Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790–1870

MARY JEAN CORBETT

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ALLEGORIES OF UNION IN IRISH AND ENGLISH WRITING, 1790–1870

In this book, Mary Jean Corbett explores fictional and non-fictional representations of Ireland's relationship with England throughout the nineteenth century. Through postcolonial and feminist theory, she considers how cross-cultural contact is negotiated using tropes of marriage and family, and demonstrates how familial rhetoric sometimes works to sustain, sometimes to contest, the structures of colonial inequality. Analyzing novels by Edgeworth, Owenson, Gaskell, Kingsley, and Trollope as well as writings by Burke, Carlyle, Engels, Arnold, and Mill, Corbett argues that the colonizing imperative for "reforming" the Irish in an age of imperial expansion constitutes a largely unrecognized but crucial element in the rhetorical project of English nation-formation. By situating her readings within the varying historical and ideological contexts that shape them, she revises the critical orthodoxies surrounding colonial discourse that currently prevail in Irish and English studies, and offers a fresh perspective on important aspects of Victorian culture.

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Politics, History, and the Family from Edgeworth to Arnold

MARY JEAN CORBETT

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My family on both sides belonged to the toiling and dying types who made it over to America.

And once in America, people divided once again: you could say they became the poor and the rich. The losers and winners. The artists and scientists. If they were countries, they'd be Ireland and England.

Carolyn See, *Dreaming: Good Luck and Hard Times in America*

Of the numbers who study, or at least who read history, how few derive any advantage from their labours!

Maria Edgeworth, Preface to *Castle Rackrent*

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Introduction

In Seamus Heaney's allegorical lyric, "Act of Union" (1975), the coupling of England and Ireland issues in the conception of "an obstinate fifth column," "the heaving province" of Ulster.[1] Identifying the masculine position with English imperial power, the poem links the colonized Irish land with the feminine, carrying a fetal body that will never be born into separateness; even as it marks the geopolitical site "where our past has grown" (8), Ulster is itself a product of the past that has survived into the present, cleaving to the mother from whom it cannot be divided. With a heart that throbs like "a wardrum / Mustering force" (21–22) and "ignorant little fists" (23) that "Beat at your borders" (24), this angry child of Union punishes its mother from within and threatens its father, too, "across the water" (25). The "legacy" (13) of force and violence, the poem suggests, is more of the same: the crossing of two cultures under conditions of imperial masculine dominance and colonized feminine subordination produce only a bitter fruit, with Union's offspring – both a part of and apart from its parents – signifying Union's enduring brutality.

Now, more than thirty years after the renewal of "the troubles," it may be difficult to read the "legacy" of the Act of Union in any other way. The terms that Heaney's poem deploys, however, should make feminist readers suspicious – not of the fact of conquest the poem describes, but of the sexualized and gendered binary it superimposes on the colonial relation, and of its attendant use of rape as a metaphor of imperial exploitation. When I teach *Heart of Darkness*, I must often remind students that to equate the Euroconquest of Africa with heterosexual rape is to engage rhetorically in a version of the act they liberally claim to condemn. Similarly, Heaney's poem aims to demystify, to reveal that the heart of an immense darkness is beating still, not just in London, but in Dublin, Derry, and Belfast as well. Yet we might better understand the gendered rhetoric of the poem as itself a product of

English discursive violence, another legacy of the rhetoric of empire as it has been institutionalized in ways of speaking and writing, learning and teaching.

Does Heaney's extended use of this gendered imperial metaphor suggest that he is thoroughly "possessed by . . . the atavistic myth he deplores," as Elizabeth Butler Cullingford implies?[2] Returning to the poem, I find that my interpretation of it depends on how I locate the speaker of the piece, and how I locate myself as a reader of it. The Latin Americanist Doris Sommer has made the point, in another colonial context, that "differences in evaluating nationalism" – or in evaluating the textual history of nation-formation – "may have less to do with which position is right or wrong than with the positionality one occupies."[3] In this instance, because the "I" of "Act of Union" speaks for and as England ("the tall kingdom over your shoulder" [9]), a female reader may well see herself positioned by the poem as the passive, all-too-female Irish body, raped and pregnant. And as a feminist reader embodied and culturally situated as a woman, this position, of course, is one I am inclined to refuse and resist in reading or writing the colonial relation, in that it reproduces that which it seeks to critique. Nations and territories are not women to a feminist reader, however loudly a masculinist speaker might proclaim them to be. My positionality would lead me to envision the scene quite differently.

Yet I also notice, on rereading, that the lyric voice marks Heaney's speaker as English, and thus as "imperially / Male" (15–16), which complicates things, given the poet's own divergent cultural locations. Recognizing the poetic speaker as male without adequately accounting for his Englishness, I have erred both in mistaking the "I" for the poet and in assigning the lyric voice to a generic man, any man, rather than to a specifically English man. Once recognized as identifiably gendered and ethnic, the "I" of the poem may be seen to occupy a discursive position within a system of representation historically produced largely by English men. Enda Duffy suggests in a reading of another Heaney poem that "what is seen is always now seen partly through the oppressor's voice and that vision is spoken always, partly in the oppressor's language and forms":[4] today this discursive position is also potentially available to any one of us to appropriate, perhaps, or ironically to reverse, even if the different locations we occupy will differently nuance our uses of it. Thus my first reading of the poem in terms of a simple gender binary is challenged not simply by Heaney's biographical status as an Irish man, but by his speaker's cross-cutting identifications with both positions, (feminine) colonized and (masculine) colonizer. No bi-

nary can adequately articulate the complexity of the poetic and political situation: a point those in or from the North may know especially well. Perhaps the poet has succeeded in leading me to misread because he has learned so well the trick of throwing his voice; or maybe it is because the gendered rhetorics of the imperial indeed inhabit us all in various ways, and have at times deafened us to colonial accents. Heaney's uncanny ability to mimic the "imperially / Male" colonizer suggests that even as the poem grounds itself in a hierarchical opposition between English man and Irish woman, it also invites us to question the fixity of the positions it represents and to historicize the relations it maps. Finally, then, it is less a matter of misreading than of rereading this poem, of returning to texts that have seemed to say one thing, and one thing only, and listening to them with a different ear, or from another position.

One thing I have especially listened for in the course of my reading and writing, as a feminist postcolonial critic, is the gendered idiom of marriage and family, which operates in the nineteenth century as a mode of constructing difference and likeness in the relation between England and Ireland. Sometimes the two are called sister kingdoms; often they are imaged as husband and wife, happily or unhappily joined; occasionally, too, as mother and child, as father and daughter, or as brothers. As feminists well know, family thinking can imply hierarchy and naturalize gendered inequality, but it is my argument here that the family trope may also chart relations of intimacy, yoke the different together, or even call into question the essentialist conceptions of gendered and racial difference that it helps to construct and on which it seems to depend. Among the nineteenth-century English discourses on Ireland that form the central matter of this book, family thinking in all its varieties establishes a range of connections between entities that can be conceived as radically different, or as nearly the same. Constituted through figures of gender, class, and race, a particular colonial relation emerges as both historically specific and contextually variable, one in which simple binaries cannot hold. While the unholy family founded on masculinist, imperialist violence knowingly and ironically figured in Heaney's poem provides one way of imaging that relation, taking this figure unironically – or as the only figure – would foreclose investigation of the far more complex family history of representation that English discourse on Ireland and the Irish yields.

In this book, I read some elements within the discursive production of Ireland and Irishness for English readers between 1790 and 1870 with special attention to the ways in which the relation between nations and

nationalities is constituted at particular historical moments in specific political contexts. My focus on what we typically call hegemonic discourse, largely but not entirely produced by and for those who were or aspired to be culturally dominant, means that I am concerned less with Irish expressions of resistance to English rule than with how texts produced for English reading audiences respond to or account for that resistance in the narrative forms and political arguments they deploy. And it means, too, that I am concerned less with an oppositional Irish culture of dissent than with a liberal English discourse dedicated to producing ideological fictions through which Irish disaffection from English rule could be rhetorically minimized, managed, or resolved. While ongoing Irish resistance clearly poses a central problem for the writers I study, from Edmund Burke to Matthew Arnold, I especially emphasize the ideological production of liberal tropes within an English framework that may contest or enforce Ireland's political inequality. Historical hindsight pronounces that all efforts to legitimate Union were doomed to fail, due in no small part to the growth of cultural and political nationalism among the Irish, which Union itself arguably facilitated; that it did not appear this way to nineteenth-century English liberals is one of my points of departure.

Liberal English fictions about the English–Irish relation consistently assume, rather, that Ireland could be and indeed should be effectively ruled by England. Instituted in 1801, the Act of Union was understood as necessary for the political security and economic well-being of both nations; geographical proximity required the larger and more powerful to extend its "protection" – for feminists, a conspicuously gendered term – to the smaller and weaker, even if only for the sake of protecting itself. Yet liberal English discourse about Ireland, as I argue throughout the book, is not simply or unambivalently a tool of domination. In my view, liberal discourse also functions in some instances to critique England and Englishness itself, even as it also persistently returns to the question of how the English nation should conceive of itself in an age of imperial expansion.

In the post-Union novels by Maria Edgeworth and Sydney Owenson that I consider in Chapter Two, for example, the marriage plot allegorically suggests the ideological need for altering England's historical relation to Ireland; the heroes of both *The Absentee* (1812) and *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) must themselves undergo or undertake some transformative work before they can become fit partners for marital/political union. Similarly, at least some of the condition-of-England texts by

Thomas Carlyle, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Charles Kingsley that I explore in Chapter Three strongly suggest that contact with the Irish reveals the faultlines within an increasingly class-stratified culture, in that the presence of Irish immigrants in England exacerbates the crisis of the English social body. And in locating the failure of Union in the failures of English rule, the writings of John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold that I analyze in Chapter Five identify the parochial insularity of English imperial culture as a major impediment to achieving a more harmonious relation. At these and other moments, I have tried to suggest that the representation of Irishness by English writers does not entirely depend on essentialist notions of national, racial, or cultural difference, or necessarily equate Irish difference with inferiority. Rather, some particular instances within the broader discursive formation I examine take cross-cultural contact, implicitly but not exclusively figured in the trope of union, as fundamental not only to reforming the Irish, but to transforming the cultural conception of Englishness as well.

Additionally, my emphasis on the dynamic quality of representations of English–Irish contact stems from an analysis of the ideological work that plots and narratives do in figuring colonial relations. At the most general and abstract level, it is easy to see that recurrent patterns of plotting Ireland's relation to England constitute a repertoire that shapes and limits the representation of the Irish and Ireland in both novels and political discourse. Ireland may be figured, for example, as a marriageable dependent who must, paradoxically, be "made to consent" to Union; or as an underdeveloped, unprogressive entity that threatens England's progress into modernity; or as a racialized other that embodies its historical and/or biological difference from England as a function of its national character. These metanarratives indeed seem designed to stabilize the meanings of Irishness in a static, subordinate position. Although elements of such *grands récits* are everywhere present in particular narrative and political representations of Ireland, I don't believe that they invariably issue in the same fixed meanings in every context; indeed, most of the narratives I work with contest fixities in charting the dynamic processes of contact. Novelistic representations, for example, are both shaped by and sometimes resistant to such metanarratives, as in Anthony Trollope's rewriting of Malthusian discourse in his depiction of the great famine in *Castle Richmond* (1860), which I analyze in Chapter Four. And because I tend to read plots very closely, for what they do and do not say, my findings here suggest that it is to the particulars of plots and plotting that we should look if we want

to challenge the conventional wisdom about English colonial discourse on Ireland.

This book thus analyzes both continuity and change in patterns of plotting, considering as well the variable uses of those plots, which respond to ideological and political shifts in England, in Ireland, and in the relation between the two. Among the various narrative modes I examine, family plots – narratives of cross-cultural marriage and mixture, as well as those that chart Irish family histories over time and across generations – have an especially important place in English writings about Ireland. Because the familial so often operates as a metonym for the social, a broken or "degenerate" Irish family – such as Edgeworth's Rackrents or Trollope's Macdermots – allegorically signifies the unsettled state of Irish society. Because efforts to legitimate English rule in Ireland so often involve disputed rights to land and property, the relation of fathers to sons, of mothers to daughters, and of potential wives to would-be husbands all take on broader implications in that these "private" relations are thoroughly enmeshed with the political and economic relations of colonial rule. And because the discourse of family is not just gendered, but also, by mid-century, racialized in a new way, plots that work from norms of development and underdevelopment articulate the uneasy and shifting place that a "primitive" or childish Celtic Ireland occupies within the modernizing imperial family of man. I attend to narrative structure, and to the kind of stories that get told and retold about the Irish, so as to reveal both the regularity of English colonial discourse on Ireland and the Irish and the mutations to which that discourse is irregularly subject. By reading narrative plots and political arguments in an anti-essentializing way, and by attending to the multivalence of plots and their internal contradictions, I hope to posit that at least some of the grounds for undoing Union, or decolonizing Ireland, lie within texts we might otherwise dismiss.

