Irish Gothic Revisited

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It is always something of a shock to realise that something you wrote, submitted, and have tried to forget about, has actually been published, read by someone else, and provoked a reaction. In opening the new journal with a brief survey of some theoretical approaches to Irish Gothic writing, I expected to do nothing more than alert whatever reader happened to stumble upon the article to a body of critical material that had built up over the last twenty years in Irish Studies (and try to sneak in a few of my own views under cover of night). When Richard Haslam responded with a lengthy article disagreeing with practically everything I argued (and even some things I didn't) I was both flattered and rather provoked. Haslam does agree with a couple of my suggestions, but he aggravatingly relegates these to a footnote (number 117 no less!), and this agreement is limited to my 'highly pertinent' raising of the Huguenot ancestry of Charles Robert Maturin and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. This is rather cold comfort since Haslam himself was one of the first to point to the importance of the Calvinist theology of the Huguenots to Maturin in an article published in 1994, 'Maturin and the "Calvinist Sublime"'.[1] However, since I am a needy critic, I am willing to take praise where it comes, and will respond in kind: I found Haslam's riposte stimulating and important for bringing to the fore a number of important issues, some of which help to define the way in which the body of material called 'Irish Gothic' should be spoken. I also accept, as he pointed out, that I neglected to highlight a use of folklore as a distinguishing feature of the Irish Gothic.[2] Readers of 'responses-to-responses', however, have not come to hear about agreements, and although I could claim to be motivated by the high-minded desire to continue a fruitful dialogue and merely draw attention to some of the difficulties in Haslam's approach to Irish Gothic, being a straight-up kind of guy I admit I am just defending my own honour – well, no one else is going to do it.

Haslam disagrees with me in so many areas that it is difficult to know quite where to begin, so let me start with a relatively minor issue. My initial article started with a brief summary of W. J. McCormack's initial canonising and later 'cashiering' of the Irish Gothic tradition, first in his article 'Irish Gothic and After' (1991), in Volume Two of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, and then subsequently in *Dissolute Characters* (1993). Haslam disapprovingly insists that 'Killeen implies that McCormack's apparent reconsideration stemmed from negative criticism of the *Anthology*'s supposed political tendentiousness' and counters that 'reservations' with the Gothic canon are already made explicit within his 'Irish Gothic and After' article and 'arise primarily from dissatisfaction with earlier critical incorporations of Le Fanu into an Irish Gothic'.[3] However, and crucially, it is simply not the case that McCormack is primarily motivated in his dismantling of the Irish Gothic canon by his belief that Le Fanu's reputation is suffering from association with writers of less literary distinction (Maturin and Bram Stoker). McCormack's main difficulty, as I outlined in my original article, is indeed with the political and historical implications of the entangled concepts of 'canon' and 'tradition' in the writing of Irish literary history. He is not simply uncomfortable with the 'Irish Gothic canon/tradition', but with canons and traditions as constructed by literary historians with ideological agendas to sell. Indeed, 'Cashiering the Gothic Canon' begins with what might be construed as a polemic against previous literary historians who have constructed Irish literary history from an Irish nationalist perspective (precisely the argument used against the *Field Day*

[1] Richard Haslam, 'Maturin and the Calvinist Sublime', *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, eds. Allan Lloyd Smith and Victor Sage (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 44-56.
[2] Richard Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* 2 (2007), 2.
[3] Ibid 2.

Anthology in the first place). Although he surprisingly exempts Seamus Deane's *A Short History of Irish Literature* (1986) from a shame list of 'literary chroniclers',[4] he singles out versions of Irish literary history which canonise in order to promote a 'patriotic' view of Irish writing. He complains, for example, that 'the Jonathan Swift whom editors know' (and whom, it is implied, gains McCormack's approbation) 'is scarcely recognisable as the figure of similar name recurring as a patriot in the literary histories'. Indeed, 'the chroniclers inhabit a last ditch of cultural nationalism'.[5] That McCormack emphatically includes the Field Day school in his disapprobation is clear from a reference in *From Burke to Beckett* (1994) in which he argues that 'much of what declares itself post-colonialist in its concerns is readily detectible as Irish nationalism, unreconstructed yet occasionally garnished with the origami of notable house-Trotskyites in the Dublin newspaper world'.[6]

Although McCormack is, as Haslam notes, very dissatisfied with Le Fanu being uncritically linked to writers such as Stoker and Maturin, the position of Le Fanu is merely a local and restricted example of the tendentiousness of canon making and tradition drawing in general which he has spent a great deal of his critical career undermining. It is the political implications of canon making and the ideological connotations of a certain view of an Irish literary tradition, as well as the historical simplifications involved in constructing Irish literary and Gothic traditions, that occupy McCormack's destructive focus. In *Dissolute Characters* he declares it his 'modest' aim to so problematize Le Fanu's relationship with the 'so-called' and 'doubtful' Irish Gothic tradition, that it would be impossible to fit him in to prevailing models, but it is clear that in doing this McCormack wants to add to the growing problematization of the ideas of canon and tradition in Irish literature itself.[7]

Tradition á la Mode.

This neatly brings us to the problem of the continued use of the terms 'tradition' and 'canon', not only in referencing the Irish Gothic, but, as McCormack highlights, Irish literature as a whole. Like McCormack, Haslam is very ill-at-ease with the concept of 'tradition' and wants the term retired to make way for what he believes to be a much more useful one, 'mode'. McCormack's objections to the concept of 'tradition' were voiced strongly in *Ascendancy and Tradition* (1985) and re-articulated in *From Burke to Beckett*. He complains that 'the notion of Anglo-Irish literature is given an excessive stability by the acceptance of tradition as accumulated and accumulative succession'[8]; notes that 'in its Yeatsian form' the assertion of a tradition is 'a statement of certain continuities'[9]; tradition, he later opines 'is frequently identified with a conservative literary history'[10]; his book is all about 'unmask[ing] the Yeatsian tradition'[11]; he is sympathetic to the German philosopher Martin Heidegger's view of tradition as 'cousin-germane to ideology'[12]. It turns out that this is what Haslam thinks of tradition as well. He contends that:

> 'Tradition' denotes the handing across generations of sacred knowledge and rules; in literary critical contexts, the designation evokes the solemn architectonics of Eliot, Leavis and Yeats.

[4] W. J. McCormack, *Dissolute Characters: Irish Literary History through Balzac, Sheridan Le Fanu, Yeats, and Bowen* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 2.
[5] Ibid, 2.
[6] W. J. McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy, Tradition and Betrayal in Literary History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), 14.
[7] McCormack, *Dissolute Characters*, 3.
[8] McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett*, 12.
[9] Ibid, 12.
[10] Ibid, 303.
[11] Ibid, 305.
[12] Ibid, 306.

