INTRODUCTION
CONTEXTUALIZING DEATH

The nature of how individuals and societies conceptualize and categorize death and the dead is entwined with diverse forms of materiality, in public, private, ritual and secular settings. How such material culture is used in post-mortem contexts is a framework within which it is possible to discover the particular attitudes and beliefs of people in one area of Ireland and identify the routes through which material forms mediate relationships. The literature on death and the dead in Ireland ranges through folklore, archaeology, history and anthropology, and this is drawn on along with a vast body of work from anthropologists on death and the dead.

Attending to Material Culture

There have been increasing calls from anthropologists to investigate more varied forms of material culture in relation to death. Humphrey (1980: 556–57) argued for greater attention to be paid to forms of memorialization other than tombs. In a review of Metcalf and Huntington's (1991 [1979]) study of mortuary rituals, she advocated that more attention should be focused, in Western societies, on material forms such as photographs, tapes and individual anniversary practices. Nearly twenty-five years later Robben (2004: 13) recognized the paucity of death studies in Western societies that centred on material culture. He reminds us that the 'objectification of material culture' was a major focus for anthropologists one hundred years ago. Yet he acknowledges a renewed interest in materiality and death evident in works by, for example, Hallam and Hockey (2001). This follows an enthusiasm for attention to material culture (which has long been the focus of

archaeologists) that has resulted in theoretical works on humans and materiality (Schiffer 1999); the biographies and social life of objects (Appadurai 1986; Attfield 2000; Hoskins 1998); materiality in everyday life (Miller 1998, 2001); and interpretations of museum collections (Pearce 1994).

The concept of agency has been a crucial element in theorizing objects, and in an examination of art objects Gell (1998: 22) contends that agency is 'relational and context dependent'. The boundaries between people and objects and how material items portray personhood are addressed by Knappett (2005: 31) in his notion also of a relational agency that is 'distributed across hybridised human–non-human networks'. More recently Knappett and Malafouris (2008) consider the concept of materiality and non-human agency. Knappett (2008: 139–56) expands the application of Actor Network Theory (ANT) in an archaeological context and argues for a concept of agency 'that is a process distributed across collectives of humans and non-humans'. He suggests that a distinction between 'objects' and 'things' can be advantageous in considering what he calls 'the variable character of material actors' (2008: 143–44). Latour (2005: 72) asks that we allow for all participants in actions or networks and suggests that objects can 'authorise, allow, encourage, permit'. Knappett (2008: 143) is anxious not to define objects solely in terms of a subject/object relationship and advocates for a greater focus on the materials of things as part of the investigation of agency. This fusing, or perhaps resultant hybrid, is, however, contingent on the agency of humans who initiate the action for specific reasons. There is also the realization of course that the dead exert a degree of agency, or have the potential to do so, over the living. The dead are still conceptualized as human, although admittedly in an altered state. None of this negates Miller's (2010: 93–94) arguments that 'things do things to us, and not just the things we want them to do' and this can apply to the toy on which we stub our toe or something 'that falls from the mantelpiece and breaks' (2010: 94). Yet, while acknowledging that a person did not direct the action, can we say that the things are acting on agency? As will be discussed below, however, in terms of inalienability, objects can be seen to have agency in relation to the past. In conjunction with that, I suggest that in considering the human/object engagement in relation to the conflation of boundaries, this is precipitated by the experiential, the sensory engagement and cognitive nature of humans who are realizing connections and embodied interplay with objects. One aspect of those interactions is how objects may depict personhood (chapters 3, 4 and 6) and the way in which this is tied to different aspects of social relations; this is particularly addressed when examining how and why certain items are selected as keepsakes. In doing so I draw on ethnographic studies of objects, meanings and memory that have been undertaken by,

among others, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981), Curasi et al. (2004; and Price et al. (2000).