My rereading of this discourse thus draws on concerns and interests associated with several different movements and methods in contemporary literary and cultural studies, and cuts across some of the established boundaries that have defined distinct fields of inquiry; for example, with some notable and important earlier exceptions, only now are literary studies of English colonial discourse by US or UK academics beginning to attend in any significant way to the representation of the Irish as an element in English nation-formation. At the most general level, then, I attempt to close this gap by thinking through the question of Ireland's discursive relation to England in the nineteenth century

from a standpoint informed especially by feminist and postcolonial studies: that is, from a position that explores the gendered colonial interests that governed the production of this aspect of English imperial culture and politics. In affiliating my project with postcolonial studies, I assert that Ireland does indeed have, or should have, a place on the new map being drawn by scholars working to revise our understanding of the history of English colonial discourse. In contesting the absence of Irish questions from English studies, I challenge the ongoing scholarly production of separate and unequal histories. And in establishing a specifically gender- and race-conscious framework for reading English representations of Ireland, I aim to reorient postcolonial Irish studies by making gender and race central and linked categories of analysis. My effort to reconfigure the questions that we pose, and how we pose them, constitutes the basis for the way in which the arguments of the book unfold; in what follows, I sketch some of these scholarly contexts for my work as a way to open a conversation among them.

Articulating the relation of Ireland to England in the nineteenth century as colonial has been made possible for me largely through the use of postcolonial tools. In my view, the insistent concerns of theorists and critics working in a wide variety of specific contexts – the creation of otherness as a material agent of imperial rule, the place of language as a site of both domination and opposition, the deployment of racial stereotyping in securing the subordinate status of the colonized – have clear applications in analyzing the discursive production of nineteenth-century Ireland in colonial terms. Yet there is little or no consensus on using either term – colonial or postcolonial – to describe the historical or contemporary relation of England and Ireland. How to proceed when there is so little agreement on what the terms themselves mean and on how to use them?

Some scholars maintain, for example, that Ireland never was a colony, while others claim that it was, and still is, at least in part; on this question, the debate has taken place primarily among the historians, as part of the larger controversy surrounding Irish historical revisionism.[5] Reframing the issue in a helpful way, Declan Kiberd suggests that practitioners of revisionist history, "far from seeing the British presence in Ireland as a colonial or imperial exercise" and "refusing to countenance a post-colonial analysis," have instead "colluded . . . with the widespread nationalist conceit of Irish exceptionality"; he calls for replacing the narrow focus of Irish studies with a truly comparativist

method that would work toward specifying likenesses and differences between the Irish colonial experience and those of other postcolonies.[6] On a slightly different front, for some postcolonial critics in literary studies, Ireland's place as a constitutive part of the Empire, which profited from the exploitation of colonies elsewhere, invalidates its claim to colonial or postcolonial status. Thus Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin once cautioned against assimilating the particular situation of Ireland, Wales, or Scotland to that of non-white or settler colonies: "while it is possible to argue that these societies were the first victims of English expansion," they have written, "their subsequent complicity with the British imperial enterprise makes it difficult for colonized peoples outside Britain to accept their identity as post-colonial."[7] In this case, it is in part the use of the general (and generalizing) term "postcolonial" to describe a set of distinct and particular histories that draws fire from different quarters: the comparativism for which Kiberd calls may well look like a homogenizing move to others.

Stuart Hall has argued in an important essay that such critiques "confuse a descriptive category with an evaluative one"; from my own position, I very much agree with his claim that it is the "breaking down [of] the clearly demarcated inside/outside of the colonial system" – a figure with particular relevance for study of Ireland's place in the UK – "which the concept of the 'post-colonial' has done so much to bring to the fore."[8] If one way of addressing these and related concerns has been to assert that nineteenth-century Ireland is a special case, being "at once a European nation and a colony,"[9] then Hall points us toward another way of understanding the postcolonial, as an analytic tool for rethinking the meanings of national, imperial, and colonial formations. From this point of view, the proliferation of scholarly studies of specific historical and material situations, taken together, demonstrate that every case is in some sense a special case: there was or is no one way of being "colonial" or "postcolonial," no paradigmatic and unchanging relation of colonized to colonizer, no single unified program of domination that proceeded in the same manner in every instance. In the words of Catherine Hall, "the different theatres of Empire, the different colonial sites, constructed different possibilities."[10] So that even if some English discursive projects for representing Irishness in the nineteenth century overlap in very significant ways with imperial rhetorics deployed elsewhere, as I believe they do, the character of the historical relation between England and Ireland also makes for specific and local differences from other colonial projects which we cannot, should not, ignore.

Susan Morgan argues in her study of Victorian women's travel writings about Southeast Asia that "the very notion of what constitutes a colony is historically and also geographically problematic," given the diversity of places where projects of colonial and imperial domination have operated; nineteenth-century Ireland was not a colony in precisely the same way as India or Australia was, any more than the histories of those two could be assimilated to one another without effacing the distinctiveness of each.[11] Radical differences in context thus require carefully historicized attention. Moreover, "critical concepts derived from considering writings about one area of the world," as Morgan also reminds us, should not be transposed to others without serious reflection on how particular colonial projects vary from each other, or may change within themselves over time.[12] Rather than dispense entirely with the terms and the tools, or disavow the perspectives that theoretical work can provide, my effort has been to specify as carefully as I can the historical coordinates of the representations I examine, informed at all points by the recognition that developing theoretical frameworks for studying the textual production of any concrete historical or discursive situation requires attention to particulars.

Within this frame, attending to the local in the nineteenth-century English–Irish context means acknowledging that the history of colonial Ireland in the nineteenth century can no longer be written in the sweeping terms of a simple opposition between colonized and colonizers: it is just not (and never was) that simple. But acknowledging that nineteenth-century Irish people participated in the domination of others – as administrative, economic, or military agents of empire; as the wives and daughters and sisters of landowners – need not mean that we relinquish the interpretive perspective that postcolonial theories of discourse and representation can provide. Instead, we should push towards the kind of specific and local analysis that attends precisely to the multiple positions available within a given formation. That "the Irish people" – a discursive category whose composition has itself been a matter of contestation for centuries – were both subjects of and subject to empire no doubt complicates any easy binary between "us" and "them" in which one might, innocently or not, wish to take shelter. Yet it should not preclude an investigation of the ways in which such a category has been constructed and deployed at different moments.

The tenor of my project, then, conceived in postcolonial terms, is not to claim special or exceptional status for representations of Ireland, or to interpret the Irish colonial experience as in any way paradigmatic, but

to rectify an important omission in contemporary scholarship: within the broad rethinking of imperial discourse in the nineteenth century initiated more than two decades ago by the publication of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the matter of Ireland has been neglected by those in both postcolonial and English studies, even by those who have worked most assiduously to complicate our understandings of empire. If indeed, as Colin MacCabe has proclaimed, "the cultural monolith that was institutionalised in the study of English literature is now broken open as a contradictory set of cultural and historical moments," due in large part to the pressure exerted by postcolonial interrogation, the work of specifying and historicizing those moments in the Irish domain remains as yet incomplete.[13] It is to this work that I hope to contribute by bringing postcolonial perspectives to bear on the texts I consider here.

While English colonial discourse about Ireland has not been widely understood as such by postcolonial critics, it is no less true that Irish questions have been rather marginalized within English studies, traditionally conceived in national and nationalist terms. The ideological construction of English literary history as "English," for example, has enforced the sense that Irish writing is itself somehow marginal to English writing in this period, reinscribing the political inequality that the Act of Union institutionalized as a kind of natural literary fact. Moreover, while Swift and Goldsmith are taken up in eighteenth-century studies as part of an "English" canon, and Joyce and Yeats can be accommodated within a self-consciously transnational modernism, nineteenth-century Ireland is something of a no-man's land for English studies, especially among Victorianists. The scholarly practice of framing the status of Ireland as part of the Celtic "periphery" or "fringe" – or, perhaps, simply assuming that things Irish "belong" only to experts in Irish studies – has perpetuated the very form of imperial thinking most progressive academics claim to deplore, in that it has precluded our exploring the heterogeneity within both "English" literature and colonial discourse.[14]

My particular focus on the textual and historical record suggests by contrast that nineteenth-century Ireland has major discursive importance for contemporary "English" writers: literary critics in English studies have by and large ignored the representation of Irishness in the writings of "great men" like Burke, Carlyle, Trollope, Mill, and Arnold rather than reckon with its meanings and uses within English literature and culture. Thus another aim of this book is to locate Ireland on the

map of "English studies" in a fashion that will provoke a more comprehensive rethinking of what Irishness meant for the construction of Englishness in the nineteenth century, inspired by the broader postcolonial rethinking of what constitutes Englishness now. If we are no longer to participate in the fiction, salient in some quarters even today, that England is an internally unified, ethnically "pure" nation, then we must work to demonstrate that it never has been; that, like the black presence, the Irish presence in England – and in the fictions about themselves that the English have told – has a specific history that, once acknowledged, will complicate the received picture.[15]

We can see the effects of isolating English studies from Irish questions at work in a number of specific venues that I explore in this book. While Burke's centrality to the English tradition has been widely recognized among literary critics at least since the publication of Raymond Williams's masterly *Culture and Society* (1958), few if any studies that invoke Burke explore the relevance of the Irish contexts I examine in Chapters One and Two to the formation of the basic and familiar tenets of his thought. A fuller understanding of his critique of the eighteenth-century penal legislation passed against Irish catholics would, I believe, make an enormous difference in how scholars understand the positions Burke took in the 1790s and, as a consequence, make it far more difficult to pigeonhole him as the architect of nineteenth-century imperial thought. Similarly, how we approach Arnold's critique of English provinciality in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) or the development of Mill as a political economist, topics I touch on in Chapter Five, might change significantly were we to recognize the impact of "the Irish question" on high Victorian liberal thought. On another front, I find it hard to imagine that US and UK Victorianists would not collectively profit from reconfiguring the "condition-of-England" discourse that I explore in Chapter Three, a discourse that has been constructed almost entirely in terms of class divisions internal to English culture, as predicated in part on the racializing of Irishness and the scapegoating of Irish immigrants. By foregrounding the ways in which representations of contact between Irish and English people operate to produce a kind of miscegenation, a figure that works to establish boundaries even as it erodes them, I also show that recognizing the implication of "race" in "class" enables us to think about these categories together in new ways. I attempt here to rewrite the class/race relations of Victorian culture as a similarly miscegenous mix so as to understand the centrality of "others" to English nation-formation.

Finally, I am particularly keen to position this book as an intervention in studies of the history of "English" fiction, because I believe that renewed attention to the figuration of Irishness may well contribute to the broader – and brilliant – rethinking of the nineteenth-century novel as an imperial genre which is currently reshaping this body of scholarship.[16] I thus take up and extend Said's insight, in *Culture and Imperialism*, that the "convergence between the patterns of narrative authority constitutive of the novel on the one hand, and, on the other, a complex ideological configuration underlying the tendency to imperialism" is indeed "far from accidental."[17] I argue that narrative form in novels about Ireland, as well as in other writing about the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, is highly complex, politically charged, and culturally specific, with the domestic sphere (*contra* Said's critique of Austen) providing a privileged novelistic site for the negotiation of colonial politics. Examining English fictions about Ireland shows us that novelistic plots – narratives of courtship and marriage, of individual development as well as of family life and history – constitute an unexpectedly rich and necessarily specific location for exploring some key issues regarding cross-cultural contact, or what the cultural critic Mary Louise Pratt calls "transculturation."[18]

In taking such an approach, I adapt and revise some of the emphases that have guided other important studies of the novel to include a focus on the representation of cultural difference as a constitutive element of the nineteenth-century novelistic tradition. Following the lead of such US critics as Nancy Armstrong and Joseph Allen Boone, I investigate the ways in which, put simply, domestic plots do ideological work; while those critics have focused, respectively, on how marriage plots erase class difference and normalize heterosexuality, my work considers in addition how national and ethnic differences are negotiated through the paradigm of romance, influenced by the groundbreaking work of Doris Sommer on Latin American "national" novels of the nineteenth century.[19] Marriage-and-family plots by Edgeworth and Owenson, for example, represent the narrative consequences of union as a matter of legitimating inequality in gendered terms. More starkly, the providential narratives governing Trollope's fictions about the Great Famine structurally encode a certain position on the English failure to respond humanely to what amounted to a widespread clearing, by death and emigration, of millions of Ireland's native inhabitants, all mediated through his use of domestic plots. By reading narrative forms as implicated in and responsive to historical and political tropes and practi-

ces, I suggest most broadly that the novel formally and structurally comments on – and sometimes critiques – the large-scale historical processes, like the construction of Union and empire, that it also implicitly represents.

Reconceiving the "Englishness" of English studies is, I believe, among the most important of scholarly tasks at hand today; acknowledging that Ireland and the Irish were assigned a crucial place in the ideological work of English nation-formation in the past – a point often made by critics in Irish studies that seems to have fallen on deaf ears outside Ireland – may well require students of the nineteenth century in the future to examine more fully the anglocentric view of English literary history that we have inherited and reproduced. Rather than considering the work of Edgeworth and Owenson, for example, as "peripheral" to the main lines of development of the novel, we should follow the lead of Ina Ferris and Katie Trumpener by investigating the central role of "the regional" in the construction of English national and imperial identity.[20] As their work reminds us, categorizing fiction as "Anglo-Irish" separates it from "real" English literature as well as from "real" Irish literature, and obscures the important part these (and other) novelists play in constituting and contesting Irish and English national identities. Marking writers or writings in these ways, moreover, occludes their heterogeneous origins and destinations: that Trollope, ostensibly the most English of novelists, produced over the course of his long career a substantial canon of what I call Irish fiction is only an extreme (and ironic) example of a wider phenomenon. It is this kind of anglocentrism, in its disavowal of "English" as a relational category, that my project critically reassesses.

