Irish Gothic: A Rhetorical Hermeneutics Approach

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Jarlath Killeen's invigorating essay in the first issue of this journal scrutinizes and re-envisions recent theorizations of that nebulous category— 'Irish Gothic.' In responding, I want to address the following questions: Is Irish Gothic better understood as a tradition or a mode? What are its distinctive components? How should we conceptualize interactions between literary texts and historical contexts? Is Irish Catholic Gothic a plausible and relevant sub-category of Irish Gothic?

My approach is guided by Steven Mailloux's concept of 'rhetorical hermeneutics,' in which "the hermeneutic problem of how text and reader interact" is 'ultimately inseparable' from 'the rhetorical problem of how interpreters interact with other interpreters in trying to argue for or against different meanings.' (1)

TRADITION VERSUS MODE

As Killeen rightly notes, W. J. McCormack has been both canon-maker and canon-spiker in the critical formulation of Irish Gothic. (2) In 'Irish Gothic and After," McCormack assembled for The Field Day Anthology extracts from works by Maturin, Le Fanu, Stoker, Wilde, and Bowen, and by less immediately obvious candidates, such as Owenson, Carleton, Synge, and Yeats. However, two years later, McCormack's Dissolute Characters emphatically rejected any idea of an Irish Gothic tradition. Killeen implies that McCormack's apparent reconsideration stemmed from negative criticism of the Anthology's supposed political tendentiousness (3), but McCormack's reservations are already discernible in the Anthology, where he moves from asserting that this tradition (or mode) is 'fugitive,' 'discontinuous,' and 'slender' to hinting that it is non-existent: 'At the risk of paradox, it has to be said that while Irish gothic writing does not amount to a tradition, it is a distinctly protestant tradition' (my italics). (4) In Dissolute Characters, McCormack foregrounds continuities between his earlier and later misgivings by remarking that he has 'discussed at greater length' in the Anthology 'the difficulties involved in this notion of an Irish gothic tradition.' (5) However, he expresses his pre-existing skepticism more forthrightly in the later book, whose chapter 'Cashiering the gothic tradition' deprecates the theorization of a 'so-called', 'doubtful', and 'merely convenient' category. (6)

McCormack's qualms arise primarily from dissatisfaction with earlier critical incorporations of Le Fanu into an Irish Gothic 'genre,' 'strain,' 'line," or "tradition." (7) McCormack recognizes that Maturin, Le Fanu, and Stoker remain the most frequently 'invoked" authors and authorizations of "a more substantial Irish gothic tradition" but contends that "the description 'gothic' can be applied to…[Le Fanu's] work only in a general and unsatisfactory way." (8) In Dissolute Characters, he refers to Le Fanu's 'uncertain place in what is uncertainly called an 'Irish gothic tradition'" and announces (in ironically quasi-Gothic language) his goal of 'liberating' and 'rescu[ing]' Le Fanu 'from the trammels of a gothic sub-tradition.' (9) Thus, McCormack interrogates an alleged Irish Gothic tradition because he is unhappy with Le Fanu's

terminological incarceration more than with representations of "Irish culture" as "an inward looking and self-generating force.' (10)

Rebutting McCormack, Killeen advances a picturesque counter-claim: "…the kind of Irish Gothic line left after his deconstruction…[actually resembles a] Gothic edifice, full of suggestive gaps, obscure corners, imposing promontories (the 'great' works), fractures, fragments." (11) For Killeen, 'a literary tradition survives in the face of McCormack's justifiable worries that ideology rather than history lies behind the positing of an Irish Gothic' (my italics). (12) However, by differentiating between the existence of a tradition and the utilization of a mode, we can resolve disagreements about the appropriate literary category. (13) '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. 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. Instead, we should adopt the more accurate and flexible 'mode,' a term proposed in the early 1970s (14) and promoted again in the mid-1990s. (15) Indeed, Killeen has already gone halfway towards a modal perspective:

> To assert a Gothic tradition in Ireland we need not be making a disguised claim to Irish self-sufficiency or even to a thematic coherence linking very different texts and authors, but merely suggesting that certain Irish writers pursued certain similar questions that were historically specific to the Irish situation, and in doing so they utilized the Gothic mode. (my italics) (16)

It may now be time to go all the way—retiring "the Irish Gothic tradition" and replacing it with "the Irish Gothic mode"—as long as the latter phrase is understood to be shorthand for a distinct but discontinuous disposition, a gradually evolving yet often intermittent suite of themes, motifs, devices, forms, and styles, selected in specific periods, locations, and rhetorical situations, by a succession of different writers. (17)

DISTINCTIVE COMPONENTS AND HERMENEUTICAL COMPLEXITIES

Efforts to establish the Gothic mode's distinctive features must be modestly provisional in the face of immense diversity, both historical (eighteenth-century, Romantic, Victorian, Modern, Postmodern) and geographical (English, Irish, Scottish, French, German, American, Canadian, and Australian—amongst others). Nevertheless, by exploring constituents of the broader Gothic mode, we can identify some characteristic features of Irish Gothic. Analyzing the first phase of Irish, English, and Scottish Gothic fiction (stretching from Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto [1764] to James Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner [1824]), Chris Baldick argues that a tale's "Gothic effect" combines "a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration." (18) Baldick also notes that Gothic tales typically invoke "the tyranny of the past (a family curse, the survival of archaic forms of despotism and superstition) with such weight as to stifle the hopes of the present (the liberty of the heroine or hero) within the dead-end of physical incarceration (the dungeon, the locked room, or simply the confinements of a family house closing in upon itself)." (19)

This list of conventions is, of course, extendable. Recurrent characters, settings, and props in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Gothic fiction include Faust/Cain/Wandering Jew or Prometheus-like protagonists, Mephistophelean tempters, virtuous heroines, dysfunctional families, gloomy mansions, evil doubles, eerie portraits, wild landscapes, Inquisition prisons, incarcerating monasteries, malevolent monks, rampaging mobs, labyrinthine underground passages, graveyards, corpses, skeletons, crumbling buildings, and crumbling manuscripts (ruins and runes). Recurrent themes and situations include representation of physical and psychological violence, transgression and excess, explicit and implicit sectarianism, revolutionary anxieties, alluring wickedness, dangerous curiosity, threatened damnation, pursuit, persecution, and insanity; in addition to the unbalancing of (contemporaneously accepted) hierarchies of good and evil, free will and predestination, tyranny and liberty, and masculinity and femininity. Recurrent narrative devices include multiple narrators, interrupted—sometimes incomplete—manuscripts or accounts, (wholly or partly encased sub-narratives,) and the alternation of incidents designed to provoke terror with those designed to provoke horror.

Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) exhibits all of these conventions, confirming Maturin's tale as a representative exponent of the Anglophone, Romantic Gothic mode. (20) Where, then, should we locate the 'Irish' elements of Melmoth and any subsequent Irish Gothic mode? Killeen argues plausibly that "figures as substantial as Maturin, Le Fanu, Wilde, Stoker, Yeats, Synge, and Bowen…have a connection to the same political and geographical space…recourse to the same broadly defined conventions of Gothic…[and] some thematic associations….' (21) He also establishes that the 'Irishness' of Irish Gothic relates to its practitioners having 'had some important Irish connection,' having 'dealt with Irish issues," and having been 'partially influenced by (or at least vaguely aware of) an Irish line of precursors.' (22) However, (as with most conceptual elaboration) the more one aspires to specificity, the more complicated the model becomes. (23)

Before addressing Killeen's suggested characteristics, we can consider another distinctive feature of Irish Gothic—its recurrent incorporation of folklore. In Melmoth, Irish folklore infiltrates the Big House, via the "withered Sybil" or fairy-doctor, Biddy Brannigan. (24) Like Maturin's "Leixlip Castle" (1825), Melmoth is knowledgeable about "the good people" and about techniques for conjuring up "the shadow of the phantom-spouse." (25) After his miserly uncle dies, young John Melmoth consults Biddy about "an odd story in the family." (26) As she initiates him into ancestral secrets, John learns that a family portrait depicts the elder brother of an officer in Cromwell's army who settled in Ireland, having obtained the confiscated property of a royalist Irish family. (27) The elder Melmoth—the Wanderer—traveled in Europe, dabbled in the occult, and exhibited apparently supernatural longevity. Biddy tells John that the Wanderer "had been frequently seen in Ireland even to the present century," but only at the approaching death of family members whose "evil passions or habits…had cast a shade of gloomy and fearful interest over their dying hour." (28) Popular belief "therefore judged no favourable augury for the spiritual destination" of John's uncle from the Wanderer's having "visited, or been imagined to visit, the house previous to his decease." (29) His habit of heralding and attending the deaths of morally dubious family members suggests that the Wanderer is, in folkloric terms, a malevolent banshee, or, more accurately, fear sidhe. Other folkloric dimensions include possible correspondences between Melmoth's evil eyes (30) and Biddy's counter-spells against the "evil eye" (31) and between Melmoth, the demon lover of the innocent

Immalee, and Biddy's instructions to young women about evoking the image of their destined "lover" and not a "demon." (32)

Le Fanu's short fiction also infuses folklore into Irish Gothic, through allusions to fairy abduction in "Ultor de Lacy" (1861) and through thematic and structural parallels between "The Child that Went with the Fairies" (1870) and "Carmilla" (1871-2). (33) In "The Fortunes of Sir Robert Ardagh" (1838), the first account is delivered in a folkloric idiom, a technique Le Fanu reproduces in late works like "The White Cat of Drumgunniol" (1870), "Stories of Lough Guir" (1870), and "Sir Dominic's Bargain" (1872). (34) Somerville and Ross also adapt native folklore for Irish Gothic, via the "dullahan" allusions in An Irish Cousin (1889) and the influence of The Silver Fox's mysterious eponym (1897-8). (35) As we shall see, folklore is also a key modal element of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish Catholic Gothic.

Investigating Irish Gothic's "peculiarly 'Irish'" (36) aspects, Killeen cites the prefatory claim of Maturin's The Milesian Chief: Ireland in 1812 "is the only country on earth, where, from the strange existing opposition of religion, politics, and manners, the extremes of refinement and barbarism are united, and the most wild and incredible situations of romantic story are hourly passing before modern eyes." (37) For Killeen, Maturin's assertion "references the reading of Ireland which was dominant: seen through the eyes of the English reading public for whom the Gothic authors were writing, Ireland was a spatial and temporal anomaly." (38) Other "central features" of Irish Gothic, for Killeen, are "[p]aranoia," "Protestantism," "a 'colonial' history," "the fear of marginalization—rather than marginalization itself," and "[t]he demonisation of both Catholics in general, and Catholicism as a theological and social system"—a strategy allied to an unacknowledged "Catholophilia." (39) Drawing upon Tzvetan Todorov's poetics, Killeen concludes that a "mode of hesitation…[and] psychological ambivalence, which Todorov believes central to the fantastic, is precisely what defines the Irish Protestant mentality." (40)

Killeen's use of Todorov in theorizing Irish Gothic is a stimulating extension of earlier critical efforts, but it also raises a methodological question. (41) Which rhetorical formulations and hermeneutic procedures best do justice to the complex relationships among (i) the virtual, textual worlds authors create, using the Irish Gothic mode; (ii) the worlds in which authors write their books; and (iii) the worlds in which their books are read? Killeen approaches this question indirectly, stating that "the burden of colonial history…is one of the main issues Irish Gothic revolves around"; 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"; that the "tortuous verbal and plot convolutions of the typical Gothic novel were perfect representations of the existential gymnastics forced upon the Anglo-Irish by history"; and that "[t]he Gothic ambivalence highlighted by Todorov was irresistible for such pathological prevaricators and perfectly represented the hesitancy of the Anglo-Irish between an 'English' realist embracing of the technological, the future, the rational, and an 'Irish' Catholic superstitiousness, anachrony, atavism" (my italics throughout). (42)

The theory underpinning such claims is encapsulated in Roy Foster's claim that the "occult preoccupations" of "marginalized Protestants" like Maturin, Le Fanu, Stoker, Bowen and Yeats "surely mirror a sense of displacement, a loss of social and psychological integration, and an escapism motivated

by the threat of a takeover by the Catholic middle classes…" (my italics). (43) Yet, just how "surely" does literature "mirror" its times? (44) To pose that question is not to argue for aesthetic autonomy but merely to advise that we slow down when approaching a junction—in this case the junction of story and history. (45)

