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NATIONAL CHARACTER, NATIONALIST PLOTS: NATIONAL TALE AND HISTORICAL NOVEL IN THE AGE OF WAVERLEY, 1806–1830

BY KATIE TRUMPENER

A year before the 1937 publication of Georg Lukács's *The Historical Novel* (whose famous first chapter on Walter Scott's *Waverley* argues for the socio-historical genesis of the genre), Scottish modernist Edwin Muir published *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer*, a study which not only proved controversial and influential within Scotland itself, but also, in striking ways, anticipated Lukács's use of Scott to postulate a reflection theory of literature. "The riddle," Muir argues,

in approaching Scott himself, by far the greatest creative force in Scottish literature as well as one of the greatest in English, was to account for a very curious emptiness which I felt behind the wealth of his imagination I was forced to account for the hiatus in Scott's endowment by considering the environment in which he lived, by invoking the fact . . . that he spent most of his days in a hiatus, in a country, that is to say, which was neither a nation nor a province and had, instead of a centre, a blank, an Edinburgh, in the middle of it. But this Nothing in which Scott wrote was not merely a spatial one; it was a temporal Nothing as well, dotted with a few disconnected figures arranged at abrupt intervals . . . with a rude buttress of ballads and folk songs to shore them up and keep them from falling. Scott, in other words, lived in a community which was not a community, and set himself to carry on a tradition which was not a tradition; and the result was that his work was an exact reflection of his predicament A people who lose their nationality create a legend to take its place. The reality of a nation's history lies in its continuity, and the present is its only guarantee But where national unity is lost the past is lost too, for the connection between past and present has been broken, and the past turns therefore into legend, into the poetry of pure memory.¹

Concurring in a symptomatic reading of Scott, Muir and Lukács in fact differ significantly as to just what he represents: Lukács stresses Scott's historical position and trajectory, Muir his links to a country with a peculiarly static relationship to its own history. For Lukács, Scott is an "English writer," who mirrors at once the cumulative history

of the English novel, the proto-industrial state of English society, and the new European collective consciousness at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Muir, in contrast, insists on Scott as an ambivalent Scottish nationalist, in equal measure suffering from and reflecting the intellectual unevenness and linguistic dividedness of a colonial Scotland. Directly shaped by recent historical events, Lukács's Scott develops a historical consciousness which outstrips his class consciousness. Muir's Scott, like Scotland itself, is engaged in a mythologizing reinvention of the national past, his traditionalism expressing, through an oblique negativity, the felt absence of continuous national traditions. Muir implies an unconsciously regressive Scott, caught in contradictions. Lukács posits an unwittingly progressive Scott who embodies his contradictions transformatively, as the *Waverley* novels' dynamic notion of representative character initiates new modes of registering historical change and links social processes and psychic development in a way that anticipates Lukács's and Muir's own socio-biographic approach to literary history.²

Taken together, Lukács's and Muir's parallel claims for Scott represent an influential conjuncture in the formation of both Marxist literary method and the modern historiography of British Romantic fiction. Their exploratory attempts to link literary, political and national transformations remain stimulating ones (and the nuance and acuity of Muir's analysis, in particular, seem newly useful for the current discussion of literary nationalism). Ironically, however, the long-term effect of their work over the last fifty years has also been to reinforce the underlying assumptions of a conservative historiography: a totalizing sense of historical determinism, a normative sense of national coherence, and a belief in great men who embody and shape their epochs. With its displacement of formal or generic analysis in the service of a national-historical reflection theory, and its foregrounding of Scott's singular/representative status, the work of Muir and Lukács has helped to foreclose not only contextual accounts of Scott's relationship to his contemporaries but with them, virtually any serious study of Romantic fiction as a body of work. Muir's Scott, indeed, is literally a figure in a vacuum, alone in his stretch of literary-historical landscape, while Lukács explicitly polemicizes against all "fashionable" attempts to situate Scott in relation to "a long list of second and third-rate writers . . . who were supposed to be important literary forerunners of his. All of which brings us not a jot nearer to understanding what was *new* in Scott's . . . historical novel."³ Following Lukács and Muir, most subsequent Scott scholarship has placed the *Waverley* novels

above and outside the fiction-writing of their time. Scott is seen as the single-handed inventor, with *Waverley*, of the “historical novel.” Under the influence of illustrious forerunners like Fielding or Smollett, as of contemporary philosophy, he is seen to anticipate, even create, the consciousness of the Victorian novel. Within his own day, correspondingly, he is seen to function as a novelistic taste- and trend-setter, at once the adjudicating biographer of his novelistic predecessors and the kindly patron of “lesser” and lesser-known novelists.⁴

In fact, most of the conceptual innovations currently attributed to Scott were in 1814 already fully established commonplaces of the British novel. Even Scott’s notion of historically representative character (his greatest innovation according to Lukács) derives substantially from the novels of his contemporaries, from their experiments with characterological allegory and their strategies for representing the psycho-social effects of historical experience.⁵ Equal to Scott’s own work in formal and political complexity, many of their novels, furthermore, give us radically different political perspectives—Enlightenment, Jacobin, feminist, anti-imperialist—on the same historical processes. Yet because of Lukács’s influential claims for Scott’s influence—that *Waverley*’s mode of depicting social totality and dramatizing historical change formed the principal basis for nineteenth-century realism, for narrative history writing, and thus for modern historical thinking as we know it—Marxist and socially-minded critics in Lukács’s wake have spent the last fifty years continuing to explicate the *Waverley* novels as if they were the major literary key to the political transformations of Scott’s era. So there are high stakes in displacing *Waverley* as a singular yet symptomatic event, and in recovering the alternative forms of historical explanation which emanate from the same historical moment: very different modes of writing literary and social history begin to seem imaginable as well.

As a corrective to the analyses of Muir and Lukács, this essay takes a primarily formal approach to the early nineteenth-century novel. It reopens old-fashioned matters of influence, character, setting, and plot as problems with important political ramifications. And it cross-cuts between the literatures of Scotland and Ireland, overcoming the separations assumed by previous, nationally-focused accounts of the Romantic novel, to establish a more precise generic genealogy of *Waverley*. By tracing, in particular, the intertwined development of what has come to be known as the “historical novel” with the “national tale” (a genre developed in Ireland, primarily by women writers, over the decade preceding the publication of Scott’s first novel), it will attempt

to formalize the strange course of generic transformation. Often one genre develops out of another in a relatively linear fashion, with authors, publishers or reviewers marking (and marketing) distinct developmental phases by corresponding shifts in their use of generic designations.⁶ Thus the crystallization of the national tale out of the novels of the 1790s and the subsequent emergence of the “historical novel” out of and away from the national tale can be plotted quite precisely, step by step, book by book, through the 1810s. At the same time (and this is more difficult to model), the two genres remain interdependent, at once still almost identical in basic plot and character structures, and yet already highly polarized in their overall novelistic strategies and in their political implications. The transition from the first genre, with its thick evocation of place, to the second, with its plot of loss and growth through historical change, may seem, in retrospect, to render irrevocable the movement away from an eighteenth-century novel of passage through place, a “travelling fiction” of picaresque and epistolary motion, towards a nineteenth-century novel of the passage of place through time. Yet the further development of the realist novel depends not only, as Lukács implies, on the ascendance or “victory” of the historical novel over earlier novelistic types, but also on an ongoing interplay and friction between two successive, related and increasingly enmeshed generic forms. With the national tale and the historical novel, we see at once the fluidity and the stake of generic convention. Names, characters, set-piece scenes, plot structures are constantly borrowed back and forth across the genres, even among writers of sharply distinct political views who will elsewhere claim to disapprove of each other’s work—while at the same time, they mark their political differences from one another precisely in the way they order and recombine the same generic repertoire.

Indeed, as the second half of the essay points out, the national tale continued to evolve in the wake of *Waverley* and in reaction to it, as its authors “historicize,” politicize and hybridize the tale, incorporating gothic and annalistic elements to develop alternative models for representing historical memory and processes.⁷ The received literary historiography of the novel, with its teleological hindsight, has either ignored the early and late national tales altogether or mentioned them only as historical “experiments” without issue or consequence. This essay argues their importance at once on teleological and on non-teleological grounds. They were both widely influential in their own right and of formative importance for the “central” canonical novelistic tradition of the nineteenth century. And as they evolve along with the

“seminal” and eventually canonical genre they spawned, the national tales continued to offer a critical alternative to it; their non-canonization is itself therefore of historical and political interest.⁸

The national tale is, among other things, a genre developed initially by female authors, who from the beginning address the major issues of cultural distinctiveness, national policy and political separatism; when the genre shifts tack, it seems in part the result of these authors’ growing self-confidence in their ability to theorize political complexities. Given its ambitions not only to reflect but to direct national sentiment, the genre of the national tale considerably complicates the traditional account of Regency fiction which saw novelistic production polarized between Jane Austen, on the one hand, in the company of other “lady novelists” with their intense interest in female socialization, domestic dynamics, and the morality of novel reading; and Walter Scott, on the other, in whose hands the novel “luckily” found itself repoliticized (and indeed, on several levels, masculinized) by being reinserted into the “larger” social field it had occupied with Defoe and Fielding.⁹ Scott actually derives many of his strategies for dramatizing political struggles from his female contemporaries, and it can be argued that much of the impetus for the novel’s renewed alignment with political issues of the day (like its continuing interest in questions of socialization) comes from women writers. In their main authorship, implied readership and political perspectives, the national tale and the historical novel initially seem to represent differently gendered ways of situating characters, cultures and history. Yet what this essay finally postulates, from the interconnection of the genres, is a dialectical relation between the spheres of male and female authorship.¹⁰

The focus of this account, similarly, is the interrelatedness of the literary life and the theoretical problems being addressed in Scotland and Ireland. It might be argued, indeed, that for a brief moment at the beginning of the nineteenth century (as Edinburgh becomes a major center for novelistic publishing and reviewing) the intense mutual influence of Scottish and Irish novelists on each other and on novel-readers of both nations begins to constitute something like a trans-peripheral Irish-Scottish public sphere. At the same time, of course, the writers of each place are attempting to capture precisely the specificities of its national history and its current political dilemmas. And the national tale and the historical novel continue, as genres, to reflect their respective origins in differing experiences of cultural imperialism. Indeed, the relative intensity and immediacy of political sufferings in the Edinburgh of 1814 is very different from those in the

Dublin of 1806: the carefully sentimentalized relationship, sixty years after Culloden, that Anglo-Scottish Lowlanders felt towards Gaelic Highland culture, has no easy parallel in Ireland. There, in the wake of the 1798 Uprising and the controversial 1802 Union with Britain, the relationship of an Anglo-Irish Ascendancy intelligentsia to the Gaelic-Catholic culture outside the pale remained politically unstable and deeply ambivalent, as many of the national tales record.¹¹ Indeed, if Muir and Lukács had written of Ireland and the national tale, instead of Scotland and the historical novel, they would have seen in Ireland's political turbulence a sufficient explanation for the genre's intermittent political radicalism, its instability of tone, and its alternation between the formulaic and formal experimentation. Still affected by the desperate unrest of the 1790s, Ireland—Lukács would have argued—proved inauspicious for the birth of realism, but sufficiently shattered, tortured and self-defeating for the birth of a novelistic proto-modernism instead.

- 1783–5 Sophia Lee, *The Recess: or A Tale of Other Times*
- 1789 Anne Radcliffe, *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, A Highland Story*
- 1792 Charlotte Smith, *Desmond*
- 1793 Charlotte Smith, *The Old Manor House*
- 1796 Regina Maria Roche, *The Children of the Abbey*; Frances Burney, *Camilla: A Picture of Youth*
- 1800 Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent: An Hibernian Tale*
- 1803 Sydney Owenson (later Lady Morgan), *St Clair, or The heiress of Desmond*
- 1804 Sydney Owenson, *The Novice of St Domnick*; Amelia Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*
- 1806 Sydney Owenson, *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale*
- 1807 Sydney Owenson, *Patriotic Sketches of Ireland*; Madame de Stael, *Corinne ou l'Italie*
- 1808 Charles Maturin, *The Wild Irish Boy*
- 1809 Maria Edgeworth, *Ennui* [written 1803–5]; Sydney Owenson, *Woman, or Ida of Athens*
- 1811 Sydney Owenson, *The Missionary: An Indian Tale*
- 1812 Charles Maturin, *The Milesian Chief*; Maria Edgeworth, *The Absentee*; Jane West, *The Loyalists: An Historical Novel*

- 1814 Walter Scott, *Waverley, or Tis Sixty Years Since* [begun 1805?]; Lady Morgan (née Sydney Owenson), *O'Donnel: A National Tale*; Mrs. Mary Sherwood, *Little Henry and his Bearer*
- 1815 Mary Brunton, *Discipline*; Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*
- 1816 Lady Caroline Lamb, *Glenarvon*; Mrs. Appleton, *Edgar: A National Tale*; Walter Scott, *The Antiquary, Old Mortality*
- 1817 Lady Morgan, *France*; Maria Edgeworth, *Ormond*
- 1818 Susan Ferrier, *Marriage*; William Godwin, *Mandeville*; James Hogg, *The Brownie of Bodsbeck*; Charles Maturin, *Women or Pour et Contre*; Lady Morgan, *Florence Macarthy: An Irish Tale*; Frances Peck, *The Life and Acts of Emun Ac Knuk: An Irish Historical Romance*; "Peregrine Puzzlebrain," *Tales of My Landlady*
- 1820 Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*
- 1821 John Galt, *Annals of the Parish*; John Gibson Lockhart, *Valerius: A Roman Story*; Mrs. Mary Sherwood, *The History of George Desmond*
- 1822 John Galt, *The Entail, The Provost*
- 1823 John Galt, *Ringhan Gilhaize, or The Covenanters*
- 1824 Susan Ferrier, *The Inheritance*; John Lockhart, *The History of Matthew Wald*; Regina Maria Roche, *The Tradition of the Castle: Scenes of the Emerald Isles*
- 1827 Lady Morgan, *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys: A National Tale*
- 1828 John Banim, *The Anglo-Irish of the Nineteenth Century*; Michael Banim, *The Croppy: A Tale of the Irish Rebellion of 1798*
- 1831 Susan Ferrier, *Destiny: or The Chieftain's Daughter*
- 1834 Lady Morgan, *The Princess, or The Beguine*
- 1840 Anon, *The Ford Family in Ireland* [begun ca. 1809?]; Lady Morgan, *Woman and her Master*

Both the national tale and the historical novel rest, as genres, on a conceptual framework derived from Enlightenment modes of comparative political analysis, from Montesquieu's contrasted cultural geographies to the four-stage historical model of social development postulated by the Scottish Enlightenment. Throughout the eighteenth century, of course, novelists in England, Scotland and Ireland (such

as Defoe, Fielding, Smollett, Thomas Amory, Goldsmith, and Charles Johnstone) developed parallel modes of social scansion in several novelistic genres, from the fluid survey offered by picaresque travel narratives to the juxtaposition of perspectives made possible by epistolary exchange and the framing conceits of the "Oriental" satire.¹² The advent of the French Revolution, however, saw both the renewed politicization of the novel and the explicit influence of political theory on novelistic form. While the heated exchanges between anti- and pro-revolutionary positions (such as those among Burke, Paine and Wollstonecraft) established influential rhetorics with which to present conservative and radical visions of society, the shape and vehemence of the Jacobinism debate itself helped to enshrine the polemical contrast of alternative social forms as a major mode of political discussion. Already in 1789, Ann Radcliffe organized the gothic plot and the political analysis of her first novel, *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, around the schematic juxtaposition of good and bad variants of feudal life, as they played themselves out in the respective castles of two warring Highland chiefs: if Castle Athlin was a despotic dungeon, Castle Dunbayne functioned as a well-run civitas. By 1792, Charlotte Smith's controversial and explicitly Jacobin *Desmond* used the same comparative framework much more elaborately, using a travel plot to anchor sustained comparative political analyses and to explore the contemporary social questions raised by the Revolution itself.