"It is just because there appears no earthly chance of [the Irish people] becoming good members of the Empire . . . that they should not remain in the anomalous position they are in, but since they absolutely refuse to become the one thing, that they become the other; cultivate what they have rejected, and build up an Irish nation on Irish lines":[21] so spoke Douglas Hyde to the National Literary Society in Dublin in 1892. In this well-known call for de-anglicizing Ireland, Kiberd identifies Hyde's desire "to found Irish pride on something more positive and lasting than mere hatred of England"; advocating the construction of "an Irish nation on Irish lines," cultural and political nationalists mapped the contours of a common project, with a special emphasis on the role of language and culture in the making of national and/or nationalist

identities.[22] Then as now, literature in particular has played a critical part in the process of "inventing Ireland" that Kiberd has so comprehensively traced, not simply or even especially through the making of a national(ist) canon, but through the radical rethinking of "nation," of "nationalism," of "literature" itself. In some of its de-anglicizing incarnations, Irish studies has rather narrowly defined what counts as "authentically" Irish literature, by consigning any writing not identifiably native-born to the dustbin of a colonized history. But the recent publication of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (1991) under Seamus Deane's general editorship has done much to problematize the construction of national(ist) canons, and so challenged the whole conception of what "an Irish nation" might look like from the varying political and cultural perspectives of the late twentieth century.

This emphasis on the heterogeneity and hybridity of the historical materials that comprise the contradictory legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism, as well as the resistances to it articulated within nineteenth-century Irish and English culture, enables us to reopen the whole question of what constitutes Irish studies now. If nationalist conceptions of the "Irish nation" on which the discipline of Irish studies has been based no longer serve the needs, interests, and realities of the contemporary situation, then the postcolonial mode of analysis that informs both the *Field Day Anthology* and the scholarly work of the major critics associated with Field Day has transformed the practices and premises that underpin Irish literary studies as an academic field, not least by foregrounding its stake in contemporary cultural politics. As in the impassioned debate on revisionism among Irish historians, the politics of the present are now acknowledged as having shaped our understandings of the past; while some may bemoan the loss of the fictions of "objectivity" or "neutrality" that once ostensibly governed the writing of both history and literary history, constituting the study of the literary and historical past as contested terrain in the present will, I hope, lead us to be more attuned to the presence of analogous struggles over meaning in the past as well.

Unsurprisingly, postcolonial projects in Irish literary studies have paid a good deal of attention to the nineteenth-century English colonial discourse that I take up here, far more than critics in English studies either traditionally conceived or in its postcolonial variants: it is, perhaps, always the special burden of decolonizing peoples to interrogate and deconstruct what has been said about them by their former masters. My contribution to the body of Irish scholarship that reexamines Eng-

lish colonial discourse has thus been informed at every turn by the nuanced and characteristically witty analysis of colonial hegemony that marks Terry Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* (1995); and especially by the exemplary work on many of the particular writers discussed in this book – Burke, Edgeworth, Carlyle, Arnold – by the always eloquent and incisive Seamus Deane.[23] Local and particular disagreements with their interpretations notwithstanding, the scope and shape of this book owes much to the influence of their writings on my own.

Yet my disciplinary training and location in US English studies, as well as my investment in a feminist postcolonial mode of analysis, make for significant differences of emphasis in how I proceed, and in how I read and interpret the past from my own position in the present. For example, the historicist strand of this project, whereby I situate representations in relation to a reading of their Irish contexts, has a dual function: to inform readers in English and postcolonial studies about the particular histories to which those representations respond and contribute, and to suggest to readers in Irish studies that English colonial discourse is by no means as monotonously monolithic and insensitive to historical change as Eagleton's work in particular may make it seem. By paying close attention to rhetorical matters, and especially to the concrete workings of plot in both fictional and non-fictional discourse, I also aim to provide full readings of texts too often glossed or summarized in earlier treatments in the Irish context, as in Deane's discussions of Carlyle and Arnold, or entirely ignored in the English one.

Just as importantly, however, my approach to the materials I study here takes gender and race as fundamental categories of the analysis I conduct. Attending to the use of gendered and racial tropes in configuring cross-cultural relations, as in the union-as-marriage plot, I also understand the production of those tropes as part of the discursive apparatus that legitimated empire: I see both gender and race in the nineteenth century, following the historian Joan Wallach Scott, as "primary way[s] of signifying relationships of power," pervasive cultural mechanisms for both the reproduction and critique of colonial relations.[24] Because I regard gender not just as a trope, but rather deploy it as an analytic tool for interrogating the very basis of Burkean thought, I take it not merely as a "natural" means of figuring feminized inequality, but as constructed and constructive in this particular context for the particular end of rehabilitating catholic men for imperial citizenship. Through analyses of how the family, itself the site of inequality naturalized and institutionalized, is figured as the prime agent for establishing

English colonial hegemony in Ireland, I argue for the centrality of gender to any study of English or Irish nation-formation. Indeed, this emphasis derives from my belief that in the English–Irish context, gender provides perhaps the most fundamental and enduring discursive means for signifying Irish political incapacity, as in the English typing of Ireland as an alternately dependent or unruly daughter, sister, or wife.

I recognize as well, however, that the uses and meanings of gender vary across the period, especially when they become part of a discursive ensemble for representing Ireland and England in terms of race and class difference and likeness. For example, a feminized Ireland could be figured normatively in some representations of the élite class as a dutiful and submissive wife, especially in the earliest period I consider here. Mother, sister, or daughter Ireland could also be associated in other representations with the irrational and the bodily, or linked (especially by mid-century) with an unmanageable English working class, and so racialized and regendered as a deficient Celtic brother. While some chapters more explicitly investigate the use of gendered categories than others, I remain concerned throughout with the ways in which gender discursively operates in articulating unequal relations between Ireland and England.

Indeed, colonial discourses in the nineteenth century were always already gendered insofar as they naturalized the subordination of some peoples and races to others by a pervasive rhetoric of feminization. As has been made abundantly clear by diverse scholars, Indian and African men, for example, were discursively feminized by the white Europeans who sought thereby to justify establishing power over them. The gendered familial hierarchy that subordinates women and children to men in an English context increasingly intersects, from mid-century on, with a racial hierarchy in which subject races are assigned the sociopolitical status of women and children within "the family of man."[25] At the same time, the practice of differentiating racial traits supports the superiority of English women to non-English women and men, just as differentiating class traits underwrites distinctions among English women. Within this schematic, the feminized – who are also simultaneously racialized – are presumed to lack political capacity, to be incapable of developing beyond a natural limit, to require rule by others.

As I trace the shifting place of Ireland and the Irish in this broad and generalized framework, I suggest that race becomes a key discursive element for legitimating or contesting Irish inequality only when a

particular conception of Irish national character – based in racial theory, plotted as underdevelopment – emerges to provide another mode of constituting and representing relations of unequal power. When difference is racialized, it becomes meaningful in political terms as a way, for example, of legitimating the subordinate status of the Irish people and the Irish nation, of accounting for political unrest, or even of promoting political change. If the place accorded the Irish within the racial hierarchy that emerged at mid-century – which installed fictive distinctions between fictive racial types even as it recognized "the fact" of ongoing mixture between them – is more or less fixed, then the effects of Irishness on and in English representations are certainly not; if racial categories serve in some contexts as a means of naturalizing power inequities, by making Irish and English "national character" a matter of blood, then they may also operate to disturb and alter the status quo. Most dramatically, the power of the Celts, otherwise understood as an ineffectual and defeated race, to alter the "better" blood and culture of the Saxons threatens to erode the fictive distinctions between stronger and weaker, higher and lower peoples, cultures, and nations. Indeed, the apparent coincidence of an increase in Irish immigration to England, the central matter of Chapter Three, with the newly evident discursive deployment of racial categories that delineate difference in the United Kingdom may suggest that it is precisely cross-cultural mixture – construed in the English context as contaminating, invigorating, or both – that such categories potentially defend against and/or promote.

Particular branches of scientific discourse offered a range of discursive possibilities for locating the Irish. The crucial development in linguistics, for example, was its establishment as "a comparative science based on the premise that languages belong to families," the Indo-European and the Semitic chief among them, with a new focus on installing hierarchies within those families; philology "not merely demarcated nations, but applied criteria of relative value to languages and cultures."[26] Once found to belong to the Indo-European "family," the Irish language – and so, Irish culture – was accorded a subordinate place within it. David Cairns and Shaun Richards argue that through such a frame, "the pre-eminence of Teutonism was confirmed, the subsidiary status of Celtism produced," in a formation that would prove especially crucial to Arnold's thinking about the relationship of Saxons to Celts, as I will explore in Chapter Five.[27] But the very idea that the English and Irish languages belong to the same "family" crystallizes a

central problematic at work throughout this book, in that family thinking entails likeness as well as otherness; it establishes a proximate internal contrast that cannot be entirely reduced to the polar opposition of essential difference. By around the middle of the nineteenth century, defining degrees of difference within a family likeness thus became an exacting task for racial theorists and social observers concerned to explicate how the Irish could be somewhat, but not entirely, other to the English – different enough, that is, to be "othered," but not so wholly different or distant as to present no threat at all.

From this angle, the question is not solely one of assessing the degree of anti-Irish prejudice at any given moment, as it has been articulated in most historical studies; rather, I seek to show how the rise of "race" itself as a category for producing likeness and difference has an important bearing on English colonial discourse about the Irish, and on the project of English nation-formation. Here again I am concerned to demonstrate not just the bigotry of English attitudes toward the Irish, any more than a gendered analysis is just about sexism, even given that both modes of "othering" are every bit as pervasive now as they were in the nineteenth century. Instead, I look to the production of racial difference, and of racialized concepts, as part and parcel of the discursive apparatus of this particular colonial project, as of so many others. In this respect, then, I aim to read the racialized and gendered figures of Irish inequality in English colonial discourse as constitutive elements in the production of a racialized and gendered Englishness.

In her recent volume, *Fusewire* (1996), which juxtaposes poems on the seventeenth-century struggle for Ulster and the contemporary troubles with love lyrics written from an English woman to and about an Irish man, the English poet Ruth Padel borrows a line from the Ulster poet John Hewitt for one of her epigraphs: "It is a hard responsibility to be a stranger."[28] In the Hewitt poem from which Padel draws the epigraph, "The Search" (1967), the speaker reflects on his move to Coventry from Belfast, in its reversing of the route that had long ago sent his planter ancestors to County Armagh. Newly arrived, "a guest in the house," he notes likeness and difference, a feeling of having returned "to this older place whose landmarks are [his] also," even if Coventry is ultimately "not [his] abiding place, either."[29] The stranger's responsibility, Hewitt seems to say, is precisely to acknowledge the traffic between here and there, present and past, implicit in his own history and in that of the places he and his have inhabited, which also continuously inhabit him.

In performing this gesture, Hewitt's stranger acknowledges the implication of one place, one history, in another.

For Padel, writing from another position, albeit also as a stranger, there is a different kind of responsibility in traveling as she does, literally and metaphorically, between England and Ulster. Her representations of the travels and travails of the colonial Irish past – as in a poem called "Conn" on the Flight of the Earls, an historical trauma that "every Irish child / counts back from / and no English kid's ever known" (37–39) – are framed by a parallel experience of ignorance and indifference in the present. With the distance between lovers in Derry and London ceaselessly traversed by "muddled electric / cable under the sea" ("Water-Diviner," 13–14), by e-mail, voice mail, and fax, the two islands seem to draw closer, even as they remain far apart. For the proximity, electronic or otherwise, of cross-cultural lovers appears to make little or no difference to the politics of English representation of the Irish: "Is all this in Ireland," the speaker asks in "Foreign News," referring to a project for ethnic cleansing in Ulster that she reads about in the London newspapers, "not front page till it happens?" (29–30).

Responsibility – to the past, to the present, and to the dialectical relation of the two – is a weighty thing, and as another kind of stranger writing at another kind of remove, with a different but no less complex set of lived historical relations to my materials than either Hewitt's or Padel's to theirs, I have felt it at times to be a hard thing. In undertaking this work, I have sought neither especially to praise nor to blame, but rather to resituate the texts I study, and the writers who produced them, within the parameters of the discursive means available at specific moments for representing the cross-cultural traffic that Hewitt, Padel, and Heaney, too, have charted in the changed moment of the present. It would be irresponsible for me to deny either the historical reality of violent conquest or the discursive violence that the liberal representations I consider themselves perform, even – or perhaps especially – when they purport "to send," in Arnold's words, "through the gentle ministration of science, a message of peace to Ireland."[30] I have yet attempted to explicate the framing assumptions that govern the ways in which the Irish are (and are not) seen; that determine the various strategies advocated for "conciliating" or "attaching" them to English rule, or for exterminating them; that ambiguously situate the Irish both inside and outside the nineteenth-century imperial family. If I have thus resurrected for close study texts that scholars in English studies might prefer to forget, and that some in Irish studies would dismiss out of

hand, in what might be tantamount to a liberalism of my own, then I have done so under the guiding conviction that remaining complicit with the evasions on either side is neither intellectually nor politically tenable. As the three poets of our time that I've cited suggest, arriving at and sustaining that conviction might be every stranger's hardest responsibility.

CHAPTER ONE

Public affections and familial politics: Burke, Edgeworth, and Ireland in the 1790s

Just after William Fitzwilliam arrived in Dublin in January 1795 to take up his short-lived post as Lord Lieutenant, Edmund Burke wrote a letter to a member of the Irish Parliament in which he posed his fundamental concern of that revolutionary decade: "My whole politicks, at present, center in one point; and to this the merit or demerit of every measure, (with me) is referable: that is, what will most promote or depress the Cause of Jacobinism?"[1] In Burke's view, as in Fitzwilliam's, it was the redress of catholic grievances that would stave off revolution in Ireland: as he wrote further on in that same letter, "I am the more serious on the positive encouragement to be given to [catholicism], (always however as secondary [to the Church of Ireland]) because the serious and earnest belief and practice of it by its professors forms, as things stand, the most effectual Barrier, if not the sole Barrier, against Jacobinism" (*Writings and Speeches* 663).