In assuming unproblematic exchanges between texts and contexts, we may infer unwarrantedly, transforming contingencies into teleologies. Consider, for example, Killeen's declaration that the Wanderer "has been dispossessed by his Cromwellian brother." (46) Is there any evidence for this radical claim? We must first consider the confusing issue of Melmoth's national identity. As noted, the fairy-doctor described the Wanderer as elder brother of a Cromwellian settler and claimed that he had visited his younger sibling in Ireland only once, when he donated his mysterious portrait to the family. (47) But, despite being introduced as non-native and non-resident, Melmoth turns Irish as the tale unfolds. He is called "the Englishman" by the Spaniards he terrifies, but Stanton later claims to have discovered that Melmoth "had been born in Ireland." (48) According to Monçada, one of the tale's enclosed narrators, the Wanderer "in his happier moods" shared with Immalee "those wild and sweet songs of his country," which a footnote identifies as "Ireland." (49) In addition, not long before vanishing, the Wanderer sits in the Lodge (the Melmoth family property) and (echoing Jonathan Swift citing Job) declares, "In this apartment…I first drew breath, in this I must perhaps resign it, —would—would I had never been born!" (50)

Contradictory accounts of the Wanderer's origins arise most probably from authorial error: over the course of writing his excessive, digressive romance, Maturin forgets the fairy-doctor's genealogy. Those who would infer that the inconsistency is designed deliberately to function as a delayed-effect demonstration of the mendacity (or "sly civility") of the Irish Catholic lower classes must confront the apparent absence of authorial irony concerning the matter, never mind that John is unsurprised to learn, via Stanton, Monçada, or Melmoth himself, about the Wanderer's claims of Irish birth. (51)

In addition, the text presents no evidence that the Wanderer considers himself to have been dispossessed by his younger brother. Where, then, does Killeen's claim originate? Discussing the operation of "theological and genealogical uncertainty" in Melmoth, he argues that "[t]he theme of dispossession which runs through the novel reflects the circular return to the issue which has dogged Irish history—that primal scene when Irish Catholics were banished to 'hell or Connaught' to make way for their ethnic and religious superiors" (my italics). (52) The phrase "primal scene" indicates a psychoanalytically-inflected interpretation, and Killeen soon uncovers the narrative's supposed repression: the "dispossessed" Melmoth "is…in an equivalent position to that [in which] Irish Catholics found themselves," and "the central anxiety of the novel is the reappearance of the dispossessed Melmoth, a figure who might stand for all those demonic figures now also complaining of dispossession: Irish Catholics" (my italics). (53) This remarkable claim is followed by another one: "Melmoth is, after all, only a threat and a wanderer because he has been denied access to the Big House which is rightly his." (54) Again, there is no evidence in the tale to support the assertion either that Melmoth believed himself to have been "dispossessed," or that his decision to sell his soul might be related to such a belief.

Killeen's psychoanalytically-inflected reading of Irish history shapes his reading of an Irish story (Melmoth). His rhetorical and hermeneutical assumptions resemble those in Julian Moynahan's reading of Maturin's Bertram (1816): Maturin is not intentionally "squirreling away a political allegory in his Gothic melodrama," but the play is nonetheless an allegory, one written less by Maturin than by "the Anglo-Irish or Ascendancy literary imagination," which is "ineluctably haunted, cloven into duality by the cleavage in Irish society between expropriated and expropiators." (55) However, 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. (56)

As already noted, 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 prosopopœia (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. (57) So too is his claim that "the dispossessed Melmoth" is "a figure who might stand for all those demonic figures now also complaining of dispossession: Irish Catholics" (my italics). (58) Who does the "standing for"—Maturin or Killeen? If Maturin, then he is engaged in allegory; if Killeen, then he is engaged in allegoresis. Either way, the relevant rhetorical and hermeneutical stances should be clarified and plausible evidence advanced.

Other readers of Melmoth also resort to historicizing allegoresis: Joseph Spence claims that Maturin's tales are "powerful political allegories" (my italics) and that "the story of the fall of Melmoth represented the fall of Anglo-Ireland" (my italics). (59) Terry Eagleton suggests that "Protestant Gothic might be dubbed the political unconscious of Anglo-Irish society, the place where its fears and fantasies most definitively emerge." (60) For Eagleton, "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, and indeed in the person of Melmoth himself, inhabit the same personality." (61) It is possible, but is it plausible? Interpreters of Melmoth's historical contexts face undeniable challenges, but, in engaging those challenges, they should avoid the Faustian temptation of allegorizing textual contingencies into pseudo-Freudian parapraxes.

Less precipitately, we might consider the implications of Melmoth's announcement to the terrified John: "Your ancestor has come home…." (62) "Home" is the penultimate word of this 542-page romance: "Melmoth and Monçada exchanged looks of silent and unutterable horror, and returned slowly home." (63) Given the "horror" he has seen and heard, will young John Melmoth ever feel at home again? If, for Stephen Dedalus, the shortest way to Tara is via Holyhead, is John's shortest way back to the Lodge via the Indian Ocean? The answers are uncertain, as unhomed as those concerning his ancestor's nationality, or the degree of correspondence between the Gehenna-like "burning ocean" into which the Wanderer

dreams of being "flung" and the "wide, waste, engulphing ocean" of the Irish Sea (linker and divider of Ireland and Britain), into which he is apparently hurled by demons. (64) In Melmoth, unhomeliness is an emanation pervading form and content, a textually transmitted unease that circulates in the channels linking and dividing text and context, reader and read. Historical reference is unhomed as the tale's period and location suddenly shift. Like Melmoth, the narrative is "independent of time and place" (65) yet frequently returns to Ireland across the centuries. (66) According to one footnote, Monçada's reference to John Buffa's Travels (1810) is an "Anachronism prepense"; according to another, a reference to "the Bartholomew bushel" of 1662 is an "Anachronism – n'importe." (67) Neither reference is actually anachronistic, but the term highlights the aura of temporal unhomeliness suffusing Melmoth, discernible in the supernaturally prolonged life span of the Wanderer and in the time loops that occur in and between text and paratext. (68)

Geographical unhomeliness pervades an evening journey in Spain, when "grey and misty twilight hung over every object": an internal narrator describes the route as lying "through a rocky road, that wound among mountains, or rather stony hills, bleak and bare as those which the weary traveller through the western isle sees rising amid the moors, to which they form a contrast without giving a relief." (69) The phrase "western isle" is asterisked to a footnote, where the main narrator declares: "Ireland, —forsan [perhaps]." (70) The note's note of uncertainty lingers in the margins of each page, whether it evokes English asylums and castles, Indian islands, and Spanish inns in the seventeenth century, or Irish houses and Spanish monasteries and prisons in the nineteenth. (71)

