in this context paid tribute to Richard Cobden's role locally as an employer rather than nationally as the hero of repeal.

²⁰ *Free trade and Protection: which is it to be. Read this and see. 1. How Norfolk people suffered in the old days of Protection. 2. How Mr Chamberlain's Scheme would again tax your food*, Free Trade Union, 1903, copy in Millennium Library, Norwich. I am grateful to Alun Howkins for identifying the tract used by Jane Cobden-Unwin. Similar memories were mobilised in the chapter 'In the days of protection', in Henry W. Massingham, ed. *Labour and Protection*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1903, p. 118-42.

²¹ *The Hungry Forties*, p. 136-7; biographical data from ancestry.co.uk.

²² *Hungry Forties*, p. 77-82; Garth Christian (ed.), *James Hawker's Journal: A Victorian Poacher*, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, esp. p. 15, 95. This book was dedicated to John Tudor Walters, by coincidence, the son of a correspondent of Richard Cobden in the 1850s, CP 4, WSR0. Hawkins had direct local knowledge of one of Chamberlain's Tariff Commissioners, the Leicester hosiery manufacturer and local landowner, John Corah, *Journal*, p. 95; cf Andrew Marrison, *British Business and Protection, 1903-1932*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 50, 61, 180, 185.

²³ *Hungry Forties*, p. 274.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, quotations at p. 252, 255.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

²⁶ Chamberlain himself became the personal embodiment of this threat, *Hungry Forties*, p. 62, 68-9 et seq.

²⁷ Anthony Howe, 'Towards the "Hungry Forties": free trade in Britain, c. 1880-1906' in Eugenio Biagini, ed. *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 193-218; id. *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846-1946*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997, p. 232, 259, 263, 271; Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, p. 34-45.

²⁸ Thus Patrick Joyce writes, the myth of the Hungry Forties 'was to be one of the most enduring and energising political myths of the century', *Democratic Subjects: the self and the social in nineteenth-century England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 129-30.

²⁹ This later acted as a source for Arnold Bennett's *Clayhanger* (1910).

³⁰ John G. O'Leary, ed. *The autobiography of Joseph Arch* (1st ed. 1898), St Albans, Macgibbon & Kee, 1966, p. [xx]; see too John Mills, *Protection's 'Good Old Days': some early century recollections* (Manchester, Sherratt & Hughes, 1903).

³¹ Interestingly, also a suggestion made by Lord Rosebery, to Unwin, see note 12.

³² Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England*, p. 31, 32.

³³ Valerie Chancellor, *History for their Masters: Opinion in the English History Textbook, 1800-1914*, Bath, Adam & Dart, 1970; 'the principle of history was represented by Free Trade, that of reaction by Protection', Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the question of class, 1848-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 189.

³⁴ Mary A. M. Marks, *The Corn Laws: A popular history*, London, A. C. Fifield, 1908, p. 7. This book contained a severe indictment of the landed interest from the point of view of a land reformer but unusually spoke of the 'hungry twenties' rather than the 'hungry forties'.

³⁵ Paul Readman, 'The Place of the Past in English Culture, c. 1890-1914', *Past & Present* 186 (2005), p. 147-99.

³⁶ Hawkins, *Journal*, p. xvi, ; Joseph Arch, *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Jan. 1906, p. 10; Newbould T. Palmer, *In memoriam William Henry Chawick, the 'Old Chartist'*, Luton, 1908.

³⁷ Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, plate IV between pages 210-11.

³⁸ Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England*, p. 271.

³⁹ Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, p. 69-133. For an illustration, below, p. [xx].

⁴⁰ For a recent usage, Robert Tombs, *The English and their History: the first thirteen centuries*, London, Allen Lane, 2014, p. [544].

⁴¹ *Times*, 5 Nov. 1904, p. 12.

⁴² Figures from 1912 edition; Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, p. 41.

⁴³ Luke Blaxill, 'The Language of British Electoral Politics, 1880-1910', unpublished PhD thesis, Kings' College, London (2012), esp. chap. IV.