Tolerating catholicism would have strategic political advantages for the emergent empire: as Burke had written in the *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), all right-minded Englishmen of whatever creed would "reverently and affectionately protect all religions because they love and venerate the great principle upon which they all agree, and the great object to which they are all directed. They begin more and more plainly to discern that we all have a common cause, as against a common enemy."[2] Successfully enlisting catholic Irishmen in that "common cause" would require viewing their religious practice as no disability, but as a mark of their fitness for imperial citizenship in the struggle against France. In his holy war against Jacobinism, Burke thus sought to redraw the lines so as to bring dissenting elements in Ireland within the pale of English liberties from which they had been excluded.

On another front, from the ideological position most closely associated with Burke's radical antagonist Thomas Paine, unmet Irish demands ranging in nature from parliamentary reform to catholic

emancipation to republican separation ultimately issued in the bloody Rebellion of 1798, led by the United Irishmen with the support of the catholic Defenders. In how this alliance developed and broke down over the course of the decade, we can also see an effort at work to construct a counterhegemonic "common cause." Crossing sectarian lines, the United Irishmen allied themselves with France in direct opposition to rule from Westminster, and to what Burke himself was to scorn as "the protestant ascendancy": those men who profited from the official patronage wielded by the English executive at Dublin Castle and who sought to defend their position against encroachments from parliamentary reformers and radical emancipationists. However little else he might have shared with them, Burke would no doubt have concurred with the disaffected rebels of 1798, whose bloody "year of liberty" he did not live to witness, that it was the failure of the ascendancy to rule in any interest other than its own that constituted the true scandal of late eighteenth-century Ireland.

It is within the context of revolution and counterrevolution that we can best understand Burke's political writings on Ireland and Jacobinism in the 1790s. As Seamus Deane rightly captures Burke's point of view, Ireland was to him "that part of the British polity most vulnerable to the radical ideas of the Enlightenment and revolution precisely because it had never known under British rule the virtues of the ancient civilization that had collapsed in France"; Burke thus undertook a "campaign in favour of a relaxation of the penal laws with the aim of thereby attaching Ireland more closely to England and reducing Ireland's vulnerability to the French disease."[3] It is my contention, moreover, that Burke's gendered vision of the patriarchal family as paradigm for – and agent of – the orderly society undergirds the ideological work to which Deane refers. Destroyed in France, revered in England, and undone in Ireland by the operation of the penal laws, the patriarchal family has a crucial role in both Burke's anti-Jacobin arguments and his prescriptions for "attaching" catholic Ireland to England.

My first aim in this chapter is to examine the place that the family occupies in Burke's thinking on Jacobinism and Ireland, analyzing the gendered rhetoric of the prophylactic against rebellion which the *Reflections* seeks to mount. By revisiting that text, as well as Burke's critique of the penal laws, from a feminist point of view, I aim to demonstrate that a gendered conception of the patriarchal family, and of women's and men's roles within it, lies at the heart of Burke's project for remaking Ireland in an English mold.

Burke's quarrel with the French Jacobins in the *Reflections* arises from their repudiation of the traditional sociopolitical order, their challenge to the venerable institutions that had provided a fiction of continuity over time and an ideological bulwark against change. Early Jacobin sympathizers in England, the immediate targets of Burke's counterattack, sought to draw inspiration from events in France for political and social movements at home, and particularly for dissenters' efforts to achieve the measure of equality that had been denied them. But Burke casts their egalitarian rhetoric in nationalist and protectionist terms, as an illegal and unnatural transfer of goods: "We ought not, on either side of the water, to suffer ourselves to be imposed upon by the counterfeit wares which some persons, by a double fraud, export to you in illicit bottoms as raw commodities of British growth, though wholly alien to our soil, in order afterwards to smuggle them back again into this country, manufactured after the newest Paris fashion of an improved liberty" (*Reflections* 22–23). For Burke, Jacobin principles are not "raw commodities of British growth," but alien goods, "counterfeit wares." Having declared French imports injurious to true British interests, he sets out to demonstrate that the established principles of government and society are indigenous historical products of British national life; in so doing, he sets in motion the flow of associations between domestic and political forms of order that runs throughout the *Reflections*.

Burke borrows his primary metaphors for political society from the aristocratic idiom of the landed estate and patrilineal succession, which naturalizes the link between property and paternity. Over the course of the *Reflections*, natural order is represented as familial just as the family comes to appear naturally ordained. The interweaving of one symbolic reference with others makes it nearly impossible to separate distinct strands, and this is precisely Burke's rhetorical aim: as Ronald Paulson traces the progression, in "[moving] from the organic growth of the plant (the great British oak) to the countryside, the country house and the georgic ideal of retirement, the estate, the aristocratic family and its generations, the inviolability of inheritance," Burke naturalizes the social order.[4] In this way, Burke justifies existing arrangements – for the transmission of property as well as for the continuance of the extant form of government – by a single principle, as what he calls "an *entailed inheritance*" (29). All Englishmen, dead or alive or yet to be born, have an equal claim to it: "The very idea of the fabrication of a new government is enough to fill us with disgust and horror. We wished at the period of

the [1688] Revolution, and do now wish, to derive all we possess as *an inheritance from our forefathers*. Upon that body and stock of inheritance we have taken care not to inoculate any cyon alien to the nature of the original plant" (27–28). Against innovation, revolution, and the hybridity they breed, Burke proposes patrilineal inheritance as the only natural and just means of insuring economic and political continuity and reproducing it over time. As J. G. A. Pocock argues, in "[making] the state not only a family but a trust . . . an undying *persona ficta*, which secures our liberties by vesting the possession of them in an immortal continuity" and so "identifying the principles of political liberty with the principles of our law of landed property," Burke represents the nexus among family, property, and civil society as immemorial and indissoluble.[5]

Burke's concern here is to furnish "a sure principle of conservation and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement" (29); while he does not rule out political change and economic expansion, the two watchwords of the rising bourgeoisie with which he is in some respects allied, Burke yet hopes to control the momentum of both by restraining them within the firmly established bounds of what he calls a "family settlement" (29). He draws most explicitly on the affective relations of the familial realm for his model of how to contain the anarchic energies he associates with both the revolutionary French and the rising bourgeois English, "the men of ability": "we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood, binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties, adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections, keeping inseparable and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars" (30). Within this framework, to rise against the polity would be equivalent to parricide; far better, then, to treat both head of family and head of state with a respectful affection that proceeds from one and the same source. Burke's naturalization of ties to patriarch and monarch, as Steven Blakemore establishes, is invested with the power of "family affections" and makes any assault on those ties appear to be an unnatural, alien, un-English act.[6]

Particularly in its emphasis on the affective charge that should inform a citizen's response to home as well as state, Burke's intertwining of familial with political relations in reconfiguring English patriarchy can be read from a feminist perspective as part of a wider cultural reimagining of relations among men and women in this period. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue, a characteristically middle-class

ethos came to depend on an articulation of gender and class that redefined the family as an autonomous political, economic, and psychological unit: "forms of property organization . . . framed gender relations through marriage, the division of labour and inheritance practices"; moreover, in their reading, "the structure of property can be regarded as a powerful 'relational idiom' in the creation of both gender and class, placing men as those with power and agency, women as passive dependants."[7] Whereas some historians, following Lawrence Stone, have argued for an historical shift in the function of the family from economic to affective group, Davidoff and Hall illuminate the interrelation of the affective with the economic, pointing out the ways in which bourgeois families consolidated their socioeconomic power through a redefinition of gender roles and practices. Providing a critical tool for reevaluating concepts of property and inheritance, this lens brings into view their gendered elements.

For example, in Burke's case, we see that the idea of inheritance entails both economic and political transmission, operations that ostensibly involve and concern only men; materialist feminist analysis enables us to recognize, however, that the "relational idiom" functions both as a norm for the lived experience of men and women and, in the ideological register, as a powerful warrant for the gendered character of that experience. Gary Kelly explains that "since women in both upper and middle classes continued to serve the economic function of transferring property from one man to another," women were also charged with "restraint of the erotic 'passions' ensuring the stability and integrity of the family as a property trust continuing through the generations."[8] Thus while women are not considered as political actors – excluded from Burke's "we," and by no means included among "*our forefathers*" – they are profoundly implicated in the familial paradigm he employs, both as the locus for "family affections" and as the embodied and embodying agents of inheritance. Even so, women's crucial role in the metaphorical and literal reproduction of the family is largely written out of Burke's account of transmission and inheritance, and that absence should alert us to the gender politics of Burkean thought.[9] For while Burke presents the family as a neutral figure embracing all within its grasp, his historicist defense of English liberty rests on some latent assumptions about the nature and character of women and men, conceived ahistorically as fixed and unchanging – yet also liable to extreme unsettling in the revolutionary context.

These assumptions have been well documented in the work of both

Blakemore and Paulson, who agree on the centrality of the gender binary to Burke's politics as well as, in Isaac Kramnick's psychobiographical terms, to his own personality.[10] In its basic form, Burke's binary opposes masculine activity to feminine passivity in much the same way that Davidoff and Hall characterize emergent middle-class gender ideology. From his earliest published work, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), Burke associated masculinity with energy and terror, femininity with quiescence and a pleasing delight.[11] And he rhetorically registered his outrage at the French Revolution in terms drawn from an available vocabulary of gender/class polarity, particularly visible in the celebrated section of the *Reflections* concerning the French royal family. But helpful as Blakemore and Paulson are in identifying the conventional class and gender associations of Burke's rhetoric, they do not employ gender as an analytic category in their readings; by contrast, my concern is not so much with how femininity figures in the *Reflections*, but in what ways and for what purposes it is written out, or written in, as a force in maintaining or disturbing the Burkean status quo. Burke's gender politics are predicated on effacing the relation of women to property and, more generally, to the public sphere: indeed, as the political theorist Linda M. G. Zerilli effectively argues, "what comes apart in the French Revolution . . . is a gendered semiotic code," in a collapse of the stabilizing gender/class boundaries on which so much of Burkean thought depends.[12]

Patrilineal inheritance, as I have noted, is central to Burke's thinking about the reproduction of political and economic forms; he represents it as sure and certain, while revolutionary change is dangerous and unpredictable in its outcomes. Yet inheritance can never be as sure as patriarchal thinkers (or putative fathers) would like insofar as its proper functioning may be subverted by the difficulties of determining paternity or the misrepresentations of impending maternity.[13] Burke's confidence in the security of hereditary transmission depends, in other words, on the tacit assumption of marital chastity among women, who act as the unacknowledged ground for and guarantors of familial, economic, and political legitimacy. In this light, his concern about the illegitimacy of "counterfeit wares" and alien cyons betrays a specifically gendered, culturally pervasive anxiety: that no principle of transmission can be fully secure if feminine fidelity is not maintained.

Not surprisingly, then, Burke figures the worst excesses of the revolutionaries as a threat of uncontained female sexuality that could destroy

all traditional ties. This threat can only be rebuffed by the renewal of those "two principles" that have inspired "all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization": "the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion" (69). Burke connects the laxity of French morals with the overthrow of paternal right:

> All other people have laid the foundations of civil freedom in severer manners and a system of a more austere and masculine morality. France, when she let loose the reins of regal authority, doubled the license of a ferocious dissoluteness in manners . . . and has extended through all ranks of life, as if she were communicating some privilege or laying open some secluded benefit, all the unhappy corruptions that usually were the disease of wealth and power. (33)

As the "austere and masculine" give way to "a ferocious dissoluteness," the "disease" of aristocratic manners – often associated in Burke, as in the work of Mary Wollstonecraft, with sexual license – spreads throughout the body politic, infecting all ranks; if not explicitly labeled as such, the effeminate or feminine character of the carriers of this plague is yet suggested. Throughout the *Reflections*, Tom Furniss argues, Frenchwomen are thus "depicted as having abandoned their femininity and modesty . . . such violations of 'proper' gender roles and behavioural patterns are both endemic to and emblematic of a general breakdown of political order."[14]

Even more overtly, in a later work, *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796), Burke specifies the threat he perceives in sexual terms, drawing on misogynous Miltonic and Virgilian representations to represent female license:

> The revolution harpies of France, sprung from night and hell, or from that chaotick anarchy, which generates equivocally "all monstrous, all prodigious things," cuckoo-like, adulterously lay their eggs, and brood over, and hatch them in the nest of every neighbouring State. These obscene harpies, who deck themselves, in I know not what divine attributes, but who in reality are foul and ravenous birds of prey (both mothers and daughters) flutter over our heads, and souse down upon our tables, and leave nothing unrent, unrifled, unravaged, or unpolluted with the slime of their filthy offal.[15] (*Writings and Speeches* 156)

Unchecked by a manly morality, this monstrous feminine principle commits all manner of outrage, from shitting on the innocent to laying eggs in others' nests, and so undermines the security of hereditary transmission; "reproduction outside marriage destroys property and all other forms of masculinist self-representation," as Zerilli comments, "by destroying the legal fiction of paternity," or at least by exposing it as a fiction.[16] Burke's images thus portray the pollution and desecration incumbent on feminine freedom as an affront to civilized domestic life –

so central to the literal and symbolic reproduction of masculine hegemony – while simultaneously representing feminine promiscuity as a threat to sociopolitical order.