At the outset of Smith's novel, Lionel Desmond is enlisted to accompany a flighty youth on a pleasure trip into revolutionary France. As this is an epistolary tale, Desmond is soon sending long letters home to his conservative friend Bethel in England, describing what he has observed of the social conditions which led to the revolution and what he has experienced of the unfolding of the revolution itself. In return, Bethel's letters counter Desmond's growing Jacobin sympathies with Burkean scepticism about the very prospect of social change; the reformers themselves appear "wavering and divided in their councils . . . which occasions me again to entertain some doubts of the permanency of the revolution."¹³ Moving back and forth between these two geo-political perspectives, the novel's first volume is thus able to focus on several things simultaneously: the transformations in France, the process of political conversion, and the growing gap between a progressive political rhetoric based on a first-hand knowledge of social conditions, and a reactionary British rhetoric grounded, appropriately enough, in a traditional repertoire of abstract political sentiment.¹⁴ In matched set-pieces, furthermore, which reiterate at once

Radcliffe's two-castle contrast and contemporary Third Estate polemics, Desmond first visits a democratically-minded aristocratic reformer, whose pleasant estate is being improved, cultivated and drained. Then he visits the reformer's despotic uncle, whose grandiose but tattered estate is still run according to feudal principles, and therefore shows tell-tale signs of wastefulness, corruption and want. Here the peasants do not sing cheerfully at their work and the landscape itself is despoiled: even the ceremonial avenues of trees leading up to the estate have been made ragged by ill-considered chopping.

This contrast between the political economies and prospects presented by the feudal order and by an explicit social contract becomes, for the remainder of the novel, the implicit basis for a rather different sort of plot, a story of platonic but adulterous love which raises questions of domestic economy and the rights of women in marriage. In the longer term, moreover, the succession and combination of Radcliffe's Highland castles, juxtaposed as discrete political systems, and Smith's plot of travel, cultural comparison and marriage, together provide the national tale with its central plot device: the spatialization of political choices, presented as a journey of discovery through the British peripheries. At the same time, both the main political bifurcation within the national tale itself—Maria Edgeworth's critically pro-Union Irish novels on the one hand, and the Jacobin-feminist national tales of Ireland, Greece, India and Belgium of Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) on the other—and the political thrust of Walter Scott's historical novel can be mapped by their differing adaptations of the novels of the 1790s.

Both in their politics and in their plots, Maria Edgeworth's Irish novels remain tied to the Enlightenment critique of feudalism. If her 1800 *Castle Rackrent* temporalizes Radcliffe's juxtapositions (as an elderly retainer chronicles the successive variants of feudal lordship the same castle has experienced in the course of his lifetime), Edgeworth's subsequent novels respatialize them into discrete, if synchronous, social stages and political states which her aristocratic characters move between and must choose among. What *Ennui* (written 1803–1805, published 1809), *The Absentee* (1812) and especially *Ormond* (1818) will suggest—following Enlightenment discussions of “improvement” and modernization—is that pre-Rebellion and pre-Union Ireland presents a simultaneity of developmental stages, economic systems, and thus, for the ruling Ascendancy, political possibilities and moral options as well. For Edgeworth, like Radcliffe, the fundamental choice is between good paternalism and bad feudalism. The redoubled problem

of Ireland, for her, is that a peasant culture, already formed and deformed by centuries of feudalism and religious strife, is now suffering anew under its new English landlords, who exploit their political monopoly of power, rack rents and expect feudal obedience without assuming feudal responsibility. The country's governors can either allow the continuing bifurcation of Irish and English castes in Ireland, or they can, through "improvement," seek to forge a new Union between landlords and tenants.¹⁵

Walter Scott's *Waverley* is at once a direct redaction of Smith's *Desmond* and an indirect one, filtered through the subsequent national tale genre Smith's novel helps to give rise to, as through an anti-revolutionary revision of *Desmond*, Jane West's 1812 *The Loyalists: An Historical Novel*. These are all influences which Scott systematically plays down throughout his essayistic writings (while acknowledging solely the influence of Edgeworth). In the famous introduction to his first novel, he explicitly distances himself from chivalric and sentimental, gothic and women's fiction, his act of literary self-fashioning symbolized by the "neutral" choice of name for his title character: "WAVERLEY, an uncontaminated name, bearing with its sound little of good or evil, excepting what the reader shall hereafter be pleased to affix to it."¹⁶ To the reader of Charlotte Smith and of Jane West, however, the name is in fact already significantly occupied, and in a way that sheds an important intertextual light on the political project of Scott's *Waverley* novels. In Smith's novel, *Desmond's* light-headed charge and travel-companion is also named *Waverly*, true to his name in his perennial inability to decide if and whether he should travel, which invitations he should accept, which woman he should marry. Put drunk into the packet-boat, Smith's *Waverly* is so preoccupied with his own confused dissipations that, in contrast to *Desmond* himself, he is unable to see the France put under his nose, or grasp the significance of the political events going on within it. In Jane West's resolutely anti-Jacobin novel *The Loyalists* (a tale of the English Civil War, here portrayed as "the reign of terror in England") the political instability of an aristocratic character, "Sir William Waverley," is presented even more critically: in the face of a national emergency which calls for decisive stances, *Waverley* is trapped into repeated double-crossings, until finally he has "turned, and trimmed, and cut in, and cut out, till nobody knew whether he was of any side at all." Eventually he is forced to hide himself from both sides, taking refuge in the ruins of his ancestral home, which has been destroyed by the "ravages of civil war."

Waverley Hall was a complete ruin. A few of the meaner offices, and a part of the walls, marked where the residence stood, which once sheltered crafty selfishness . . . [T]he unclaimed demesne, [was] once guarded even from the intrusion of admiring curiosity, by the secluding jealousy of a cold-hearted worldling, whose pride counteracted his ostentation, and whose timidity was even greater than his self-love . . . The streets of the village were silent and deserted. Neither the loom, the flail, nor the anvil were heard.¹⁷

If West's extended description of the despoiled estate oddly echoes Smith's description of the ill-managed aristocratic estate Desmond visits in mid-revolutionary France, it also anticipates Scott's description, at the end of *Waverley*, of the stately home despoiled in the fighting of the Jacobite rebellion, its outlawed aristocratic owners hiding themselves in its ruins, and its blasted oaks metonymically representing the end of an epoch. Twenty years after *Desmond* and two years after *The Loyalists*, *Waverley* itself wavers, in crucial respects, between Smith's and West's visions of civil revolution. In contrast to West's novel, Scott narrates a hapless journey into civil war from a perspective sympathetic not only, initially, to the forces of rebellion, but also to the inadvertently erring Waverley himself: in a time of historical upheaval, loyalty is not a simple duty, but instead requires repeated adjudications as circumstances shift. Like Smith's novel, *Waverley* uses set-piece comparisons to meditate on the collapse of aristocratic authority. And yet its political inferences end up reversed, Tory rather than Jacobin: here it is a conservative rather than a progressive rebellion which receives the author's partial endorsement, here the fully feudal world of the Highland clans which commands the deepest allegiance and easiest loyalty.

If Scott's first novel adapts both Jacobin and anti-Jacobin novelistic forms while disavowing the political legacy of the Jacobins in particular, the subtitle of Sydney Owenson's first novel announces its admiring redaction of Smith with (perhaps unconscious) forcefulness. Like the original *Desmond*, Owenson's *St Clair, or The heiress of Desmond* (1804) is an epistolary novel which juxtaposes a travel plot and a plot of adulterous longing. Indeed, the novel is preoccupied with what might be called the politics of redaction: set in Ireland, it explores what would happen if the plot of Goethe's *Werther* were transposed to the British Isles, so that its ubiquitous Ossian references were not simply sublime rhetorical tags, but also had geo-political correlatives. Owenson's second novel, *The Novice of St. Domnick* (set in sixteenth-century France, and opening in the latter-day scriptorium which an eccentric female antiquarian has erected in a monastery library) goes

on to historicize the redaction process itself, as a way of examining the surprising overlap between historical epochs and discursive systems. When the elderly antiquarian, as the epitome of written tradition, falls in love with a strolling “minstrel,” the embodiment of an oral repertoire, she expresses her attraction in “half-heathenish, half-Christian” terms that reveal the historical contradictions of Renaissance learning: the vestiges of pagan mythology lie in sedimentary layers beneath a surface of Christian sentiment, classical poetry beneath patristic law.

“May the muses be propitious to thy efforts! may Apollo smile upon thy votive lay! may the saints protect thee in thy devious wanderings!” . . .

The Lady Magdelaine . . . talked more often of Ovid than of saint Bonaventure, and quoted Sappho almost as often as saint Genevieve.¹⁸

In the context of Owenson’s whole oeuvre, these first novels are striking for their grasp of how the contrastive plot organizations of the 1790s can be turned to launch literary-historical and literary-political discussion—and yet for the way their preoccupation with the politics of writing actually preempts a more extended discussion of contemporary or national politics.¹⁹ Developing a still more complex variation of the same basic romance plot, Owenson’s third novel, *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale* (1806) juxtaposes the concerns of her previous two novels to explore the tension between a literary, antiquarian sense of Ireland and a nationalist, bardic one. What this juxtaposition suddenly recovers, in fact, are the political implications of Smith’s traveling plot for the British Isles and the literary-political possibilities of Edgeworth’s Irish chronicle. The result is a new kind of national fiction, which for the next decade will help both to establish the hallmarks of cultural nationalism in Ireland and to consolidate modern tourist itineraries.

At the beginning of *The Wild Irish Girl*, the novel’s hero journeys to Ireland, banished by his father to the estates he holds as an English absentee. The journey, then, is taken under duress, and with the hero’s firm expectation he will find the country dull and backward, the kind of place from which it makes sense to rack one’s rents and remain absent. What he actually finds in Ireland surprises him: picturesque scenery and customs, voices issuing from a ruined chapel, the thrilling voice of the dispossessed Princess Glorvina singing to her harp, the voice of the priest explaining the antiquity and venerability of Irish traditions, the eerily keening voices of the peasant funeral procession. A landscape assumed to be barren and empty in fact re-

verberates with the sounds of an ancient culture; growing to love not only Ireland, but also its aristocratic and allegorical embodiment, the hero ends the novel by marrying Glorvina and settling permanently on “their” joint estate. For ten years to come, the national tale as a genre will rest on increasingly stylized repetitions of this basic plot, with its allegorical presentation of the contrast, attraction, and union between disparate cultural worlds. In each subsequent version, an English character will again travel to the British periphery, which he or she expects will be devoid of any culture at all. Instead, under the tutelage of an aristocratic native friend, he or she will come to appreciate its cultural plenitude and self-sufficiency to such a degree that he or she will decide to settle there permanently. Each book ends with the traveller’s marriage to his or her native guide, in a wedding which allegorically unites English and Celtic “national characters.”²⁰

Developed by Owenson and Edgeworth, influencing Mme. de Staël and influenced by her, the genre of the national tale reaches decisive turning points first with Charles Maturin’s brilliant 1812 *The Milesian Chief* (arguably the single most important source for Scott’s *Waverley*) and then with the 1814 publication of *Waverley* itself: together, these two novels at once reiterate and transform the national tale’s generic premises by explicitly historicizing its allegorical framework. The national tale before *Waverley* presents late eighteenth-century culturalist assumptions, such as the perceived influence of cultural geography on the specificity of character, setting, and events, in particularly concentrated and politicized forms, upholding the distinctiveness and the autonomy of place. From *Waverley* onwards, the historical novel conversely enacts the collapse and transfiguration of place, as an annalistic accretion of time within the stability of place gives way to the phenomenological development of places themselves, their characters and their stories. The national tale before *Waverley* maps developmental stages topographically, so that they simply exist as adjacent worlds which the characters move and then choose between; the movement of these novels is geographical, rather than historical. In contrast, the historical novel, (which still, at the outset of *The Milesian Chief* and of *Waverley*, relies on a schematic juxtaposition of stratified cultural zones) will find its real focus in the way in which one developmental stage collapses to make room for the next, and cultures are transformed under the pressures of historical events. With their respective focuses on domestic and political spheres as the sites of national and historical formation, on the stability of culture in place and the fragility of culture over time, the two genres might be said to develop dialectically opposed

ways of situating culture in relationship to nationalism and to history. The national tale before *Waverley* presents national character as a synecdoche of an unchanging cultural space: here nationalism is a self-evident legacy, the result of unbroken continuity, of a populist community which unites aristocracy and folk. The historical novel draws heavily on this vision of national continuity, but in order, in the end, to posit the moment of nationalism somewhere else, at a further stage of historical development: it is only through the forcible, often violent entry into history that the feudal folk community becomes a nation, only through dislocation and collective suffering that a new social contract and sense of national identity are forged.

The rest of this section will sketch a cumulative overview of the national tale, outlining simultaneously its key generic features and the way they change in emphasis as the genre moves towards and past the historical novel. Focusing on the three most distinctive aspects of the early national tale—the journey, the marriage, the national character—it will discuss the shifting relationship in Owenson's own work between tourism and textual tradition, the movement of the marriage plot from a comedy of national reconciliation towards a tragedy of doomed love in Charles Maturin's *The Milesian Chief*, the transformation, over the history of the genre, of an allegorically flattened national character into one torn apart by the contradictions of uneven development in the tale's various cultural spaces and layers. As it moves from the unchanging national world towards the dislocations of the historical novel, the national tale (as a genre centered on an allegorical equation of personal and cultural identity) will become, paradoxically, the birthplace of a new kind of literary schizophrenia.

How will the peripheries appear to the traveller—and to the travelling eye of the reader? Like all nationalist genres, the national tale is caught from its beginnings in certain unresolvable contradictions. It sets out to describe a long-colonized country “as it really is” and thus sets itself, implicitly and explicitly, against the hitherto standard descriptions written from the imperial perspective of the “center,” which had focused on the desolation, emptiness, barrenness of the “periphery” in order to justify continued economic and cultural colonization. The national tales counter this negative textual tradition by attacking the veracity of such imperial “authorities”: Susan Ferrier's 1831 *Destiny; or the Chieftain's Daughter* thus opens with a sarcastic refutation of Dr. Johnson's notorious pronouncements about the Scottish Highlands, while Owenson's 1814 *O'Donnel: A national tale de-*

votes ten pages to a more general and more sustained demolition of Dr. Johnson's literary and political judgments.