Investigations of material culture in homes reveal changes over the generations in how many treasured items may be kept and displayed. Arensberg and Kimball (1968 [1940]: 129) described the practice of keeping treasured items in a special room (the 'west room') in a County Clare household.[1] Here were kept special objects, including heirlooms that were 'associated with past members of the household'. The west room evoked a power through the furniture and objects that were used to decorate the space (Taylor 1999: 231–35). These items were inalienable, as the family would part with them only 'when it must' (Arensberg and Kimball 1968 [1940]: 129). In contrast to the centrality of the west room that played 'a crucial role in the drama of domestic life' (Taylor 1999: 223) because it housed particular objects of sentimental value, my work shows that objects can be more dispersed throughout the household. The rules and norms governing display and access have changed; some items are now more public than in previous generations, while others remain privately tucked away and rarely shared. The motivations to memorialize is evidenced in this study through the attachment that people place on keepsakes and mementos. These items are often of no monetary value yet may act as representations of the deceased or of their personality. The picture in the hallway, the book on the shelf and the headstone in the graveyard are analogous with the examples of memorial artefacts elucidated by Goody (1974: 452): 'the ancestral tablets of traditional China … the stools of the Ashanti, the clay pots of the Tallensi … the simple anthropomorphic shrines of the LoDagga'.

The analysis of material culture in this ethnography is therefore undertaken within the context of previous ethnographic studies but also with cognizance of a growing body of more recent theoretical work in anthropology on materiality. An underlying concern in much of this work is with reclaiming the importance of material objects as potent agents of communication in the everyday cultural lives of peoples around the world. Placing materiality more centrally in the analysis of social and cultural behaviour is not to fetishize material worlds, but rather to acknowledge that social worlds are 'as much constituted by materiality as the other way around' (Miller 1998: 3). The contention that a focus on objects does not negate or marginalize the anthropological goal of the study of people is borne out by Hoskins's (1998: 2) observations that the history of objects inevitably entails the history of persons. Hoskins found she could not separate these elements in her study of how ordinary household possessions might be given an extraordinary significance 'by becoming entangled in the events of a person's life and used as a vehicle for a sense of selfhood' (Hoskins 1998: 2). Objects have social

meanings, which can be unravelled, and are as integral a part of our lives as our bodies, 'indeed, these two facets of our lives have the fundamental characteristic of physicality not possessed by most other facets of our existence' (Pearce 1994: 1–3).

The Value of Things

One of the major concerns of this book is to consider how and why objects acquire particular types of value. The material culture of the dead includes an array of objects ranging from headstones, keepsakes and mementos to more transient or ephemeral forms that are manifested in text or displays of commemoration at gravesides or monuments. They are used to immortalize the dead and symbolize the personhood of the deceased. Material items may become instilled, by use and association, with emotional capacities and move towards 'the ontological state of "self" (subject) from that of "other" (object)' (Lupton 1998: 144; Hallam and Hockey 2001: 43). Objects used in imagining the dead have biographies (Kopytoff 1986: 64–91) that connect them to the social and cultural processes of the communities in which they circulate or are positioned. The social life of material objects (Appadurai 1986: 34) is dependent on the stories (or narratives), associations and interactions between objects and people (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 44). It is through these media that material forms process towards achieving inalienability (Carrier 1993; Herrmann 1997; Mauss 1954; Weiner 1985). Their value (like Geary's relics 1986: 188)[2] depends on specific beliefs and circumstances and the 'social and cultural transition' of the objects. Their uses, progressions, and changing forms are elemental in the role they play in the symbolic constitution of ideas of immortality. The status of material objects and attempts to situate them in relation to commercial trade has led anthropologists continually to define and revisit concepts of value. It is, however, not just anthropologists who are concerned with the criterion of value. People make decisions constantly on value in deciding which items to keep or discard. Objects are allocated sentimental, monetary or historical family value or a combination of these. Rarely have they only one form of value.