Uncertainty haunts the tale, and tales within the tale, like Stanton's, which John's uncle told him could be found "among some papers of no value, such as manuscript sermons, and pamphlets on the improvement of Ireland, and such stuff…." (72) Political and religious texts surround a memoir of terror: all are ironically dismissed as "of no value," and all are enclosed in a drawer in a chest under the portrait of a damned ancestor hanging in the forbidden chamber of a crumbling Big House. But, the texts in the drawer are contiguous, not continuous. The allegoresis of Spence, Eagleton, and Killeen, however, transforms contiguity into continuity, thereby making itself a little too at home in the text. (73) In rushing to assert an unambiguous "correlation" between "the cultural hesitancy of the Protestant Irish" and "the Gothic mode" (74), we overlook the possibility that methodological wisdom may be found in hermeneutic "hesitancy." He or she who hesitates is not necessarily lost. (75)

TONE AND MOOD: THE RHETORIC OF IRISH GOTHIC

Another instance of the need to reduce speed occurs in Killeen's claim that "[a] good example of the inability of the realist mode to dominate and overcome its Gothic counterpart is a novel like Maria Edgeworth's Ennui (1804)." (76) From Killeen's perspective, the novella explores "[t]he choice…between allowing the Irish to remain characters in a Gothic story, or gently translating them into a national bildungsroman." In the so-called "easy reading," Ennui's "ideological weight…appears to come down on Mr. McLeod's side," indicating "that the spectre of the Gothic can be banished given enough reforms and patient application of reason and technology." But, Killeen argues, this interpretation "ignores the energies of the text":

…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 Ireland and confronts its Gothic scenery and meets its Gothic cast list, and almost becomes involved in the 1798 Rebellion, organised by a secret society meeting near some sublime cliffs. (77) There is a sense…that recreating Ireland into a miniature version of England may well be industrially desirable and economically necessary, but that it will be disastrous from a psychological view and that cultural decadence and ennui will follow such a recreation. The plot of the novel certainly seems to opt for a reformable and possibly realist Ireland of the future; the energy of the novel lies completely with the Gothic melodrama Glenthorn finds being enacted when he migrates there. Ennui is a clear example of Gothic energy refusing to allow realist closure. Edgeworth may be intellectually on the side of English reform, but psychologically her novel is more attracted to Irish Gothic irreality. (78)

Killeen's contrast between "plot" and "energy," between authorial intellect and psychology, indicates another "depth" reading, psychoanalyzing Ennui and its author. However, let us explore the surface. (79) Ellinor, while nursing Glenthorn, undoubtedly entertains him with "inexhaustible…anecdotes" about his Irish "ancestors," including "a large assortment of fairies and shadowless witches, and banshees…legions of spirits and ghosts, and haunted castles without end, my own castle of Glenthorn not excepted…." (80) And Glenthorn admits that her "extremely eloquent" account of the castle "absolutely excited in my mind some desire to see it" (my italics). (81) However, the older, wiser Glenthorn depicts his younger, more fatuous self as being equally "impressed" by "the idea of the sort of feudal power I should possess in my vast territory, over tenants who were almost vassals…"; and, in the survey of "[m]ixed motives" conducted by the mature Glenthorn, no Gothic dimension registers. (82)

During Glenthorn's arrival at his Irish estate, flurries of sublimity do briefly whirl (anticipating the hurricane of Sydney Owenson's The Wild Irish Girl [1806]): Glenthorn Castle "seemed to rise from the sea, abrupt and insulated, in all the gloomy grandeur of ancient times, with turrets and battlements, and a huge gateway…." (83) In addition, Glenthorn's "state tower" bedroom is "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." (84) However, a crucial sentence follows, closing Chapter Six: "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." (85)

As this sentence crucially illustrates, Gothic fiction requires to be comprehended in terms of rhetoric as much as poetics: only if articulated in a particular narrative tone can the Gothic mode produce its intended mood—the rhetorical effect (and "moral function") identified by Angela Carter as "provoking unease." (86) By adopting a mildly parodic tone, however, Edgeworth deftly subverts any incipient Gothic mood and thereby reassures rather than unsettles her early nineteenth-century readers. (87)

Chapter Seven opens with a glance towards sublimity—the "prospect" from Glenthorn's bedroom "bore an air of savage wildness" that "seized" his "imagination with the idea of remoteness from civilized society," so that "the melancholy feeling of solitary grandeur took possession of my soul." However, Ellinor's "affectionate countenance" disperses "this feeling", and by Chapter Thirteen, Glenthorn is "seized with a fit of yawning" in front of the supposedly "sublime spectacle" of "the Giants' Causeway." (88) In addition, the 1798 Rebellion is represented in distinctly non-Gothic terms (89), and an incident of post-Rebellion plotting is easily foiled: "I am sorry I have no bloody battle for the entertainment of such of my readers as like horrors; but so it was, that they yielded without a drop of blood being spilled, or a shot fired." (90) This audience-teasing tone returns in the closing pages: "If, among those who may be tempted to peruse my history, there should be any mere novel readers, let me advise them to throw the book aside at the commencement of this chapter; for I have no more wonderful incidents to relate, no more changes at nurse, no more sudden turns of fortune." (91)

According to Killeen, Glenthorn is among those who "reflected…that perhaps with the coming about of this new modern Ireland something frightening, fractious, dangerous, but exciting and stimulating had been lost." (92) However, the novella tells us something very different: at the prospect of winning Cecilia Delamere's hand, Glenthorn experiences "the commencement of a new existence," performs a metaphorical auto-exorcism, and declares, "The enchantment of indolence was dissolved, and the demon of ennui was cast out for ever." (93) Killeen claims that Ennui provides "a good example" of how novels that "offer putatively realist accounts of Ireland are continuously disrupted by the Gothic mode" (my italics) (94), but consider the following data: (i) over its 148 pages, only a handful of the novella's sentences manifest a recognizably Gothic mode; (ii) even when it briefly appears, the mode is expressed in a parodic or muted tone; (iii) the principal tone of Ennui is undeniably, overwhelmingly homiletic. (95) If we accept these points, the argument that "Ennui is a clear example of Gothic energy refusing to allow realist closure" becomes implausible. (96) Claims that Ennui exhibits, in any significant manner, the Gothic mode risk making "Gothic," via "[l]yrical flights of oratory, hasty generalizations, prophetic attitudes and recuperative manoeuvres," a term "synonymous with almost everything." (97) As I hope to show, however, that accusation need not apply to the concept of an Irish Catholic Gothic.