Burke's insistence on the importance of the family, then, has a double valence: it is necessary, along with the state, for the restraint of masculine energy and desire; and it also provides a brake on feminine sexual appetites – prone, if unchecked, to adulterous and therefore revolutionary excess. From this perspective, the celebrated passage in the *Reflections* concerning Marie Antoinette reads not as an anachronistic defense of chivalry, but as a very contemporary plea for a requisite discipline in sexual and familial relations, conceived as central to the maintenance of order. For part of what Burke fears in the Jacobin revolt is the unfixing of the proper bounds of feminine and masculine sexual restraint just at the moment when those bounds are more crucial than ever:

> Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defense of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness. (66–67)

If "that generous loyalty to rank and sex" – "the unbought grace of life, the cheap defense of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise" – should disappear in England as it has in France, all distinctions would thereby be lost. Here Burke avows the central role of masculine heterosexual discipline in creating and maintaining social, political, and national order: without "that subordination of the heart" and "that chastity of honor" – without, that is, an ideological apparatus for carefully controlling and sublimating men's sexual energy – social life threatens to devolve into an uncivilized chaos of anarchic forces and desires. And if the feminine proprieties – "the pleasing illusions," "the sentiments which beautify and soften private society," "all the decent drapery of life" (67) – that should restrain masculine energy were to be cast aside, either by men or by women themselves, then the result in Burke's estimation would be the destruction of civil society.

Thus Burke's emphasis on securing a "family settlement" of property and government also involves settling the affective and libidinal forces at work among women and men in and on particular individuals, be they husbands, wives, or children. Centering his affections on his family, a

father–husband simultaneously finds an appropriate channel for desire and supports the necessarily hierarchical and fixed system of benefits and privileges that structure the social order; just as "no Prince appears settled unless he puts himself into the situation of the Father of a Family," as Burke wrote during the Regency crisis, no lesser man can be truly loyal to his sovereign unless he acquires the same curb on his appetites.[17] A proper mother–wife, who lays no eggs in any nest but her own, similarly requires near kin to accommodate her libidinal investments; thus she will come to represent in her own person "the pleasing illusions," the principle of womanhood worthy of a glorious respect, while insuring the reproduction of familial life at a number of different levels. The ideal Burkean family, in short, stands as the embodiment of "public affections," which "create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment," "required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law" (*Reflections* 68): and while "the law is male," as Terry Eagleton aptly remarks, "hegemony is a woman."[18] On the sanctity of this private entity rests public, national, and imperial security.

The prophylactic rhetoric of the *Reflections* therefore depends on representing the best means of English resistance to the French disease as the patriarchal, property-bearing family, construed as the natural and proper school for attaching individuals first to their own "little platoon" (41), and second to the broader family of the state. In this light, Jacobinism can best be understood as the principle of opposition to that order which undoes the hierarchical, unfixes the passions, and unsettles the family and the nation – "the dissolution of civil society as such," in Eagleton's words, "and thus a subversion of the very notion of government through the affections."[19] What France threatens to become in its breaking of the patriarchal compact, Burke is determined England shall never be: but closer to home, the sister kingdom presents an even more striking model for how the subversion of order that Burke associates in the *Reflections* with English radicalism and French Jacobinism has already produced chronic disaffection in Ireland.

In his late apologia, *Letter to a Noble Lord,* Burke portrays his duties to Ireland and England as different in degree, but not in kind. With regard to Ireland, he writes that "my endeavour was to obtain liberty for the municipal country in which I was born, and for all descriptions and denominations in it." But Britain had a larger claim: "Mine was to support with unrelaxing vigilance every right, every privilege, every

franchise, in this my adopted, my dearer and more comprehensive country" (*Writings and Speeches* 167). His stance here as elsewhere demonstrates what Thomas H. D. Mahoney has called Burke's "imperial mentality," whereby the interests of Ireland, however significant in their own right, were all the more important insofar as they accorded with – or deviated from – those of the "more comprehensive country" of Great Britain.[20]

An active, multifaceted Irish opposition was, however, articulating those differences of interest with increasing volubility in Burke's time. The elements in Ireland contending for political control in the latter half of the eighteenth century included those at Dublin Castle who distributed patronage and "managed" the Irish parliament; after 1782, those Irish parliamentarians anxious to wrest a broader measure of autonomy from England; an emergent urban catholic bourgeoisie centered in Dublin who sought full access to the political process; and the presbyterian dissenters of Ulster who suffered under disabilities of their own. Spurred on by the example of the North American colonists, patriot groups within Ireland such as the Volunteers, originally formed as a militia group in 1774, protested both excessive taxation and unequal representation. And the parliamentary agitation that issued in the repeal of Poynings' Act in 1782 gave the Irish parliament greater freedom to legislate for Ireland, but without essentially altering the fact of direct British rule in the form of the Dublin Castle executive.

If landed protestants in parliament had their grievances against the imperial power, so, too, did these less powerful constituencies: prosperous middle-class dissenters and Dublin catholics formed extra-parliamentary associations such as the United Irishmen and the Catholic Committee to push, respectively, for parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation. Most seriously, prospects for an alliance between these groups, each excluded from full citizenship, alarmed both the landed protestant minority in Ireland and the British government in the 1790s, especially in view of the threat from France. And each dominant force moved in its own way – and in its own interests – to stem the tide, the ascendancy by calling for repression and the government by granting concessions to catholics, albeit incomplete and grudging, in the relief bills of 1792 and 1793.[21]

Even as Irish opposition to English rule grew in some quarters, Burke maintained the position on the proper relation between his two countries that he had articulated as early as 1773, in his "Letter to Sir Charles Bingham":

> . . . if it be true, that the several bodies, which make up this complicated mass, are to be preserved as one Empire, an authority sufficient to preserve that unity, and by its equal weight and pressure to consolidate the various parts that compose it, must reside somewhere: that somewhere can only be in England . . . So that I look upon the residence of the supreme power to be settled here; not by force, or tyranny, or even by mere long usage, but by the very nature of things, and the joint consent of the whole body. (*Writings and Speeches* 488)

From an imperial point of view, Burke could imagine only one possible effective center for power and ultimate authority: in the empire, as in the patriarchal family, one head alone could prevail, "by the very nature of things," yet its rule must be such that it could secure "the joint consent" of the governed. Burke's imperial mentality, that is, was predicated on the same hierarchical gendered thinking that structured his approach to other forms of governance, be they national or familial.

Within this version of the imperial family of Great Britain, Ireland figures as a subordinate – perhaps a son or a sister, but more typically a daughter or a wife – whose dependence would be tempered by its treatment at the hands of a just, manly, but not tyrannical father/husband/brother. As part of that family, Ireland was entitled to a limited autonomy, but subject ultimately to its superior's sovereignty, both for its own benefit and Great Britain's: as Burke wrote in "A Letter on the Affairs of Ireland" (1797), his last extant work, "the closest connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, is essential to the well being, I had almost said, to the very being, of the two Kingdoms . . . Ireland, locally, civilly, and commercially independent, ought politically to look up to Great Britain in all matters of peace and of War" (*Writings and Speeches* 675). A vital factor in the empire, Anglo-Ireland was said to control its own sphere of affairs, yet had of necessity to bow to the dominating patriarch who sanctioned and circumscribed that control in its own imperial interests.

But Burke's comments to Bingham also register the significant barriers to Irish recognition of English supremacy, for from the point of view of more than one dissenting Irish interest in the 1780s and 90s, English sovereignty over Ireland was read precisely as a matter of "force, or tyranny"; nor could "long usage," by which he refers to the doctrine of prescription, really be said to apply to a country in which conquest had to be perennially renewed, a point that Burke himself would make at critical moments in the 1790s. Within Ireland, multiple constituencies pursued their often conflicting agenda; indeed, the historians Thomas Bartlett and Kevin Whelan have each argued that this was

exactly the way Pitt's government wanted it, in effect playing off one interest against another so as to keep all elements in a perpetual state of internecine crisis.[22] Securing "the joint consent of the whole body," divided as it was by class, creed, and national identifications, could never have been an easy task, even under the best of conditions. But by focusing specifically on the particular impediments to catholic citizenship, as did the British government from the 1770s, Burke attempts to demonstrate that the use of force and tyranny against catholic Ireland, far from securing anything like "joint consent," had produced instead ongoing disaffection.

Penal laws passed during the reigns of William and Anne, ostensibly to prevent the spread of catholicism, not only entailed restrictions on religious training and worship, but also, and no doubt more importantly in Burke's eyes, constrained economic opportunities and property-owning for members of the faith: "though garbed as a holy war against popery," as Theodore W. Allen puts it, "this policy was governed mainly by considerations of capital accumulation."[23] Debarred from the franchise, magistracies, army and navy commissions, some branches of the legal profession, the university, and most other forms of education and advancement at home and abroad, catholic men were thus essentially excluded from all the institutions that helped to produce and shape the masculinist ideal of the landed gentleman, even if the laws were unevenly enforced and, significantly, "in no way hindered the steady growth of a middle-class mercantile elite."[24] Many of the laws were repealed during Burke's lifetime: in 1778, catholics were enabled to inherit and sell land on the same basis as protestants; by 1792, catholic men could be called to the bar as barristers and solicitors, were permitted to intermarry with members of other faiths, and granted the right to education; in 1793, the franchise was given to forty-shilling freeholders, and catholic men were admitted to army and navy commissions and to university. They were still, however, excluded from parliament and from certain high offices within the government, with the great mass of catholics of course remaining entirely unenfranchised. Burke's opposition to this restrictive legislation, however, which took written form as early as 1765 in his unfinished "Tracts relating to the Popery Laws," centers not on its inherent injustice to an oppressed class, but on his sense that Ireland could not be reformed or conciliated unless English practices of familial inheritance and domestic affection, so crucial to his

analysis in the *Reflections*, were made equally available to catholics.[25] His antipathy to the penal laws stemmed, that is, from what one might anachronistically call their Jacobinist indifference to familial politics, to the proper settlement of power within the father's hands.

In the *Reflections*, Burke proffers two uses of history for the present: we may read it as "a great volume . . . unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind"; or "it may, in the perversion, serve for a magazine furnishing offensive and defensive weapons for parties in church and state, and supplying the means of keeping alive or reviving dissensions and animosities, and adding fuel to civil fury" (124). Whereas he takes the former as his tactic in the *Reflections*, Burke consciously deploys Jacobinist "perversion" in making his case for securing Irish consent in the revolutionary context: as Whelan concludes, Burke's arguments, "conservative in an English setting, became subversive once transposed to the narrow ground of Ireland."[26]

In his first *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe* (1792), Burke brandishes weapons from the seventeenth-century magazine of Irish history, representing 1688 as the moment at which England consolidated its rule over Irish catholics by brute force, when "the Protestants settled in Ireland, considered themselves in no other light than that of a sort of a colonial garrison, to keep the natives in subjection to the other state of Great Britain" (*Writings and Speeches* 615):

> The new English interest was settled with as solid a stability as any thing in human affairs can look for. All the penal laws of that unparalleled code of oppression . . . were manifestly the effects of national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people; whom the victors delighted to trample upon, and were not at all afraid to provoke . . . every measure was pleasing and popular, just in proportion as it tended to harass and ruin a set of people, who were looked upon as enemies to God and man; and indeed as a race of bigotted [*sic*] savages who were a disgrace to human nature itself. (*Writings and Speeches* 616)

Connecting this most recent colonial conquest of Ireland to the penal laws enacted on its heels, and showing both to be among "the effects of national hatred and scorn," Burke rereads the historical event celebrated in the *Reflections* as the great stabilizing moment of English liberty from a very different perspective in an Irish context. The so-called Glorious Revolution here marks the moment at which the catholic Irish majority was forcibly excluded and violently coerced by the few: "I shall not think that the *deprivation of some millions of people of all the*

rights of the citizens, and all interest in the constitution, in and to which they were born, was a thing conformable to the *declared principles* of the Revolution" (*Writings and Speeches* 614). Although Burke did seek, as Deane contends, to achieve "the reconciliation of the Irish Catholic majority to the Whig settlement,"[27] it is even more significant in my view that Burke dates "the true revolution" in Ireland to 1782, when "the Irish parliament and nation became independent" (*Writings and Speeches* 617), and not to 1688. By this move, Burke suggests that the hegemony he celebrates in England is as yet unestablished in Ireland and, moreover, that its growth has indeed been actively discouraged.

In place of that old relation between conquered enemy and conquering power, Burke proposes one that speaks to the interests of the present as he articulates the current status of the catholic majority:

> . . . to be under the state, but not the state itself, *nor any part of it*, is a situation perfectly intelligible: but to those who fill that situation, not very pleasant, when it is understood. It is a state of *civil servitude* by the very force of the definition . . . This servitude, which makes men *subject* to a state without being *citizens*, may be more or less tolerable from many circumstances: but these circumstances, more or less favourable, do not alter the nature of the thing. The mildness by which absolute masters exercise their dominion, leaves them masters still. (*Writings and Speeches* 598)

Or, as he more succinctly puts it in his *Letter to Richard Burke* (1792), "new *ascendancy* is the old mastership" (*Writings and Speeches* 644). In the 1790s, granting catholic Irishmen the right to sit in parliament as well as to elect its members, on the same (limited) terms as citizenship was extended to (some) Englishmen, would make them "part of" the state: no longer "mere subjects of conquest" (*Writings and Speeches* 599), but persons capable of fully and freely contributing to the empire, economically and politically. The movement from subjection to citizenship, from dominance to hegemony, from the brute violence of seventeenth-century coercion to the willing affection of eighteenth-century consent, is what Burke seeks to promote.[28] Arguing from natural law in the "Tracts relating to the Popery Laws," he asserts that while the people "are presumed to consent to whatever the Legislature ordains for their benefit" (*Writings and Speeches* 454), "no one can imagine . . . an exclusion of a great body of men . . . from the common advantages of society, can ever be a thing intended for their good, or can ever be ratified by any implied consent of theirs" (455). Repealing the penal laws would release Irish catholics from "subjection," which Burke equates with "the most shocking kind of servitude" (*Writings and Speeches* 642) in the *Letter to*

Richard Burke, and so encourage growth of the "public affections" which their implementation had stunted. He seeks, that is, to close the gap between "civil servitude" and full citizenship – a gap most visibly pernicious, in his view, at the level of family relations.