> However, tradition is too weighty (and weighted) a word to describe the irregular development and deployment of Gothic forms and themes in the work of Irish writers over the course of three centuries…It may now be time to … [retire] 'the Irish Gothic *tradition*' and [replace] it with 'the Irish Gothic *mode*'.[13]

In a previous article on James Clarence Mangan, Haslam has called for support for this terminological substitution from Robert Hume and, significantly, Fred Botting, one of the most important critics writing on the Gothic.[14]

Of course, a problem with relying on Botting to back up this dismantling of 'tradition' in favour of 'mode' is that Botting actually uses both terms fairly inconsistently throughout his study of Gothic (1996).[15] Indeed, to suggest that he favours a shift from 'tradition' to 'mode' is to misrepresent his view. Botting's argument is that given the sheer diffusion of 'Gothic forms and figures over more than two centuries', it is difficult to define Gothic as 'a homogenous generic category'; as a 'mode' it exceeds 'genre and categories'.[16] There is certainly no rejection of the notion of a 'Gothic tradition' here since in the same paragraph he writes:

> While certain devices and plots, what might be called the staples of the Gothic, are clearly identifiable in early Gothic texts, the *tradition* draws on medieval romances, supernatural, Faustian and fairy tales, Renaissance drama, sentimental, picaresque and confessional narratives as well as the ruins, tombs and nocturnal speculations that fascinated Graveyard poets (my italics).[17]

A page and a half later, discussing American Gothic, Botting claims that in the United States 'the literary *canon* is composed of works in which the influence of romances and Gothic novels is far more overt', so that American literature seems 'virtually an effect of a Gothic *tradition*. Gothic can perhaps be called the only true literary *tradition*' (my italics).[18] He afterwards points to Horace Walpole as the founder of 'the Gothic *tradition*' (my italics)[19]; argues that Charles Brockden Brown was a negotiator of 'European and American Gothic *traditions*' (my italics)[20]; and considers that David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) absorbs 'the American Gothic *tradition*' (my italics).[21] The term 'tradition' is indeed a problematic and sometimes distorting one in literary critical history, but if we were to retire all terms which were problematic and distorting we would be left with a much denuded and even more distorting view, in which 'mode' does not help one bit.[22]

An important objection to Haslam's attempt to delete the term from our critical vocabulary when discussing Irish Gothic is that 'tradition' is a much more polyvalent term than he allows. Indeed, W. J. McCormack makes it clear that he objects only to a specific formulation of tradition, tradition 'in its

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[13] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 2.
[14] Richard Haslam, '"Broad Farce and Thrilling Tragedy": Mangan's Fiction and Irish Gothic', *Éire-Ireland* 41: 3 and 4 (Fall/Winter 2007), footnote 17.
[15] Indeed, bizarrely, Haslam points out that McCormack himself uses both terms 'mode' and 'tradition' in his studies and I would point out that almost every writer on the Gothic that I have consulted does exactly the same – i.e., they do not see a conflict between the terms.
[16] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), 14.
[17] Ibid, 14.
[18] Ibid, 16.
[19] Ibid, 21.
[20] Ibid, 115.
[21] Ibid, 175.
[22] Romanticism would have to go for a start, followed closely by realism.

Yeatsian form'[23] – the view of 'tradition' articulated by the modernists. Yet, modernist views of tradition are not the only ones, even if they have been allowed to dominate discussion. While McCormack wants to 'cashier' the monologic, modernist view of tradition, he reminds us that it is perfectly possible to 'consider tradition historically as the (sometimes contradictory and violent) convergence of readings, not of texts'.[24] He urges his readers not to mistake tradition for its objects (the components of the canon), and instead recognise it as 'the social and cultural dynamics of the process of handing down, and the place of this in the modes of production of the period and the historical character of that period'.[25] Accepting this view of tradition as a very complex, contradictory, 'violent' process of textual production and cultural interpretation, critical responses to the use of Gothic themes and tropes would in fact constitute part of the Irish Gothic tradition, a tradition in which no one single ideological or political affiliation is discernible. Indeed, such a tradition would look rather like that image I invoked in my original essay: an Irish Gothic tradition which resembles a 'Gothic edifice, full of suggestive gaps, obscure corners, imposing promontories (the "great" works), fractures, fragments' (2), a view Haslam dismisses as 'picturesque' (and we know what he means by that).[26]

Once we move outside the sometimes narrow confines of literary history, we find that 'tradition' has been used in this much more complicated way as including both actual works and the processes involved in interpreting and transmitting these works. For example (one that might not gain me very many friends), the Catholic Church in the *Dogmatic Constitution of Divine Revelation*, debated at the Second Vatican Council in 1962, problematized an old-fashioned view of Catholic tradition as simply referring to the deposit of faith and redefined it as 'the whole process by which the Church "hands on"…its faith to each new generation'.[27] The relationship between Irish Gothic texts – or Irish texts that employ Gothic tropes and themes – and the process of reception and interpretation of these texts is (hesitatingly and in a limited way) analogous to the relationship between scripture and interpretation in the Catholic tradition: 'Tradition comes before and during and not just after, the writing of Sacred Scripture'.[28] Haslam's invocation of the term 'mode' is certainly useful, but it is rather strange to think that its use requires the 'retirement' of the term 'tradition'. To invoke a more theological discourse, I would suggest that the Irish Gothic mode *subsists in* the Irish Gothic tradition, and that this tradition includes all articulations of the Gothic mode (including all critical refection on it) that have any relationship to the subject matter of 'Ireland', as broadly conceived as that can be. In this way 'tradition' can be reconceived, in Paul Ricoeur's words, *not* as 'the inert transmission of some dead deposit of material but …the living transmission of an innovation always capable of being reactivated by a return to the most creative moments of poetic activity'.[29]

Haslam's (ideological?) unease is reminiscent of the furore which greeted the Richard Kearney edited study of *The Irish Mind* in 1985. As he puts it in a recent response to the controversy the volume

[23] McCormack, *Burke to Beckett* 12.
[24] Ibid, 12.
[25] Ibid 303. This is hardly an unusual critical position. Harold Bloom, a critic who spent the early years of his career disputing the Eliotian view of tradition has not simply abandoned the term as somehow indissolubly connected to a stultifying conservatism, and in *Anxiety of Influence* (1973) famously devised a tradition of radically personal 'influence' where one great writer struggles with the modes he 'inherits' from a 'strong' precursor, a version of tradition as a highly contentious and even violently aggressive form of misreading.
[26] Jarlath Killeen, 'Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction', *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* 1 (2006), 1.
[27] Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 62-3.
[28] Ibid, 62.
[29] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 68.

generated, Kearney posited that on the whole, 'Irish intellectual traditions represent something of a counter-movement to the mainstream of hegemonic rationalism…In contradistinction to the orthodox dualist logic of *either/or*, the Irish mind may be seen to favour a more dialectical logic of *both/and*: an intellectual ability to hold the traditional oppositions of classical reason together in creative confluence'.[30] It was partly this formulation that encouraged Terry Eagleton to see much of Irish intellectual and literary history as doggedly opposed to a representational epistemology, from the calligraphy of the *Book of Kells*, to the negative theology of John Scottus Eriugena, to Burke's sublime, and also the Gothic novel.[31] Some reviewers argued that Kearney, in the cause of Irish nationalism, had essentialized Irishness and simply reversed the usual colonial claims that Ireland was full of people who simply couldn't think straight, privileging this inability as an 'alternative system of thought'. Kearney has since emphasised that the phenomenon of the 'Irish mind' be 'understood as a *cultural* phenomenon that develops and alters as history progresses, and *not* as some innate ethnic characteristic'.[32] If the Irish Gothic tradition be included as representative of the cultural phenomenon of the 'Irish mind', the complexity of its intellectual and aesthetic contribution to Irish history can begin to be mapped.

Allegory or Allegoresis?