IRISH CATHOLIC GOTHIC

Killen's essay implies agreement (concerning the nineteenth century) with McCormack's claim that "Irish gothic writing" is "distinctly protestant." (98) Killeen also appears to accept McCormack's declaration that Melmoth Réconcilié (1835) (Balzac's sequel to Melmoth) "jeopardises any easy declaration of Le Fanu as heir to Maturin." (99) However, McCormack's avowals that nineteenth-century Irish Gothic is resolutely Protestant and that Balzac is the disruptor of Irish Gothic continuities are significantly undermined by the work of James Mangan. Highlighting the Gothic mode in Mangan's Autobiography, Seamus Deane first adumbrated the notion of an Irish "Catholic-nationalist Gothic." (100) With regard to challenging McCormack's theses, an equally significant text is Mangan's "The Man in the Cloak," which not only reworked Balzac's Melmoth Réconcilié but also first appeared in the same edition of the Dublin University Magazine (November 1838) as "Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess," the fifth of Le Fanu's preponderantly Gothic Purcell Papers, and the prototype for Uncle Silas. (101)

More than a decade before Mangan's "Man in the Cloak," Irish Catholic Gothic emerged, in John Banim's "The Fetches" (1825), whose introduction includes a remarkably sophisticated exploration of rhetorical techniques for generating supernaturalist effects. (102) To understand precisely how Banim inflects the Gothic mode, we can turn again to Chris Baldick: conceding that all Gothic fiction is "concerned with extreme states of mental disturbance," he nonetheless distinguishes between "'full-dress' Gothic," which "decks out its essential psychological tremors in a uniform costume of lurid effects and trappings," and a "second unorthodox group," which "carries a much lighter cargo of chains and cowls, so that its similar obsessions with persecution and delusion stand out more clearly." (103) Novels of the second group (like Caleb Williams [1794], Frankenstein [1818, 1831], and Justified Sinner), Baldick argues, "tend to rely less on the evocation of atmosphere from a monastic or castellar setting than on a fabulous principle of transgression, usually involving the Faustian acquisition of forbidden knowledge." (104) Banim borrows this principle of "transgression" from Melmoth and fuses it with native folklore about doubles, or fetches. Allusions to Faustian pacts in "The Fetches" are echoed in Banim's story "The Ace of Clubs" (1838) and in his brother Michael's cruder The Ghost Hunter and his Family (1833). Space restrictions preclude a detailed discussion of early nineteenth-century Irish Catholic Gothic, so I shall merely note the melding of Gothic and folkloric modes in Michael Banim's "Crohoore of the Bill-Hook," William Carleton's "The Lianhan Shee" (1830/1833), and Gerald Griffin's "The Barber of Bantry" (1835). (105)

Towards the end of his essay, Killeen refers briefly to twentieth-century "Catholic Gothic narratives in which the cottage, the castle and the church merged as spaces attempting to block the nation's progress towards the rational, cosmopolitan future"; he also remarks that "Gothic imagery" recently "has been used to characterize the 1940s and 1950s, and its industrial schools and Magdalen laundries have all been imbued with an aura more common to the horror film than the history book." (106) However, he names no specific works, engaging instead in an intriguing, albeit non-literary excursus that depicts Charles Haughey as a Gothic anti-hero.

Yet, any attempt to theorize Irish Gothic must surely mention Seamus Deane, a vital force in the critical and creative institutionalization of Irish Gothic. In the 1980s, Deane promoted the concept of Irish Gothic (107); he was the prime mover of the Anthology's "Irish Gothic" section; he introduced the notion of Irish "Catholic-nationalist Gothic" (108); and, in his novel-memoir Reading in the Dark (1996), he explicitly merged Irish Gothic with folkloric modes. (109)

As Deane recognized early, John Banville's Birchwood (1973) played a major part in revitalizing late twentieth-century Irish Gothic. (110) The Mephistophelean Felix's words—"Ah, Melmoth, he said softly. We've been expecting you" (111)—echo through other allusions to the Wanderer in Banville's œuvre. (112) The reinvigoration of Irish Catholic Gothic continues in the new millennium with Neil Jordan's Shade (2004), which introduces Irish mythology as well as folklore. Moving beyond the traditional "vampire story" or "tale of horror," and summoning the shades not only of Maturin, Le Fanu, Stoker, Bowen, and Yeats, but also Beckett, Jordan's novel explores "consciousness" as it confronts the unhomely "blankness of non-being." (113)

Thus, far from awaiting what Killeen calls "a dramatic and truly terrifying revival" (114), Irish Gothic walks amongst us still.

THE DISCIPLINARY SPIRIT

Frederick Crews usefully distinguishes between "two kinds of discourse…the disciplinary and the self-ratifying"; an "essential feature" of the former "is the give-and-take, largely conducted in journals, between proponents of new hypotheses and possessors of knowledge that may or may not have been successfully accounted for in those hypotheses." (115) According to Crews, "[f]or the disciplinary spirit to operate, members of a given intellectual community must read one another's work discriminatingly and try to show, through pointed reference to available facts, that certain apprehensions of those facts are more plausible than others." (116)

It is in the spirit of such disciplinary solidarity that my disagreements with Killeen's argument are presented. (117) On one point, however, we can certainly agree: "Irish Gothic" remains a worthwhile and fruitful category of criticism and creativity.

1. Mailloux, Steven, Reception Histories: Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and American Cultural Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 50. As Mailloux notes, "[i]n some ways, rhetoric and interpretation are practical forms of the same extended human activity":

Rhetoric is based on interpretation; interpretation is communicated through rhetoric. Furthermore, as reflections on practice, hermeneutics and rhetorical theory are mutually defining fields: hermeneutics is the rhetoric of establishing meaning, and rhetoric the hermeneutics of problematic linguistic situations. When we ask about the meaning of a text, we receive an interpretive argument; when we seek the means of persuasion, we interpret the situation. As theoretical practices, hermeneutics involves placing a text in a meaningful context, while rhetoric requires the contextualization of a text's effects. (p. 4)

2. Killeen, Jarlath, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction." The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies. 1 (October 2006).