Burke consistently criticizes the penal laws on the grounds that they undermine a father's authority over his children and his estate. Instead of primogeniture, by which an eldest son inherited his father's land and other property, the penal legislation had mandated gavelkind (repealed in 1778), whereby an estate was divided equally among all of a man's male children, thus obstructing the consolidation of assets in one son's hands.[29] For the seventeenth-century English, replacing primogeniture with gavelkind had been a strategic move in securing the subjection of conquered catholics, preventing them from rebuilding their economic and political power as landholders. As Burke sympathetically puts it in the "Tracts," by these laws "the Landed property of Roman Catholicks should be wholly dissipated; and . . . their families should be reduced to obscurity and indigance [*sic*], without a possibility that they should be restored by any exertion of industry or ability, being disabled . . . from every species of permanent acquisition" (*Writings and Speeches* 437), with "industry" and "ability," balanced by the "permanent acquisition" that primogeniture enables, being precisely the Burkean recipe for the stable family/state. "Deprived of the right of Settlement, no person who is the object of these Laws, is enabled to advance himself in fortune or connection by Marriage" (*Writings and Speeches* 437), thus shutting off another route for catholic men to consolidate landed power and the cultural and political authority that accrued to it.

In their economic and political effects, the laws also determined familial relations in other ways that Burke found highly suspect. For example, a further penal stipulation (also repealed in 1778) had enabled an eldest son, upon conforming to the Church of Ireland, to reduce his catholic father to an estate for his life only, with the permanent, heritable rights to the property given over immediately to the son. "By this part of the Law, the tenure and value of a Roman Catholick, in his real property, is not only rendered extremely limited, and altogether precarious" – which to Burke's way of thinking would be bad enough – "but the paternal power in all such families is so very much enervated, that it may well be considered as entirely taken away" (*Writings and Speeches* 438). Since, to Burke, paternal power within the family forms the foundation for social order, the penal laws are not merely out of step with the needs of empire, but directly subversive of them. The new

conditions of hegemonic control in the late eighteenth-century empire require that discipline begin at home: the rebellion of sons against their catholic fathers, which the penal statutes explicitly encourage, is counter to the interests of patriarchal authority, in the family and in the state.

Unsurprisingly, Burke is also especially concerned in the "Tracts" about keeping unruly wives in check and indicts the penal laws, "not satisfied with calling upon Children to revolt against their father" (*Writings and Speeches* 440), for breaching patriarchal control in this particular as well. A newly conforming wife and mother, by act of law, could gain greater authority over her dependent children, who might be taken from their father's custody for education in their new faith; catholic fathers would, however, remain responsible for financially maintaining those children until they came of age. While Burke acknowledges that "the Case is exactly similar" (*Writings and Speeches* 441) if the father conforms, since the nonconforming mother would then lose her children to him, he looses his rhetorical ire only on the abrogation of paternal rights and the potential rise in feminine power:

> . . . if the Wife should chuse to embrace the protestant religion, from that moment she deprives her husband, (whether she will or no) not only of all management of all his Children, but even of that satisfaction in their society, which is, perhaps, the only indemnification, a parent can receive for the many heavy cares and sollicitudes [*sic*], which attend that anxious relation . . . if she may, whenever she pleases, subtract the Children from his obedience and protection she must, by that hold, acquire one of the strongest sources of power and superiority over her husband. (*Writings and Speeches* 440–41)

The penal laws thus err again in granting power to those who should be legally as well as morally, politically, and socially subordinate; in seeking to encourage conformity to one arm of the state, the established church, they undermine the power of another, the patriarchal family. To reduce or limit a husband's coercive power over his wife and their children, or his other property, prevents the establishment of proper masculine authority: and so, in Blakemore's words, "the Popery Laws turn both wife and children against the father by suborning them with the very paternal power that has been appropriated."[30] Under such laws, the condition of catholic Ireland proleptically figures that of revolutionary France, with Irish wives and sons holding the powers of usurpation in their very own hands.

By eliminating religion as a disability, Burke thus hoped to reinvest power in Irish catholic men, not as catholics, but *as men*, who would thereby become full sharers in political power and full enforcers of

imperial security. Religious disabilities had deleterious domestic effects insofar as they prevented reproduction of the patriarchal family norm; moreover, they kept catholic eyes turned toward France and away from domestic (British) ties, while they made Irish protestants unduly suspicious of their catholic countrymen, and so more likely to sympathize with co-religionists abroad than with catholic neighbors at home. Burke's argument for repeal of the laws in the "Tracts" thus rests, as would his case in the *Reflections*, on his appeal to the domestic affections, with "domestic" bearing in this case both a familial and a national valence. Burke entreats protestants to put their nation, conceived across sectarian lines, first:

> . . . a number of persons['] minds are so formed, that they find the communion of Religion to be a close and an endearing tie, and their Country to be no bond at all; to whom common altars are a better relation than common habitations and a common civil interest; whose hearts are touched with the distresses of foreigners . . . But to transfer humanity from its natural basis, our legitimate and home-bred connections; to lose all feeling for those who have grown up by our sides, in our eyes, of the benefit of whose cares and labours we have partaken from our birth; and meretriciously to hunt abroad after foreign affections; is such a disarrangement of the whole system of our duties, that I do not know whether benevolence so displaced is not almost the same thing as destroyed, or what effect bigotry could have produced that is more fatal to society. (*Writings and Speeches* 461)

By the removal of catholic disabilities, all Irishmen would recognize what they held in common rather than what separated and differentiated them: "legitimate and home-bred connections" – growing up together, sharing a common national identity, being both Irish and British – should take natural precedence over "foreign affections." By recasting the relationship between Irish catholic and protestant men in these terms, and so seeking to produce across religious lines the fraternal bonds that Benedict Anderson's work posits as fundamental to nation-formation, Burke encourages the growth of domestic alliances, familial affections, and the homosocial bonds of citizenship as one masculinist solution to national and imperial fragmentation.[31]

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of Burke's analysis in shaping liberal discourse on Ireland in the nineteenth century: it takes hold formally and ideologically in the literary fictions of Edgeworth and Owenson, and in the political fictions of Mill, Arnold, and other Victorian intellectuals. While it has been the fashion in some quarters to

dismiss Burke for the positions he took, his writings should be central to any investigation of English fictions about Ireland if only because he looked steadily at the causes of catholic Irish disaffection and located them not in essentializing concepts of race or religion, but in the damages done to the many in the interests of the few: the penal laws "divided the nation into two distinct bodies, without common interest, sympathy or connexion; one of which bodies was to possess *all* the franchises, *all* the property, *all* the education" (*Writings and Speeches* 597). Burke's rhetoric may well be deliberately exaggerated here: historians debate the extent to which the laws were actively enforced, and his own arguments tend to minimize the impact of denominational splits among protestants and differing class interests among catholics by emphasizing a binary or sectarian division. Yet his focus on the concrete material and social deprivations sanctioned and forwarded by the penal laws provides an important historical context for reading those representations that follow. For if, by the standards some subsequent writers were to deploy, Ireland's differences and deficiencies appeared intractable or irremediable, Burke argued that those differences – or perceptions of the Irish as different – were in good part historically produced by English rule; he claimed that economic and political disabilities determined the national character and conduct of the Irish, not the other way around, and resulted in perpetual civil unrest. The very circumstances that Burke construes as producing Irish disaffection and difference – sometimes conveniently forgotten, sometimes strategically remembered by his nineteenth-century heirs – would be represented in many subsequent texts as attributable only to the racial, national, gendered character of the Irish themselves.

When Burke looked at Ireland from his imperial vantage point, he saw Irish vulnerability to France and to sectarian conflict stemming from disaffection below, exploitation above, and especially from the absence of a stabilizing middle. The lack of a powerful catholic landed class that could command widespread loyalty and so take a share in ruling the nation meant that no colonized native stratum mediated between rulers and ruled; as a result, the English colonial system had not solicited what Whelan calls "the crucial bonding force that gave political systems their endurance – the affection of the people who lived under them."[32] In this absence or lack we may also read what has been taken as one emblem of Ireland's difference from England, an absence with considerable consequences for Irish politics and economics, and for nineteenth-century representations of Ireland: there was no Irish middle

class to do the ideological dirty work of securing consent to rule from above in exchange for a measure of social authority.[33] Prescribing assimilation rather than conquest, consensual rule over coercive legislation, the Burkean paradigm for attaching Ireland to England required the development of ideological instruments that would promote these ends, arts of peace rather than of war, of influence instead of domination: in the revolutionary 1790s in Ireland, amidst the struggle for political representation and reform waged largely by and for men, it is perhaps not surprising that such work fell to protestant women. Burke's project finds its ideological home in the feminine cultural sphere of the novel, and especially in the hands of Maria Edgeworth.

The Burkean view of the unruly family as source and site of social and political disorder thus provides my heuristic key to Edgeworth's similarly conceived representation of Irish life before the Union in *Castle Rackrent* (1800) as riddled by the failure of a native Irish patriarchy properly to propagate itself. In its anglicizing discourse on language, and its representations of gender, class, and national formations as they shape and are shaped by matters of inheritance and property, *Castle Rackrent* exhibits a formal and thematic drive to represent a version of what has been in Ireland, "before the year 1782," that also hints at what should be, after the upheavals of 1798. Adhering to a Burkean paradigm rather than "[querying] the basis of the colonial relationship itself,"[34] *Castle Rackrent* locates the historical disruptions and discontinuities of Irish life within the fractured family whose history it emplots: like Burke, Edgeworth understands Ireland as necessary to an imperial Great Britain, albeit subordinate to it. In the novel's representation of Ireland under the penal system, we will see as well how the attempt to consolidate colonial rule requires the representation of at least some of the competing elements that most threaten its hegemonic aim.

In recent years, critical attention to *Castle Rackrent* has largely and effectively focused on its colonial politics; in the effort to locate both its author and its primary narrator in relation to the story the novel tells, the ambiguities of Thady Quirk's voice and position have been especially scrutinized. Some critics interpret Thady as a willing conspirator against the last of the Rackrents rather than as a loyal if short-sighted devotee of what he calls "the family." Tom Dunne describes Thady as "a Caliban in the guise of a quaint stage-Irish Ariel, his devious and false servility a direct product of the colonial system, and destined, through his crucial aid for his son, to be its nemesis"; Robert Tracy likewise claims that "Thady is not naive," but rather "well aware that the more

foolishly the Rackrents behave, the more he and his family will prosper."[35] Also assigning a subversive agency to Thady's acts and consciousness, other critics read his designs as challenging those they attribute to his creator, representing Edgeworth's project, by contrast with Thady's, as a deliberate effort to clear away the crumbling ground of the eighteenth-century Irish order so as to introduce in its place a rational and enlightened alternative to misrule. Terming her fiction "not an analysis but a symptom of the colonial problem," and reading her *oeuvre* as "documents in the 'civilizing mission' of the English to the Irish," Deane in particular ascribes to Edgeworth a colonizing aim.[36] My reading of Edgeworth's position suggests, rather, that we need to historicize her work within the context provided by the Burkean reading of eighteenth-century Ireland. In that frame, we may assess it as an effort to construct a mediating stance that would bridge the gap between what had been and what she thought could be: a colonial project, to be sure, but one that is defined against both those that preceded it and some of those contemporary with it.

The contours of Edgeworth's project are shaped in good part by her family's anomalous position as liberal Anglo-Irish landlords in late eighteenth-century Ireland. Unlike the absentees whose indifference to their Irish tenants Edgeworth was strongly to criticize in such later works as *Ennui* (1809) and *The Absentee* (1812), her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, had returned to Ireland from England in 1782 – an auspicious year for those with patriot dreams of renovating Ireland – "with a firm determination," in his words, "to dedicate the remainder of my life to the improvement of my estate, and to the education of my children; and farther, with the sincere hope of contributing to the melioration of the inhabitants of the country, from which I drew my subsistence."[37] Because the Edgeworths understood themselves to be a breed apart from their improvident and uncaring ancestors, on whose history Maria drew in writing *Castle Rackrent*, Richard took it upon himself to correct the wrongs that had been done to his estate and his tenants in a spirit of benevolent paternalism.[38] In this endeavor, as in many literary ones, Edgeworth served as her father's assistant, and ultimately his successor, carrying on his program until she was well into her seventies.

That program, enacted in both estate management and literary representation, clearly located the Edgeworths in a minority position within their own class in the 1790s. Marilyn Butler characterizes them by contrast with other landed protestants as "willing in principle to accept Catholic emancipation, and to vote with various degrees of

commitment for 'progress,' or a gradual amelioration of poverty, backwardness and sectarian hatred by way of education and agrarian reform."[39] Disaffected from the ascendancy, early enthusiasts for the French revolution, actively hostile to the kind of exploitation catalogued in *Castle Rackrent*, the Edgeworths thus combined some of the ideological commitments of Irish radicals with an enlightened landed interest in making Ireland peaceful and productive; indeed, as Joep Leerssen has recently noted, the late Enlightenment tradition of patriotism provides one of the important, if neglected contexts for reading the novel.[40] Via Thady's narration and several of the editorial notes, *Castle Rackrent* reveals some of the abuses that had been perpetrated against the agrarian Irish by landlords in Ireland and by the English and Irish agents and middlemen who represented their interests: in this aspect, the novel reads as a plea for reform. To win the rulers to an appreciation of those they had unjustly ruled; to make those rulers capable of inspiring the kind of (misplaced) loyalty the Rackrents inspire; to minimize sectarian divisions in the interests of social harmony: in these particulars, Edgeworth comes very close to Burke in her prescriptions, as in her understanding of the family as the primary medium for both disorder and reform.

