

A photograph of a stone tower and ruins in Ireland. The tower is made of grey stone and has several windows. It is surrounded by green grass and trees. In the background, there is a body of water and more trees. The sky is overcast.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IRELAND MORE THAN POTATOES

BRIEF HISTORY OF IRELAND

- 1066 Normans invade England
- 1169 extend control into Ireland, but rule the two as separate nations
- 1670s- Oliver Cromwell invades and confiscates 80% of the land to pay his troops following the English civil war
- 18th century British attempts to govern Ireland
→ unrest

- 1823- O'Connell founds Catholic Association and works for emancipation of Ireland
- 1845-1848- Potato famine aka "the Hunger"
Population falls from 9 million to 3 million



THE GREAT HUNGER: RURAL POVERTY IN IRELAND

- Catholic population heavily oppressed by mostly absentee British overlords
- Irish peasants relied heavily on the cultivation of potatoes for subsistence
- Early marriage and large families led to population growth and increasing poverty
- 1781: 4 million people
- 1845: 8 million people

- 1845- 1851: fungus Black 47 decimates potato crops
- Over 1 million die of famine
- Over 2 million emigrate to USA and Britain



SKIBBEREEN

Oh father dear, I oft-times hear you speak of Erin's isle
Her lofty hills, her valleys green, her mountains rude and wild
They say she is a lovely land wherein a saint might dwell
So why did you abandon her, the reason to me tell.

Oh son, I loved my native land with energy and pride
Till a blight came o'er the praties; my sheep, my cattle died
My rent and taxes went unpaid, I could not them redeem
And that's the cruel reason why I left old Skibbereen.

Oh well do I remember that bleak December day
The landlord and the sheriff came to take us all away
They set my roof on fire with their cursed English spleen
I heaved a sigh and bade goodbye to dear old Skibbereen.

Your mother too, God rest her soul, fell on the stony ground
She fainted in her anguish seeing desolation 'round
She never rose but passed away from life to immortal dream
She found a quiet grave, me boy, in dear old Skibbereen.

And you were only two years old and feeble was your frame
I could not leave you with my friends for you bore your father's name
I wrapped you in my cóta mór in the dead of night unseen
I heaved a sigh and bade goodbye to dear old Skibbereen.

Oh father dear, the day will come when in answer to the call
All Irish men of freedom stern will rally one and all
I'll be the man to lead the band beneath the flag of green
And loud and clear we'll raise the cheer, Revenge for Skibbereen!



MAIN IDEA

- What is the major theme of this song?
- How do the lyrics help explore this theme?





THE FAMINE IN IRELAND.—FUNERAL AT SKIBEREEN—FROM A SKETCH BY MR. H. SMITH, CORK.

THE FIELDS OF ATHENRY (ANOTHER MORE CONTEMPORARY VERSION)

By a lonely prison wall
I heard a young girl calling
Michael they are taking you away
For you stole Trevelyn's corn
So the young might see the morn.
Now a prison ship lies waiting in the bay

Chorus

Low lie the Fields of Athenry
Where once we watched the small free
birds fly.
Our love was on the wing we had dreams
and songs to sing
It's so lonely 'round the Fields of Athenry.

By a lonely prison wall
I heard a young man calling
Nothing matters Mary when your free,
Against the Famine and the Crown
I rebelled they ran me down
Now you must raise our child with dignity.

By a lonely harbor wall
She watched the last star falling
As that prison ship sailed out against the sky
Sure she'll wait and hope and pray
For her love in Botany Bay
It's so lonely 'round the Fields of Athenry.

MAIN IDEA

- What does this song suggest about the Hunger?



CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF THE HUNGER

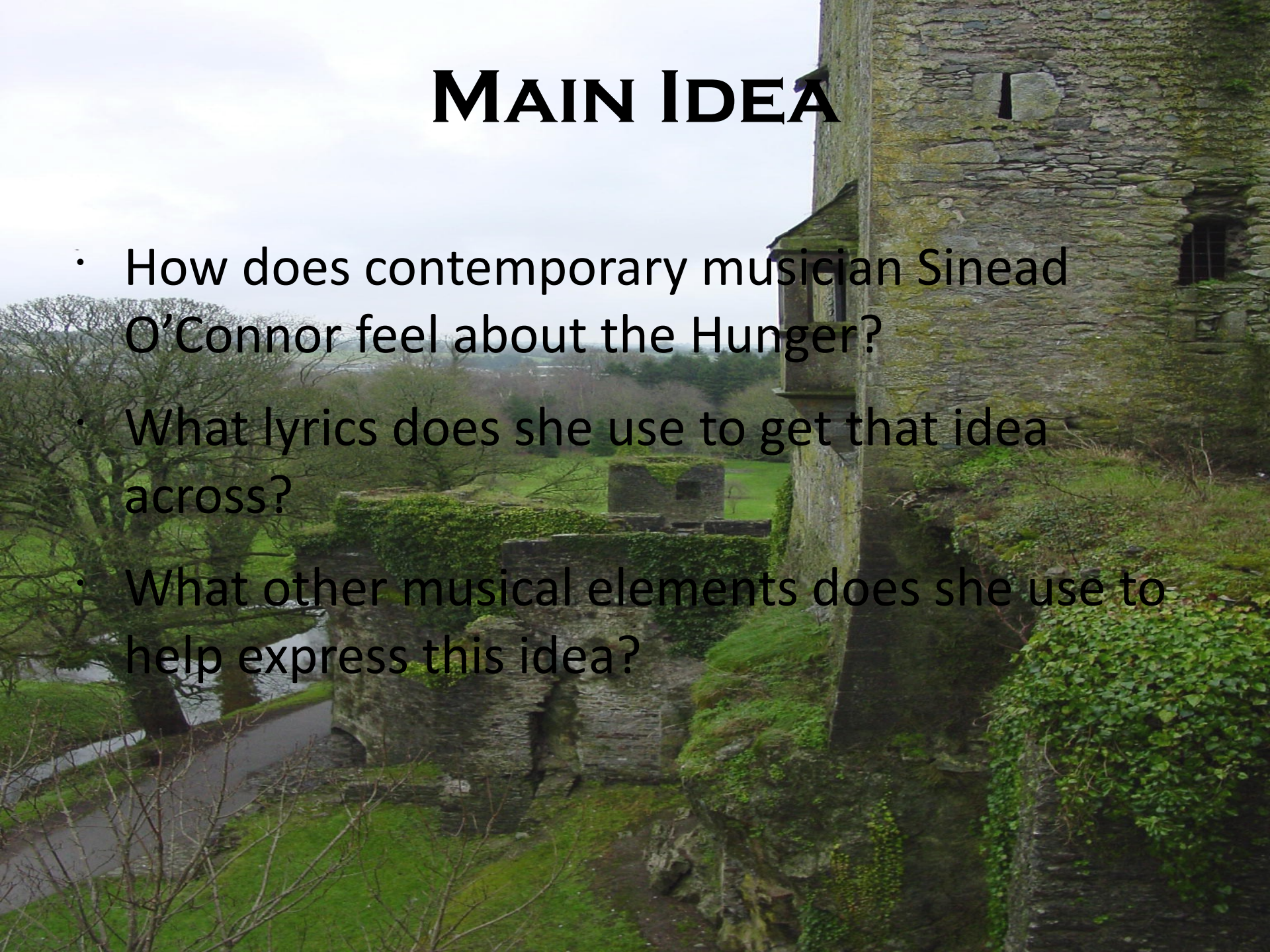
- Most modern historians do not use the term Potato Famine favoring the name Great Hunger instead.
- Many believe that the famine that killed over one million could have been prevented through British Empire, Britain was not in the throes of a food shortage.

[Click here to listen to "Famine" by Sinead O'Connor](#)



MAIN IDEA

- How does contemporary musician Sinéad O'Connor feel about the Hunger?
- What lyrics does she use to get that idea across?
- What other musical elements does she use to help express this idea?



LIFE AFTER THE HUNGER

- 1867 Fenian Uprising
- 1868- British PM Gladstone declares “mission to pacify Ireland”
- 1885 & 1893- Home Rule acts fail
- 1912- Home Rule act passes, two year plan to turn control of Ireland over to Irish
- 1914- WWI begins, Home Rule act suspended

- 1916, April 24-29: Easter Rising
- 1919, January 21: Irish Declaration of Independence, war of independence begins
- 1921, December 6: Irish Free State established
- Tensions continue between North and South through the 20th century



THE EASTER RISING, 1916: FOGGY DEW

As down the glen one
Easter morn
To a city fair rode I,
There armed lines of
marching men
In squadrons passed me
by.
No pipe did hum, no battle
drum
Did sound its loud tattoo

The bravest fell, and the
requiem bell
Rang mournfully and clear
For those who died that
Easter-tide
In the springing of the
year.
While the world did gaze
with deep amaze
At those fearless men but

MAIN IDEA

- How is this song similar to the other songs in this presentation?
- How is it different?