In considering how the former possessions of the dead become cherished keepsakes and mementos, I have drawn on a large body of anthropological literature concerned with the concept of 'inalienability',[3] a term fraught with debate. Noyes (1936: 435–36) was not convinced that it defined effectively the distinctions of value and exclusivity. In evaluating the concept of inalienability, I consider how it is dependent on circulation and distribution and how the former belongings of the dead can exhibit a power to define

who the deceased was and possess a role in preserving part of the identity of the dead (Weiner 1985: 210–27). It will be shown that in order to retain an inalienable quality, these objects never lose the identity of and the attachment to the person to whom they once belonged. Mauss (1923–24, cited by Weiner 1985: 210–27) recognized that in giving away something, a part of one's nature and substance was also given, 'while to receive something is to receive a part of someone's spiritual essence … the thing given is not inert, it is alive and often personified'. Thus, in the context of practices carried out by the people with whom I worked, objects can be agents in relation to the past and the present and are enmeshed in social and cultural associations. The agency of the material objects is manifested in their ability to maintain connections with the dead through the keeping of items that evoke the embodied person: 'connections between bodies, spaces and objects articulated the inner dimensions of the individual and symbolized their social relations' (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 41). Without the social and cultural connections, material items cannot be 'alive', but when they are tied to associations with people, places and stories, they are, like the Maori cloaks (one of two 'traditional wealth objects' noted by Weiner 1985: 214), unique in their personal histories and so rendered irreplaceable.

More recent work on inalienable items has, for example, concentrated on the processes through which already cherished possessions of older consumers become inalienable (Curasi et al. 2004). People employ various strategies to precipitate an item's inalienable status and this is done as a way of perpetuating a lineage or history, thus encapsulating memory on the more macro level of the extended family (Price et al. 2000). Goody's exposition of what he called 'intergenerational transmission' (1962: 273) considered the mechanism for the redistribution of rights and material items of the deceased – a process that he recognized as necessary for cultural transmission. The distribution of items across generations is addressed in how belongings are shared hierarchically and horizontally (chapter 4) not just among kin but also among friends and acquaintances. I examine the efficacy of the transmission of objects in relation to shared notions about the dead and their relationships with the living. Any transfer of inheritance can potentially be adversarial and certain people within a group of family or friends may feel overlooked in the distribution of wealth and goods. Goody (1962: 276–83) recognized this, and the mechanisms used to pre-empt conflict, as a common factor in all types of societies. These mitigating procedures may include the making of wills or, in Ireland, the handing over of title to land when children marry (Arensberg 1937: 78; Goody 1962: 278). There is an acknowledgement of a relationship in life and it is this connection that is a determining factor in the transfer of material items. The myriad situations that surround the concept of reciprocity are seen in the context of this ethnography as

post-mortem acknowledgements of relationships that are bound up with post-mortem obligations to the dead, methods of both material and cultural transmission.

In a re-evaluation of Kopytoff (1986) and Weiner (1985, 1992), Graeber (2001: 33–35) argues that Weiner reverses Simmel's (1971: 54) position that value is a product of exchange; Weiner argues that things become valuable in direct proportion to the level of fear of losing them. Graeber disagrees with Kopytoff that objects are valuable simply because they are 'unique'. This is, of course, dependent on some agreed definition of 'unique', which is as problematic as 'inalienable'. Graeber (2001: 34) acknowledges, however, that an item's ability to 'accumulate a history' formulates and enhances its value. Both Kopytoff (1986) and Weiner (1985, 1992) make useful points in relation to objects, albeit from different perspectives. There is an over-concentration in their work, however, on items of relative high status, which contrasts with the emphasis in this study on everyday items and how they attain or are ascribed value. I argue that value is more fluid and relative; indeed Simmel (1971: 50) argued strongly for relativity in value, although he anchored it to exchange. His theory is useful, however, when applied to how the relativity of relationships to people and associations are determinants of an object's value. I argue that this is not merely a chronology of the trajectory of an object but also its associated stories connected to specific people that underlie aspects of value.

The Self in Things

Weiner (1985: 212) discusses the issue of immortality in reference to Simmel's (1971) observations that objects may embody 'pathos' because 'they encompass the limits and constraints in social relations'. In linking persons with things, the materiality of the things is superseded; items may become routes through which mortality is transcended. What this raises are questions about where the 'self' may reside and what that can tell us about people's perceptions of the dead. The materiality of experience and being in the world is a fundamental human condition that has to be, nevertheless, viewed in conjunction with the acknowledgement of the nonmaterial realm that exists beyond death. Humans conceive the world, and outside of the world, in terms of quantification and experience that are physical and material.