Haslam's second major bone of contention focuses on what he sees as the most important interpretive error that can be found in my reading of particular texts in the Irish Gothic tradition and which can be extended to include my understanding of the tradition in its entirety. He argues that my 'psychoanalytically-inflected reading of Irish history shapes [my] reading of an Irish story' (particularly *Melmoth the Wanderer*), and that I always tend to see Gothic texts as commenting in some way on 'the burden of colonial history', as commentaries on the anxieties of the Anglo-Irish in general, so that in my analysis, Irish Gothic is one specific means by which Protestant Anglo-Irish writers reflected on their place in Ireland and articulated the psychological conundrums which that position imposed.[33] Luckily, I am not alone in making such an egregious blunder, and Haslam sees Julian Moynahan, Joseph Spence and Terry Eagleton as my brothers-in-error. Apparently we all make the same interpretive mistake:

> this interpretation substitutes allegoresis (a hermeneutic practice) for allegory (a rhetorical practice); in the former, a text lacking the conventionally accepted characteristics of theological, moralistic, historical, political, or personification allegory is explicated *as if* it were a deliberately designed allegory.[34]

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[30] Richard Kearney, 'The Irish Mind Debate', *Navigations: Collected Irish Essays 1976-2006* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2006), 19.

[31] Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995), 50-1, 188-9.

[32] Kearney, 'The Irish Mind Debate', 21. In an earlier article Haslam approvingly cites Conor Cruise O' Brien's negative review of Kearney's collection as useful for problematising notions of 'the Irish Mind' ('A Race Bashed in the Face' 20).

[33] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 3.He also argues that I claim that 'Protestants compensated for their loss of power in the real world by re-investing their energies in another, more obscure, and yet more powerful domain' (3). However, I made it clear in my original article that this was a view put forward by Roy Foster in his article on 'Protestant Magic' (1995), and it was a view with which I did not entirely agree. Indeed, I argued that Irish Protestants did not simply 'lose power' in real terms in nineteenth-century Ireland and that 'we must remember that the Protestant writers of Gothic in Ireland formed a part of the (relatively) powerful rather than the powerless, and it doesn't really make sense to view them as marginalized in anything other than purely psychological terms' (4).

[34] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 3.

Of course, the term 'allegory' did not arise once in my original article, although it does occur in Terry Eagleton's suggestion that 'it is possible to read Maturin's astonishing novel as an allegory of this strange condition in which exploiters and victims are both strangers and comrades'.[35]

Does seeing *Melmoth the Wanderer* as a commentary on the Irish Protestant mentality or Irish history and politics amount to *allegoresis*, an uncalled-for, unprovoked, unnecessary imposition on an unwilling text, a breach of hermeneutical decorum, and ultimately a complete misrepresentation of both a text and the Irish Gothic tradition itself? Northrop Frye had a neat line in responding to accusations of allegoresis. In his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) he explicitly warned that 'All commentary is allegorical interpretation'.[36] I too would hesitatingly suggest that all accounts of Maturin's tale which relate something other than simply the plot are open to the accusation of allegoresis. Frye's point is that all readings which assess the way a text 'says one thing but means another' are necessarily implicated in the mode of allegorical interpretation. As Morton Bloomfield explains, 'except for textual scholars who attempt to preserve and protect the verbal surface of a work…we may put all interpreters into the general category of allegorists'.[37] Haslam is concerned that Moynahan, Eagleton, Spence and myself are involved in subordinating both the text and the author to the critic, to seeing in the text what we want to see in it. To counter this he answers my specific readings of *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *Ennui* (1809) with textual detail of his own, but he does this primarily to re-establish what he sees as the proper relationship between a text, an author and a critic in which the critic should not set out to make the text say things that the author did not intend. Since, he argues, Maturin did not intend *Melmoth* to amount to a consideration of the Protestant Irish position in Ireland, or the politics of Ireland at the time, it is unfair – indeed, illegitimate – of me to claim that this is what the novel does. That kind of interpretation 'makes itself a little too much *at home* in the text' and ends up imposing an allegorical reading which is simply not there; he cautions that hesitancy in interpretation rather than allegoresis should take precedence.[38]

Personally speaking, I feel that I could hardly have made much more of tentativeness if I tried: the main point of my original argument, after all, was to point out that Tzvetan Todorov's association of the Gothic with a psychological 'hesitancy' between a supernatural and a natural understanding of the plot can be linked to the cultural hesitancy of the Protestant Irish:

> There were no greater cultural hesitators in the British Isles than the 'Anglo-Irish'; so deep was their sense of cultural ambiguity that Julian Moynahan has rightly called them a "hyphenated culture". As hybrid figures the Anglo-Irish were in a perfect position to develop an important tradition in a literature that emphasises hesitancy over certainty, and which refuses to dissolve binaries such as living/dead, inside/outside, friend/enemy, desire/disgust'.[39]

It was no part of my general plan to argue that we should calcify the hesitators and their texts into a very specifically drawn out allegory. I also endorsed Moynahan's view that Gothic often violates the 'official best intentions' of its authors so that, while it may or may not be true that Maturin did not intend an allegorical reading of *Melmoth*, this does not necessarily mean that the novel he produced does not

[35] Eagleton, *Heathcliff*, 190, quoted in Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 3
[36] Northrop Frye, *An Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 89.
[37] Morton Bloomfield, 'Allegory as Interpretation', *New Literary History* 3 (1972), 302.
[38] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics', 4.
[39] Killeen, 'Irish Gothic', 6; see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 25.

include such an allegory.[40] Haslam is deeply suspicious of psychoanalysis as a tool of interpretation considering it a cheap way to incorporate readings that a particular critic wishes to propound under the cover of either the personal, political or cultural unconscious (he includes a long footnote disputing Fredrick Jameson's conceptualisation of the 'political unconscious'[41]), but while critics (including myself) should perhaps be more hesitant in employing such models to literary analysis, it is important to recognise that what Haslam is trying to do is to close down analysis by effectively outlawing modes of interpretation with which he does not agree. Hence, in his brief article on the 'Irish Gothic' for the *Routledge Companion* (2007) he suggests that psychoanalysis itself is an outmoded discourse – thus implying that any application of its terminology automatically renders that interpretation illegitimate.[42]

There is no space here to replay Jacques Derrida's argument that once a text leaves the author she cannot control the ways it can interpreted[43]; or to re-emphasise the now surely uncontested view that an author is not in complete control of what meanings a text contains. I am not here arguing that authorial intention is unimportant or to be dismissed,[44] simply insisting that there may be more to a text than an author assumes or would recognise. Baldly speaking, even if Maturin was not *intentionally* commenting on the 'Irish Protestant mentality', he ended up doing so anyway. It is difficult to see why any literary critic would want to disagree with this position. Moreover, it is not, in fact, necessary to invoke the notion of allegory to defend this view. Indeed, we can bring into play another term put forward by Northrop Frye. In his analysis of romance Frye posits that, by its structures and conventions, romance always provokes alternative meanings, and argues 'it seems to me that the word allegory here is misleading: I should prefer some such phrase as "symbolic spread", the sense that a work of literature is expanding into insights and experiences beyond itself'.[45] The eminent Gothic critic Anne Williams has also preferred the term 'symbolic spread' to 'allegory' in analysing the Gothic.[46] In my own study of eighteenth-century Irish Gothic I endorsed 'the New Historicist notion that texts and the histories in which they are imbedded are mutually productive processes'[47]; the term 'symbolic spread' usefully describes the means by which this mutual production of interpretation takes place.