Locating Edgeworth in this way requires attention not only to the story her novel tells, but also to how she tells it, to what ends and in what interests. In the text's dual representation of Thady's voice alongside the more authoritative, identifiably English voice of an editor, the competing languages of *Castle Rackrent* offer a primary textual site for examining how Edgeworth defines her project against both a colonized "native" voice and an aristocratic idiom that she identifies with abuses of power. Defending "the prevailing taste of the public for anecdote" against censure and ridicule, the Preface to *Castle Rackrent* critiques historical writing for its devotion to a particular style: "the heroes of history are so decked out by the fine fancy of the professed historian; they talk in such measured prose, and act from such sublime or such diabolical motives, that few have sufficient taste, wickedness, or heroism, to sympathize in their fate."[41] The editor purports to prefer "a plain unvarnished tale" of the kind that Thady will offer over "the most highly ornamented narrative" (62), and this literary preference has a particular class valence to it. Aristocratic vices, linguistic and moral, are associated with a rhetorical power unjustly employed to advance the claims of a literary élite; linguistic sophistication – the writing of those who make it difficult to read them – duplicitously conceals where it promises to reveal,

obscures where it should enlighten. Edgeworth's linguistic project may be understood in part, then, as an attempt to create a counterhegemonic alternative to aristocratic discourse, undertaken in "the name of metropolitan knowledge and linguistic correctness."[42]

Considered from an imperial perspective, and following along the lines of Anderson's influential analysis, we may also interpret Edgeworth's Preface as an effort to institutionalize a newly national language – one that would unite rather than divide, consolidate rather than separate – as the medium for imagining the political community of "Great Britain" across sundry geographical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries.[43] Then as now, English language use marked and was marked by differences of culture, class, and ethnicity.[44] Competence in "refined language," determined in part by access to class privilege, was a prerequisite for political power: as John Barrell suggests, the emergent English middle classes "to whom most works on language practice were addressed . . . might hope, by the acquisition of the linguistic equivalent of a property qualification, to become fully enfranchised members of the language community," thus paving the way for access to other forms of representation as well.[45] In addition to its class dimension, a specifically English linguistic standard was also a vital instrument in creating a normative sense of the English nation, with full membership accruing to those who could speak and write in the newly "correct" fashion; "differences of provincial and idiosyncratic usage," although tolerated, could not achieve the power of the new "*national* standard."[46] Whatever linguistic contributions Irish, Scottish, and Welsh writers and speakers made to the United Kingdom were to be marginalized within the emerging national – and, increasingly, imperial – language canon. And Gary Kelly locates the standardizing impulse more specifically in the professional middle classes, which "used ['standard English'] as the basis for a spoken dialect of their own that would be of no particular place" in the production of "a new 'national' class."[47]

From this angle, Edgeworth's editorial discourse bears the marks of its time in that it argues for a middle way between aristocratic and provincial idioms, a third term that represents itself as superior to both because potentially more accessible to all speakers and writers of English, and so more effectively "national." The Preface thus constructs the editor's language, albeit obliquely, as a middle ground between two extremes. The editorial apparatus developed over the course of the text's production – not only a preface, but also a glossary and explanatory notes – takes up standard English, bearer of the new national/

imperial character, as against the over-refinement of the aristocratic idiom and the insufficient dialect of the novel's primary narrator. Most readers of *Castle Rackrent* agree that the continuous presence of the editorial voice first heard in the Preface, "a literate and learned consciousness very different from that of the 'illiterate' narrator," in Kelly's words, "dominates the text as a whole while operating from its margins" and speaking with a decidedly different accent from the narrative proper.[48] As a "vulgar" speaker, Thady is therefore implicitly represented by the Preface as one of "those who, without sagacity to discriminate character, without elegance of style to relieve the tediousness of narrative, without enlargement of mind to draw any conclusions from the facts they relate, simply pour forth anecdotes, and retail conversations, with all the minute prolixity of a gossip in a country town" (62). Thady's storytelling, indebted to an oral tradition and represented as a product of one of the regional or provincial dialects that standard English displaces, thereby functions as the other pole to aristocratic discourse. Against the shortcomings of the two extremes, Edgeworth's editor defines a literate, middling, national style and a literate, middle-class, national reader.

The deauthorizing of Thady's voice in the interests of a middle position defined against specific class and national differences in language may also, by extension, deauthorize the provincial story he tells, yet the fact of its being represented in dialect form surely calls readerly attention to it. Thady's digressive story indicts the falsity and inadequacy of the Rackrent aristocrats, which might be Edgeworth's way of killing two birds with one stone: he exposes himself as an improper speaker even as he simultaneously exposes his masters' insufficiency as proper rulers. At the same time, as Ina Ferris remarks, Edgeworth's decision to deploy the Irish vernacular "[acknowledges] difference and discontinuity" between England and Ireland; or, to put it another way, Edgeworth herself introduces the problem of linguistic and cultural otherness within the United Kingdom which the apparatus then works so hard to contain.[49] Her project thus must be situated as an effort both to raise and, at least narratively, to resolve the problem of how to deal with Irish difference, as constituted by and through Thady's voice, within a kingdom that seeks to constitute itself as politically united, even if linguistically and culturally divided. By introducing that difference as a novelistic matter of linguistic as well as cultural fact, Edgeworth initiates an important and apparently inexhaustible strand of discursive production about Ireland, for in both its form and content, Thady's

narrative both presents the Irish as different from the English and calls out for their correction. In this way, *Castle Rackrent* attempts the work of mediation, in its featuring of Thady's voice, and that of anglicization, in its pervasive rendering of that voice as inadequately authoritative, as insufficiently English. That these two kinds of ideological work are not identical to one another may help to explicate the multivalence of the text itself, and the many plausible readings it has generated.

In the linguistic project Edgeworth undertakes, we may also find, I think, a fitting emblem for Union itself in this period: like that perceived solution to the political impasse between England and Ireland, *Castle Rackrent* reinscribes Ireland's dependent and inferior status by linguistic means, even as it attempts to establish a basis for merging or marrying two unlike entities so that they would become part of a national or imperial whole. The historian Oliver MacDonagh interprets the consequences of the Union in a similar light when he writes that "the need to treat Ireland as a subordinate collided constantly" over the course of the nineteenth century "with the policy of converting her into a component of an integrated society in the British Isles."[50] In an imperial union of unequals, only one partner can take precedence, as Burke would argue, and that one must be English. Yet Edgeworth wonders, near the conclusion of the novel, "whether an Union will hasten or retard the melioration of this country," with its most likely immediate result being that "the few gentlemen of education, who now reside in this country, will resort to England" (122). Such a claim betrays her sense that "melioration" will necessarily be carried out by a very few men like her own father, and by herself: hence the anglicizing fervor of all Edgeworth's "Irish" fiction, as well as the need to persuade her English readers to value the nation they will, she hopes, come to incorporate within a greater Britain. Perhaps paradoxically, the first step in Ireland's becoming a part of a united kingdom, and more fit according to Burkean criteria for full partnership in it, would be to recognize and represent its linguistic and cultural difference, as Edgeworth does, not so as to preserve it, but in order gradually to erode it.

As some critics of *Castle Rackrent* have recognized, the disorderly transmission of family property in the novel signals, from an English point of view, a serious disturbance in the Irish social order. In its linking of familial stability to social reproduction of the established relations of property and authority, Burke's celebrated discussion of inheritance in the *Reflections* may serve as the exemplary Whig statement on the matter:

> The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself. It makes our weakness subservient to our virtue, it grafts benevolence even upon avarice. The possessors of family wealth, and of the distinction which attends hereditary possession (as most concerned in it), are the natural *securities* for this transmission. (45)

For Burke, familial inheritance, proceeding from father to son through the law of primogeniture, secures "the perpetuation of society." In *Castle Rackrent*, however, "weakness" and "avarice" rule without benefit of "benevolence," as the estate rarely passes on in orderly patriarchal fashion. As W. J. McCormack and Ann Owens Weekes have been first to argue in a systematic way, the disorder of family and property relations, judged by an English standard for measuring stability, marks an important node in Edgeworth's critique of the Rackrents, and here an essential field for anglicizing Irish life by establishing proper gender norms comes into view.[51] For in representing the Rackrents as bad husbands and reckless masters, Edgeworth suggests that the absence of sufficient means for perpetuating the transmission of property in the English style, and the parallel absence of appropriately English familial and marital relations, issue in the need for Union itself, which may assist in the regeneration of Irish society.

That Irish society fell short of the Burkean standard for order before and after 1800 was owing in good part, of course, to the legacy of the penal laws, which had delegitimated traditional Irish land practices even as they had also prevented catholic men from enjoying the protection of the private property rights extended to protestant subjects. Penal restrictions indeed generate the very "family" whose uneven history Thady traces: "by act of parliament," and "seeing how large a stake depended upon it," sir Patrick O'Shaughlin chose to "take and bear the surname and arms of Rackrent" (66) in order to inherit. Thus, as Catherine Gallagher points out, "the O'Shaughlins . . . only possess their legal identity and estate by renouncing their Irish name," and, by implication, their (Irish) religion as well.[52] So the bad behavior of the Rackrents can be directly related to the disturbance in indigenous familial and communal practices that English law had created, and that Burke hoped to amend by instituting gendered English norms for the preservation and transmission of property at the heart of an improved Irish society. Edgeworth's Irish Rackrents in no way live up to the model of English gentlemanliness, with its attendant concerns for property, duties, and continuity, that could secure both familial and social

stability; what is missing from her analysis, however, is precisely Burke's insistent awareness that English penal intervention has produced in part the instability *Castle Rackrent* chronicles.

Edgeworth's narrative is, rather, far more focused on revealing the patriarchal deficiencies and economic improvidence of the Rackrent men than on analyzing the legal and political factors that helped to create their situation: *Castle Rackrent* is, as Tracy describes it, "a chronological account of four successive owners of the Rackrent estates, whose follies and extravagances become an object lesson in how *not* to be an Irish landlord."[53] The mistreatment of their dependents implied by their name aside, the Rackrents and their story achieve a measure of coherence – are indeed primarily constituted as a "family" – only in Thady's recounting of their history, for their actual relations to each other are tenuous at best. The drunken sir Patrick gives up his religion and his name so as to secure the Rackrent estate and pass it on to his son Murtagh; after his sudden death, Patrick's body is "seized for debt" in what those whom Thady terms "the enemies of the family" suspect to be "a sham seizure" arranged by Murtagh "to get quit of the debts" (68) outstanding against the estate. Sir Murtagh proceeds to exploit his tenants to the utmost without mercy, pursues expensive and unsuccessful lawsuits, and sires no heir; upon Murtagh's demise, his younger brother, sir Kit, an inveterate gambler and absentee, inherits and squanders what is left of the family fortune, rackrenting the tenants and behaving dishonorably all around. Finally, the estate passes to sir Condy, the "heir at law," who belongs to "a remote branch of the family" (85); raised among the common Irish catholic children of the town, with an inveterate devotion to whiskey punch, his character is consequently formed far below what his adult station will require. What links these masters is less their common blood than a common inadequacy to their appointed tasks.

Joseph Lew notes that the Rackrents are virtually "incapable of producing direct heirs; the estate always descends to a junior branch, in a process of irreversible decline."[54] The breaks in the transmission of the estate signal the concomitant degeneracy of the family itself, Edgeworth implies, and contribute to the social instability of the world she portrays: "the generations of Rackrent do not need generation to propagate themselves," as with the exception of Murtagh, Rackrent men inherit only by "claims traced along precarious routes of male protestant descent," as well as through the original dispossession of the nameless catholic landholder that the penal laws induce.[55] Each of the heirs, with

the partial exception of Condy, is far more concerned with the conditions of his own present possession than with the prospects for future inheritors of the estate. Such improvidence – in the double sense of both wasteful extravagance of resources and an inability to perceive (or to care about) the consequences of one's behavior for those who will follow – is narratively registered in the chronicle form of the novel, in which the breaks between each heir's possession signify the lack of consistent and enduring relations among them, the relations that should ensure a Burkean continuity and stability.[56] "One of the first and most leading principles on which the commonwealth and the laws are consecrated," writes Burke in the *Reflections*, has been put in place

> lest the temporary possessors and life-renters in it, unmindful of what they have received from their ancestors, or of what is due to their posterity, should act as if they were the entire masters, that they should not think it among their rights to cut off the entail or commit waste on the inheritance by destroying at their pleasure the whole original fabric of their society, hazarding to leave to those who come after them a ruin instead of an habitation. (83)

Narratively, then, as well as socially, the Rackrent "story" features discontinuity both within the Irish context and between the Irish world and the English one, a discontinuity emblematized by the failure of succession that only (English) patriarchal intervention can repair.