The sense of a continuing presence of the dead, documented in the ethnographic literature, has led to new concepts of the body. Hallam et al. (1999) have sought to theorize the body by exploring the site of the 'self' when it is not coterminous with the physical body. The idea of a 'self' beyond the body is essential to the people in the area I worked. They believe that what con-

stitutes the 'essence' of a person is not confined to the physical. Yet, this 'essence' or fundamental encapsulating of 'self' has to be made material. Here we are faced with the paradox, or perhaps more accurately, the dialectic, of corporeality and non-corporeality, wherein, in seeking to acknowledge and capture the 'self' outside of the body this is done by a reversal through projecting memories onto material items. The notion of a disembodied 'self' is materialized and objects may be used to symbolize the deceased.[4]

Material forms are also indicators of beliefs about the dead and how they should be treated. Malinowski (1948) recognized the contradictory state between love and fear and argued that fear was not only centred on the corpse; the ambivalence was between 'love of the dead and fear of the corpse' (Goody 1962: 21–22). In Ireland, the fear of the corpse is not overtly manifested, if it is there at all. The corpse is cleansed, laid out and displayed, kept company and entertained at wakes; it is incorporated into rituals (Taylor 1989a). If these rites can be properly viewed as ways to temper fear, then it is not fear of the physical corpse, but fear of the dead. Contradictions do arise between love and fear of the dead – or love of the self that was in the body, but fear of that other self that is not embodied. The stories that people tell and the reasons for specific remembrance practices reveal beliefs and attitudes towards that altered state of 'self' of the dead that cannot be contained by the living, only placated (Christiansen 1946). There is an unequal power relationship that thus ensues and this generates, if not outright fear, then a degree of apprehension and uncertainty of the unknown world of the dead, an apprehension that is negotiated and mitigated differentially according to culture. The rituals and rites, private and public performances that follow can be traced to this fear.

The transformation of the deceased into an altered state or being may in various societies render a person an ancestor, at times a ghost, or an ever-present spirit. The belief that the dead are accessible in this new form is necessary for continued memorializing and relationships. In China, contact with the dead, whether they are ancestors or ghosts, is potentially 'dangerous and disturbing' (Stafford 2000: 79–80). There is a duality to the spirits of the dead in China and a combination of the 'benign' and the 'demonic' in the cosmos (Stafford 2000: 31). The dead in China and in many societies, including Ireland, are believed to have the potential and the power to intervene in the lives of the living. Beliefs in the dead who may come back to remonstrate with the living (Ochoa 2007: 475) or the ghosts who can be both benevolent and malevolent[5] (Gough 1958: 447–8) have parallels in Ireland. O'Hogain (1999) and O'Suilleabhain (1967) recognized the desire to reassure the dead of their continued popularity through funeral games and rituals. Collected folklore and contemporary storytelling in Ireland abound with tales of ghosts and visitations of the dead.[6]

Sentiment and the Senses

The role of sentiment and the creation of sentimental value are also key components in the centrality of how material culture may help to cement ongoing relationships with the dead. Parkin (1999: 304) acknowledges that there are articles of sentimental value 'which both inscribe and are inscribed by … memories of self and personhood'. His study of people who were displaced from their homes in violent situations revealed that, with little or no time to gather many belongings, people chose objects that instilled a memory of a past self, the self before displacement. Such personal mementos may be inscribed with narrative and sentiment (Parkin 1999: 313). The journals and diaries of Mormons during nineteenth-century migrations in America were used by Belk (1992: 339–61) to show how possessions often acquired 'emotion-laden meanings' (Belk 1992: 339). Heirlooms carried by the migrants, whether clothing or furniture, conjured up memories of those left behind and served as symbols of those people. In situations where the relative who has bequeathed the heirloom is no longer living, such items may become the focus of 'a western form of ancestor worship … gifts, clothing, photographs, and even a copper tub were among the items acting as transitional objects for these Mormon immigrants' (Belk 1992: 353). In considering the relationships between people and things, people often see objects from the point of view of relationships with others and past experiences evoked by an item can be used 'to define the selves of these people' (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981: 112–13).

