Introduction
I applied for and received funding in order to complete the research and writing of my book project entitled *The Expanding Island: Migration and Multiculture in Modern Irish Writing*. This book provides a literary history of Irish multicultural writing that contrasts with the nation-centered accounts of modern Irish culture. The book explores Irish migrant writing throughout the twentieth century using key issues from the “new” Ireland—specifically, race, migration, and cross-cultural engagement—in order to draw connections between the country’s past and its future.

The purpose of *The Expanding Island* is two-fold. The first is to make a critical intervention in the field of Irish Studies by moving away from the nationalist and ethno-national focus of most histories of Irish literature. By investigating Irish migrant writing throughout the twentieth century, *The Expanding Island* helps us to better understand the multicultural nature of Irish literature, both past and present. Moving outside the canon of Irish literature in order to construct an alternate history of Irish writing also shows how we can more broadly conceive of who and what can be considered Irish.

Secondly, the book aims to contribute to “strong” Irish multiculturalism. Byran Fanning, Ronit Lentin, Piaras Mac Éinrí, and other sociologists working on contemporary Ireland have contrasted the official discourse of welcoming new Irish migrants with the failure of multiculturalism in Ireland. Fanning argues that until “strong” multiculturalism can be brought into the country, there needs to be “a commitment to the equitable social integration of diverse communities.” Fanning and most other social scientists focus their attention on systemic discrimination and inequalities by government and institutional practices. Rather than focusing on macro-level policies, *The Expanding Island* approaches strong multiculturalism from the micro-level by looking at Irish migrant writers’ engagement and representation of cross-cultural interaction. As such, it interprets contemporary Irish immigration as part of the longer history of Irish multiculturalism, rather than as an entirely novel social challenge.

Longer Project Description
*The Expanding Island* provides a literary history of Irish multicultural writing. Most histories of modern Irish literature—especially those that cover the first half of the twentieth century—examine the ways in which canonical works participated in or engaged with nationalist projects and agendas. The focus on Ireland’s strong national traditions is not surprising: as with many formerly colonized countries, Ireland in the twentieth century has been preoccupied with establishing political and cultural independence. Most of twentieth-century Ireland is then
contrasted with the globalized, multicultural nature of contemporary Ireland. After the economic boom known as the Celtic Tiger, the country has undergone a dramatic demographic shift: according to the 2011 census, 17% of the country’s population was not born in Ireland. These “new Irish,” as Irish immigrants are often called, have brought about a “new” Ireland—one that seems to radically break from its past. While scholars and public commentators most often establish a binary between Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century and at its end, *The Expanding Island* argues that there are significant, if overlooked, connections between this earlier time period and the contemporary moment. The nation-centered focus of Irish Studies scholarship has overshadowed the fact that, throughout the twentieth century, Irish writers have grappled with issues like migration, race, and cross-cultural engagement—the same challenges that Ireland currently faces. By investigating Irish migrant writing throughout the twentieth century, *The Expanding Island* helps us to better understand the multicultural nature of Irish literature, both past and present.

In particular, *The Expanding Island* offers a counter-narrative to the nation-oriented myopia that so often dominates accounts of Irish culture. The most common ways of reading the Irish literary canon serve to reinforce not only Irish nationalism but also to close the boundaries of what is or is not considered Irish. Moreover, throughout Ireland’s cultural history, there has been an emphasis on ethno-nationalism—that is, the Gaelic Celt as a racialized community deserving of its own nation. Consequently, the country has had a difficult transition in becoming a more diverse society, for many citizens view mass immigration as a possible threat to national life and citizenship. I move away from this ethno-national emphasis by tracing a prominent, if neglected, literary history of Irish migrant writing. Though they have often been disconnected with the Irish literary canon, Irish migrants seriously and thoughtfully engaged the challenges of a cross-cultural orientation. Their writing draws on both changing ideologies of race, nation, and identity that were globally circulated as well as on the variety of multicultural projects in which they participated. Such projects discussed in the book include the establishment of Christian missions in Asia, nation-building in South America, pan-European feminist movements, and the roots revival in America. The history of twentieth-century Irish migrant writing articulated in *The Expanding Island* does not conform to the tidy, institutionalized version of multiculturalism often espoused by Irish politicians and cultural commentators; rather, it provides a messy, contradictory, and altogether more complete picture of Irish multiculturalism throughout the twentieth century.