As a contemporary and very obvious example of 'symbolic spread' I would cite John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) which soon after its release came to be seen as a quasi-conservative (perhaps ultra-conservative) commentary on the sexual revolution of the 1960s and a warning that sexual promiscuity equals death. In the film all the teenagers who have sex are brutally murdered with a phallic-like knife by the deranged Michael Myers who appears to be engaging in not-so-subtle

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[40] Killeen, 'Irish Gothic', 3; Julian Moynahan, 'The Politics of Anglo-Irish Gothic: Charles Robert Maturin, Sheridan Le Fanu, and the Return of the Repressed', *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination of a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 111.

[41] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', footnote 60; see also Haslam's complaint that despite 'the growing number of historical, philosophical and scientific studies implacably establishing the fraudulent origins and flawed procedures of psychoanalysis, widespread recognition of its pseudoscientific status has been long delayed within European and American intellectual communities whose various schools from the post-structural to the post-colonial remain heavily indebted to the idiom of Freud and his epigones' ('A Race Bashed in the Face' 12).

[42] This is clearly why Haslam gives such a sympathetic reception to the work of Frederick Crews.

[43] Jacques Derrida, 'Signature Event Context', *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 313.

[44] Neither, of course, did Derrida.

[45] Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1976), 59.

[46] Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 81-2.

[47] Jarlath Killeen, *Gothic Ireland: Horror and the Irish Anglican Imagination in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 25.

reinforcement of family values. Carpenter later expressed shock that his film could be read as an endorsement of abstention and insisted that it was not his intention to bring an end to the sexual revolution.[48] However, it would be bizarre to argue that, simply because there was no conscious intention on Carpenter's part, the film should not be read as containing a commentary on sexual behaviour.[49] Similarly, Haslam's approach would appear to render illegitimate readings of *Dracula* (1897) which see in the staking of Lucy Westenra a reinscription of patriarchal values on a sexually-transgressing woman simply because such an interpretation was probably not consciously meant by Stoker.

Part of Haslam's discomfort with my 'symbolically spread' analysis is due to his deep suspicion of any attempt to describe the Irish Protestant mind in general terms:

> …the definite article should be treated with caution and caveats when employed categorically ('the Irish Gothic mode'). Even more intellectual vigilance is necessary when 'the' prefixes prosopoœia (Moynahan's 'the Anglo-Irish or Ascendancy literary imagination'). Extreme caution is required when dealing with hazardous materials like Freudianism, especially when hypostasized creations like 'the…Ascendancy literary imagination' are psychoanalyzed in order to expose 'the return of the repressed' (see the sub-title of Moynahan's influential essay). Thus, although presumably intended to function as historical shorthand, Killeen's references to entities entitled 'the Protestant character', 'the English mind', and 'the Irish Protestant mentality' are distinctly problematic.[50]

In his article on 'Irish Gothic' in the *Routledge Companion*, Haslam likewise accuses me of 'hypostasizing' 'the Irish Anglican Imagination' in my book on the subject, although he does admit that I am partly redeemable since I accept that such terms are open to challenge.[51] Let me acknowledge that there is a genuine problem in attempting to generalise and articulate a view about the mentalité and psychology, but also the general characteristics, of a given culture, and that it is impossible in the strictest sense to essentialize any given set of people because there will always be exceptions, and differing versions of the same community. It is strictly true to say that 'the Irish mind', or 'the Protestant imagination', or 'the English personality' does not exist except in the most hypothetical and abstract terms. There are a few more points to be made in respect to this, however, the first being the rather obvious one that substituting the prefix 'an', or 'one version of', for the definite article, does not really help matters, and that qualifications while useful can not only be cumbersome but also very misleading. For example, Marianne Elliott's *The Catholics of Ulster* (2000) purports to trace the history of one specific culture from Cú Chulainn to the second millennium and strongly asserts that a 'regional identity' can be identified for this group. By Haslam's strict logic Elliott's book should be called 'a version of some Catholics of Ulster: A Partial History', but I think that this might blunt some of the rhetorical force of her analyses and also suggest that she is not, however provisionally, really trying to describe a discernible community.

Likewise, by the strict logic of Haslam's argument, a book such as Oliver Macdonagh's brilliant *States of Mind: Two Centuries of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780-1980* (1983) would not be possible, not least because in it he ascribes very different views of time and space to two different communities living in Ireland, although qualifying this with the insistence that he does not mean 'to suggest that the respective common

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[48] Darryl Jones, *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film* (London: Arnold, 2002), 117.
[49] Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women and Chain Saws* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 167.
[50] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 3.
[51] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, eds. Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (London: Routledge, 2007), 88-9.

historical assumptions of the two peoples were, or are, either innate or universal'.[52] MacDonagh's discussion of such things as 'the Ulster Protestant sense of territoriality',[53] 'the Irish nationalist...concept of space'[54], 'the peasant's view of property'[55], would all be outlawed. In his seminal study of competing Irish cultures F. S. L. Lyons argued that much of the conflict in Irish history could be put down to the fact that different communities understood the world in such different ways so that they became 'seemingly irreconcilable cultures, unable to live together or to live apart, caught inextricably in the web of their tragic history'.[56] However much Lyons' view has been challenged, he is surely correct to discern that these communities understand themselves as possessing different world-views. When Terry Eagleton argues that 'the Anglo-Irish mind was gripped by a ferocious Oedipal aggression towards its paternal superiors at Westminster, a hostility which, like the Oedipal child, it sought often enough to displace and disavow',[57] he is guilty of a myriad sins from Haslam's perspective, not only generalising but also psychoanalysing an entire group of people. Eagleton is, however, one of the worst examples Haslam could have chosen to berate since, throughout his many studies of Irish culture he constantly qualifies such generalisations. However, he also insists that although the Protestant Irish were hardly a wholly unified group in social terms their internal 'differences are…less important than their shared political and religious ideology'.[58] So, although we can easily concede the point that '*the* Irish Protestant mind' does not exist, it is perfectly possible to discuss 'the Irish Protestant mind' – in other words, Haslam is the one adding the italics to the definitive article, rather than any of the rest of us.

My book on 'the Irish Anglican Imagination' was an attempt at a study of 'social memory' as theorised by Steve Connerton, a memory which involves folklore, mythology, traditions, and literature, and was as far from deterministic as I could make it. In his study of 'collective memory' Maurice Halbwachs insists that individual memory is best seen through the prism of collective memory since the individual constantly depends on her version of the past being reflected and corroborated by the community to which she belongs. We remember the past not merely as individuals but as parts of a collective and community – 'knowable communities' have memories, and one way of getting at these memories is through an analysis of the literature that the community has produced. While, again, it is perfectly correct to argue that Halbwachs rode rather roughshod over the individual inflection of collective memory so that individual idiosyncrasy was almost lost in his argument, in my own work I have consistently tried to emphasise the individual differences (between, for example, Sir John Temple and Jonathan Swift) as well as the similarities in the Irish Protestant community. However, the positive aspects of Halbwachs must not be ignored and discussing collective memory or group identity should not be dismissed as some kind of historical or psychoanalytical slight-of-hand. The Irish Gothic tradition is one, very telling, way to tell us about the community that (generally) produced it: the Irish Protestant community.