This notion of how memory of past experiences is embedded in the evocative nature of particular objects plays on concepts of how memory is constituted. Hallam and Hockey (2001: 13) examine 'the relationships between embodied action and material objects' to explore how material objects constitute systems of recall for persons and social groups. They argue that whatever form the materials of memory take, they acquire significance 'through conceptual linkages between personhood and the material world' (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 36). There is the suggestion that a person's sense of identity or social role is 'bound up' with objects that trigger memories and conjure up mental pictures (Tonkin 1992: 94–96) and words or narratives are important in shaping memory and identity (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 44; Parkin 1999: 303–20). The impetus to perpetuate a personhood is evidenced in this study through the various strategies and rituals that people employ in conjunction with materiality and is addressed especially in chapter 4.

Objects and monuments can be tracked through their physical and social lives. Appadurai (1986) recommends that we 'follow the things', for they are without meaning apart from those that human actions endow them with, and their meanings are 'inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories'

(Appadurai 1986: 3–63). In this he opens up the theoretical possibility of inquiring into how the former possessions of the dead become sentimental objects and how these items are used by the people who now have custody of them or responsibility for their continuance. A belief that personhood can be inscribed within 'private mementos of mind and matter' is put forward by Parkin (1999: 308). Something that was once a commodity (for example, a piece of clothing, or items that have had 'little or no utilitarian value' [Parkin 1999: 313] such as photographs or letters) becomes a sentimental and treasured item and symbolic of a person or a relationship (Carrier 1993).

Sentiment is here examined as a particular kind of emotion triggered by the sensory experience of a valued object.[7] There has been considerable debate in the literature on the privileging of sight historically, and, for examples, both Stewart (1999: 19–22) and Zelizer (1998: 6) contend that the visual has dominated analysis of the interactions between people and things. In dealing with the connections between senses and emotions, I examine all the senses and the fusion that occurs between them. Stewart's (1999: 19) contention that a sensory hierarchy regulates the body's 'somatic memory of its encounters with what is outside of it' is tested through accounts related by people during the study. While the visual can be a primary marker of events because images, as Zelizer (1998: 6) argues, 'help to stabilize and anchor collective memory's transient and fluctuating nature', it will be shown that this is not always the case. Sutton's (2001) and Stoller's (1989) rich explorations of taste have redressed the imbalance in the ranking of the senses. Taussig's (1991) keen examination of the tactility of sight has contributed to a growing awareness and debate on how senses can merge to produce a hybridity that is stitched together by emotional seams. In addition, Classen's (2005) comprehensive volume on touch brings together an eclectic array of essays on how touch is used, perceived, negotiated and culturally formed, and Turkle's (2007) collection of reminiscences about 'evocative objects' draws on all the senses to portray the overwhelming emotion that can result from the contemplation of items of memory.

It has been argued that emotion, imagery and memory are interconnected through scientific mapping of the brain (Damasio 2000). Yet Tonkin (2005: 62) is of the opinion that we should take account of contexts, and while there are interactions between emotionality and imagination, it is context 'that often structures interactions'. Sentiment and senses of objects must therefore be seen in context and are triggered not only by material objects but also by stories and connected to the landscape. In theorizing how places, both public and private, impact on the uses and forms of materiality, the importance of space emerges as significant in both narratives and acts of remembrance. Stories about the dead, where they are recounted or located in relation to landscape, are important cultural referents in Ireland.[8]

In respect of collective remembrance there are a number of studies devoted to the cognitive processes of memory (e.g. Halbwachs 1992 [1952]; Middleton and Edwards 1997 [1990]; Winter and Sivan 1999). These works concentrate on how collectivism is enacted in memory processes, but I focus on aspects of communal remembrance, in which individuals will negotiate and frame experiences that may be opposed to official texts. Communal remembrance is the public gathering of people to enact rites for a discrete group of deceased persons (for example those who died in wars or the dead of a parish). The collectivism that may be enacted in these ceremonies is that of the 'social construction of bereavement and commemoration' (Weiss 1997: 91–92) that seeks to produce a bounded and agreed set of memories, themes that play out in particular ways in Ireland (chapter 5).