At the same time, the national tales attempt to construct an alternative picture of their societies, usually using two somewhat contradictory claims as their basis. On the one hand, the defenders of the periphery argue that its physical and cultural landscape has its own beauty and its own aesthetic, although it may not conform to neo-classical standards; as it arises organically from specific historical and geographical circumstances, a national art must be understood on its own terms, not forced into a prior aesthetic mold it can never fit. On the other hand, all aspects of the national culture which have even any remote resemblance to Mediterranean cultural "prototypes" are eagerly embraced by nationalist authors, who see in such similarities a particularly powerful means of establishing cultural legitimacy. The footnotes to Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* thus labor to establish connections or analogies between customs, religious rituals, music, dancing and literature in ancient Greece and present-day Ireland, as well as pointing out more esoteric resemblances between Hibernian and ancient Egyptian dress.²¹ Already, then, the impulse to develop original, indigenous criteria for cultural evaluation is matched, even checked, by the resort to the authority of precedent.²²

The nationalist project of Owenson's subsequent fiction, in particular, becomes textually mediated in two further ways, as it tries to develop new ways of traversing and reading the peripheries. *O'Donnell* focuses explicitly on problems of cultural interpretation, particularly on the difficulty in ensuring that the new English tourism, beginning in early nineteenth-century Ireland in the wake of the Act of Union, will be properly sensitive to the historical specificity, cultural difference, and ethnographic richness of Irish life. The journey of national exploration which opens this novel is a collective one, a tour through the North of Ireland by an aristocratic party from London whose insensitive and boorish behavior is meant to provide a negative exemplum for real-life English tourists. "Only think," one of the party writes in delight, "of a *particular set* from the neighbourhood of St. James finding themselves accidentally re-assembled in the wilds of Ireland!"²³ Throughout the expedition, in fact, most of the party remain far more interested in each other than in where they are, and even in the presence of the most "venerable ruins," their behavior remains immature, as they show off to one another, sprawl on ancient tombstones and, full of "flippant loquacity," treat all natives they meet (including

those who are their social equals) with insulting condescension. Worse still, they neither accord to Ireland the respect due to an ancient civilization (“It is totally impossible that an *Irish* scene could resemble any thing in *Italy*: the comparison is really quite comical”) nor, convinced of its innate backwardness, take cognizance of its current efforts to modernize itself:

We happen to have no taste for coal-mines—besides I don’t give any credit to your knowing how to work coal-mines in Ireland. You had better stick to your bogs . . . But have you nothing about Fingal here? No place that Ossian mentions? We are told that this is the spot for that sort of thing.²⁴

The irony of *O’Donnell* is that it simultaneously parodies and promotes a touristic view of Ireland. For while it criticizes the way literary tourism can blind the visitor, ever searching for the ancient site, to the lived connections between past and present, the novel also sets itself up as a literary guidebook to the North of Ireland, setting an agenda for future tours.²⁵ This is indeed the growing double-bind of the national tale itself, as it uses Irish and Scottish antique picturesqueness to buttress claims to inherent worth and to English attention, but at the same time tries to keep such antiquarianism from obscuring either the current political and economic situation of the peripheries or England’s historical responsibility for many of their problems.

The longer the national tale is established as a genre, ironically, the more emphasis it places on the ambiguous legacy of past literary representations of the periphery, and the imperial modes of cultural interpretation they establish even for present-day travellers. Thus in Owenson’s 1818 *Florence Macarthy*, the literary mediation of Ireland not only accompanies but even, at moments, overshadows or undoes the effects of the journey of national exploration itself. At the beginning of the novel, as *Il Librador* lands in Dublin harbor, the vessel’s passenger (actually Lord Fitzadelm, returning Anglo-Irish absentee) and its captain (actually General Fitzwalter, hero of the South American wars of liberation, hero of the novel and also, it will prove, the rightful heir to Fitzadelm’s estate) hold two key conversations around alternative readings of Edmund Spenser’s *View of the Present State of Ireland* and of Volney’s *Ruines des Empires Anciens* which make clear the extent to which political differences can be restated as hermeneutic and aesthetic ones:

“In viewing Ireland through Spenser’s pages [argues Fitzwalter], you will see it, as children do an eclipse through a smoked glass.

He was one of those, whose policy it was to revile the country he preyed upon—to spoil, and then to vituperate . . . Spenser, the deputy of a deputy . . . is no author for impartiality to judge by; and when he stoops to eulogize the “dreadless might” of his ferocious patron, Grey, one of Ireland’s Herods . . . however he may please as a poet, he is contemptible as an historian, and infamous as a politician.”

“Oh! as a historian or politician I give him up [Fitzadelm replies], because both characters are equally ridiculous: the politician always guided by prejudice and interest, the historian always immersed in ignorance and error. Time discovers and shames both: and thus it is with all that bears upon human facts. The imagination alone is always right; its visions are alone imperishable. The Faery Queen of Spenser will thus survive, when his State of Ireland shall be wholly forgotten: and, for my own part, so much do I prefer the visions of his fancy to the historical relations of any period connected with the history of men, that I would go a thousand miles to visit the ruins of his Irish *Kilcoleman* . . . But I am not sure that I would turn one point out of the way to tread upon the spot where legitimate despotism signed the fiat of its own destruction, and gave Magna Charta to an emancipated nation.”

The vessel at that moment touched the pier.

Entering an impoverished and bedraggled Dublin, Fitzadelm and Fitzwalter gaze at the former Irish Parliament, turned into the Bank of Ireland upon the recent Act of Union:

“It is a beautiful thing of its kind [says Fitzadelm] . . . what will it be centuries hence, when its columns, touched by the consecrating hand of time, shall lie prostrate, and its pediments and architraves be broken and moss-grown—when all around it shall be silence and desolation? . . . some future Volney of the Ohio or the Susquehanah [may be cast] upon the shores of this little Palmyra, when he may surmise and wonder, may dream his theories, and calculate his probabilities; and, bending over these ruins, may see the future in the past, and apostrophize the inevitable fate of existing empires.”

“Or an American freeman,” observed the Commodore, “the descendants of some Irish exile, may voluntarily seek the bright green shores of his fathers, and, in this mouldering structure, behold the monument of their former degradation.”²⁶

“One spoke in epic, the other in epigram.”²⁷ The Anglo-Irish proponent of Spenser and of literary autonomy, who scorns any possible connections between literary representation and political life, reads post-Union Ireland in terms that might be dubbed “aesthetiquarian”: the more ruins, the more beautiful. His Irish nationalist interlocutor, conversely, hastens to condemn Spenser’s imperialism and to read the

ruins of Ireland not as aesthetically pleasurable, but as the evidence of historical and political crimes. Fitzadelm's reference to Volney's 1791 *Ruins* evokes its famous opening scene: a traveller stands in the desert before the ruins of an ancient temple, and is mourning the destruction of past greatness, when the genius of the ruins, the spirit and voice of the past, speaks back to him. For Fitzadelm, imagining his own present as some future traveller's tragically lost cultural past, the scene is aesthetically affecting, a synecdochal representation of the melancholy and the pathos of history. In Fitzadelm's philosophy, indeed, the ruin of successive cultures is a recurring historical necessity as much as a recurring historical tragedy: later in the novel, contemplating a ruined Irish abbey (and associatively recalling a past visit to a Spanish convent, where he contemplated the Moorish ruin which adjoined its cloisters), he finds himself "musing on the course of things, from the fragments of Arabic taste and Mahometan superstition, into the temple of Christian rites."²⁸

This model of historical transformation and transubstantiation, with its emphasis on the way one culture is subsumed into the next, apparently wholly and inevitably, informed Owenson's own early novel *The Novice of St. Domnick*. Now she explicitly argues against it, on the grounds that it can feed a dangerous tendency towards political passivity and resignation: the Moors' conquest of Spain and their subsequent expulsion, the English conquest of Ireland, the Spanish conquest of South America, with all their accompanying bloodshed and brutality, become in this worldview inevitable and unalterable facts of natural history. Indeed, when General Fitzwalter discusses the South American wars of liberation later in the novel, Fitzadelm will argue at length that any struggle for liberation is bound, in the long run, to be utterly futile, and the forces of liberation, even worse, identical in the end with the forces of oppression:

Man, in whatever region he is found, may best be typified by squirrel in a cage. . . . His little sphere is so planned . . . that he can be nothing but what he is, do nothing but what he does. He goes round his circle, and repeats his rotations, with no difference in the performance, but a little acceleration or a little retardment. These South Americans but repeat an old story: they are savage and unprotected, they are conquered;—they are slaves, and degraded, they endure;—they struggle and succeed,—become great, prosperous, illumined; conquer and oppress in their turn, moulder away.²⁹

In contrast to such fatalism and its cult of the ruin as picturesque emblem of political futility, Fitzwalter “the brave Guerilla Chief” refuses the ruin as an aesthetic spectacle in order to claim it instead as the evidence of historical crimes: his Volney is a historical and political figure, the theorist of the French revolution whose genius of the ruins laments the enslaving subjection of empire and proclaims in its stead the universal rights of man, appearing not in order to mourn the past but to call for the liberation of the present. Rather than enthusiastically anticipating a distant age in which Ireland’s ruin will be picturesquely complete, Fitzwalter is impassioned by the signs of degradation, oppression and ruin visible already in the present day, in a parliament turned into a bank, a nation destroyed by its transformation into an economic colony. With such contrasts, Owenson implicitly refuses literary modes of reading culture, along with a colonizing tradition of literary depictions—since, indeed, she suggests that from Spenser to Johnson, the great poets of the “English” canon need to be seen as politically complicit with the imperialist expansionism of the English government. At the same time, paradoxically, her novel (like the works of Jane Austen and other contemporaries) continues to use literary discussion and literary judgments as touchstones of character and political sensitivity. Indeed, she evokes metaphors of reading continually to describe the problem of deciphering the “surface of the country . . . of its history . . . that text, whose spirit and whose letter were mis-rule and oppression.”³⁰

From its original didactic attempts to educate English readers (by providing them, in *The Wild Irish Girl* and *O’Donnel*, with fictionalized, picturesque and polemical guidebooks) the national tale moves toward critical sociologies of colonial society (*Florence Macarthy*, *The Absentee*, *Ormond*) and then militant histories of colonialism (*The Milesian Chief*, *The O’Briens*, *The Anglo-Irish*). At the same time, its central political tendency shifts gradually from a celebratory nationalist politics, which both recognizes cultural distinctiveness and believes in the possibility of trans-cultural unions, towards another, more separatist politics, in which a history of cultural oppression makes rapprochement and reconciliation more and more inconceivable. The national tale’s marriage plot and its national characters are deeply affected by these shifts. For the culminating acts of union become fraught with unresolved tensions, leading to prolonged courtship complications, to marital crises, and even, in two of Susan Ferrier’s novels, to national divorce. And the resulting traumas threaten to erode the

mental stability of national characters, where they do not quite literally tear them apart.³¹ Owenson's 1811 *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (whose literally imperial setting in seventeenth-century India highlights the thematics of colonialism, domination and forced modernization beginning to emerge in the genre as a whole) thus suggests the tragedy of Westernization through the ill-fated love of Hilarion, the Apostolic Nuncio to India, and Luxima, the Cashmire princess and priestess of Brahma. His attempts to convert her to Christianity, and their subsequent romance, result in her exile and loss of caste, his defrocking and trial by the Inquisition. Deeply irreconcilable, the two cultures of India and Rome can meet only when the analogous despotism of their respective superstitions becomes visible: the moment, for instance, when Luxima attempts to perform suttee at the very stake at which the Inquisition has condemned Hilarion to be burnt. At the same time Owenson's depiction of Luxima's increasing self-alienation, as her thoughts are literally pulled back and forth between old cultural alliances and new emotional ones, suggests a socio-historical genesis of certain forms of mental illness:

Her mind was wandering and unsettled; the most affecting species of mental derangement had seized her imagination—the melancholy insanity of sorrow: she wept no tears, she heaved no sighs—she sat still and motionless, sometimes murmuring a Brahminical hymn, sometimes a Christian prayer—sometimes telling of her grandsire, sometimes of her lover—alternatively gazing on the muntras she had received from one, and the cross that had been given her by the other.³²

The madhouse scene in Charles Maturin's 1820 *Melmoth the Wanderer* will suggest a vertiginous proliferation of such divisions, as the forcibly interned narrator is surrounded on either side by men driven into different forms of schizophrenia by different aspects of the English Civil War. On one side, a Loyalist tailor, ruined by giving credit to Cavaliers, spends his days reciting fragments of Lovelace and Aphra Behn in "a voice half in exultation and half in derision." And the Puritan weaver on the other side, driven mad by religious enthusiasm, "half the day imagines himself in a pulpit, denouncing damnation against Papists, Arminians, and even Sub-lapsarians . . . At night his creed retaliates on him; he believes himself one of the reprobates he has been all day denouncing, and curses God for the very decree he has all day been glorifying Him for."³³ The timeless, allegorically flattened characters of the early national tale are here transformed into tormented, bifurcated characters who wage a perennial civil war within

themselves: entering violently into history, such characters are at once forced into rapid changes and have a part of their psyche permanently numbed by shock, remaining behind in a state of arrested development.³⁴

At the same time, as Maturin's 1812 *Milesian Chief* already suggests, the national tale itself has moved into an increasingly sophisticated representation of the link between cultural/character formation and a complex historical temporality. With its journey of national discovery, its national characters (Armida, the harp-playing Anglo-Italian aristocrat who returns from the Continent to her father's newly acquired Irish estates, and Connal, the fiery, dispossessed Irish prince), and its allegorical love story, on the one hand, and its setting in recent history (with its hero's unwitting entanglement in the abortive Uprising of 1798), on the other, *The Milesian Chief* straddles the divide between *The Wild Irish Girl* and *Waverley*, the national tale and the historical novel. It also reiterates every trope and convention of the Ossianic, sentimental and gothic fiction of the previous fifty years. In the moment before the paradigm shift, before the birth of a new genre, the concentration in this novel of sheer literariness results not only in many passages of unparalleled rhetorical intensity but in a powerful and often moving evocation of the need for tradition itself.

The novel's love story elaborately stages the meeting, mingling, and finally, in the tragedies of the third volume, the suppression and erasure of two adjacent and dialectically opposed intellectual and emotional cultural traditions: Greco-Roman and Greco-Hibernian, antiquarian and bardic, neo-classical and sentimental.³⁵ Over performances of respective national song and harp traditions, and a disagreement in a ruined cemetery over the political thrust of Volney, the continental artistic genius falls in love with the Irish genius loci, and an aesthetic of the ruin faces the prospect of a ruined and desolate country.³⁶ The diametrical opposition which Owenson will develop, six years later, between "Fitzadelmian" and "Fitzwalterian" positions, here confront each other and then begin to mingle, as Connal takes up Armida's habit of classical allusion and as Armida learns to appreciate Ossianic poetry not just as "primitive" artistry but also as sophisticated cultural expression and historical testimony. As in previous national tales, universalizing judgments and standards find themselves replaced with a political energy whose immediacy is based on local attachments. A decorative and scholarly neo-classicism becomes infected with the "wild energy" of national feeling; antiquarianism gives way to a revolutionary romanticism.

The Milesian Chief thus begins to allegorize historical development along with cultural essence, dramatizing the process by which one cultural episteme overlaps with the next and gives way to it—only then, in its almost apocalyptically bitter ending, to suggest the end of culture and of development history itself under the crushing forces of the modern state. The national revolution fails, brutally suppressed by the armies of the new English property owners; Connal is executed by a firing squad; Armida takes poison; and with them the national cultures and the aesthetic principles they stand for die as well. In comparison, the famous ending of Scott's *Waverley* (with its love in the ruins culminating in the marriage of English and Lowland aristocracies, a private happiness that sublimes the historical dislocation of the whole culture of the Highlands) comes to look unduly optimistic, giving the violence of history retroactive meaning, purpose, and alibi.