When George Orwell discussed the class differences within Britain as an objection to attempts to claim any kind of homogeneity in British culture he noted that internal divisions 'fade away the moment any two Britons are confronted by a European' and that 'even the distinction between rich and poor dwindles

[52] Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind: Two Centuries of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780-1980* (London: Pimlico, 1992), 11.
[53] Ibid, 19.
[54] Ibid, 23.
[55] Ibid, 37.
[56] F. S. L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 117.
[57] Eagleton, *Heathcliff*, 71.
[58] Ibid, 43.

somewhat when one regards the nation from the outside'.[59] Any study of a collective will be more likely to emphasise the cultural commonalities rather than internal divisions. In her (possibly hypostasizing) account of the 'forging' of collective British identity in the eighteenth century, Linda Colley points out that while 'there were always dissenting voices: and it is right and proper that they should emerge loud and clear from the historical record and that we acknowledge them…we should not let them drown out the other, *apparently* more conventional voices'.[60] The search for the underlying patterns of cultural codification in any given group or collectivity is not a quest for the holy grail – and given that some of these patterns are indeed underlying or latent rather than manifest, it is surely not illegitimate to invoke and utilise a discourse which is calibrated to uncovering latencies often undetectable to insiders, the discourse of psychoanalysis.[61]

Protestant Gothic/Catholic Gothic.

Another of Haslam's disagreements with me (and this time, also with McCormack), concerns the claim that 'Irish Gothic writing' is 'distinctly protestant'.[62] Haslam rightly protests that there is a substantial body of Gothic writing composed by Irish Catholics, including John Banim, Michael Banim, William Carleton (though, of course, Carelton did convert to Protestantism), James Clarence Mangan, John Banville, Neil Jordan and Seamus Deane – to which list I would add Oscar Wilde (but then, I would, wouldn't I), and James Joyce – there are distinctly Gothic elements to stories like 'The Sisters' (1904) and 'The Dead' (1914), as well as the Circe episode of *Ulysses*. Indeed, I would be willing to go much further than this kind of listing and agree with Vera Kreilkamp who, in a review of Margot Gayle Bakus' *The Gothic Family Romance* (1999) noted that the 'marginalised Gothic mode [Bakus] examines permeates virtually all Irish writing'.[63] Indeed, Kreilkamp suggests that far from existing as a separate tradition in Irish writing, it is the *only* tradition of Irish writing – the realist novel, she points out, did not really exist in a pure form in Ireland. None of this, however, negates the original point made by McCormack, and rearticulated by myself, which is that Irish Gothic is a Protestant mode because Gothic itself is a Protestant mode. The point being made here is not that Irish Gothic was written only by Irish Protestants (though it mostly was), but that the form itself is Protestant.

The relationship between Catholicism and modern forms of literature has been fraught. In an essay on 'Catholic Literature in the English Tongue, 1854-8', delivered in 1859, John Henry Newman claimed that, in terms of modern English writing, 'we have…a Protestant literature'.[64] Newman obviously went too far in this declaration since, as he observed, William Shakespeare could be considered a Catholic writer, and the canon of modern English literature would have to include Richard Crashaw, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson. If he had contented himself with reference to the novel form, however, Newman would have been on much more solid ground. After all, literary historians have been keen to stress not

[59] George Orwell, 'The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius', *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Penguin, 1970), vol. 2, 83.
[60] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 4.
[61] Here is not the place to launch a full-scale defence of psychoanalysis as a mode of inquiry, and I am not qualified to do so, anyway. For a start of such a defence against the onslaughts of numerous debunkers such as Jeffrey Masson and Frederick Crews, see John Forrester, *Dispatches from the Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and its Passions* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[62] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 5; McCormack, 5; 'Irish Gothic and After', 837.
[63] Vera Kreilkamp, 'Review', Margot Gayle Bakus, *The Gothic Family Romance: Heterosexuality, Child-Sacrifice and the Anglo-Irish Colonial Order* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1999), *Victorian Studies* 43: 4 (2001), 248.
[64] John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. I. T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 262.

just that the Gothic is essentially Protestant, but that the novel itself is Protestant, and that Catholics who write novels are interlopers in an alien tradition.[65] Newman was echoed, though from a less sympathetic position, by George Orwell in the twentieth century who asked contentiously: 'How many Roman Catholics have been good novelists? Even the handful one could name have usually been bad Catholics. The novel is practically a Protestant form of art; it is a product of the free mind, of the autonomous individual'.[66] You need not necessarily agree with Orwell's association of freedom with Protestantism to endorse his central intuition that the novel and Protestantism are deeply connected – indeed, so closely connected that a claim that the novel is interpellated by Protestantism may not be an overstatement.

In her article on 'The Englishness of the English Novel' (1980), Q. D. Leavis argued that 'the glories of English literature are innately Protestant in character' and that 'the English novel owes more than anything else to the fact that it has traditionally been the product of an essentially Protestant culture'.[67] Newman's, Orwell's, and Leavis' claims have largely been supported by over a century of literary scholarship. Ian Watt's seminal *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) contended that 'It is…likely that the Puritan conception of the dignity of labour helped to bring into being the novel's general premise that the individual's daily life is of sufficient importance and interest to be the proper subject of literature'.[68] This was echoed by Michael McKeown's *The Origins of the English Novel* (1987), endorsing a connection between the 'Protestant mind' and the form of the novel.[69] Clearly, this is not all that needs to be said, and the relationship between the novel and Protestantism would have to be qualified by its simultaneous connection with the romance. However, it is probably best to articulate the relationship between the novel and the romance as one of critical dependency (in the same way that Protestantism, being a belated Christian denomination, depends on Catholicism as a way to define itself). Something very similar might be said of Gothic fiction which is both driven by Catholophobia – it is a form which is inextricably bound up in, one of whose major functions is, attacking Catholicism – and yet also displays constant and repeated Catholophilia, a desire for that which has been rejected, a point I tried to demonstrate in detail in my study of eighteenth-century Irish Gothic. Critics much more able than I, including Victor Sage, Cannon Schmitt and Patrick O' Malley, have done much to elucidate this disgust-desire dichotomy driving the Gothic forward.

In the 1960s Maurice Levy argued that the Glorious Revolution leading to the Protestant Settlement was of basic importance to Gothic writers, and Victor Sage has supported this, insisting that 'the penetration of Protestant theology into every aspect of English culture since the Settlement acts as a most intimate, and at the same time a most objective, conditioning factor in both popular belief and literary culture'.[70] The Gothic tradition is formed partly from the images of horror abstracted from that great founding text, John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (Book of Martyrs) (1563), whose raison d'être is precisely the demonstration of Catholic monstrosity and, as John Henry Newman pointed out in his 'Lectures on the Present

[65] I would suggest that the term 'Protestant novel' is a tautology, while 'Catholic novel' makes a great deal of sense.
[66] George Orwell, 'Inside the Whale', *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Penguin, 1970), vol. 1, 515.
[67] Q. D. Leavis, 'The Englishness of the English Novel', *Collected Essays*, ed. G. Singh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), vol. 1, 318.
[68] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (1957; London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), 74.
[69] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1660-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 337.
[70] Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), xiii.