- ⁴⁴ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* [hereafter *Hansard*], 4th ser. (144), c. 394, 4 Apr. 1905; also *ibid.* (185), c. 782, 4 Mar. 1908.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (189), c. 414, 21 May 1908.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 5th ser. (4), c. 1083, 25 Nov. 1909.
- ⁴⁷ WSRO, CP 154. fo. 63 draft leaflet, 'The Hungry Forties' for Women' Free Trade Union, 25 Feb. 1908; *The bad days of protection* (Liberal Publications Department, leaflet 1993, 1904); *They remember: the miseries of protection* (Liberal League, no. 125, 1904); Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, p. 41.
- ⁴⁸ *Free Trade Nation*, pp. 34-5.
- ⁴⁹ *Hansard*, 5th ser. (22), c. 2342, 15 Mar. 1911.
- ⁵⁰ *Times*, 20 Jan. 1913, p. 8.
- ⁵¹ Blaxill, 'Language', p. 202-7.
- ⁵² Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, p. 41.
- ⁵³ Anthony Howe, 'Popular Political Economy' in David Craig & James Thompson (eds.), *Languages of Politics in nineteenth-century Britain*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 119-41.
- ⁵⁴ Frank Trentmann, 'Wealth versus Welfare: the British Left between Free Trade and national political economy before the First World War', *Historical Research* 70, 1997, p. 70-98.
- ⁵⁵ Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 209-26. As late as 1932, a Factory Inspector in Lancashire complained 'You know Lancashire people never seem able to forget the hungry 'forties – it's burnt into them somehow', recalled by the Labour politician, Ellen Wilkinson, 'Born and Bred in Lancashire', *The Listener* 881, 29 Nov. 1945, p. 617.
- ⁵⁶ For Clarke see *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, V, ed. Joyce M. Bellamy & John. Saville, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1979, p. 64-70; Joyce, *Visions of the People*, pp. 301-2.
- ⁵⁷ Clarke, 'Men who fought for us', p. 279.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 269.
- ⁵⁹ See Tweedell, a Co-operative Wholesale Society director, cited *Times*, 7 Aug. 1907, p. 10.
- ⁶⁰ George D. H. Cole, *A Century of Co-operation, 1844-1944*, London, Co-operative Union, 1944, chap. 1, 'The Hungry Forties'; *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Dec. 1943, p.6; *Manchester Guardian*, 20 June 1944, p. 6.
- ⁶¹ *Hansard*, 5th ser. (217), c. 484, 30 June.
- ⁶² Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, p. 189-190 et seq.
- ⁶³ Chaloner, *Hungry Forties*, p. 6.
- ⁶⁴ Frederick W. Moorman, *Songs of the Ridings*, London, Elkin Mathews, 1918, p. 49-50. This verse was dedicated to the Yorkshire members of the Workers' Educational Association and had first appeared in the local press, possibly much earlier as a contribution to the Edwardian debate.
- ⁶⁵ 'Present Day and the Hungry Forties', *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Nov. 1928, p. 13.
- ⁶⁶ See Mary D. Stocks, *My Commonplace Book*, p. 159-60, 'a piece of raw history'.
- ⁶⁷ *My Uncle Silas*, Preface, p. 9. A collection of short stories, with illustrations by Edward Ardizzone; a second collection followed in 1957, and successful adaptations on television and film.
- ⁶⁸ *The Listener*, 2 Apr. 1930, p. 584; *ibid* (14 Dec. 1932), C. R. Attlee. See too 'Bread: A Play for the Microphone', aired in July 1932, *Radio Times*, 460, 22 July 1932, p. 28. The scriptwriter, Lawrence du Garde Peach, was later to author the text for the Co-operative Centenary Pageant in 1944, above, p. [x]
- ⁶⁹ Charles Rowley, *Fifty years of Work without Wages (Laborare est Orare)*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, n. d. ?1911, p. 3-10.
- ⁷⁰ *Blackburn Times*, 3 May 1924.
- ⁷¹ Dyke Wilkinson, *Rough Roads; Reminiscences of a Wasted Life*, London, Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd, 1912, p. 3; George R. Sims, recalling his Chartist grandfather; Soutter, *Fights for Freedom* p. 13-14, preface by John Burns, p. 33.
- ⁷² *Commerce and Industry*, 2 vols. London, Constable, 1919, p. 127-8, 141-5, 147. This work carried a preface by the tariff reform economist Sir William Ashley. For Page, see http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/william_page.html#resources [consulted 18 Dec. 2015]
- ⁷³ John H. Davies (ed.), *The Life and Opinions of Robert Roberts, wandering scholar, as told by himself*, Cardiff, William Lewis, 1923.
- ⁷⁴ Arthur Redford, *Labour Migration in England, 1800-50*, Manchester, The University Press, 1926, ch. vii, 118-31.
- ⁷⁵ Chapter XXIV, 'The Hungry Forties', pp. 291-309 in 1971 reprint, University Paperback; Chaloner, 8-9; George M Trevelyan, *English Social History*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1944, p. 553, 558.