In other respects, of course, it is but a small step from *The Milesian Chief* to *Waverley*, from Armida (herself descended from Glorvina and Corinne) to Flora, from an increasingly self-questioning national tale to a gradually self-conscious historical novel. Thus Scott's novel simultaneously traces and reverses the national tale's journey of national discovery and homecoming, as it at once deposes and eulogizes its hero's romantic fantasies. While *Waverley* is moving northward and backward in cultural time (to discover the still-living reality of romance culture, he leaves the eighteenth century and travels by way of the fourteenth century to what is left of the third), historical forces are beginning to move Highland culture itself inexorably forward towards modernity. The wavering of *Waverley*; the madness of David Gellatney, appearing first as regressive and then, unexpectedly, as elegiacally timely; the fading of Flora as her culture withers and the second blossoming of Rose as the fortunes of her house recover: Lukács sees in *Waverley* an emerging characterological roundness or "realism," as the behavior or meaning of characters changes with their historical fortune. But this increasingly phenomenological notion of character (which seems to him particularly suited to demonstrate and mirror the subtleties of historical change), has clear continuities with the national tale's initial notions of national allegoresis, just as it will reinforce its later notions of historically-induced neurosis. The idea of representative character here comes full circle. In the subsequent historical novel and the subsequent national tale, it will continue to balance unsteadily, with the schematic and the complexly specific, a new psychological "realism" and ancient forms of personification allegory wrapped inextricably together.

The (involuntary) historical expressiveness of literature, Sydney Owenson argues in the preface to *O'Donnel*, exists in strange tension with a recurring crisis of generic and literary conventionality.

Literary fiction . . . has always . . . exhibited a mirror of the times in which it is composed; reflecting morals, customs, manners, peculiarity of character, and prevalence of opinion. Thus, perhaps, after all, it forms the best history of nations; the rest being but the dry chronicles of facts and events, which in the same stages of society occur under the operations of the same passions, and tend to the same consequences. But, though such be the primary character of fictitious narrative, we find it, in its progress, producing arbitrary models, derived from conventional modes of thinking amongst writers, and influenced by the doctrines of the learned, and the opinions of the refined.³⁷

The theoretical stake of the generic relationship between the national tale and the historical novel could be described in comparable terms, as the paradoxical relationship of a convention-bound “literary history” to the concerns of cultural nationalism and to nationalist history-writing. The eighteenth-century rise of culturalist and historicist ways of understanding and interpreting literature (through the new discussion of Homer as a historical and culturally-situated figure in the first half of the century, and then, in its final third, through the new cult of the bard) laid the basis for Romantic reconstructions and reclamations of national-cultural traditions. In various parts of Britain as well as in Central Europe, “national literatures” and national literary histories were founded or re-founded through the publication or re-publication of representative literary works in a few key genres during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And, indeed, somewhat ironically, these genres (including, eventually, the national tale and the historical novel) have ever since, as an ensemble, formed quite literally a generic framework for the attempts of virtually all subsequent nationalist and regionalist movements to establish the temporal and cultural coherence, the specificity of their “nationhood.”³⁸

Some of these genres are philological and scholarly (including dictionaries, collections of folk songs, editions of oral narratives and medieval literary “monuments”), some semi- or pseudo-scholarly (“national epics” from *Ossian* onwards, often constructed imaginatively under the guise of reconstruction). The national tale and the historical novel belong to the few genres which are openly imaginative, although they too incorporate scholarly elements (the footnotes and appendices which surround Edgeworth’s and Owenson’s and Scott’s novels, for instance) and indeed amalgamate and reiterate many of the key features

of the previous nationalist genres. This recapitulation is quite self-conscious, an accretion of literary conventions which corresponds in many ways on a formal level to the accretion of national characteristics, conventions and experiences whose process and content forms the subject-matter of their narratives. For both the national tale (with its stress on the thick accretion of cultural life forms) and the historical novel (with its stress on the fragility and finally the malleability of such cultural forms in the face of historical crisis), cultural memory and “genre memory” come to seem intimately linked.

The transition from national tale to historical novel itself, as a moment simultaneously of generic accretion and generic rupture, offers an interesting place to examine how this process of literary-historical recapitulation and repertoire-sorting takes place. But it also offers the opportunity for a second kind of theoretical speculation, about our own ability and inability to model historiographically the origins, development, standardization and metamorphosis of generic forms. Where do genres come from? Why and how do they change? They arise, it might be argued, as a response to a moment of historical crisis.³⁹ The growing inadequacy and obsolescence of social paradigms and thus also of literary forms used to represent a changing world leads at a particularly charged historical moment to the creation of a new genre; this literary equivalent of a paradigm shift allows a different epistemology or at least a new constellation of social concerns to find expression. Thereafter, however, as it develops generic conventions, the genre may drop out of history again, become increasingly “literary” in its reference and its models, and increasingly detached from the new social, historical or national specificity it was designed to describe—until the gap between literary representation and lived reality reaches crisis proportions and the cycle begins again with a new genre.

This description of generic metamorphosis, like so much of the modern vocabulary to discuss historical change, is derived (at least indirectly) from the *Waverley* novels themselves, with their depiction of clear historical thresholds, and their related notion that those moments of transition, those breaking points are the moments which are most historically charged, moments in which history is “entered” dramatically and irrevocably. But there are things this model, and the fixed relationship it assumes between historical reality and representational form, between original, pathbreaking generic prototype and increasingly convention-bound copies, can’t adequately account for. If literary works can be said to group themselves into genres, they do so by a number of means: through their methods of establishing nar-

rative voice, perspective and tone; their techniques for shaping characterization and demarcating the narrative and the socio-political space through which the characters move, the range of social and literary concerns they address; but also through their conscious recycling of a preexisting range of plot patterns and moves, the way they borrow tropes, themes, characters from earlier works and deploy them to create set pieces, often precisely in order to announce their literary lineage and their literary consanguinity with other works of the same genre. So “literariness,” conventionality itself, can become a powerful expression of a relationship to tradition. And the development of genre, seen from inside, can seem dynamic as well as static, as its conventions are worked over, tried out, discarded temporarily, fought over from work to work, in a constant shifting and realigning of balances and emphases.

If the national tale before *Waverley* habitually presents a regionalist chronotope so strong it can pull cosmopolitan nineteenth-century travellers back into it, what the historical novel presents is a violent struggle between different possible future worlds derivable from the same past, a process which is complete only when a particular present comes to be, and subsumes the past, and all other historiographical and narrative possibilities within it. The related and long-standing assumption of most historiographers of the novel has been that the *Waverley* novels (immediately, rightly, inevitably) supplanted or subsumed other narrative forms because what they represented was the most historiographically complex, politically nuanced, and psychologically sophisticated account of historical forces available in the British novel of its time. But if, with the historical novel, a progressivist history of linear progressions, paradigm shifts, and epistemic breaks seems to have gained a clear victory over other, more accretive models for representing temporality and change, its triumph was by no means so absolute in the historical moment in which it was apparently consolidated.⁴⁰

Indeed, after 1814 (while a late national tale is developed in diverging and interesting directions by Maria Edgeworth, Susan Ferrier and the Banims), the *Waverley* novels receive incisive challenges from work that incorporates annalistic and gothic elements alike, the “theoretical histories” of John Galt’s *Tales of the West*, on the one hand, and the late work of Maturin and Owenson, on the other.⁴¹ What these authors begin to explore, with the national tale as one starting point, is the coexistence of multiple layers of time in place, and the discontinuities of place in time. Problematising schematic and totalizing

explanations of historical causation, they approach history instead as a network of synchronous and non-synchronous causes, effects, and processes.

The most important political and narrative divergence between *Waverley* and the later gothic-annalistic national fiction lies in the intense attention Maturin, Owenson, and Galt pay to the long-term effects of historical trauma, the deliberate or amnesiac repression of historical memory, and the neurotic psycho-social mechanisms developed to contain its explosiveness. This difference in emphasis expresses itself with particular clarity in the narrative organization of their novels. The historiographical structure of the *Waverley* novels depends on an important paradox or tension. Their central narratives (continuously, omnisciently and for the most part unobtrusively narrated) represent the triumph of a single-focus narrative history—and thus point forward towards the realist novel of mid-century. At the same time, their elaborate documentary framework of footnotes and pseudo-editorial commentaries echo the footnoted debates between late eighteenth-century antiquarians over editorial practices, the elaborate apparatus and ironic polyglossia of Gibbon's historiography, the growing narrative self-consciousness of the epistolary and Shandyeian novel at the end of the eighteenth century, and of course Owenson's early work itself, foregrounding the retroactive, antiquarian production of historical knowledge out of a myriad of experiences, records and possible reconstructions. Such framing, of course, lends density to the historiographical survey of Scott's novels. Yet it also in some ways privileges the perspective of antiquarian narrators over that of historical participants, as the intellectual complexity of the act of historiographic assembly potentially exceeds the psychological complexity of historical experience itself.

United in politically motivated critiques of this textualist vision of history, as of aesthetiquarianism more generally, Galt, Maturin, and Owenson develop differing strategies, in the wake of *Waverley*, to recapture the thickness and jaggedness of lived history. Ironically, they choose to refigure the relationship between experience and text by appropriating elements from two very different genres, the gothic novel and the annalistic history, which in some ways represent even more extreme forms of textualism than the historical novel itself. The gothic, with its self-conscious nesting of narrative within narrative, its chapters overshadowed by poetic epigraphs, and its plots matching characters to ancestral portraits or prophecies to fix their identities, is often textually as well as psychologically claustrophobic, presenting a

real world overshadowed by textual tradition, a history always already mediated by previous representations. The annal, conversely, with its apparently naive listing or stacking of narrated events in an order dictated only by chronology, levels banalities and catastrophes in a single dead-pan narrative voice which often suppresses all nuance and all affect.⁴²

Yet the fusing of these genres with each other and with the national tale produces an alternative historical fiction of enormous psychological and political power. If Scott's novels at once depict and reenact the process of cultural erasure under the violence of history, Maturin and Owenson's historical gothic lays the groundwork for new notions of a historical and political repetition compulsion. And where Scott's novels telescope long-term historical process into single dramatic events, played out by small groups of major and minor actors, Galt and Owenson refashion the annal form in order to explore the temporal unevenness of development and the otherwise invisible connections between local occurrences and long-term processes, local agency and long-lived institutional structures. Thus Owenson's 1827 family chronicle *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* attempts a panoramic representation of the cumulative weight of Ireland's history of political oppression as it affects individual historical players. The very names of the O'Briens and the O'Flahertys are already saturated with historical meaning; they are "the sign of feuds and alliances, of hatreds and of loves, of ancient inheritances and recent usurpations. What an abridgement of the history of the land . . . is the story of the 'O'Briens and the O'Flahertys.'"⁴³ But the novel is littered with historical namesakes, revenants, and reincarnations as much with synecdotal allegories, and the culminating union of Murrough O'Brien to Beauvoine O'Flaherty does not provide a unifying resolution so much as suggest (since an earlier Murrough O'Brien had married an earlier Beauvoine O'Flaherty several generations earlier, in an Ireland just as united and divided in her sufferings) that the Irish people are caught in a repetitive historical loop of gothic proportions.

And despite the fact its main plot deals with revolutionary upheaval (culminating in the 1798 United Irishman Rebellion), the suggestion of historical breakthrough is relativized by the interpolation of an illuminated chronicle of the two families, the *Annals of St. Grellan*, which incidentally details the history of Ireland from its first settlement through various waves of English conquest and occupation, to break off, finally, with the unbearable horrors of the recent past.

1691. King William's army plunder and murder the poore Irish at pleasure . . . what sport they made to hang up poore Irish people by dozens, without pains to examine them; they scarcely thinking them human kind: so that they now began to turn rapparees, hiding themselves . . . in glens and crannies of O'Flaherty's mountains . . . nothing was commoner than to find many, who from too much melancholy, grief, fear of death, and constant danger, being turned in their brains, did run starke, or live in tatters, subsisting upon herbs . . . and the like . . . And wild indeed were they, in these troublesome times, and down to the present; and when one of them was taken . . . it would be with long and extraordinary care and management that they were brought to their senses, and sure were they ever to remain affected, or light.⁴⁴

The continuation a century later, into Owenson's main plot, of a subculture of political outlaws and guerilla fighters, based in the same hills and engaged in the same struggle, makes it difficult to dismiss the chronicle's portrait of the "rapparee, Or wild Irishman, Of the 18th century" either as a historical abberation or a historical mythology.⁴⁵ We are a long way, suddenly, from the "maddening" charms of the *Wild Irish Girl*, from an Ireland whose history of conquest poses a picturesque and empathy-inducing picture. The disconnected and repetitive nature of the family chronicle bears witness to the unassimilable nature of the violence done to and in Ireland: to become "wild," to go literally mad is under the circumstances the only appropriate, sanity-preserving response. The annal itself offers both an account (almost unassimilable in its complexity) of Ireland's conflicted religious and political cultures, and a mournful recognition of the constancy of her woe: "it was curious," says the hero with vast understatement, "to observe the same system still reproducing the same effects."⁴⁶

In *The Entail* and *The Provost* (both 1822), finally, John Galt emphasizes the non-synchronicity of historical change and the increasing, retrospective invisibility of historical agency. Ostensibly a family chronicle which ends as a romance, *The Entail* is an indirect social, intellectual, political, and literary annal of eighteenth-century Scotland, presented as a complex tissue of innovations, survivals, nostalgias and throw-backs. Its form reflects the shifting *Zeitgeist* of Scotland through a slow metamorphosis of literary genre and stylistic register, opening at the beginning of the eighteenth century with a hard-edged Defoean realism, and closing near the end of the century in Ossianic and then Mackenziesque modes of elegiac and sentimental romance. At the same time, the novel offers a psychologically nuanced picture of how historical change is internalized by a succession of characters, fundamentally affecting their self-perception and moral choices: although

the basic pattern of family history repeats itself again and again, the changing social and economic contexts make successive generations of the family literally unintelligible to one another. Galt's foregrounding of economic factors, furthermore, as the most important long-term motor of plot and character development allows him not only to escape the sentimentality of cultural nostalgia but also to place its euphemisms historically and politically. In 1711, while in London Joseph Addison is initiating the ballad revival with his famous essay on the Border ballad "Chevy Chase," the eleven-year-old Claud Walkinshaw (born, orphaned and impoverished during the failed Darien Expedition which paved the way for the 1707 Act of Union) is preparing in Scotland for the dreary life of a peddler, eschewing "Chevy Chase" (and the heroic tales that had inspired his father to his fatal patriotic adventure) in favor of Dick Whittington's story of economic advancement. Even decades later, after he has become a prosperous businessman and landowner, the remembered weight of his pack and his early poverty will make Walkinshaw hunched, pinched, pathologically stingy, and obsessively concerned with regaining all his lost estate, to pass it down intact, so that at least one descendant will escape the curse of recent Scottish history.