Condition of Catholics in England' (1850), versions of Catholics-as-monsters pervaded English culture as a long and pernicious tradition:

> this Tradition does not flow from the mouths of the half-dozen wise or philosophic, or learned men who can be summoned in its support, but is a tradition of nursery stories, school stories, public-house stories, club-house stories, drawing-room stories, platform stories, pulpit stories; - a tradition of newspapers, magazines, reviews, pamphlets, romances, novels, poems, and light literature of all kind, literature of the day; - a tradition of selection from the English classics, bits of poetry, passages of history, sermons, chance essays, extracts from books of travel, anonymous anecdotes, lectures on prophecy, statements and arguments of polemical writers made up into small octavos for class-books and into pretty miniatures for presents; a tradition floating in the air.[71]

Patrick O' Malley insists that 'in its ideological structure, the English Gothic novel, though it typically represents Catholicism, is fundamentally a Protestant genre',[72] while Cannon Schmitt emphasises that 'On the one hand, Gothics pose as semi-ethnographic texts in their representation of Catholic, Continental Europe or the Far East as fundamentally un-English, the site of depravity. On the other, a notion of Englishness is itself constructed in the novels', an Englishness dependent upon the negation of Catholicism.[73]

It is rather too easy to compile a list of prominent Catholic novelists as a way to refute the thesis that the novel is a Protestant form but such an approach would completely miss the point, and this can be said for the Gothic also. Although it would be far too complex to demonstrate completely here, it should be noted that many twentieth-century Irish Catholic writers who use Gothic motifs in their work adopt almost wholesale the monstrous version of Catholicism basic to the Gothic novel – a claim ably demonstrated by the depiction of the 1950s as a Gothic horror story by some Catholic writers and filmmakers in the latter half of the twentieth century. Of course, another use by Catholic writers of Gothic motifs and tropes is in a mode of writing back, a kind of reverse Gothic. The most obvious example of this is in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) where he takes the prevailing Catholic demonology of the Gothic and overturns it so that the Gordon rioters of 1780 take on the imagery normally ascribed to Spanish Inquisition monks and Continental nuns and priests by Hugh Walpole, Ann Radcliffe and 'Monk' Lewis. As Luke Gibbons perceptively notes, in Burke's writing as a whole, 'the brutality of British colonialism in India, and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, meant that [a] new form of state terrorism was now unleashed upon the world, driven by a form of zealotry and intolerance which Burke, in the *Reflections*, traced back to the Cromwellian period'.[74] In this way the Irish Gothic is bound up in the depiction of Irish Catholics as monstrous Others; when Catholic writers adopt the Gothic they are essentially attempting to appropriate an alien form.

Reading Maturin and Edgeworth (again).

A complete justification of the readings of *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *Ennui* put forward in my original article would require more space than I have at my disposal, but what I can do here is gesture towards

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[71] Quoted in Sage, *Horror Fiction*, 27.
[72] Patrick O' Malley*, Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 32.
[73] Cannon Schmitt, *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 2.
[74] Luke Gibbons, 'The Mirror and the Vamp: Reflections on the Act of Union', *Hearts and Mind: Irish Culture and Society under the Act of Union*, ed. Bruce Stewart (Monaco: Princess Grace Irish Library, 2002), 24.

how such a justification would proceed. Haslam's main difficulty with my reading of *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *Ennui* stems from his suspicion of my tendency to assume 'unproblematic exchanges between texts and contexts' and read latent and unconscious elements beneath the manifest and conscious. [75] Having addressed this difficulty above, I can now move to his textually-based refutation. My original essay claimed that the eponymous Melmoth the Wanderer 'has been dispossessed by his Cromwellian brother'[76]; Haslam asks pertinently: 'is there any evidence for this radical claim?' His answer is emphatic: no, not a jot.[77] This allows him to argue that my general association between the Wanderer and the Catholic landowners dispossessed by incoming Protestants who were granted land in payment for services rendered during the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland is simply another interpretive mistake in what is by now a long and wearying list. It suits my psychoanalytically-inflected reading of Irish history to see Melmoth in this way, and therefore I see Melmoth in this way: not so much exegesis as eisegesis: 'there is no evidence', Haslam insists, and argues that a critic should be much more hesitant when positing a relationship between this novel and the situation of Ireland. This is, however, a novel which takes place entirely in Ireland. Although much of the plot's actions occur elsewhere (Civil War England, Inquisition Spain, an Indian island), these events are narrated by Monçada to John Melmoth while they sit in what turns out to be the room in which Melmoth the Wanderer claims to have been born, in a Big House in Co. Wicklow. This detail alone suggests that we should be very hesitant when dismissing Ireland from the analytic equation.

Haslam is perfectly correct to highlight the apparent contradiction between the references to the Wanderer being born in Ireland in this Big House ('In this apartment…I first drew breath, in this I must perhaps resign it'[78]), and Biddy Brannigan's claim that the Melmoth family took hold of the house when it was confiscated from an Irish Royalist (presumably also Catholic) family and given to the Wanderer's younger brother who had fought in Cromwell's army.[79] How can the Wanderer have been born in the house before his *younger* brother gained possession of it? Haslam puts this down to an authorial error – Maturin simply lost control of his text and could not always keep things consistent.[80] The historically-aware reader, however, must note that such confusion over origin is peculiarly consonant with that of the Irish Protestant culture of which Maturin himself was a part. As has been exhaustively set out by a number of historians, Protestants who had settled in Ireland after the Cromwellian and Williamite settlements were deeply ambivalent when it came to fixing their nationality; many continued to call themselves English, while others came to denote themselves Irish as they developed an increasing connection with the country in which they lived.[81] In other words, Melmoth's ambiguous origin *resonates* with that of Maturin's social and religious culture (this is where terms like 'symbolic spread' are useful).

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[75] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 3.
[76] Killeen, 'Irish Gothic', 5.
[77] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 4.
[78] Charles Robert Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant, intro. Chris Baldick (Buckinghamshire: Oxford University Press, 1989), 540.
[79] Ibid, 26.
[80] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 4.
[81] See Ian MacBride, '"The common name of Irishman": Protestantism and patriotism in eighteenth-century Ireland,' *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650-c. 1850*, eds. Tony Claydon and Ian MacBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 236-261; Toby Barnard, 'Protestantism, Ethnicity and Irish Identities, 1660-1760', *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650- c. 1850*, eds Tony Claydon and Ian MacBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 206-235; Nicholas Canny, 'Identity formation in Ireland: the Emergence of the Anglo-Irish', *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, eds Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 159-212.

Moreover, a general sense of 'up-rootedness' is basic to the plot of *Melmoth*. Let us take as probable some initial displacement, transplantation, of Irish Catholic Royalists to make way for the Cromwellian Protestant Melmoths, or at least admit that it is difficult to dispel this image once Biddy Brannigan has narrated her tale. Similar displacements take place everywhere in this novel, displacements generally linked to a loss of inheritance of money or land. 'The Story of the Parricide' concerns a man who has killed his father so to 'inherit' wealth sooner rather than later; this parricide tells a tale of a young lover, forced into a monastery and disinherited because he wanted to marry a woman of inferior descent; the parricide's role in the monastery is to help its officials lure aristocrats into taking vows and thus disinheriting themselves; this story is related to John Melmoth by Monçada, another disinherited aristocrat, who has been superseded by his younger brother. 'The Tale of Guzman's Family' also concerns disinheritance. Guzman, a pious Catholic who has no heir, summons his married sister Ines Walberg and her family to Spain to be close to him in his twilight years. When he dies, however, they find themselves disinherited and the estate passes to the Spanish Church, leaving them in poverty and destruction.