3. Ibid. p. 1.

4. McCormack, W. J., "Irish Gothic and After (1820-1945)" ["IGA"]. In Deane, Seamus, ed. The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, vol. II, pp. 831-949 (Derry: Field Day, 1991), pp. 831, 833, 837. As the quotation indicates, upper-case and lower-case orthography engender different nuances, since McCormack's "Irish gothic" is not identical to Killeen's (or my) "Irish Gothic." In a later essay, McCormack reiterates his thesis but (perhaps following editorially-required conventions) capitalizes the crucial word: "[T]he idea of a coherent Irish Gothic fictional tradition, commencing in the late eighteenth century, is doubtful" ("Irish Gothic" p. 135).

5. McCormack, W. J., Dissolute Characters: Irish literary history through Balzac, Sheridan Le Fanu, Yeats and Bowen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993),
p. 11.

6. Ibid. pp. 2, 3, 3, 10.

7. For details concerning pre-Field Day formulations of Irish Gothic (by John Cronin, A. N. Jeffares, Julian Moynahan, Seamus Deane, and Roy Foster), see Haslam ("Irish Gothic").

8. McCormack, "Irish Gothic and After (1820-1945)," p. 832. According to McCormack, "None of Le Fanu's novels could be accurately described as gothic, though his shorter tales stand in some contrast with their explicit use of the supernatural" ("IGA" p. 840). McCormack's dissatisfaction at Le Fanu's inclusion in a gothic troika with Maturin and Stoker may spring from his belief that "Le Fanu has the best claim to be regarded as a writer of talent" (p. 832).

9. McCormack, Dissolute Characters, pp. viii, 7, 29.

10. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 1. This is not to deny that McCormack might repudiate such representations.

11. Ibid. p. 2.

12. Ibid. p. 2.

13. In the Anthology, McCormack appears to treat the terms "tradition" and "mode" equivalently—compare, for example, his references to "the Irish gothic mode" ("IGA" p. 852) and "the gothic mode" (pp. 831, 838, 842, 849, 850) with references to "this oft-remarked Irish gothic tradition" (p.832; for variations, see pp. 833, 842, and 846). In Dissolute Characters, McCormack sticks with "Irish gothic tradition" (p. 3; for variations, see pp. viii, 7, 10, 18, 29, 161, 189, and 198).

14. Platzner, Robert L. and Robert D. Hume. "'Gothic Versus Romantic': A Rejoinder." PMLA 86 (1971): pp. 266-74, p.273.

15. Botting, Fred, Gothic (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 14.

16. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 2.

17. Greater conceptual rigor might result from referring to "an Irish Gothic mode" (or "sub-mode"), rather than "the," but it would be at the cost of stylistic awkwardness—better a few definite articles than a desert of indefinite particles. Nevertheless, although "the supernatural" may be a more intellectually pleasing and euphonious phrase than "supernaturalist effects," prudence is required when one employs the definite article to transform adjectives into nouns. Otherwise, hypothesizing can lead to hypostasizing. The broader and deeper the categorization's scope, the greater the circumspection "the" requires. With respect to such difficulties concerning a term like "the uncanny," see Masschelein, Anneleen, "The concept as ghost: Conceptualization of the uncanny in late-twentieth-century theory," Mosaic 35. 1 (2002): pp. 53-68. (I now direct similar suspicion at my own earlier use of terms like "the Calvinist sublime" [Haslam "Maturin"].)

18. Baldick, Chris, "Introduction," The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. xix.

19. Ibid.

20. Similar elements occur in Maturin's Fatal Revenge (1807), which incorporates other Gothic accessories (nuns and bandits) and throws in a volcanic eruption and some earthquakes for good measure. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, certain typical geographical locations (Spain and Italy), settings (castles and monasteries), and props (monks and nuns) have been used less frequently in worldwide Gothic fiction, but many of the listed themes and formal devices are regularly reanimated.

21. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 2. However, it must be noted that any shared "political and geographical space," literary "conventions," and "thematic associations" undergo numerous transformations between the early-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries.

22. Ibid.

23. Combining two well-known proverbs, we might say that God and the Devil are in the details, engaged in a long-running, dualistic duel.

24. Maturin, Charles, Melmoth the Wanderer, Ed. Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 10. Except when indicated, Melmoth page references denote the Baldick edition.

25. Ibid. pp. 24, 11.

26. Ibid. p. 23.

27. Ibid. p. 26.

28. Ibid. pp.26-27.

29. Ibid. p. 27.

30. Ibid. pp 17-18, 34, 54.

31. Ibid. p. 10; see also p. 24.

32. Ibid. p. 11.

33. Similarities between the latter two stories were first spotted by Nelson Browne (p. 87) and later discussed by Robert Tracy (pp. xxiii-iv).

34. This is noted by Ann Cahill, who also discusses Le Fanu's encounters with and debts to the Irish folklorist Patrick Kennedy (pp. 314-15). On Kennedy, and on Le Fanu's use of Irish folklore in later work, see also McCormack (Le Fanu pp. 238-43).

35. On connections between Irish folklore and the Transylvanian folklore of Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897), see Roy Foster (p. 226-7).

36. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 4.

37. Charles Maturin, The Milesian Chief, 4 vols (New York: Garland, 1979), I, v.

38. Ibid. p. 5. In a book-length analysis of "the auto-exoticist reflex" (p. 66), Leerssen also foregrounds this Maturin quotation (p. 48). For earlier citations of the passage in theorizations of Irish Gothic, see Moynahan ("Politics" p. 47) and Gibbons (pp. 23-4).

39. Ibid. pp. 3-4.

40. Ibid. p. 6.

41. Previous explorations of Todorov's relevance for analyzing Irish Gothic occur in Gould, Haslam ("Fantastic Semantics"), Hassett, Morash ("The Time…"), and Stewart ("Our Proper Dark"); see also Morash ("Ever Under…").

42. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", pp. 2, 2, 6, 6.

43 Foster, R. F., Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 220. Cited in Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 3.