And so, in the 1760s, while his wealthy and neglectful elderly relative Miss Christiana Heritage draws up a codicil to her will "for the purpose of devising, as heir-looms, the bedstead and blankets in which Prince Charles Edward slept, when he passed the night in her house," Claud Walkinshaw is in the next room with his lawyer, disinheriting his beloved oldest son Charlie (namesake of the Young Pretender and "ay [his father's] darling chevalier"), out of a fear of historical repetition which compels him to repeat it: "Ye ken [Claud says in a sharp and greedy voice] how I was defrauded, as a bodie may say, of my patrimony, by my grandfather."⁴⁷ The middle-class nostalgia of the 1770s for the heroic events of the '45, the cult being built up around the cultural legacy of the Heritages of Scotland, is at once historically synchronic and emotionally non-synchronous with Claud's sharp, greedy, emotionally pinched voice, with the long-term economic fears and the indelible trauma of class displacement inflicted by the events in Darien seventy years before.

The Provost is Galt's most bravura handling both of the motors, the mechanisms, and the force of historical change, and of the narrative voice which filters, explains, and trivializes them.⁴⁸ Framed as the provost's reminiscences as he ends a long and personally profitable career in public office, the novel gradually makes visible (under the

annalistic accumulation of incident and anecdote) the equally gradual transformation of small-town society from the 1760s to the 1820s, a process that (under the guise of “improvement”) establishes the control of a new middle-class hegemony, and renders politically powerless the newly formed Scottish working class. Like its most important model, Tacitus’s annals of the erosion of Roman republicanism, Galt’s account of the way a new ruling class consolidates its political power does not focus on consequence-laden historical turning points, historical thresholds, or dramatic psychomachian struggles in which old and new forces battle to the death. Its vision of historical process is, rather, a decentered one, the slow, unnoticed, and almost imperceptible leaking away of one age, one political system as another is slowly and deliberately constructed in its place, an accumulation of small but decisive incidents (the enclosure of the town moor; the repair, enclosure and leasing of the Kirk pews to introduce a new hierarchy of property into the congregation; the suppression of the traditional fairs and of a meal mob protesting prices) which lend power to the new forces of bourgeois self-interest and just as gradually erode the participatory power of everyone else.

The motors of historical change, here, are neither abstract historical forces nor world-historical agents, magnificent, allegorized and larger than life. In part Galt presents historical change as a direct result of deliberate attempts to manipulate and alter the organization and character of social life, in part the indirect effect of such alterations, the self-perpetuation, multiplication, proliferation of changes once they have been introduced. On the most visible level, change appears an incidental (and in part unintended) by-product of the growing ambition and the growing insecurity of small-time operators, who find themselves reorganizing social and economic life to boost and protect the interests of an already-prospering middle class. Economic and social dominance are increasingly interdependent. Thus the Provost works to suppress the traditional fairs on two indirectly related grounds. The travelling peddlers, with their inexpensive goods and low overhead costs, might challenge or even break the growing monopoly (and rising prices) of village shopkeepers. And in the face of growing economic disparities between the triumphant middle classes and the increasingly discontented and desperate lower classes, it seems best to abolish quietly any forum where a potentially mutinous mob might assemble.

The attempt to set aside local traditions and to silence oppositional ones at first requires direct (if covert) intervention by the city’s governors. But once they have established and set in motion the new

social apparatus, it not only maintains itself, perpetuates itself, and constantly generates and justifies the expansion of its own scope of operations, but it also renders increasingly invisible the human agency which initially set it in place. Once a few measures of “improvement” have been pushed through, they can be used to justify a virtually endless (and increasingly repressive) series of further changes: once the road has been widened and sidewalks erected, a whole new range of laws, surveillance procedures and self-regulating “habits” follow quite naturally:

New occasions call for new laws: the side pavement, concentrating the people, required to be kept cleaner, and in better order, than when the whole width of the street was in use; so that the magistrates were constrained to make regulations concerning the same, and to enact fines and penalties against those who neglected to scrape and wash the plainstones forenent their houses, and to denounce, in the strictest terms, the emptying of improper utensils on the same, and this, until the people had grown into the habitude of attending to the rules, gave rise to many pleas, and contentious appeals and bickerings, before the magistrates.⁴⁹

If in Scott’s novels the motor of history is strangely impersonal, Galt’s novel masterfully presents both the human agency by which social change is effected (demonstrating clearly whose interests are served and whose repressed) and the way in which the machinery of change, once put into operation, camouflages that agency and those interests as “the movement of history,” in fact eventually freeing the manipulators to appear, even to themselves, as public benefactors guided by popular opinion, and wishing only for the common good.

To some degree, the first three Waverley novels themselves (*Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and *The Antiquary*), if read backwards from Galt’s *Provost*, read as a sequence, and read against the grain, might begin to look annalistic as well. With their successive frames of reference (the 1740s, the 1770s, the 1790s) they form a chronicle whose complicated continuities and discontinuities work against or at least palliate the force of the specific historical ruptures suggested by each novel individually, appearing in trilogy almost as a *Dialectic of Enlightenment* with a Galtian critical edge. In *Waverley*, the superstitious and sometimes despotically governed oral world of the Highland clans breaks apart under external pressures and a failed rebellion. In *Guy Mannering*, the gentry’s impulse towards “improvement” and domestic enclosure (synchronous, as the subplot makes clear, with an age of imperialist expansion abroad) intensifies the gap between property

holders and the propertyless; erases traditional social structures, feudal allegiances and aristocratic memory; effects the dislocation or *grande enfermement* of the folk community; and causes the “gypsification” of just about everyone. Twenty years later, finally, at the end of an era of change, the community of *The Antiquary* (gentry, middle classes and wandering beggars), faced with the threat of invasion from without, can be reconstituted and reunited precisely through an interpretive struggle over the past, a well-worn debate about the proper way to reconstruct and recover lost traditions.

Scott’s novels written by Galt would produce the *Waverley* novels as radical critique: the modernization of Scotland, the first trilogy of novels would then suggest, was effected in three stages, each of which manages successfully to conceal its connection to those which preceded it. First the remnants of Highland clan society are decimated and dispersed *militarily*, in open warfare. Then the introduction of new *economic* principles and pressures weakens the traditional bonds of Lowland society as well, creating a new caste of pariahs and outlaws. And finally, the threat of Jacobin uprising and invasion can be used *ideologically* to consolidate the changes which have taken place over the previous forty years, as a new patriotism and a new cultural nostalgia for a distant age of social harmony blunt the edge of popular protests, erasing more recent, vengeful memories and effectively occluding the human agency which produced the social inequities of the present.

These are not, of course, the *Waverley* novels we know. The historical and the post-colonial novel, the politically quietistic “realism” of Scott and the politically seismographic proto-modernism of Maturin, Owenson, Galt were invented almost simultaneously, from the same peripheries and the same novelistic genealogy.⁵⁰ But despite their intermeshed histories, they point in crucially different directions. Lukács’s championing of the magisterial historical survey provided by Scott and his lack of interest in exploring the historical paranoia and neurosis of Scott’s contemporaries is not, of course, accidental, especially in view of the political climate of his own writing and the aesthetic climate that writing helped to create. As Galt’s Provost instructs us, the reconstruction of how apparent historical breakthroughs actually occur is often the only way to understand how and why this “progress” is retroactively constructed, what it suppresses, what used to be there instead—in short to understand how, in Edwin Muir’s phrase, “the past turns to legend.” So the traverse, here, of a more agitated fiction previous and parallel to Scott’s own, is meant to suggest

all that a still monolithic “Scott legend” continues to conceal, all that is hidden in, behind, and by Scott’s own “very curious emptiness.”

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NOTES

¹ Edwin Muir, *Scott and Scotland. The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1936), 12–13, 161. Muir’s influence is visible in modern accounts of Scottish literature from David Daiches’s *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The Eighteenth-Century Experience* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964) to Kenneth Simpson’s *The Protean Scott: The Crisis of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Univ. Press, 1988), although see also Tom Nairn’s critical response in *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: New Left Books, 1977), 120–22. Muir’s intellectual background offers interesting contrasts to that of Lukács. Active in the Glasgow socialist movement as in the Scottish avantgarde, Muir lived during the 1920s in Prague, Germany, Italy and Austria, and he and his wife Willa became the foremost contemporary translators of Central European modernism (including major works by Kafka, Hermann Broch and Lion Feuchtwanger). Muir’s study of Scott could fruitfully be considered in relation not only to Willa Muir’s *Mrs. Grundy in Scotland* (a historical study of the ideology of respectability in Scotland, written as extended personification allegory, and published in the same series, in the same year as Muir’s book) but also to the famous Central European Marxist/modernist experiments in exemplary sociological biography—Siegfried Kracauer’s *Jacques Offenbach and the Paris of his Time* (1937), Benjamin’s Arcades fragments (worked on throughout the 30s) on Baudelaire as a “lyric poet of High Capitalism,” and Broch’s work towards *Hugo von Hoffmannsthal in his Time*. Seen in this company, the scale and stake of Muir’s differences from Lukács become clear, not only on the question of modernism, but on their approaches to historical exemplarity and totality as well.

² “What is lacking in the so-called historical novel before Sir Walter Scott is precisely the specifically historical, that is, derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age.” “Scott’s extraordinarily realistic presentation of history [revolves on] his ability to translate these new elements of economic and social change into human fates, into an altered psychology.” Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1983), 19, 58.

³ Lukács (note 2), 30.

⁴ The post-war revival of interest in the Waverley novels has typically focused on Scott as a figure working in virtual isolation from the British novel of his time. Donald Davie’s *The Heyday of Walter Scott* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961) thus reads Scott against the European classics. Arthur Mitchell Clark’s *Sir Walter Scott: The formative years* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1964) and Jane Millgate’s otherwise useful *Walter Scott: The Making of a Novelist* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1984) depict Scott’s formation primarily as a self-fashioning. Although critical of Scott’s influence on Scottish fiction, David Craig’s *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People 1680–1830* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961) nonetheless reads Galt as a distinctly minor author, in a chapter significantly entitled “The Age of Scott.” Avrom Fleishman’s *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1971) comments critically on “Scott’s cultural dictatorship in America” as on a “Scott industry” which trumpets Scott’s achievements (22–23), and very briefly considers Scott’s relationship to Edgeworth, Galt and a few other contemporaries, before launching into a sustained account of Scott’s whole novelistic oeuvre. While intrigued by the question of Scott’s immediate sources, Fleishman finally sees them as a problem both too tangled to solve easily and as something of a dead end as well,

unable to account for “the special features and the enormous success of what must have been felt at the time—and still seems—an innovation” (22). Most of the best recent work on Scott—see for instance Kathryn Sutherland’s “Fictional Economies: Adam Smith, Walter Scott and the Nineteenth Century Novel,” *ELH* 54 (1987): 97–127 and the Scott chapters of Ian Duncan’s *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992)—illuminatingly contextualizes the shape and products of Scott’s writing career in relation to the political life and political theory of his day. Again, however, the overriding literary historical emphasis tends to be on Scott’s relation to the literary canon of the past (as he accretively collects and works out a classical, Renaissance, or eighteenth-century literary inheritance) and to the novel of the Victorian period (as his works create or concretize major changes in the address and function of fiction) more than the dynamics of his relationship to contemporary literature. Ina Ferris’s groundbreaking *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991) lays the foundation for a different kind of argument: it not only reads Scott’s novels against individual novels by Edgeworth, Owenson, Hogg and Galt, but, even more importantly, situates Scott’s authorship in relation both to the realm of contemporary female writing and to the reviewing practices of the literary periodicals. Other helpful studies (working at times in the same direction) include Peter Garside, “Popular Fiction and National Tale: Hidden Origins of Scott’s *Waverley*,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 46 (1991): 30–53; James Kerr, *Fiction Against History: Sir Walter Scott as Story-Teller* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989); John MacQueen, *The Enlightenment and Scottish Literature II: The Rise of the Historical Novel* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1989) and Francis R. Hart’s “Scott and the Novel in Scotland,” in *Scott Bicentenary Essays*, ed. Alan Bell (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 61–79.

⁵ For Scott’s “official” relationship to his contemporaries, see his *Letters*, including a number addressed to Maria Edgeworth and Susan Ferrier; *The Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Robert Maturin*, ed. Fannie E. Ratchford and William H. McCarthy, Jr. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1937); Sir Walter Scott, *The Lives of the Novelists* (London: Dent, n.d.); Sir Walter Scott, *On Novelists and Fiction*, ed. Ioan Williams (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), and of course Scott’s famous praise of Edgeworth in the 1829 “General Preface to the *Waverley Novels*,” as well as Peter Garside’s critical account in “Popular Fiction and National Tale” (note 4). If the theses of this essay are correct about the degree of generic influence on Scott’s conception of the historical novel, then his own pronouncements on the contemporary novel systematically mask his own interest in the texts which he borrows most from. It is thus Maturin’s *Wild Irish Boy* rather than *The Milesian Chief*, Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent* rather than *Ennui* or *The Absentee* or *Ormond*, Smith’s *Old Manor House* rather than *Desmond*, Radcliffe’s *Udolpho* rather than *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* that Scott mentions by name and discusses at length, although it is clear he has read all of them. If Scott commentators have not explored his indebtedness to these other novels, it is in part because they have relied too exclusively on his own account of his influences, or at least have underestimated its ironic play of revelation and concealment: an intertextuality perhaps readily, even uncomfortably apparent to Scott’s contemporaries has thus been lost to later literary historians.

⁶ This version of the argument will leave many important questions unexplored. A fuller treatment of the status of novelistic genres in the Romantic period would need to take into account the material bases of authorship, and then to calibrate carefully the literary-historical circumstances of the novels’ composition and publication to political history on both a micro and macro-level. Literary-historical parameters for the period include the increasing specialization of publishers and novelistic audiences; the shifting balance of power between trend-setting London publishers and the alternative publishing centers of Edinburgh and Dublin; the generic expectations aroused or enforced by reviewers and by literary advertising; the effects of Scott’s official and

unofficial “patronage” on the careers of many of the period’s writers, and the specific effects on the literary public of Sydney Owenson’s and Walter Scott’s inauguration of new kinds of “author functions” along with and as new genres. Scott’s prolonged masquerade as the anonymously antiquarian “Author of *Waverley*” is well known, but Owenson’s well-publicized glorification (and as “Glorvina,” personal embodiment) of a heroic, bardic female author was equally influential and controversial in its time. (On Scott and Owenson’s models of authorship, see Ferris [note 4] and Mary Campbell, *Lady Morgan: The Life and Times of Sydney Owenson* [London: Pandora, 1987]; on the relations of author and audience more generally, Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences 1790–1832* [Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1987].)