In a novel where disinheritance is such a recurrent theme, the invidious position of Melmoth the Wanderer comes to the fore: why did he sell his soul to Satan? He calls himself at one point a 'disinherited child of nature',[82] but the exact nature of that disinheritance is not made clear.[83] However, that he claims to have been 'born' in a room of the estate taken-over by his younger brother who has dispossessed a Catholic family, is surely suggestive. The title, 'disinherited child of nature', does at least serve to connect the Wanderer to the host of other characters and marginal figures (including the displaced Catholic Royalists) who have also found themselves dispossessed, and it was this connection that led me to argue that the dispossessed Melmoth 'might stand for all those demonic figures now also complaining of dispossession'.[84]

The Irish Catholics – both Royalists and 'nationalists' – who were dispossessed by the incoming Protestant Cromwellians were commonly talked of in terms of the monstrous and the demonic, as agents of Satan, and also as malicious wanderers of the night. In his seminal *The Irish Rebellion* (1646), Sir John Temple insisted that Irish rebels were not simply discontented subjects but 'inhuman monsters' in league with the devil (149), and that 'the malignant impressions of irreligion and barbarism, transmitted down, whether by infusion from their ancestors, or natural generation, had irrefragably stiffened their necks, and harrowed their hearts' (17).[85] In the aftermath of the Cromwellian conquest and confiscations, an anonymous Irish officer in the French army explained that one outcome of the conflict was that many Irish Catholics were condemned to wander through Europe in exile:

> See you not the kindly countenanced, unhappy Gaels,
> the war dogs who yielded naught to their opponents,
> scattered in troops through Europe?[86]

The Commissioners for the Administration of the Affairs of the Commonwealth of England in Ireland (established in 1653) also commented upon the amount of Catholic displacement that had occurred due to the conquest, 'the multitude of persons, especially women and children wandering up and down the

[82] Maturin, *Melmoth* 319.
[83] That Melmoth has been disinherited from his heavenly home is certainly implied here.
[84] Killeen, 'Irish Gothic', 5.
[85] Sir John Temple, *The Irish Rebellion: or an history of the beginning and the first progress of the generall rebellion raised within the kingdome of Ireland upon the three and twentieth day of October in the year 1641* (London, 1646), 149, 17.
[86] Quoted in Peter Beresford Ellis, *Hell or Connaught! The Cromwellian Colonisation of Ireland, 1652-1660* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), 43.

country, that daily perish in ditches, and are starved for want of relief'.[87] These examples could be multiplied many times over. To argue, then, that a heretical, dispossessed, wandering, 'Irish' agent of Satan can be seen as a figure who 'might stand for' heretical, dispossessed, wandering, Irish agents of Satan, hardly seems like a stretch of credibility.

There is, moreover, enough textual evidence to indicate that whatever about the legal niceties, it is precisely the Big House he claims to have been born *in* which Melmoth believes he was dispossessed *of*. After all, the entire plot revolves around the transfer of this property to the young John Melmoth, and Biddy Brannigan insists that the Wanderer 'had been frequently seen in Ireland even to the present century' at the death of family members – i.e., at the moment of property transfer to the next generation.[88] It is surely relevant that Melmoth feels interested enough to witness the generational transfer of this property. The house to which he feels a peculiar link, even claiming he was born there despite the probability that he originated in England, is the one he returns to constantly with an almost proprietorial interest. A conviction that he has been immorally dispossessed would also explain his vituperative account of European colonialism, which he depicts as a history where rightful owners were disinherited in favour of usurping marauders.[89] A belief that property which was rightfully his has been taken from him, would also explain the vehemence of his complaint to Immalee:

> you might starve for this day's meal, while proving your right to a property which must incontestably be yours, on the condition of your being able to fast on a few years, and survive to enjoy it – and that, finally, with the sentiments of all upright men, the opinions and judges of the land, and the fullest conviction of your own conscience in your favour, you cannot obtain the possession of what you and all feel to be your own, while your antagonist can start an objection, purchase a fraud, or invent a lie. So pleadings go on, and years are wasted, and property consumed, and hearts broken.[90]

This harangue is so intimate and detailed as to amount to a personal history.[91]

Haslam also objects to my interpretation of Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui*, although there is far more agreement between us here than difference. We both agree that this is a realist novel and is, probably, best read as an anti-Gothic narrative. My original essay contended that 'The ideological weight of the novel appears to … [suggest] that the spectre of the Gothic can be banished [from Ireland] given enough [agricultural, educational, social, political, and economic] reforms and patient application of reason and technology', and I accepted that 'Edgeworth may be intellectually on the side of English reform' of Ireland and its translation from Gothic mess to realist order.[92] As far as I can tell, Haslam agrees with this but objects to my qualification concerning the ultimate success of this anti-Gothic strategy. I suggested that although the novel is intended as a realist response to Gothic Ireland, the 'energies' of the novel finally lie on the side of the Gothic since 'Lord Glenthorn is completely bored while in "rational" England and is only awakened to life's possibilities when he meets Ellinor, his Irish former wet-nurse and a banshee-like figure straight out of a Gothic melodrama. His excitement continues once he arrives in

[87] Quoted in Ellis, *Hell or Connaught*, 83.
[88] Maturin, *Melmoth*, 26.
[89] Ibid, 300-01.
[90] Ibid, 306.
[91] For an interesting and provocative reading of the novel along these lines, though with an emphasis on primogeniture as a cannibalistic practice, see Julia M. Wright, 'Devouring the Disinherited: Familial Cannibalism in Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*', *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*, ed. Kristen Guest (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 79-106.
[92] Killeen, 'Irish Gothic', 7.

Ireland and confronts its Gothic scenery and meets its Gothic cast list, and almost becomes involved in the 1798 Rebellion'.[93] Haslam counters that, on the contrary, although Edgeworth's novel sometimes raises a 'Gothic tone' this tone is almost always immediately deflated to dissuade the reader from partaking in any such Gothic energy. He gives as a good example of this strategy the scene where Glenthorn arrives at his Irish castle. Glenthorn exclaims that he found his 'state tower' bedroom in his Irish castle 'so like a room in a haunted castle, that if I had not been too much fatigued to think of any thing, I should certainly have thought of Mrs. Radcliffe'.[94] This might appear to raise the spectre of the Gothic but the sentence immediately following it dispels such ghosts: 'I am sorry to say that I have no mysteries, or even portentous omens, to record of this night; for the moment that I lay down in my antiquated bed, I fell into a profound sleep'.[95] Haslam insists that 'By adopting a mildly parodic tone…Edgeworth deftly subverts any incipient Gothic mood and thereby reassures rather than unsettles her early nineteenth-century reader',[96] and accuses me of suffering from the old 'affective fallacy' whereby the reader tends to read her own prejudices back into a work rather than take full account of the actual text in front of her eyes. I return the favour by suggesting that perhaps Haslam is suffering from a version of the 'intentional fallacy' in his search for what Maturin and Edgeworth 'really meant', and would also point out that the 'parodic' deflations of the Gothic that Haslam points to are not uttered by 'Edgeworth', but by *Glenthorn* – hardly a pedantic point given the general unreliability of this narrator.