Death and Liminality

Rituals performed at death are centred on facilitating the separation of the dead from the living while also re-establishing the dead in an altered state of being. They are rites undertaken not just for the dead but also for the living; the living need to be assured of the separation of the dead, but they also need to make cognitive adjustments to the altered status of the dead. Themes of separation and reintegration are addressed (chapter 2) in an analysis of how people talk about the dead and how their stories illuminate the importance of places and objects in facilitating the re-assimilation of the dead. They are also important considerations in examining how acts of remembrance, attention to the belongings of the dead and the role of the senses are contingent upon a process of reintegration.

Van Gennep (1960 [1909]) originally postulated the existence of states of segregation and subsequent re-amalgamation in his exposition of the three stages of *rites de passage* (separation, transition and reincorporation). The intermediary or liminal phase was expanded on by Turner (1967, 1969), for whom it represented a 'betwixt and between' stage during which a person undergoing a change (an initiation rite, a marriage or death) is suspended between a former and a future state (or status). This state of anti-structure became the starting point for his concept of *communitas,* an attribute of rites of change that evolves during the liminal period and manifests as a loose agglomeration of equals (Turner 1969: 94, 130). He believed examples of this, outside of rites of passage, could be found in communities of hippies, monks or even pilgrims. Turner's (1969) stance on liminality and communitas as anti-structure is, however, open to criticism. If the liminal is essential to the processual nature of the ritual, it is, arguably, part of the

structure and raises the issue of whether anti-structure can be said to exist. This is similar to what Gluckman and Gluckman argued about the rigidity of the 'distinction between structure and anti-structure' (Deflem 1991: 19) when they suggested that evidence of structure, albeit inverted, was present in communitas (Gluckman and Gluckman 1977: 242). Turner, however, recognized that within anti-structure there lay the seeds and the eventual formation of structure (1969: 132). What he was referring to, however, is more accurately conceived of as the conformist nature of groups, the members of which, on agreeing on a common lifestyle or philosophy, identify themselves as different to external society by striving to be similar internally to the group.

In contrast to Turner (1969) and Van Gennep (1960 [1909]), I argue that the bounded characteristics they attribute to death as a rite of passage are not always neatly circumscribed. In many cases the liminal is not fully resolved in any processual sense but is present in the continuing attention to the dead. The disconnectedness expounded in liminality continues after death and must be negotiated through material items. I examine this in relation to how kin connections and spatial and temporal considerations may modify the expectation or appearance of resolution. For the close kin and friends of the deceased, liminality may remain as a permanent 'structure', embedded in acts of remembrance. The evidence in this study shows that both private and collective (public) remembrance rituals and ceremonies are instances of attempts to renew the separation and integration stages. This, however, does not apply to all people or situations equally. Factors that will temper the degree to which liminality will still be present include a lack of close family or social connections or if kin live far away.

The nature of death and how it has been viewed in different societies have ultimately been concerned with the opposing states of loss and renewal – the loss of the individual, the loss to the society and the renewal that takes place when the deceased are re-socialized in an altered state as ancestors, souls in heaven or ghosts.[9] There are numerous stories in the oral and written tradition about ghosts and visitations of the dead, tales of mythical creatures connected to death warnings and writings on the deaths of the heroes of the Ulster Cycle epic tales.[10] In the collected folklore of Ireland there is a vast body of literature relating to the dead. Carleton (1862), Glassie (1987), Hyde (1910), Murphy (1975) and Wilde (1971 [1888]) are just a few examples of published tales and customs that include variations of stories about the dead that are still current. I draw on these when analysing how people talk about the dead (chapter 2) to show the depth of beliefs about the continuing connection with the dead. I also examine the narratives to add new perspectives on context that includes place, gender and structure.

Contestation

The historical and ethnographic evidence of the contestation between church and people[11] has parallels today. Taylor (1995) examines contestation between the various interested groups (most notably church authorities and individuals) through one case study in Donegal. By examining a range of possible readings (by individuals) of a given situation, Taylor (1995) asks questions about the relationships between official and popular religion and between power and meaning. These are themes and issues that are also addressed in the book (chapter 5) when examining how private and public remembrance can conflict with officially scripted texts. Other forms of discord also take place in relation to restrictions on the types of headstones permitted and attitudes towards material display in graveyards (chapter 6).