⁷ Just as the term “historical novel” may have made its first appearance in the subtitle of Jane West’s *The Loyalists* (1812), so too the “national tale,” arguably, is consolidated as a genre partly through the decision of Sydney Owenson or of Henry Colburn, her publisher, to subtitle a whole series of her novels with the generic designation “A National Tale” or “An Irish Tale.” This generic designation then continued to be used for a number of works by other authors, ranging from Mrs. Appleton’s patriotic novel of medieval British life, *Edgar: A National Tale* (1816), to the whole series of Irish novels which Henry Colburn published in 1834 under the heading *Irish National Tales by the Most Distinguished Authors, Now First Collected*. In its later incarnations, the designation “national tale” often explicitly suggests a historical as well as a nationalizing consciousness: the novels of Eyre Evans Crowe, for instance, were published in Colburn’s Irish National Tales series under the two general sub-headings (each encompassing several volumes) of “Today in Ireland” and “Yesterday in Ireland.” In the case of the national tale, at least, the genre appears centered, for part of its life, in the publishing house of Henry Colburn, and might be understood partly as a marketing phenomenon; more work needs to be done on the role of specific publishers in shaping, commissioning, identifying and classifying works of and as examples of a particular genre. At the same time, genre must also be seen as a question for intellectual history. The adverse reactions of James Hogg, John Galt and Thomas McCulloch, for instance, to Scott’s depiction of the Covenanters in *Old Mortality* (1816) took the form of explicit counter-representations of the same events in historical fictions of their own, Hogg’s *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818), Galt’s *Ringhan Gilhaize, or The Covenanters* (1823) and McCulloch’s unpublished *Auld Eppie’s Tales*. Ina Ferris’s essay, “Constructing the Past: *Old Mortality* and the Counterfictions of Galt and Hogg” (note 4, 161–94), extrapolates from such specifics to read the diverging novelistic practices of Scott’s contemporaries as a similarly, if more obliquely, critical response to Scott’s historical novel. Its exploration, at the same time, of a large body of contemporary fiction engaged in allegorizing historical processes and political life aims to provide a new context to rethink the status of the few other “canonical” novelists of this period as well, from Jane Austen (with her apparently “representative” politics) to Thomas Love Peacock (with his apparently “anomalous” use of personification allegory).

⁸ Gary Kelly in his overview of “Village Anecdotes” and “National Tales’ and ‘Historical Romances’” in his *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1780–1830* (London: Longman, 1989), especially 86–98, Ina Ferris (note 4), and Peter Garside (note 4) remain the notable exceptions to this neglect, although the individual women writers working in this genre have been receiving increasing attention, often accompanying a reprinting of their works. See for instance W. J. McCormack and Kim Walker’s excellent introduction to Maria Edgeworth’s *The Absentee* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), and Campbell (note 6), as well as Sandra A. Zagarell, “Narrative of Community: The Identification of a Genre,” *Signs* 13 (1988): 498–527, which is a more general account of nineteenth-century female regionalists. On Edgeworth’s relation to Owenson, see Robert Tracy, “Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan: Legality vs. Legitimacy,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 40 (1985): 1–22.

⁹ This polarization was in part already accepted by Scott’s original public, as Ferris

argues in "Re-Positioning the Novel: *Waverley* and the Gender of Fiction," *Studies in Romanticism* 28 (1989): 291–301. Ironically, it was to some degree reinforced in the initial phases of the recent feminist reassessment of the novelistic canon, given its particular attention to novels which could be read as explicitly feminist or proto-feminist, in their foregrounding of female experience, education and "the woman question." See here Jane Spenser, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers Before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora, 1986), and Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angelica. Women, Writing and Fiction 1660–1800* (London: Virago, 1989). The resulting search for a separate, distinctively female literary tradition (as emphasized, for instance, in otherwise invaluable reprinting programs) runs the danger of ratifying the sexist ghettoization of "lady novelists" in earlier periods and in traditional literary histories, even those interested in female achievement: see for instance the appreciative yet finally trivializing paeon to contemporary female authorship that closes the account of Charlotte Smith in Scott's *Lives of the Novelists* (note 5), 334; the chapters consecrated to female authors in Margaret Oliphant's *The Literary History of England, in the End of the Eighteenth and Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, 3 vols. (London: MacMillan and Co. 1882) and R. Brimley Johnson, *The Women Novelists* (London: W. Collins, 1918).

¹⁰ Interesting confluences of feminist and national concerns are to be found throughout Owenson's work. (Beginning her novelistic career under her maiden name, Sydney Owenson became "Lady Morgan" with her marriage in 1812, subsequently publishing under her married name. Although she is now known and reprinted, if at all, as "Lady Morgan," the focus in this article on her early works, the wish to avoid anachronism, and the wish to avoid the misleading impression that she was innately an "aristocratic" author, has led to her identification here as "Sydney Owenson" as consistently as possible.) See for instance the discussion of the circumstances which give rise to national character and ideal womanhood respectively in the Preface to her *Woman or Ida of Athens* (1809), and to the extended discussion at the end of her *Florence McCarthy: An Irish Tale* (1818) of female authorship (and the writing of the national tale in particular), as women's work at simultaneously its most exalted and most quotidian, its most traditional and most radical. Her last volume, *Woman and her Master* (1840; Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1976) indeed aims at a synthesis of anthropological, sociological and historical perspectives on female oppression since antiquity. See also the juxtaposition of plots involving national identity and female socialization in Mary Brunton's *Discipline* (1815) and Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* (1818), and their implicit linking in Charles Maturin's *Women, or Pour et Contre* (1818), with its agonized wavering between two (secretly related) models of femininity embodied by an English Methodist, locked into a repressive modesty, and by a genial Italian actress (fashioned on Corinne, Armida and perhaps Owenson herself), whose public performances of her erudition and her emotions is problematic as well.

¹¹ Scott's *Waverley* is set "sixty years since," at a last battle for the Highlands which by the time of writing now belongs safely and decisively in and to the past. Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui* (written 1803–1805, published 1809), Charles Maturin's *The Milesian Chief* (1812), Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816), Lady Morgan [Sydney Owenson]'s *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* (1827), and Michael Banim's *The Croppy: A Tale of the Irish Rebellion of 1798* (1828) all depict a far more recent failed rebellion, which if in certain respects analogous to Culloden, proved utterly unlike it in others, including the fact that its suppression (and even the official Act of Union which followed in 1800) by no means marked the end of guerilla fighting. Although a considerable overview literature already surveys the separate novelistic traditions of Ireland and of Scotland, there have been few attempts to consider these national literatures in critical conjunction. The standard treatments of the early Irish novel remain Thomas Flanagan's *The Irish Novelists, 1800–1850* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1959); the first volume (*Von den Anfängen bis zum ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert*) of Klaus Lubbers' two-

volume *Geschichte der irischen Erzählprosa* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1985); Siobhán Marie Kilfeather, "‘Strangers at Home’: Political Fictions by Women in Eighteenth Century Ireland," Ph.D. diss., Princeton Univ., 1989; James M. Cahalan, *The Irish Novel: A Critical History* (Boston: Twayne, 1988); Barry Sloan’s derivative *The Pioneers of Anglo-Irish Fiction 1800–1850* (Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1986), and Patrick Raftery, *Irish Literature in English: The Romantic Period (1789–1850)*, 2 vols. (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press Inc., 1980). For basic overviews of Scottish fiction, see Francis Russell Hart, *The Scottish Novel, From Smollett to Spark* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978); John MacQueen’s *The Enlightenment and Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1989); Ian Campbell, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction; Critical Essays* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, Ltd., 1979); Emma Letley, *From Galt to Douglas Brown: Nineteenth Century Fiction and Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988). For useful accounts of the cultural background to the novel in Ireland, see also W. J. McCormack, *Ascendancy and Tradition in Anglo-Irish Literary History from 1789 to 1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), and the evocative opening chapters of his *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Norman Vance’s synthetic *Irish Literature: A Social History, Tradition, Identity and Difference* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1988); Carole Fabricant, *Swift’s Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1982); Seamus Deane’s "Introduction" to Terry Eagleton et al., *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (Derry, Northern Ireland: Field Day, 1990; rpt. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3–19, and the invaluable collection of literary and cultural documents collected in Seamus Deane, Andrew Carpenter and Jonathan Williams, eds., *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (1991; reprint, New York: Norton, 1991). For the background to the novel in Scotland, see David Daiches’s *The Paradox of Scottish Culture* (note 1); his *Literature and Gentility in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1982); Andrew Hook, ed., *The History of Scottish Literature, Vol. 2, 1660–1800* and Douglas Gifford, ed. *The History of Scottish Literature, Vol. 3, The Nineteenth Century* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Univ. Press, 1987); Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); and N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison, ed. *Scotland in an Age of Improvement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1970). For the overall development of "Britain" as a political entity, see Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536–1966* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974); Tom Nairn, *The Enchanted Glass, Britain and its Monarchy* (London: Radius, 1988) and Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992).

¹² See for instance Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Journey through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724–1726); Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones* (1749); Tobias Smollett, *Roderick Random* (1748) and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771); Thomas Amory, *Memoirs containing the Lives of several Ladies of Great Britain* (1755) and *The Life of John Bunce, Esq.* (1756–1766); Oliver Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World* (1760–1761); Charles Johnstone, *Crysal: or The Adventures of a Guinea* (1761) and *The History of John Juniper* (1781); as well as Elizabeth Hamilton, *Letters of a Hindoo Rajah: written Previous to, and During the Period of His Residence in England* (1796).

¹³ Charlotte Smith, *Desmond: A Novel*, 3 vols. (1792; reprint, New York: Garland, 1974), 1:197. On the relation of *Desmond* and *Waverley*, see Wilbur L. Cross, "An Earlier Waverley," *Modern Language Notes* 17 (1902): 87–88. On the political and literary life of the 1790s, see for instance E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Classes* (1963; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1966), Olivia Smith, *The Politics of Language 1790–1819* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) and Gary Kelly, *The English Jacobin Novel, 1780–1805* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

¹⁴ Charlotte Smith’s *The Old Manor House* (1793) hinges on a similarly virtuosos

contrast of class, cultural and generic perspectives. For the first half of Smith's novel, the plot mode is romantic and gothic: as two lovers, dependents of the despotic mistress of the old manor, attempt endlessly to secure her approval and to find uninterrupted trysting places, the plot rests, again and again, on the minute detailing of architectural space and household timetables. The second half of the novel abruptly sends the hero to fight in the American Revolutionary War, where he becomes almost completely dislocated from the world to which he once belonged, increasingly unsure of the justice of the British cause, falling into captivity among the Indians, trekking alone across much of the North American continent, and returning home to find the manor deserted. Already in the historical gothic of Sophia Lee's 1783 *The Recess*, the persecuted and increasingly distracted protagonists look back from their exile, their West Indian slavery or their frightened proximity to the British campaigns in Ireland, to the protected seclusion of their subterranean childhood hiding place, "recessed" from the pressures of a historical and political world. If Charlotte Smith's plot is in some ways merely an updating and politicizing of this plot, what *The Old Manor House* nonetheless achieves, in its movement from the first to the second half, is the complete relativization of the local hierarchies of the English estate, even while it underlines at the same time the utter inability of the people of the manor, committed as they are to a resolutely local and provincial perspective, to grasp their place in or the effect of their politics on the world.

¹⁵ Although increasingly critical of English attitudes towards Ireland, Maria Edgeworth's Irish novels remain the version of the national tale most interested in the claims of a reformed and reforming Ascendancy, and most reliant on Enlightenment political, sociological and economic theory. Geographically, morally and narratively the most complex of her Irish tales, her 1817 *Ormond* adopts the tripartite structure of *Waverley*'s journey, arranging the three states of society it surveys as a dialectic as well as an evolutionary succession. Here for the first time Edgeworth's utilitarianism is softened, and she shows a sympathetic interest in how traditional societies function as closed cultural economies, staunchly resisting improvement; the novel consistently presents the world of native Irish tradition (King Corny's rural court in the Black Islands) more positively, despite its anachronistic and historically doomed character, than the forces of improvement, Anglicization and modernization, as represented by the corrupt Sir Ulick. In the end, the model figures of synthesis prove to be the Ascendancy, cosmopolitan, and deeply virtuous Annaly family, paradoxically the least rooted in place or in Ireland of all the versions of the Irish aristocracy represented in the novel. Yet as their name suggests, they are meant to play a complex role in unifying and incorporating the different ages and orders of the novel. *Ormond*'s own path of moral education (which leads him from place to place and from one social chronotope to another within Ireland, towards a final Union with Miss Annaly) is similarly an annal of the gradual civilizing of Ireland, which moves past earlier stages of civil society (the virtues and excesses of traditional and hereditary government and the daring, unscrupulous reformism of the Parliamentary era) to reach a synthesis of tradition and perfectibility.

¹⁶ Walter Scott, *Waverley* (1814; reprint, London: Dent, 1969), 63.

¹⁷ Jan West, *The Loyalists, An Historical Novel*, 2 vols. (1812; reprint, Boston: Bradford and Read, 1813), 2:153, 6–7, 2.

¹⁸ Sydney Owenson, *The Novice of St. Domnick* (London: Richard Phillips, 1806), 91, 153.

¹⁹ Indeed Owenson's 1807 *Patriotic Sketches of Ireland* makes use of comparative political set-pieces derived from Smith out of Radcliffe: of two Irish cabins visited on neighbouring estates, one is poor under the abuses of the tenant system, the other prosperous under the influence of agricultural improvement. Yet the parallel comparison of two cities, Sligo and Ballysidore, which opens the first volume, suggests a rather less pointed political program. Ballysidore is by far the older town, and was flourishing until "the vicissitudes of civil dissension" force its inhabitants to flee along the shore, where their temporary encampment grows into the city of Sligo. By the

beginning of the nineteenth century, “Sligo is now a large opulent and commercial town, while its parent city is one of the most ruinous and wretched villages in the province.” Sydney Owenson, *Patriotic Sketches of Ireland, Written in Connaught*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Philips, 1807), 2:7. Despite the political circumstances surrounding the respective fates of the two towns, however, the moral Owenson draws from the story is not political but more generally philosophical: “The vicissitudes of those two little places present us an epitome of the fate of all earthly states. The routine of all human, as of all natural events, knows no variability in its cause or its effects; and the rise, climateric [sic], decline, and fall of every empire, are but the counterpart of that which has preceded it” (1:8–9). Owenson herself will later condemn this impersonal, cyclical view of historical process, along with the exoticism and antiquarianism which characterize her own first three novels. It is as if, in her early works, Owenson has imitated Smith’s use of a travelling plot to launch political observations, but has not yet understood the full political implications of her literary and formal choices, nor how Smith’s Jacobin and feminist politics fit together.

²⁰ The national tale’s allegorical marriage plot has important antecedents (see for instance Jonathan Swift’s “The Story of the Injured Lady, Being a True Picture of Scotch Perfidy, Irish Poverty and English Partiality,” written probably in 1707, but published posthumously in 1746; and the juxtaposition, in Frances Burney’s 1796 *Camilla* and Amelia Opie’s 1804 *Adeline Mowbray*, of Irish, Scottish and English suitors, each embodying different national “characteristics”). Several national tale writers also work simultaneously with a “fostering” plot, a related national allegory which draws even more strongly on familial metaphors to describe the formation of national and British consciousness. As I have described elsewhere (“The Voice of the Past: Anxieties of Cultural Transmission in Post-Enlightenment Europe,” Ph.D. diss., Stanford Univ., 1990, chap. 7), this fostering plot derives from a motif central to European myth and folktale: an aristocratic infant is exchanged at birth, raised by a peasant nurse as her own, and finally, leaving the peasant milieu behind, is restored to its aristocratic birthright, usually also marrying into another aristocratic family. Ubiquitous in eighteenth-century Britain as a staple both of the picaresque and of a new bourgeois literature (see for instance Henry Fielding’s 1749 *Tom Jones*, John Home’s 1757 *Douglas*, Clara Reeve’s 1777 *The Old English Baron*, and Susannah Minifie Gunning’s 1796 *Delves: A Welsh Tale*), the plot is both intensified and inverted by the early nineteenth century advent of a folklorically based nationalism. In Maria Edgeworth’s 1804 *Ennui* and Susan Ferrier’s 1824 *The Inheritance*, “aristocratic” heroes or heroines actually prove the offspring of their peasant wetnurses—and this denouement, furthermore, is as happy as the reverse one would have been fifty years earlier. Through their class demotion, the “aristocrats” are able to understand for the first time their affective kinship with “the people.” The path from the palatial home back to the nurse’s cottage thus replicates the passage of the absentee heroes of the national tales back from the metropolises of Europe to their native land, with the nurse/mother serving both as the real love interest of the plot, and the real national initiator. Like the marriage-plot national tale itself, however, this variant comes under serious challenge in the 1810s and 20s: where Edgeworth’s *Ennui* extolled the “fostering system” for creating Ireland’s sole cross-class, cross-ethnic and cross-religious solidarity, subsequent fictions dealing with Britain’s external and internal empires—Mary Bute Sherwood’s *Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814) and *Little Lucy and her Dyah* (1823); the Meg Merrilees plot in Scott’s 1815 *Guy Mannering*; William Godwin’s 1818 *Mandeville*—suggest that it also produces a confusion and crisis of national loyalties, and thus risks inducing its own kinds of mental illness or schizophrenia.