⁷⁶ This account is based on a sample of 30 or so titles, identified from the school textbook collection, Institute of Education, London. Examples include Isidore Tenen, *A History of England From the Earliest Times to 1932*, London, Macmillan & Co., 1932, p. 565-9; Anna Titterton, *From Waterloo to George VI*, London, Ginn, 1939, p. 57, 68-9; Edward J. S. Lay, *The Modern Class-Book of English History. Senior Book V, Victoria and Modern Times*, London, Macmillan & Co, 1939, p. 27.

⁷⁷ Thus it survived in the second edition of Donald G. Perry and Ronald M. S. Pasley, *Modern British History, 1815-to 1939*, London, A. & C. Black, 1948, p. 491 but not in Charles P. Hill, *A Survey of British History, Book IV, 1783-1939*, London, Edward Arnold, 1949, a book informed by the latest Oxford Histories of England. Hill remained a standard textbook throughout the 1950s and 1960s (personal knowledge).

⁷⁸ *Hansard*, 5th ser. (185), c. 1781, 25 June 1925.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* (183), c. 1269, 7 May 1925

⁸⁰ *Hansard*, (260), c. 2108, 10 Dec. 1931; (265), c. 688, 28 Apr. 1932, recalling his personal knowledge of a survivor of the 'Hungry Forties'.

⁸¹ For example, Fenner Brockway, *Hungry England*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1932; Vernon, *Hunger*, p. 236-71; Noel Annan, 'One hundred years ago', *The Listener*, 5 Dec. 1946.

⁸² John Cotton Gagg, 'The hungry forties' (stencilled script of BBC broadcast), 2 June 1949, W.E. Tate Papers, Museum of English Rural Life, MS 1234A/1/27; Tate, later a pioneering rural and local historian, acted as programme assistant; BBC Written Archives, R16 Education general – Schools Programmes - History, 1938-1954; *Radio Times*, 1337, 27 May 1949, p. 18; *Manchester Guardian* (3 May 1949), p. 8. The Manchester Central Library organised a book display to coincide with this talk.

⁸³ Among them, the last of the 'Cobdenites', Francis W. Hirst, *The Repeal of the Corn Laws, with an account of the Hungry Forties*, Midhurst, Cobden Club, 1946, p. 17-27.

⁸⁴ *The Hungry Forties* (Public Relations Office for F.A.O. in the U.K., London, 1946).

⁸⁵ *Hansard*, 5th ser. (178, Lords), c. 209, 23 July 1952, on food prices; J. Boyd Orr, 'The Road through Plenty to Peace', *Listener*, 1002, 17 June 1948, based on his radio talk, 10 June, *Radio Times*, 1286, 4 June 1948, p. 16.

⁸⁶ See Frank Trentmann, 'The Resurrection and Decomposition of Cobden in Britain and the West; in Anthony Howe & Simon Morgan, eds., *Rethinking Nineteenth-Century Liberalism: Richard Cobden Bicentenary Essays*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, p. 264-88.

⁸⁷ Montague Fordham, *Britain's Trade and Agriculture: their recent evolution and future development*, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1932, p. 28-9, cited by Chaloner, p. 10. Fordham, an active rural reformer in Edwardian Britain, was clearly familiar with earlier usages of the term.

⁸⁸ 'Corn Law Repeal, Free Trade and History', *Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society* vol. [x] 1945, read at the Society, 10 Oct. 1945; *The Manchester Guardian* rather demurred as this slaying of a favoured local 'sacred cow', ed. 11 Oct. 1945, p. 4.

⁸⁹ Thomas S. Ashton, 'The Treatment of Capitalism by Historians' in Friedrich A. Hayek, ed. *Capitalism and the Historians*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p. 55. Ashton's essay had originally appeared in the *Journal of Economic History*, Supplement IX (1949).

⁹⁰ *Hungry Forties*, p. 9. Chaloner did not treat the Irish Famine as part of his Hungry Forties.

⁹¹ Redcliffe N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1949; R. Dudley Edwards & T. Desmond Williams, eds., *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, 1845-52*, Dublin, Browne & Nolan, 1956; Mrs Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland, 1845-9*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1962; *Times*, 10 Oct. 1956 (review of Michael Molloy's 'The Paddy Pedlar'; *Times*, 8 Aug. 1961 (review of a radio play, 'A grand year for mushrooms'); George Cusack and Sarah Goss, eds. *Hungry Words: Images of Famine in the Irish Canon*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2006.

⁹² Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012.