The book draws upon scholarship that theorizes multiculturalism from below—that is, real, lived experiences of cross cultural interaction and engagement. These discussions have recently come under different names than multiculturalism, such as post-ethnicity (David Hollinger), conviviality (Paul Gilroy), cosmopolitanism (Kwame Anthony Appiah), and intersectionality (Floya Anthias), but all share a deep suspicion of cultural purity, which, in Salman Rushdie’s words, is “a slogan that leads to segregations and explosions.” These scholars also move beyond
the identity politics that governed how multiculturalism was thought of during the 1980s and much of the 1990s and instead suggest that identity, both individual and collective, is a constantly negotiated process rather than a fixed state.

Each chapter in the book provides an in-depth example of an Irish migrant writer’s experience of multiculturalism from below. The book first examines the minor nationalist figure William Bulfin, who immigrated to Argentina during a time when the country was divided over embracing either its indigenous and mestizo population or the massive influx of ‘white’ European settlers as the basis of its national tradition. Argentina’s conflicting ideologies shaped Bulfin’s ideas about race and national belonging—both in relation to Argentina and Ireland. Helen Waddell, a neglected modernist figure, was influenced by the notions of religious syncretism upon which nineteenth-century missionary work was built. The daughter of a Christian missionary criticized for being too ecumenical, Waddell spent most of her childhood in Japan, and her writing signifies an earlier attempt to fashion multicultural Irish sensibility. Kate O’Brien, discussed in Chapter Three, wrote in a time of increasing restrictions on women in the Free State, and focuses on Irish female experience abroad. Leaving Ireland for the Continent provides O’Brien’s protagonists with a broader understanding of European feminism, which in turn allows for greater freedom than the model of Gaelic Catholic womanhood advocated in Ireland. Chapter Four focuses on Brian Moore, a successful international novelist who moved to North America as an adult and was influenced by shifting ideas about white ethnicity, ancestry, and assimilation in the United States. His Irish-American novels document the challenges of identity politics for Irish-Americans, who were being absorbed into white America. Writing in the wake of a more highly globalized Ireland, Colum McCann, the subject of Chapter Five, models the possibilities for a strong multiculturalism in Ireland by looking to other places and times. In doing so, he poses Irish multiculturalism as the responsibility of the Irish-born as well as of the newly arrived immigrants and exiles. Each of these writers thought deeply about how their Irish identity—which they all defined differently—could be incorporated into other cultures and traditions. When taken together, they provide a longer and more nuanced history of Irish multicultural literature that allows us to reconceptualize our understanding of Ireland and its national traditions.

**Budget**
I received $2000 as summer salary, which allowed me to work full-time on my research over the summer.

**Results**
The results of my SAIF grant were very successful. I have a strong draft of the book manuscript and have sent in a proposal and sample chapter to Syracuse University Press, which has the strongest Irish Studies series of all American university presses. Additionally, I was able to complete research on two related projects, described below.
“National and Transnational Irish Literatures.” *Where Motley is Worn: Transnational Irish Literatures.*

With Moira Csaey, I co-editing this contributed volume, comprised of eleven essays and a chapter-length introduction, which we have written. Our introduction contextualizes the following essays by outlining the issues at stake in transnational studies and investigating the transnational turn in Irish Studies. As a whole, the collection explores writing that places Irish identity in dialogue with Asian, African, Latin American, and other cultural, national, or ethnic affiliations in the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Manuscript under review at Cork University Press.


Part of a forthcoming volume about the neglected modernist writer Helen Waddell, this essay argues that Waddell has an important, if neglected, role to play in the canon of Irish literature.

In April, I also attended the 2013 national meeting of the American Conference for Irish Studies, held in Chicago, and presented the paper, “Helen Waddell, Precursor to Irish Multiculturalism.”

**Benefits to the University**

Given the system-wide Inclusive Excellence initiative, I think this project has great relevance to the UWP community. These publications and the book which they will lead to will give national attention to the University and serve as an outward symbol of the University’s commitment to diversity. Moreover, this project has had a strong impact on my classroom practices. Students often consider race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism to be distinctly American issues, but *The Expanding Island* proves otherwise. And in all of my courses, including those in British and Irish literature, I use marginalized and non-canonical works to emphasize the importance of race, diversity, and multiculturalism in national literatures.

My classroom practices are also meant to address what Platteville students, in the 2011 NSSE, pointed to as weakness of the university curriculum. We scored low on two particularly relevant questions—that our classes “included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments” and students increased their “understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.” Research has shown that reading literature is one of the best ways to increase empathy, perspective taking and social/cultural intelligence. Therefore, the university’s support of research and teaching that involves creative texts, race, and diversity is especially important.