44. As noted above, Leerssen cites Maturin's preface to Milesian Chief; his accompanying commentary exhibits similar theoretical assumptions to those of Foster: "Thus the political dividedness of Ireland, between fashionable life in viceregal circles and picturesque primitivism on the Atlantic cliffs, is reflected in the generic ambiguity of Irish romance/novels" (p. 48; my italics). Compare also Moynahan: "Maturin's alienation from Irish Catholic culture and society, along with his difficulties vis-à-vis ecclesiastical superiors in his own Established Church are mirrored in the woes and frustrations of young Alonzo [Monçada]" (Anglo-Irish p. 127; my italics).

45. As I have argued elsewhere, reductive drives to historicize Irish Gothic can end up in "hermeneutic chasms" ("Fantastic Semantics" p. 275).

46. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 4.

47. Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, p. 26.

48. Ibid. pp. 34, 59.

49. Ibid. p. 334.

50. Ibid. p. 540. The Wanderer was rumored to have been "frequently seen" in his fear sidhe role, "in Ireland even to the present century" (p. 26). This might explain how he picked up a few Irish melodies along the way, but it does not solve the mystery of his birthplace.

51. On "sly civility," see Bhabha (pp. 93-101). Ignoring possible authorial error on Maturin's part, Joseph Spence rather implausibly assumes the conflicting versions of Melmoth's national identity are part of an

intentional artistic strategy: "This succinctly betrayed Maturin's conception of Irish nationality as a state which could be assumed by the Englishman, whenever he chose. With the depositing of his portrait in Wicklow, Melmoth donned the mantle of Irish nationality; henceforth he was an Irishman, without qualification, in his creator's eyes" (p. 49).

52. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 4.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Moynahan, Julian, "The Politics of Anglo-Irish Gothic: Maturin, Le Fanu and the Return of the Repressed." In Kosok ed. Studies in Anglo-Irish Literature (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1982), p. 48.

56. See Haslam ("Irish Gothic"). As note 1 of the present essay indicates, rhetoric and hermeneutics are closely allied practices, but we should not confuse them. In Anglo-Irish, Moynahan returns to "allegory—that spectre!" (p. 178), suggesting now that Le Fanu and Somerville and Ross consciously chose to produce "allegorical or equivocal writing" as a result of "a sense of social guilt," protests against English mainstream writing, and "an individual writer's conflicted or double sense of identity" (pp. 178-9). The real "spectre" in Moynahan's argument, however, remains allegoresis.

57. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", pp. 2, 5, 6.

58. Ibid. p. 4.

59. Spence, Joseph, "'The Great Angelic Sin': The Faust Legend in Irish Literature, 1820-1900." Bullán 1. 2 (Autumn 1994): pp. 47-58, pp. 47, 50.

60. Eagleton, Terry. Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture (London: Verso, 1995), p. 187. Eagleton ascribes "political unconscious" to Fredric Jameson but confesses he has "adapted it somewhat freely here" (p. 187). (Perhaps it is better to say "diluted"—a Jameson with water?) Jameson's The Political Unconscious remains the explicit or implicit model for much recent literary-historical allegoresis of Irish Gothic. Dissecting Jameson's rhetorical and hermeneutical ploys, Frederick Crews argued that the book is "openly devoted to articulating a modern version of the fourfold patristic method of imperious Christianization, with just one major change: Marxist 'History' now stands in Christ's anagogical place as the ultimate sacred referent" (Skeptical p. 151). (Aijaz Ahmad has made an equally stringent critique of Jameson's later experiments in allegoresis [pp. 95-122].)
Margaret Kelleher maintains that the "qualities" of Irish Gothic "as 'political unconscious' have certainly been overly generalized" (p. 473). However, the underlying problem is that Jameson's book itself embodies a "generalized" system of allegoresis—see Haslam ("Fantastic Semantics" pp. 275-77).

61. Ibid. p. 190. Further examples from Eagleton include: "To read the diabolic Melmoth as a type of the Anglo-Irish ruling class is hardly extravagant…" (p. 190); "…it is not hard to read this [Melmoth's selling his soul] as a metaphor of the original crime of forcible settlement and expulsion, which belongs to the period in which Melmoth's bargain with the devil takes place, or to see his preying upon the dispossessed as a nightmarish image of the relations between the Ascendancy and the people" (p. 190); "But Melmoth is much more than some melodramatic stereotype of the dastardly landlords…" (p. 191); "…the great Satanic love scene between Melmoth and Immalee can be deciphered as the Ascendancy's doomed pursuit of hegemony, its need for a loving consent on the part of its subjects which will in fact lead them to their ruin" (p. 192); "If Melmoth the Wanderer is in some sense an allegory of Ireland…" (p. 193; my italics throughout).

62. Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, p. 537.

63. Ibid. p. 542.

64. Ibid. pp. 538, 542.

65. Ibid. p. 44

66. Ibid. pp. 27-26.

67. Ibid. pp. 91, 475.

68. On the references' non-anachronism, see Hayter's edition of Melmoth (pp. 709-10 and p. 719). For other reflections on anachronism and Gothic fiction, see Morash ("The Time…") and Mighall (ubique). (Leerssen uses "Anachronism – n'importe" as an epigraph for Remembrance and Imagination.) On paratexts, see Genette.

69. Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, p. 504.

70. Ibid.

71. On the function of Melmoth's footnotes, see McCormack (Dissolute pp. 4-7) and Spence (p. 49).

72. Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, p. 21. At various points in Melmoth, Maturin foregrounds radical uncertainty and contingency. Concerning uncertainty, the narrator declares that, while Melmoth addressed Immalee, "it was impossible to discover whether his predominant expression was that of irony or profound and sincere feeling" (p. 376; see also pp. 60, 297, and 309, and the footnote on p. 303). Concerning contingency, see the "trifling phenomenon" that "interfered to alter" Immalee's "destiny" (p. 324; compare Milton's Paradise Lost, Book II, lines 927-38).

73. So, on the other hand, do more formalist readers, such as Jack Null, Kathleen Fowler, and Amy Elizabeth Smith, who sever the narrative almost completely from a historical context and insist that its lapses, lacunae, and loopholes are intentional.

74. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 7.

75. Donya Samara notes that Gothic fiction can bring "into question representational structures, including subjectivity and history, but also interpretation" (p. 243).

76. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 7.

77. Contrary to Killeen's account (p. 7), Glenthorn is threatened by a post-1798 Rebellion conspiracy.

78. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 7.