Haslam is repeating a by now well-worn and persuasive critical position on Edgeworth, her politics, and the way her novels operate. Edgeworth has been read, fairly consistently, by critics as diverse as Tom Dunne, W. J. McCormack, Kevin Whelan and Seamus Deane, as epitomising a staunchly conservative, anti-Jacobin, Burkean, colonial intelligence whose fiction and philosophy emanated from within the safety of a Big House perspective. In her recent and compelling study, *Maria Edgeworth and Romance* (2004), Sharon Murphy argues that Edgeworth's writings have a grand 'didactic enterprise' involving the translation of abstract Enlightenment principles of rationality and progress into practical lessons for her readers – old and young: promoting values thoroughly patriarchal in their epistemology (rationalist), values (hierarchical), economics (capitalist) and politics (imperialist).[97] She further argues that Edgeworth's Irish novels are ideological narratives positing that 'the reformation of Ireland will only be accomplished once the nation's native inhabitants are brought to more nearly resemble an English form'.[98]

For these critics, *Ennui* is a didactic novel whose message is that Ireland must reject Gothic in favour of realism. However, there is another way to view Edgeworth. Marilyn Butler has suggested – in a deliciously worded analysis – that Edgeworth was far more ideologically sloppy than many of her critics have allowed, and argued that she should be thought of as politically 'bipartisan'.[99] In a more recent series of articles Butler has elaborated on this and proposed that Edgeworth may have been more sympathetic to revolutionary versions of Irish nationalism than has been noticed, and argued that her novels are in fact extraordinarily coded works of fiction through whose codes Edgeworth appeals to two distinct set of readerships, English Protestants and Irish Catholics, who pick up on different discourses mingled together within her texts. *Ennui* is a case in point. Although Haslam wants us to read with one set of eyes – where the novel always rejects Gothic in favour of realism – Butler insists we need at least two, and I would

[93] Ibid, 7.
[94] Maria Edgeworth, *Ennui*, ed. Marilyn Butler (London: Penguin, 1998), 179.
[95] Ibid, 179.
[96] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 5.
[97] Sharon Murphy, *Maria Edgeworth and Romance* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 43.
[98] Ibid, 138.
[99] Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 124.

contend that these correspond (loosely) to the realist and Gothic energies of the text. The nexus of the discourse appealing to Irish Catholic nationalists is, according to Butler, the passages where Ellinor recounts tales of Irish legend, myth and history to Glenthorn while he lies near death, telling him stories of Shane O' Neill the Irish rebel, 'a large assortment of fairies and shadowless witches, and banshees…legions of spirits and ghosts'.[100]

As Butler points out, encoded in Ellinor's mythological and historical stories is a grand narrative of Irish rebelliousness and ultimate English ruin,[101] a code which connects to the name of Glethorn's eventual wife. Together they invoke a hidden narrative lurking behind much of the surface significance of the novel:

> 'The O' Donoghue' is a name from the Gaelic-Irish history of County Kerry in the remote southwest – a folk hero who was an Irish counterpart of Arthur, the 'once and future King'. In old age, after a happy reign, the O' Donoghue walked out on the surface of Lake Killarney, then under the water. He had told his people that when they needed him he would return, and legend says he was occasionally seen. It can't be more clumsy plotting, it has to be after authorial deliberation that at the very end of *Ennui* a man who now thinks of himself as by descent a Gaelic Irishman, named O'Donoghue De-lamere, comes back to his own land and people near the southwest coast of Ireland, and takes up the take of bettering their conditions. Cecilia's surname Dela-mare puns ingeniously; over the sea, but also over the mere or lake. For the English reader, her (or her mother's) snobbish requirement that he adopt her name is yet another sign of Glenthorn's enslavement to a female principle. For the Irish reader, the symbolic return of the Gaelic hero is much the stronger reading.[102]

Next to this, my own claim that the Gothic interruptions of Glenthorn's putatively 'rationalist' recollections invert the apparent logic of the narrative and upend a strict realist reading, sounds rather modest. It is an interpretation, moreover, that is supported by Clíona Ó Gallchoir's argument that Edgeworth's novels constantly reveal the 'limits of realism' and, through depictions of sudden and dramatic change – such as the transformation of Glethorn into Christy O' Donoghue – operate as 'metaphors for revolution'.[103]

The possibility that there are coded versions of Gothic discontent operating below the textual surface is why we need to pay close attention to certain Gothic moments in the narrative such as when Glenthorn is driven across the Irish countryside in a ramshackle coach by an apparently mad coachman. Glenthorn tells the reader that, for the first time in his life, he was not bored: 'though I complained bitterly, and swore it

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[100] Edgeworth, *Ennui*, 160.
[101] Marilyn Butler, 'Edgeworth's Ireland: History, Popular Culture, and Secret Codes', *Novel* 34: 2 (2001), 281.
[102] Ibid. 282-3. In another article Butler asserts that 'Edgeworth offers not solutions, but a further option: an Irish future in which repossession of the land will come… [the reader] if Irish … will pick up the prophecy of a very different future'. Marilyn Butler, 'Irish Culture and Scottish Enlightenment: Maria Edgeworth's Histories of the Future', *Economy, Polity and Society: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, ed. Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 173.
[103] Clíona Ó Gallchoir, 'Maria Edgeworth's Revolutionary Morality and the Limits of Realism', *Colby Quarterly* 36: 2 (2000), 94. Julie Costello likewise emphasises that although one reading of the novel indeed rightly sees it as a means by which 'to validate the claims of the ruling Ascendancy over those of the displaced Irish landowners…the confusion of identities that attends this movement also helps to obscure the fact that an Irish O' Donoghoe eventually assumes control of the Glenthorn estate'. Julie Costello, 'Maria Edgeworth and the Politics of Consumption: Eating, Breastfeeding, and the Irish Wet Nurse in *Ennui*', *Inventing Maternity: Politics, Science, and Literature, 1650-1865*, eds. Susan C. Greenfield and Carol Barash (Lexington, KY: Kentucky University Press, 1999), 184.

was impractical for a gentleman to travel in Ireland; yet I never remember to have experienced, on any journey, less ennui…Upon this principle I should recommend to wealthy hypochondriacs a journey in Ireland, preferably to any country in the civilised world'.[104] As Darryl Jones points out, this is because Ireland is not part of the civilised world but is a Gothic zone,[105] and it is only a Gothic zone that can cure Glenthorn. If Ireland had possessed a more rational and efficient transport system, Glenthorn's ennui would not have been dispelled. The alternative to a Gothic Ireland is suicide. It may seem that this choice is dispensed with at the end of the novel when Glenthorn enters the rational profession of the law. However, if Butler's reading of the textual codes is correct, perhaps this is the very moment of real Gothic subversion as the past returns to disrupt the present when legendary Christ(y) O' Donoghue De-la-mere returns from the misty mythic past to take up control of his castle again, and (possibly) mount an effective sabotage of the realist discourse that is trying to contain him. Lord Glenthorn may have declined to take any part in the 1798 rebellion; as the revivified legendary rebel 'the O' Donoghue', perhaps he will lead a different kind of rebellion.

Disciplinary Spirit

Haslam ends his article summoning 'the spirit of disciplinary solidarity' as described by Frederick Crews, and points out that it is a solemn duty for colleagues to read each other's work with discrimination and air disagreements in honesty and without animosity.[106] Given that Frederick Crews himself is notorious for his rancorous disagreements with others in the intellectual community (he famously depicted Freud as a monomaniacal drug addict), he may not have been the best figure to call on in this instance. However, I share Haslam's view that it is certainly worthwhile to debate such points in a forthright and, hopefully, respectful and tone, and trust that such exchanges will encourage more research into the Irish Gothic tradition.

[104] Edgeworth, *Ennui*, 175-6.
[105] Darryl Jones, '"Distorted Nature in a Fever": *Ennui*, Irish Gothic and the 1798 Rising', *An Uncomfortable Authority: Maria Edgeworth and her Contexts*, ed. Heidi Kaufman and Chris Fauske (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 133-5.
[106] Haslam, 'Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach', 6.

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