Taylor contends that death is one of the principal ways in which the Catholic Church has controlled and imposed ritual, texts and 'devotional objects' (Taylor 1989b: 176). The decision of the clergy not to allow the playing of fiddle music at a graveside (Taylor 1989b: 178) is an example of the labyrinth of acceptable and unacceptable forms of materiality at death. The conduct of wakes and the experience of Irish Catholics afforded Taylor (1989b, 1995) an opportunity to probe the power dynamics of the institution of the church and how that is internalized or subverted in various religious contexts. While I address the differences between institutional scripts and how the individual reads particular events (as in public remembrance events discussed in chapter 5), I consider these points within the context of materiality and an emphasis on kin connections and attachment to place.

The focus on items within the domestic setting represents a move away from historical concerns about the power of objects that took shape within a religious context, where the initial attention was on items such as relics and the structures of monasteries and cathedrals (Taylor 1999: 225). The relics I consider are not powerful objects within the institutional religious context but those within the domestic and kin domain. They are personal, diverse and idiosyncratic, special only to people who have social or kin connections with the deceased. The associations of objects with deceased family members provide fruitful opportunities for exploration by the anthropologist of the social and cultural constructions of the connections between 'individual mental processes and the surrounding material world' (Taylor 1999: 226). Such connections are equally applicable to the world of objects and to places in the landscape (Taylor 1999).

The materiality of death, and the dead, also extends to an awareness of how the landscape shapes and encroaches on feelings about the dead and the sense of belonging for the living that is enshrined in the places of the dead. Some writers have been concerned with the historical landscape in

Ireland or how the land transfer is regulated through kinship connections (Arensberg 1937; Arensberg and Kimball (1968 [1940]). The importance of legitimizing residency and ties to land through kin (living or dead) is in the forefront when people relate their connections to past members of their geographical area. Glassie (1982: 664) noted that 'the land becomes history, as history becomes thought as people cross space in awareness.' What these writers illustrate is the attachment to landscape that is interwoven with stories and sensory experience. I explore how attachments are forged through the association of places with the dead and their stories.

More recent work by Donnan (2005), along the South Armagh border, reveals that recalling features in the landscape in a relational sense is a way to anchor ethnicity with place, particularly that of those who died violent deaths in the Troubles (see also Thomas 2001). The fixing of the dead (and the living) in the landscape is a major theme that stresses the connectedness to place that is enmeshed in narratives of the dead. How the landscape is used, sensed and thought about is discussed in chapters exploring how people talk about the dead, how the landscape conjures senses and emotions and how people conceptualize various forms of materiality in the landscape. The way that people remember, in the landscape and in the home, focuses attention on culturally acceptable forms of remembering. These are bound to the unfinished nature of separation and reunion, as discussed above, and reflect the need by the people with whom I worked for continuous negotiation of a liminal phase. Both private and public forms of remembering through materiality are objects of social attention and are also powerful ways in which people perform separation and integration.

Notes

1. A close equivalent of this practice of assembling certain objects in a particular space was found in the Basque country in Northern Spain by Douglass (1969: 140), who noted that villagers kept a room for special festive occasions. This formal space was furnished with the household's most prized items and adorned with a gallery of photographs of family members, past and present.

2. Geary's examination of 'the cultural parameters of commodity flow in medieval civilization' (1986: 169) investigates the circulation of mediaeval relics (wherein they may oscillate from sacred items to commodities) to interrogate issues of exchange and value and points out that the relics of saints 'had no obvious value apart from a very specific set of shared beliefs' (1986: 174).

3. The notion of inalienability in anthropology can be traced to Mauss's seminal essay on the gift (1966 [1950]). In an examination of gift giving among Samoans, Maoris and Trobriand Islanders, he classified certain possessions as 'indestructible' or 'immeuble' (1966 [1950]: 7) in order to differentiate them from items suitable for general trade transactions. The 'indestructible' items, such

as Samoan marriage mats, Maori cloaks and the *kula* necklaces and armshells had particular properties that invested them with a type of value that precluded their selling. Goody (1962: 286) found that among the LoDagga, land was never exchanged for money. To sell land could conflict with beliefs about 'the inalienability of land rights' (1962: 286). So here the concept of inalienability is developed as an abstract. It is a quality that may be invested and linked to materiality but moves beyond the object. Goody considered how inalienability could be applied to the LoDagga redistribution of rights and goods following a death. Land was above monetary value and was only transferred or exchanged in tightly controlled networks of kin through inheritance, gift or loan. For Goody, 'the definition of property revolves essentially round the problem of exclusion' (1962: 287).