²¹ In Owenson’s footsteps, see Mrs. Appleton’s 1816 *Edgar: A National Tale*, a “medieval” novel whose didactic celebration of British nationality is buttressed with footnotes on “medieval” customs, eating habits and even elaborate justifications for its own occasional anachronisms. For the logical extension of the footnoting impulse, see the later editions of Frances Peck’s 1818 *The Life and Acts of the Renowned, Chivalrous*

Edmund of Erin, commonly called Emun Ac Knuck, or Ned of the Hills. An Irish Historical Romance of the Seventh Century Founded on Facts: Blended with a Brief and Pithy Epitome of the Origin, Antiquity and History of Ireland with Copious Notes, Critical and Historical. "It is a singular, but universally admitted fact," Peck argues, "that all well educated Irishmen are acquainted with the history of every country except their own" (*The Life and Acts*, 3rd ed. [Dublin: Samuel J. Macken, 1842], 164). But what begins, in the attempt to correct this ignorance, merely as exceptionally heavy footnoting of the political history of Ireland, the inferiority of English to Irish intellectual traditions, or the parallels between Hibernian and Greek epic cultures eventually turn into chapters in their own right, which repeatedly appear out of nowhere to block the action of the plot for dozens of pages at a time.

²² *The Wild Irish Girl* itself successfully synthesizes the main nationalist, antiquarian, and local color genres of the eighteenth century. As Owenson (note 19) notes the following year, she formulated "a national novel, spun from those materials which the ancient and modern history, manners, and habits of my country supplied . . . To blend the imaginary though probable incident with the interesting fact, to authenticate the questioned refinement of ancient habits, by the testimony of living modes . . . such was the prospectus (1:vii-ix). Owenson is also the author of the 1805 *Twelve Original Hibernian Melodies*—and indeed her footnotes to *The Wild Irish Girl* explicitly insert it into the wave of nationalist antiquarian research and controversy which followed James MacPherson's 1760 *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (especially Charlotte Brooke's 1784 *Reliques of Irish Poetry*, the 1786 *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* of Joseph Walker, whose advice in writing *The Wild Irish Girl* Owenson will explicitly acknowledge in her *Memoirs*). Owenson draws as well on an existing tradition of "antiquarian" and Ossianic novels (William Godwin's 1784 *Imogen: A Pastoral Romance, From the Ancient British*, Regina Maria Roche's 1796 *Children of the Abbey*); on didactic works about rural and regional life (the oeuvre of Hannah More, George Crabbe and Maria Edgeworth, which simultaneously informed Elizabeth Hamilton's 1808 *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*); on that masterpiece of eighteenth-century Irish surrealism, Thomas Amory's 1756–1766 *Life of John Bunclie* (from whose long travel descriptions, often double-footnoted, Owenson perhaps derives not only her footnoted descriptive style, but also her occasional Menippean wit about her own "scholarly" apparatus) and on picaresque, Enlightenment and sentimental travel writing, fictional and journalistic (Defoe, Fielding, Smollett, Mrs. Radcliffe, Arthur Young and the controversial stock-taking of Samuel Johnson's 1775 *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*). The comparison of Owenson's fiction with a late eighteenth-century forerunner of the "national tale," Frances Brooke's 1769 *The History of Emily Montague* (now known primarily as the "first Canadian novel") makes clear both the national tale's generic origins in eighteenth-century travel fiction, and the structural innovations it introduces. An epistolary novel like *The Wild Irish Girl*, *Emily Montague* is set in 1760s Québec in the wake of the British conquest (which appears primarily as an exciting recent event, rather than as a political struggle), and presents the final choice between places as a purely economic one, without overt political inflections. The novel's main hero and two heroines come out to Canada from England, fall in love, and write enthusiastic (if occasionally puzzled or homesick) letters home about the Canadian landscape, French Canadian society, and their glimpses of the interestingly exotic customs of Indian life. While they find Canada agreeable, they also remain acutely aware of their distance from the familiar and familial culture they grew up in; this, and the lack of chances for social advancement in the colonies make the novel's denouement (in which a family crisis precipitates the permanent return to England of all main characters) a happy one. Early nineteenth-century national tales of Ireland and Scotland, by contrast, weigh the odds and the outcome heavily in the opposite direction.

²³ Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), *O'Donnel. A national tale* 3 vols. (1814; reprint, London: Henry Colburn, 1815), 1:20. Owenson comments repeatedly on the problem of tourist and traveller knowledge throughout her non-fiction travelogues, from her

1807 *Patriotic Sketches of Ireland* to her 1821 *Italy*, and the issue persists as one of the motivating concerns of the national tale as a genre, as in the work of Scottish and Irish writers more generally. When the hero of Elizabeth Hamilton's 1800 *Memoirs of the Modern Philosophers* reports of his "Tour Through Scotland," his enlightened view of Scotland (as a country in fact deeply Christian and civilized rather than in any way exotic or barbarian) has been made possible by his choice not to use his letters of introduction, but rather to observe the country for himself. Maria Edgeworth's 1803 *Ennui* lampoons the pretensions of first-time visitors who publish Tours or Views of an Ireland they do not at all understand. Indeed, from *O'Donnel* to John Banim's 1828 *The Anglo-Irish of the Nineteenth Century*, the national tale will discuss the question of touring with or without a guide-book, arguing that such travel aids risk blinding the traveller to all save the approved sights. For other contemporary accounts of misinterpreting travellers to the peripheries, see for instance Oliver Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World* (1760–1761; reprint, London: Everyman, 1934), 90–93; the veritable catalogue of misinterpreting travellers to Ireland in Letter 14 of Mrs. Wood's *Letters from the Irish Highlands* (London: John Murray, 1824), 85–87, as well as William Combe, *The Tour of Doctor Prosody in Search of the Antique and Picturesque* (London: Matthew Iley, 1821). On post-Enlightenment travel writing more generally, see Carole Fabricant's "The Literature of Domestic Tourism and the Public Consumption of Private Property" in ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown, *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 254–75; Esther Moir, *The Discovery of Britain: The English Tourists 1540–1840* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964); Charles L. Batten, Jr. *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978); Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1983); Malcolm Andrew, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain 1760–1800* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1989); Deidre Lynch, "'Beating the Track of the Alphabet': Samuel Johnson, Tourism, and the ABCs of Modern Authority," *ELH* 57 (1990): 357–405 and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

²⁴ Morgan, *O'Donnel* (note 23), 1:87, 163. The satirical account of the misprisions of the touristic group, absorbed with themselves, is taken up again in her 1835 *The Princess, or The Beguine* which retells the *O'Donnel/Florence Macarthy* plot in a setting of Belgian, rather than Irish nationalism; at one point British tourists visiting a Belgian gallery seem able to recognize only the already-known names of Italian artists, and are thus oblivious to the different aesthetic of Flemish art.

²⁵ In one footnote, therefore, Owenson hastens to make clear to her English reader that although for the purposes of plot the fictional travellers decide to stop at "a new inn on the seacoast" for the night, "it may be perhaps necessary to inform the English tourist, who may be induced to visit the Giant's Causeway by the coasting road from Belfast to Bush Mills, that *no such inn at present exists*, as is here mentioned." Morgan, *O'Donnel*, 1:97.

²⁶ Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), *Florence Macarthy: An Irish Tale* (1818; reprint, London: Henry Colburn, 1834), 6–7, 20–21. In parallel and in contrast, see the political bifurcation over a discussion of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* in Elizabeth Hamilton's anti-Jacobin *Memoirs of the Modern Philosophers*, 3 vols. (1800; reprint, New York: Garland, 1974), 1:190–98. Indeed, Hamilton's novel argues more generally that Jacobin attitudes towards reading, quotation and literary property metonymically point up the shortcomings of their political philosophy as well. Owenson's exegetical duel over the political meaning of the ruin probably has its ultimate source in Richard Hurd's 1759 "Dialogue III on the Golden Age of Queen Elizabeth between the Honourable Robert Digby, Dr. Arbuthnot and Mr. Addison," in which a joint visit to the ruins of Kenilworth Castle induces melancholy nostalgia in Dr. Arbuthnot but a righteous political anger in Addison. "There [said DR. ARBUTHNOT] is scarce an object in view, that doth not revive the memory of some distinguishing character of that age, which may justify

such veneration. ALAS! interrupted Mr. ADDISON, and what can these objects call to mind but the memory of barbarous manners and a despotic government?" *Letters on Chivalry and Romance with the Third Elizabethan Dialogue*, ed. Edith J. Morley (London: Henry Frowde, 1911), 47.

²⁷ Morgan, *Florence MacCarthy* (note 26), 32.

²⁸ Morgan, *Florence MacCarthy*, 46.

²⁹ Morgan, *Florence MacCarthy*, 289–90. At the same time, Owenson's sense of cultural "overcasting," from *The Novice of St. Domnick* onwards, forms one conceptual foundation at once of the early nineteenth-century historical gothic, the fantastic and of the proto-science fiction concerned with time travel. In Charles Maturin's *Melmoth*, for instance, the interlarding of disparate times and places finds a concrete figure of literal but reverse "overcasting," as an embroidered rendition of a Christian scene is "repaired" and updated, literally embroidered over in such a way that its Christian content is suppressed and its latent classical or pagan resonances reemerge. *Melmoth the Wanderer: A Tale* (1820; reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 495–96.

³⁰ Morgan, *Florence MacCarthy*, 39.

³¹ This dystopic rewriting of the national tale marriage plot may well begin in a subplot of "The Uses of Adversity," a story which forms part of "Peregrine Puzzlebrain's *Tales of My Landlady* (1818). There, an Irish estate agent, Mr. M'Shauglin, travels to London on business, wins Lady Muggins, rich widow of an "eminent pork butcher," and brings her back to Ireland. "But almost immediately after their arrival in this country, mutual discontent took place of matrimonial harmony. Her Ladyship, proud of her wealth, her title, and her connections among, as she phrased it, the most *substantialist* and *toppingest* people in the city of *Lunnon*, found every thing in our poor little island insupportable. She declared, indeed, on her third day's residence in it, that it was the most barbarous, outlandish place on the face of the *yarsal* globe; and as to the people, she was sure that they had not half of the politeness of some *selvidges* which she had read about in history. As the *amor patriae* is M'Shauglin's weak side, he defended his native land with more spirit than temper; and the consequence has been a succession of quarrels, which have nearly extinguished her love for her husband, as well as rendered their lives very uncomfortable" (*Tales of My Landlady*, 3 vols. [London: M. Iley, 1818], 1:252–53). Tellingly, of course, it is Lady Muggins, not her Irish husband, who utters a series of "bulls" (the "comical" mistakes in speaking English so often and disparagingly attributed to the Irish) in the very act of denouncing Irish savagery. (On the politics of "bulls" as a form of anti-Irish slur, see Richard and Maria Edgeworth's 1802 *Essay on Irish Bulls*, as well as Kilfeather [note 11], chap. 1). Susan Ferrier offers a fuller, Scottish version of the same basic story. At the beginning of her 1818 *Marriage*, a young English heiress elopes to Scotland with a Highland nobleman. Prepared for "romantic" Scotland, Juliana proves unprepared for Scottish weather, food, speech, dress and pastimes. After the marriage founders, Juliana's twin daughters are raised apart, one as "English" and the other as "Scottish." The Scottish daughter eventually comes to London, is rebuffed by mother and twin, and retires with her husband to the Scotland they both love. Thus the mother's comic inability to appreciate the values of Scottish life is offset by a daughter who freely and loyally chooses her native Scotland over the blandishments of the metropole. Ferrier's *Destiny: or The Chieftain's Daughter* (1831) opens on an even more elaborately failed marriage of irreconcilable national opposites. The Chief of Glenroy visits London, marries an aristocratic English widow, and removes with her to the Highlands, where their national differences prove insuperable, and the marriage ends in separation. (Indeed they are quite literally allergic to each other's worlds: she suffers from rheumatism she attributes to the Scottish climate, while her husband suffers from gout which he attributes to his single, injurious visit to London). The rest of the novel contrasts the lives of their two daughters, the sensible Scottish Edith and the faithless English Florinda. Although, like previous national tales, *Destiny* is concerned with local loyalties, its almost total avoidance of the usual local color and its

picture, closer to Austin than to Ossian, of the genteel pursuits of the Highland nobility, marks one terminus of the national tale back into the novel of female education from which it in part originated. Regina Maria Roche's 1824 *The Tradition of the Castle, or Scenes in the Emerald Isle* offers a parallel, and finally equally conventional, elaboration of national tale tropes. The novel begins with a critical account of the 1802 Act of Union, opening with a parliamentarian's account of his support for the Bill—and his announcement he will be moving his family to England, to live off of their Irish rents. Becoming dissolute, he commits suicide, leaving his son to return to Ireland, to spend three volumes fighting for the restoration of his estates and for the novel's culminating romantic Union with the allegorically named Eveleen Erin. With its deliberate delay between the declaration, by parliamentary fiat, of official political union and the actual, affective union, the structure of the novel might seem to open up new political vistas for the national tale. In fact, the critical perspective which the novel establishes at the beginning vanishes quickly beneath endless plot complications, and is utterly gone by the final Union. Although within the national tale itself, the trope of the celebratory and solving cross-cultural marriage thus evolves into a national relationship shown to be fraught with difficulties, the British intermarriage continues to be evoked in other forms of political discussion as an allegory of trans-national unions. See, for instance, its appearance in the introduction to Mrs. Wood's *Letters from the Irish Highlands* (London: John Murray, 1824) where it suggests a practical method of increasing international understanding. "As the improvement of Ireland necessarily depends upon England, the first step towards that improvement must be, to make our English brethren acquainted with the true state of this portion of the empire. Any Englishman who has travelled in Ireland, every Irishman who has visited England, must have been struck by the mutual want of information prevailing among the inhabitants of the sister islands. It was remarked by an English lady, who, since her marriage with an Irish landed proprietor, contrives to reside part of every year in her own country, that she made it her business, in Ireland, to correct the erroneous opinions of her friends with regard to England, and in England, to set them right respecting Ireland" (xv–xvi). The figure of the transnational marriage remains similarly central to early colonial literature in Canada, where from William "Tiger" Dunlop's evocation of a Scotch-Irish marriage in his 1847 *Recollections of the American War 1812–1814* to Catharine Parr Traill's 1850 *Canadian Crusoes* it represents the hope of ethnic rapprochement.

³² Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* 3 vols. (1811; reprint, Delmar: Scholar's Facsimiles, 1981), 186–87. (For one source of the trope of bifurcated identity, see ch. twenty-nine of Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui*, in which the former Lord Glenthorn, renouncing an illegitimate birthright to become an ordinary citizen finds himself still "apt to mistake between my old and my new habits," for which "people stared at me as if I was mad." *Castle Rackrent and Ennui*, ed. Marilyn Butler [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992], 293.) Already in *Woman: or Ida of Athens* (1809), a trans-cultural love story set amid the Greek-Turkish struggle over Greece, Owenson experiments with the grafting of national tale plot into an exotic locale. Despite the cultural and religious relativism of Owenson's own fiction, her novels help to establish part of the plot repertoire for the nineteenth century "Biblical" novel. See for instance John Gibson's Lockhart's 1821 *Valerius: A Roman Story*, a historical tale very much rooted in the national tale plot, and which functions in many ways as a sort of *Missionary* in reverse: a Briton arrives in the imperial capital of Rome, watches Christians being martyred in the Coliseum, falls in love with a Christian maiden who converts him to the new religion, and with her escapes Roman persecution by successfully fleeing back to Britain, turning his back on Rome forever. For an Evangelical refusal, on the other hand, both of the cosmopolitanizing implications of *The Missionary* and of the marriage-centered national tale plot in general, see Mary Sherwood's 1821 *History of George Desmond*, the confessions of a repentant Anglo-Indian who strays from Christian virtue under the sensory, sensual and sexual blandishments of India. Soon after his arrival in Bengal, Desmond attends a feast given by an Anglo-Indian

debauchee who has “gone native”; disoriented by his first tastes of Indian foods, the unfamiliar scent of Indian perfumes and the spectacle of Indian ceremony, Desmond too allows himself to be seduced by an evil “nautch girl,” sets up house with her, and “goes native” himself. Although she eventually bears a child, he finally deserts her in order to marry the virtuous Englishwoman he loved in his youth, and attempts thereby to return to white society and to Christian ways. But his past continues to follow him, as the nautch girl finds his wife out, confronts her with Desmond’s impurities, and finally poisons her. In the colonial context of India, Sherwood argues, the alliance with an allegorical national character is necessarily sinful, unhappy and ultimately poisonous, just as the more general rapprochement with native culture can be achieved only at the price of betraying the values of the Christian religion and the code of British civilization.

³³ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820; reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), 93, 103. Jane West’s 1812 depiction of the English Civil War employs a similar rhetorical bifurcation: “While the fanatics and levellers alternately gained the ascendancy . . . [t]hat mighty Parliament . . . as different parties prevailed in it, countenanced the most rigorous coercion or permitted the wildest anarchy . . . that strange combination of talent and extravagance, of praying demagogues and aspiring religionists” (West [note 17] 2:220–21.) See also James Hogg’s *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818; reprint, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976), in which the contradictions of the local civil war being waged in the Lowlands, in 1685, between the Covenanters and Claverhouse’s army are literally embodied by the elderly servant Nanny Elshinder. Apparently half-deranged, she accompanies her work with a continual flow of hymns, psalm fragments and muttered reminiscences, which function as a fragmentary history of the entire Covenanter movement. At the same time, her alternation between a public avowal of “prelatic principles” and the Covenanter revenge songs she sings to herself make her mistress initially uncertain of her true loyalties. It is her most dramatic moment of mental bifurcation—her distracted, yet verbatim reproduction of a cross-examination “in which two distinct voices were imitated,” the voice of the military interrogator alternating with the voice of a woman suspected of Covenanter principles—that proves to hold the key to her true loyalties. For what she is reproducing is the traumatic memory of her own interrogation, in the course of which she was branded on the cheek and had her ears cropped. “I have suffered for that cause *in this same body*,” as she later puts it, showing her scars to prove her principles, “for there is but one half of my bone and my flesh here” (46, 99).

³⁴ The notion that some forms of mental derangement can be traced to (the delayed effects of) a historical causation helps to create a new mode of psychological fiction that leads both towards and away from the realist novel. In William Godwin’s 1818 *Mandeville* (written under the influence of O’Donnell and Maturin’s Irish novels, although it inverts their sense of perpetrators and victims in the Irish-English struggles), the title character’s traumatic trace memory of the 1641 Irish massacre of Ulster Protestants, during which his own parents were murdered, surfaces again fourteen years later when he is falsely accused, during the first phases of the Civil War, of disloyalty to the Crown; together, the two traumas, old and new, cause a complete mental collapse. John Galt’s 1822 *The Entail* and John Gibson Lockhart’s 1824 *History of Matthew Wald* transpose Godwin, in turn, into Scotland; beginning with the national traumas of the Darien Expedition, the Union and Culloden, they build the rest of their plots—tragic disinheritances, disasters, insanity—upon the buried legacy of those events. All of these novels function by holding in suspension a foregrounded psychological narrative and an implicit historical chronology which allows the reader to date plot developments and thus to explain the source of the characters’s mental states. Other contemporary novels continue to work with the notion of characterological schizophrenia introduced by Owenson and Maturin’s novels of the 1810s, at the price, often, of a kind of generic schizophrenia as well. Thus John Banim’s 1828 exploration of the hyphenated and divided cultural identity of *The Anglo-Irish of the Nineteenth Century* begins as a

reconstructed national tale about the apparently hegemonic Protestant Ascendancy, using the education and return to Ireland of an Anglo-Irish absentee to analyse at length a neurotic micro-politics of cultural denial, self-loathing and inferiority complexes. In the second volume, it uneasily shifts gear into a Waverleyesque historical novel plot whose macro-political events—hostage takings, meetings with guerilla chiefs and foiled uprisings—are meant to serve as backdrop and impetus for its hero's change of political attitude, but which instead, in the wake of the detailed psychological analysis that has gone before, seems both mechanical and desperately anxious to lay to rest the suggestions of permanent instability raised by its own opening analysis. Such generic tensions between the national tale and the historical novel will remain foundational to “realism” as late as Arnold Bennett's 1908 *The Old Wives Tale*, which marks and links its movements back and forth between its sections, allegorical protagonists, places and generic prototypes (Constance, the stasis of Bursley and of the national tale, with its belief in an accreted knowledge of place, and Sophia, the cataclysms of late-nineteenth century Paris and of the historical novel, with its quest for wisdom through bitter experience) by moments of historical violence that the characters witness, internalize and repress. These traumas then reappear in them belatedly but legibly as lingering medical symptoms, especially strokes, one even evident as partial facial paralysis, so that—as in Owenson and Maturin's concretizations of uneven development and civil war—part of the personality continues to move forward in historical time, while the rest remains frozen in place.

³⁵ As the name Armida indicates, Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* is an intertext as important for this novel as Tacitus's *Annals* will be for Galt: it is mirrored in many specifics of plot, in the epic emphasis on two polarized forces fighting over a Holy Land (a struggle which gives way at moments to love between individual warriors trapped on opposite sides) and in its tragic sense of the cataclysmic, incomprehensible character of even “Holy” wars. Tasso's love story in many ways challenges the Manichean religious and heroic economy of the epic form; the final reconciliation between Armida and Rinaldo, after the defeat of Armida's sorcery, amid the wreckage and “deliverance” of Jerusalem, suggests (despite Rinaldo's vague hope of Armida's eventual conversion) a triumph of non-Christian alliances just at the moment when the pagan forces at large are defeated. At the same time, as a love triumphant, it provides (along with Godfrey's prayer in the newly conquered Temple) one of the poem's scanty elements of positive closure, amid the apocalyptic destruction of the city at large. In Maturin's *Milesian Chief*, in contrast, a private happiness cannot be achieved at all when nations break—the effect of public cataclysms in this novel is precisely to destroy simultaneously the private sphere as a separable place, and the heroic code of Tasso's world. Here, indeed, it is neither Armida's sorcery nor even the machinations of her relatives which pose the real threat to Connal's cause; it is doomed instead by something much more impersonal, a new, institutional reorganization of power which cannot even be embodied allegorically, and which renders obsolete all the local royalties of Connal's forces.

³⁶ Charles Maturin, *The Milesian Chief, A Romance*, 4 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1812), 1:181–85. Lady Caroline Lamb's 1816 *Glenarvon* will rewrite *The Milesian Chief* as a scandalously autobiographical roman-à-clêf rather than as an intellectual summary of a historical moment: she herself will become the Armida figure, as Calantha, and Lord Byron, the Connal figure, as Glenarvon. Foregrounding her own seduction and desertion (accompanied by harp music and sublime Irish landscape), Lamb ends up turning the *Milesian Chief*'s build-up to the 1798 Uprising into mere background action, with the actual rebellion come and gone in the space between two chapters.

³⁷ Morgan, *O'Donnel* (note 23), 1:vii.

³⁸ For the historicizing eighteenth century reception of Homer, see Aberdeen classicist Thomas Blackwell, *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (London: n.p., 1735), Robert Wood, *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (London: H. Hughes, 1775), Kirsti Simonsuuri, *Homer's Original Genius: Eighteenth Century Notions of the Early Greek Epic (1688–1798)* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ.

Press, 1979) and Margaret Mary Rubel, *Savage and Barbarian: Historical Attitudes in the Criticism of Homer and Ossian in Britain, 1760–1800* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1978).

³⁹ Thomas Blackwell (note 38) (whose socio-historical portrait of Homer arguably initiated modern notions of literary history) subscribed to a similar theory about the connection between historical crisis and (epic) literary form. “It was when Greece was ill-settled, when Violence prevailed in many Places, amidst the Confusion of the wandering Tribes, that *Homer* produced his immortal Poem: And it was when *Italy* was torn in Pieces . . . in the Heat of the Struggle and Bloodshed of the *Guelfe* and *Ghibelline* Parties, that *Dante* withdrew from his Country, and made the strongest Draught of Men and their Passions, that stands in the Records of modern Poetry. The Author of the *Eneid* lived in a Time of Disorder and publick Ruin . . . And . . . it was when unhappy *Britain* was plunged in all the Calamities of *Civil Rage*, that our high-spirited Poem took its Birth” (65–66). Owenson argues, in contrast, that it is only in the wake of historical upheavals that new literary modes can be consolidated: hence, she concludes, the exhaustion of forms in her own epoch, “an era of transition [in which] changes moral and political are in progress” (Preface, Lady Morgan, *Dramatic Scenes from Real Life*, 2 vols. [London: Saunders and Otley, 1833], 1:v).

⁴⁰ See here Ina Ferris’s helpful account ([note 4], especially the introduction and chap. 3) of the initially critical, even slighting reception of *Waverley*. By 1825, in contrast, William Hazlitt’s *Spirit of the Age* essay on “Walter Scott” could open with the flat declaration that Scott is the most popular writer of the age.

⁴¹ Even beyond its heyday, the national tale will remain a repertoire of identifiable plot bits, linked to an equally recurring set of political concerns. The anonymous 1845 *The Ford Family in Ireland*, for instance, set in the wake of the 1798 uprising, is a tale of collective national comparison and discovery à la O’Donnell and *The Absentee*, crossed with the kidnapping/secret society/conversion plot of *Waverley* and *The Anglo-Irish*, and ending in the execution of the hero as in *The Milesian Chief*.

⁴² The gothic novel may in fact be the first fictional genre which (at least from Radcliffe onwards) habitually performed acts of literary homage and self-legitimation in the form of its epigraphs, inserting itself into literary tradition at the beginning of every chapter. It is also, from its outset, linked not only to an Ossianic interest in the synchronization of voice and landscape, but also to the specific topographies and traditionalisms of the peripheries: see for instance Sophia Lee’s 1783–1785 *The Recess* (whose action moves, in its final volume, both to Ireland with Essex’s army, and then to a remote Scottish castle), Radcliffe’s 1789 *Castles of Athlin*, and Regina Maria Roche’s 1796 *Children of the Abbey* (in which characters circulate continually between different sublime peripheries, from Northern Wales to Northern Ireland to the West Coast of Scotland and back again). On the differences between annal, chronicle and the narrative histories of the nineteenth century, see Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian,” in *Studies in Historiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 1–39; and Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 1–25.

⁴³ Lady Morgan, *The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys, A National Tale* (1827; reprint, London: Pandora, 1988), 442.

⁴⁴ Morgan, *The O’Briens* (note 43), 241–42.

⁴⁵ Morgan, *The O’Briens*, 243.

⁴⁶ Morgan, *The O’Briens*, 232.

⁴⁷ John Galt, *The Entail: or the Lairds of Grippy* (1822; reprint, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 61, 31.

⁴⁸ Much of Galt’s subsequent fiction also uses “autobiographical” narratives to explore the formation of political ideologies, life stories and thus narrating voices. The narrator of his 1823 *Ringhan Gilhaize* thus narrates three generations of his family’s Covenanting activity to explain his own sense of religious mission (culminating with his assassination

of Lord Claverhouse on the last page of the novel), even while his increasingly obsessive and apocalyptic tone reveals the narrowing of historical understanding which actually separates the last generation of Covenanters from the ancestors they seek to emulate and revenge. *The Last of the Lairds* (1826) uses a gradual shift in narrative voice to allegorize a comparable shift in contemporary political alliances: the changing attitude of the intelligentsia towards aristocratic privilege as it is threatened by an even more reprehensible force, the new money gained through imperial exploitation. And Galt's last novels explore the way self-understanding becomes world-view: *Laurie Todd, or The Settlers in the Woods* (1830) and *Bogie Corbet, or the Emigrants* (1831) contrast "American" and United Empire Loyalist attitudes towards the colonization of North America, while *The Member* and *The Radical* (both 1832) present the background to both sides of the parliamentary Reform debates. The panoramic scope of his novels as an ensemble, and yet their nuanced attention to the circumstances which shape consciousness make Galt arguably the most important (and certainly most innovative) political novelist of his epoch. His influence on subsequent Scottish fiction, however (beginning with David Macbeth Moir's 1828 *Life of Mausie Wauch, Tailor at Dalkeith*, dedicated to Galt and itself a major influence on Victorian "Kailyard" fiction) is primarily as a sentimental annalist rather than as a political satirist. The best work on Galt, (which focuses on the early novels and comes to different conclusions than those arrived at here) remains Keith M. Costain, "Theoretical History and the Novel: The Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *ELH* 43 (1976): 342–65, although see also *John Galt: Reappraisals*, ed. Elizabeth Waterson (Guelph: Univ. of Guelph Press, 1985).

⁴⁹ John Galt, *The Provost* (1822: reprint, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), 86.

⁵⁰ Many of the now-classic "post-colonial" texts (Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, to name only some obvious examples) unwittingly share political and formal concerns with Romantic works like *The Milesian Chief*, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, *The Entail*, and *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, themselves obsessed with questions of imperialism and colonial formation. It seems not at all fanciful, indeed, to speak of magical realism in connection with gothic alternatives to the emerging realism of the early nineteenth century, or of post-colonial historical novels (themselves conceived, of course, in complicated relation to the foundationalist, Scott-influenced, "realist" historical novels of their respective national literary traditions) in conjunction with the annalistic historical allegories of the Romantic period, in comparable reaction to the *Waverley* novels.

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