79. As Wilde reminds us, "Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril" (Dorian p. 3).

80. Edgeworth, Maria, Ennui, in The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, Vol. 1 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999), p. 175.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid. pp. 175, 182. Alternations between the focalization of the younger and older Glenthorn are occasionally highlighted: "But I am anticipating reflections which I made at a much later period of my life. To return to my history" (p. 207).

83. Ibid. p. 189.

84. Ibid.p. 191.

85. Ibid.

86. Cited in Mulvey Roberts, Marie, ed. The Handbook to Gothic Literature (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. xvii, 35. As critics from I. A. Richards to Mikhail Bakhtin have indicated, tone signals an author's attitude to audience, narrator, characters, or subject. Concerning intended mood, Robert Hume argued long ago that "the serious Gothic works were written with effect very much in mind—terror, horror, mystery in a more than frivolous sense—and hence 'affective' groupings have some justification" (Platzner and Hume p. 274); Hume also notes the "vast difference between reading one's responses back into a work" (W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's so-called "affective fallacy") and the procedure of "seeking, on internal evidence, to determine the response it is apparently designed to elicit" (p. 274). See also Victor Sage's recommendation that "Le Fanu's Gothic" be "conceived, not as a

genre, but a rhetoric: a recurring set of designs on readers' security and pride in their own rationality…[creating] a range of different effects" (p. 4).

87. Compare the later incident when Glenthorn's "head was so full of visions, that I expected a ghost to enter—but it was only Ellinor" (p. 258). For the skilful use of the parodic tone in Gothic fiction, see Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost" (McCormack, "IGA," pp. 915-29.)

88. Edgeworth, Ennui in The Novels and Selected Works, pp. 191, 249.

89. Ibid. pp. 244-48.

90. Ibid. p. 263.

91. Ibid. p. 294.

92. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 8.

93. Edgeworth, Maria, Ennui in The Novels and Selected Works, p. 294.

94. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 7.

95. As Maria's father points out in the preface, Ennui is "intended to point out some of those errors to which the higher classes of society are disposed" (p. 159). The final two chapters, during which Glenthorn expands upon his claim that "[t]he loss of my estate continued the course of my education, made me know that I had a heart, and that I was capable of forming a character for myself" (p. 307), are scream-inducingly didactic.

96. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 7.

97. Levy, Maurice, "'Gothic' and the Critical Idiom." In Smith and Sage, eds. Gothick Origins and Innovations, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), p. 7. Similar neglect of mode and tone undermines efforts to portray important aspects of Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent (1800) as "quintessentially gothic" (Backus p. 105), as embodying "the Gothic past" (Killeen, Gothic, p. 200), or as "uncanny" (Connolly).

98. McCormack, "Irish Gothic and After (1820-1945)", p. 837.

99. McCormack, Dissolute Characters, p. 18; paraphrased in Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 1. McCormack later confesses that his "comparative study of Le Fanu and Balzac" cannot actually be substantiated (Dissolute p. 163; see also p. 189).

100. Deane, Seamus, Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 126. Obviously, further levels of complexity abound: Catholic does not necessarily imply nationalist or republican, nor does Protestant necessarily imply unionist or loyalist.

101. While dismantling the Irish Gothic "tradition," McCormack states that "twenty-five years elapse between the publication of Melmoth and that of Le Fanu's first novel, The Cock and Anchor" (Dissolute p. 10). This claim is factually correct but rather misleading, since it omits the very Gothic Purcell Papers. On Mangan and Irish Gothic, see Haslam ("Broad Farce").

102. By "supernaturalism," I mean an aesthetic effect generated by a synthesis of tone, mode, and mood, occurring in fiction that engages with the possibility of intersections between natural and supernatural worlds.

103. Baldick, Chris. "Introduction." In Maturin, Melmoth. p. x.

104. Ibid. Although Melmoth makes some use of monastic "trappings," Baldick persuasively locates it in the more psychologically-inflected group (p. x).

105. McCormack places Carleton's "Confessions of a Reformed Ribbonman" in the Anthology's "Irish Gothic" section but characterizes it more as the work of an Anglican convert than a former Catholic (pp. 873-4). With respect to the politico-theological intricacies of Irish Catholic Gothic, Siobhán Kilfeather poses a pertinent question: "Is the Gothic always the nightmare of the oppressor, or can it be a vehicle for dissent from below?" ("Gothic Novel").

106. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 7.

107. Deane, Seamus, A Short History of Irish Literature (London: Hutchinson, 1986), pp. 99-100.

108. Deane, Seamus, Strange Country, p. 126.

109. On Deane's promotion of and contribution to Irish Gothic, see Haslam ("Broad Farce," "Entity," "Ghost-Colonial," and "Irish Gothic"). During a symposium on "The Gothic, the National, the Subversive," held at Glucksman Ireland House, New York University (4 October 1998), McCormack identified Deane as éminence grise of the Anthology's "Irish Gothic" section.

110. Deane, A Short History of Irish Literature, p. 225. Other significant transfusions include Flann O'Brien's The Third Policeman (1939-40; 1967) (one of many novels that haunt Banville's Eclipse), and Brian Moore's The Mangan Inheritance (1979), which also alludes to Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890; 1891).

111. Banville, John, Mefisto (Boston: David R. Godine, 1999/1986), p. 222.

112. See The Book of Evidence (p. 98) and Athena (p. 122). Banville's citations of Melmoth simultaneously reference the apparitions of Melmoth in Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita (1955). In Eclipse (2000), Banville plays further postmodern variations on Irish Gothic and ghostly modes. In Banville, unhomeliness is sometimes imbued with a distinctly Heideggerian tinge, intimating the potential violence of its temptations: "It is being that he has encountered here, the thing itself, the pure, unmediated essence, in which, he thinks, he will at last find himself and his true home, his place in the world. Impossible, impossible dreams, but for a moment he allows himself to believe in them" (Banville, Ghosts, p. 85).

113. Jordan, Neil, Shade (New York: Bloomsbury, 2004), p. 84.

114. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", p. 8.

115. Crews, Frederick, Follies of the Wise: Dissenting Essays (Emeryville: Shoemaker Hoard, 2006), p. 305.

116. Ibid.

117. I have focused on points of difference, but let me acknowledge that Killeen's essay includes (among many other insights) an astute discussion of Maturin and Le Fanu's Huguenot background (p. 2).

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