4. Examples from different parts of the world include Worsley's (1954: 165–7) study of how the Australian Aboriginal group the Wanindiljaygwa used dolls and bone boxes to symbolize people. Small bone boxes were made when anyone under the age of thirty died, into which were placed a lock of hair and one or more bones from the right hand wrapped in cloth. If a newborn baby died, no bones were placed in the box, but a little doll was fashioned to symbolize the person. After the burial service the boxes were given to the grandmothers, who passed them onto the mothers. Following the initial intense mourning period, however, the items were returned to the custody of the grandmothers. They carried them on their person until someone had a child – thus dolls symbolized the unborn, and the boxes symbolized the dead. There is also the more familiar iconography from the Mexican Day of the Dead with the artistic representation of the dead in skulls, skeletons and anthropomorphic sugary sweets, which Brandes (1998a: 181–218) has shown is humorous in mocking death and ephemeral in that it is designed to last only for one day.

5. Gough (1958: 447–48) recorded three types of cults of the dead among the Nayars in India: the 'lineage ghosts,' which were the focus of a collective cult; matrilineal forebears who had distinguished themselves in life; and 'alien ghosts,' who were generally victims of bad deaths such as murder or suicide. All three sets of ghosts have potentially dual qualities of benevolence and malevolence. Lineage ghosts can 'inflict misfortunes' on the living if they live their lives wastefully but will reward correct deference to them in the form of offerings. And 'alien' ghosts have to be exorcised from the places that they haunt (Gough 1958: 463–64).

6. During the last 140 years writers have collected and published a range of stories and customs relating to the dead (e.g. Carleton 1862; Glassie 1987; Hyde 1910; Wilde 1971 [1888]).

7. Anthropologists have recently revived their interest in emotions, and much of this literature (e.g. Geertz 1980; Goddard 1996; Hochschild 1979; Leach 1981; Lutz and White 1986; Middleton 1989) has concentrated on the meaning or feeling debate (the biological or cultural root of emotion) (see Leavitt 1996). Tonkin (2005: 57) believes the word 'emotion' has 'culturally specific and changing connotations'.

8. The types of tales that are continuously recycled are, in many ways, comparable to the moral stories of the Apache that are tied to landscape and ancestors (Basso 1996: 37–70).

9. Variations of the fundamental presentation of breakage and reforming, the meaning and nuances of funeral rituals, repeated mortuary ceremonies and more long-term treatment of the dead have been studied in societies across the world (e.g. Alexiou 1974; Bloch 1971; Bloch and Parry 1982; Danforth 1982; Dubish 1989; Fabian 1973; Herzfeld 1996; Panourgia 1995; Seremetakis 1991). Stafford (2000: 4) problematizes the separation stage in rites of passage and argues for a more central position for this 'common human constraint' within anthropological analysis. In a study of attitudes in modern China he argues that the process of separation (not just at death) precipitates reunion and is linked to questions of human relatedness (Stafford 2000: 174–76). Rituals enacted at times of separation and reunion 'express and explore' issues of relatedness and may produce (as Durkheim argued) 'the very collectivities within which separation has social and emotional significance' (Stafford 2000: 175–76).

10. The Ulster Cycle is one of four groups of mythological tales and sagas from Ireland. It contains stories of people known as the Ulaid (who gave their name to present-day Ulster), who are believed to have lived some two thousand years ago. One of the most famous tales is the Cattle Raid of Cooley (Táin Bó Cúalnge), which took place around part of the border area where this study was carried out. See Kinsella (1974) and O'Rahilly (1976).

11. In a historical study of Irish Catholicism, Corish (1985) mentions the desire of the church in the seventeenth century to modify behaviour at wakes, especially the lamenting, as such practices were viewed as pagan, with too much emphasis placed on the reinforcement of kin connections.

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