In its focus on unmanly Irish improvidence, however, Thady's chronicle – like the *Reflections* – tends to obscure the place of women in the reproduction of heirs and transmission of property: the degeneracy of the Rackrent men, foregrounded by Edgeworth (and by most of her critics), also entails a less visible but no less vital absence of "generation" on the part of their wives, a point Edgeworth makes with considerable irony throughout the text.[57] Rackrent marriages are made for money, not for love, yet the women who make these marriages are no mere victims; as Weekes observes, "each wife escapes upon her husband's death, her fortune intact and indeed in two cases increased."[58] Sir Murtagh chooses his wife, for example, on the basis of the fortune she will bring: he "looked to the great Skinflint estate" (68) as a means of enhancing his own purse. But his wife is every bit as grasping as he is, and runs a so-called charity school only so her duty-yarn may be spun *gratis* by its pupils (69). As Edgeworth herself did in fictionalizing John Langan for the market, many of the novel's women seek to make material profit from the colonial project and so are directly implicated in it. Like their husbands, Rackrent women display a decided preference

for portable property and no interest in securing the means of its transmission; with no commitment to "the family," they simply leave it behind when their husbands die or when things go bad. That they do not reproduce biologically may be taken as emblematic of the disorder Edgeworth locates in familial and social relations: themselves treated as the site and medium for property exchange between men, the ladies Rackrent fetishize what they accumulate, seeing self-interest as the limit of their interest.

Within the family economy, these women thus exercise several different kinds of power. Despite the fact that they are largely used as a means of access to property, they resist husbandly efforts at economic and personal control and appropriate whatever resources they can. For example, sir Murtagh's nameless lady exacts from the tenants everything owing to her – "duty fowls, and duty turkies, and duty geese" (69) – for as long as she remains their mistress, and carries off all the household furnishings along with her when her tenure ends; sir Kit's wife – whom Thady calls "the Jewish" – survives seven years' imprisonment without ever surrendering her diamond cross to her importunate spouse.[59] Their ostensible dependency on men masks the fact that the patriarchal system of property transmission, properly ordered, depends in great part on women, yet not one of the three Rackrent wives to whom we are introduced bears a child, with Patrick's (presumed) wife, mother to Murtagh, going entirely unmentioned by Thady, and Condy's mother similarly unrepresented. Within the constraints of patriarchal limitations on feminine agency, the Rackrent women thus resist their subordination by spurning their "natural" reproductive role and remaining childless. The lack of female subordination in this important arena of patriarchal control is another sign of how far short Irish affairs fall of the Burkean model Edgeworth implicitly supports.

The Rackrent wives are neither all-powerful nor utterly powerless: they simply take advantage, when they are able, of what rights they do have in order to secure their own futures. Unlike their husbands, not one of them dies in the course of the novel – although the last, Isabella, is "disfigured in the face ever after by the fall and bruises" (121) she incurs on her departure from house and husband in returning to her family of birth, in what Thady seems to portray as fit punishment for her lack of loyalty to "the family." But female disorder, licensed by patriarchal misrule, is only one of the forces that unsettles the Rackrent settlement, for the hereditary improvidence of the Rackrents does have its price. The ultimate passing of the estate from sir Condy's hands into Jason

Quirk's, expedited by Condy's indifference and Jason's unerring sense, makes for one of *Castle Rackrent*'s few acts of primogeniture, with an odd twist. Giving up his former religion to become an attorney, just as old sir Patrick renounced his so as to inherit in compliance with the penal laws, the conforming protestant son receives the legacy of land and family that is just as much – if not, in a sense, more – the creation of his poor catholic father as of his equally impoverished protestant master.[60]

What Iain Topliss calls the "self-impelled extinction" of the Rackrents thus ostensibly marks the beginning of a new line, the Quirks, which with Jason at its head promises to be far more provident in conserving, or even expanding, its property: Jason puts aside the degenerate decadence of the Rackrents in favor of the rationalizing and legalistic power to which he gains access.[61] Some critics have read Jason's assumption of the Rackrent estate rather as a return of the Gaelic repressed: for Dunne, the concluding movement of the novel suggests that "the Quirks achieved the common peasant dream, noted in many contemporary accounts, of repossessing the land which they believed historically and rightfully theirs," while Tracy suggests that such an ending brings on "the nightmare of Anglo-Ireland," in which "one way or another, the Irish peasants will take back the land from its Anglo-Irish owners."[62] But here the impending passage of the Act of Union may help us to read other meanings into Edgeworth's final narrative act in *Castle Rackrent*. For if the future of Ireland indeed lay with the Jason Quirks of the culture, that future would not consist of a peasant society under the improved and improving rule of the Anglo-Irish – to which the Edgeworths, for all their differences with the ascendancy, had always subscribed as the solution to the Irish "problem"; it would be led instead by the emergent catholic Irish middle classes, of which Jason is undoubtedly an avatar Edgeworth cannot approve. In setting even the final actions of *Castle Rackrent* "before the year 1782," or nearly twenty years before the time of writing, Edgeworth implicitly acknowledges the growth of one of the rival powers to Anglo-Irish supremacy which the Act of Union worked to contain, newly literate and partially enfranchised catholic men of increasing property and proportionate disaffection. That acknowledgement, however, by no means implies anything but uneasiness about the prospect.[63]

In her subsequent post-Union fictional representations of Ireland, Edgeworth would not again portray in detail the Irish catholic middle classes as a serious threat to Anglo-Irish hegemony; her focus would

remain instead on advocating "melioration" through the internal reform of the protestant landowning class, which, as I will argue in Chapter Two, she imagined as a hybrid group combining the best of both English and Irish "national characters." The "new habits, and a new consciousness" that the Preface predicts for the Irish "when Ireland loses her identity by an union with Great Britain" (63) could no more include some of the newer Irish identities being forged at that moment, like Jason Quirk's, than it could the older ones of the Rackrents. In the service of establishing the homogeneity that Union implies, not only the Rackrent men and women but the Quirks, too, are discredited, for different reasons and to different ends. And in this sense *Castle Rackrent* is less a nightmare than a dream, insofar as it proposes, through the passing of the Act of Union, to consign the unsettling differences of Irish culture to a vanished – albeit necessarily representable – past.

Yet if, as Eagleton argues in relation to the novel, "the past is an unruly kingdom which must be decisively abandoned," then it also "possesses, at least potentially, *ideological* resources of which the present stands sorely in need."[64] Those Burkean resources are chiefly associated with the domestic affections that the Rackrents, and particularly sir Condy, seem to inspire in all of "their people" but Jason, and which Jason himself cannot command. For while the Rackrent "family" may well be fictive at every level, its ultimate dispossession from the estate calls forth signs of attachment that Thady characterizes as "natural feeling": when the children of the town "were made sensible that sir Condy was going to leave Castle Rackrent for good and all, they set up a whillalu that could be heard to the farthest end of the street"; "when the report was made known, the people one and all gathered in great anger against my son Jason, and terror at the notion of his coming to be landlord over them, and they cried, 'No Jason! no Jason! sir Condy! sir Condy! sir Condy Rackrent for ever!' " (110). However misplaced such affection might have seemed to either Burke or Edgeworth, its power was not lost on them. And it was precisely this power, redirected and rationalized through the creation of family affections, that they sought to harness so as to attach the Irish to English imperial rule.

CHAPTER TWO

Allegories of prescription: engendering Union in Owenson and Edgeworth

When some members of the Irish parliament proposed in 1773 to tax Irish landholders living in England, Edmund Burke opposed the plan.[1] Writing to an Irish peer in his "Letter to Sir Charles Bingham" (1773), Burke speaks of "the happy communion" that should obtain between England and Ireland, and the proposed levy as an affront to it: "What is taxing the resort to and residence in any place, but declaring, that your connexion with that place is a grievance? Is not such an Irish Tax, as is now proposed, a virtual declaration, that England is a foreign country, and a renunciation on your part of the principle of *common naturalization*, which runs through this whole empire[?]"[2] In Burke's view, for the Irish to tax English absentees means to treat them as aliens rather than as fellow subjects under the united imperial crown; acting as if "England is a foreign country" denies it the status of kin. Burke's objective, by contrast, is to stress the identity of interests between the two, as in the analogous rhetoric of family and marriage, rather than their differences or conflicts. He thus masks structural inequality between Ireland and England by emphasizing the commonality among the constituent parts of Great Britain.

Burke's further objections to the proposed tax are based on its pragmatic consequences, "because it does, in effect, discountenance mutual intermarriage and inheritance; things, that bind countries more closely together, than any Laws or Constitutions whatsoever":

> If an Irish heiress should marry into an English family, and . . . great property in both countries should thereby come to be united in this common issue, shall the descendant of that marriage abandon his natural connexion, his family interests, his publick and his private duties, and be compelled to take up his residence in Ireland? Is there any sense or any justice in it, unless you affirm, that there should be no such intermarriage and no such mutual inheritance between the Natives? (*Writings and Speeches* 491)

His example underscores the political function of marriage as a means

of making "the principle of *common naturalization*" a concrete fact embodied in male issue; the family, with its links to the orderly transmission of property, is a central mechanism for achieving that end. Discouraging intimate contact between the natives of England and Ireland would work against the establishment of family connections between them, imperiling the cross-cultural economic and imperial ties Burke wishes to naturalize, in this case by marrying "an Irish heiress" to an Englishman. Intermarriage, then, figures centrally for Burke as an agent in holding together two parts of an always potentially divided kingdom, one in which antagonisms such as Irish support for the absentee tax require material and ideological solutions.

Like the novelists of the revolutionary 1790s, Jacobin and anti-Jacobin alike, Burke translates "political and public issues into private and domestic equivalents," with an eye to what Gary Kelly calls "their domestic, everyday, commonplace consequences."[3] In making his argument against the tax on the basis of both public policy and domestic circumstances, Burke suggests that the "union" of England and Ireland functions as more than just a dead metaphor in the writing and thinking of the time.[4] Binding two nations together in an era of reform is less a matter of passing laws than of creating the institutional and affective links that marriage and family promote and sustain, and of producing concrete embodiments of those links in "common issue" – children with ties to both Irish and English culture. In their focus on begetting and sustaining intercultural ties at the level of intimate personal relations, Burke's remarks nicely prefigure the pattern both Sydney Owenson and Maria Edgeworth would adopt in representing the making of post-Union cross-cultural connections as a marriage plot.

Without minimizing the differences in position between these two authors, conventionally figured by an opposition between Owenson's (Irish) romanticism and Edgeworth's (English) realism, I want to suggest that there is more common ground between them than we usually recognize. Although Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) and Edgeworth's *The Absentee* (1812), the two novels I consider in this chapter, vary dramatically from one another in style, both are centrally concerned with the question of how to set the relationship of Ireland and England after the Union on a new footing. Each novelist imagines that relationship as a merging or marrying of separate and unequal entities, and creates a progressive plot for "attaching" Ireland to England. And both also call for the reformation of a ruling class – itself configured through intermarriage as both English and Irish – that will win the

affections of the Irish people to it. The closure that marriage performs in each text is meant to signify the opening up of a new intercultural alliance between England and Ireland, as well as the shutting down of a violent past. Inevitably, then, the family plots of these intergenerational novels look backward, to the wars of erring fathers and the sexual conduct of dead mothers, as well as forward, to the as-yet-unborn progeny of Union who will be both Irish and English rather than one or the other, under the sign of the Burkean paradigm that casts continuity between and across generations – and nations – as the key characteristic of the healthy family, state, and empire.

Throughout post-Union fiction, the marriage plot operates as a rhetorical instrument for promoting colonial hegemony in making the private relations of romance and reproduction central to the public and imperial good. As what Tony Tanner calls "a means by which society attempts to bring into harmonious alignment patterns of passion and patterns of property," this narrative structure also figures relations of domination and subordination in a colonial context as coextensive with those of gender and class.[5] When the Union of Great Britain and Ireland is "troped . . . as the marriage of the Anglo-Irish [hero] with the Irish [heroine]," in Anne K. Mellor's formulation, "the happy bourgeois family thus becomes the model for colonizer–colonized relationships"; the allegorical plots of Owenson and Edgeworth, like those Doris Sommer examines in the nineteenth-century Latin American context, are "grounded in 'natural' heterosexual love and in the marriages that provided a figure for apparently nonviolent consolidation during internecine conflicts."[6] In ideological terms, the closure that marriage enforces "glosses over the contradictions, the inequities, concealed in the institution of marriage itself," occluding the fundamental disparity of power between partners to union and "[disguising] the asymmetries encompassed within the trope of 'balanced' order."[7] Locating the male protagonist on the side of the dominant national power, the marriage plot in these novels functions as an imperial family plot as well, constructing Ireland as a complementary but ever unequal partner in the family of Great Britain; it maps gender difference and cultural difference together, as if they were interchangeable. With prospective brides and grooms standing in for the nations they represent, brought together by what Katie Trumpener terms "the contrast, attraction, and union of disparate cultural worlds," these mixed marriages do the intercultural work of imaginatively constituting the domestic stability considered so crucial to national and colonial security.[8]

Taken together, the two novels I consider in this chapter demonstrate how questions concerning the legitimacy of English rule in Ireland are raised and ultimately foreclosed by the narrative workings of the intercultural marriage plot. What especially interests me about them is not the binary opposition between a feminine Ireland and a masculine England that they install, or even the relations of inequality that they institutionalize, but the cross-cultural work that each attempts to perform in renegotiating relations between Ireland and England after the Union. Albeit differently conceived in each, both novels emphasize effecting change and reformation within the male partners to union as a prerequisite to its achievement. From this perspective, we can see that the national tales of Owenson and Edgeworth also contain generic elements we more typically associate with the hero's plot in the novel of education, in which the formation of masculine character, as Kelly describes it, "leads to acts of conversion . . . dramatic reversals, enlightenments, transformations in individual character and point of view."[9] The work of Michael Ragussis has established, moreover, that such "figures of conversion" – ostensibly the neutral stuff of comic plots – convey decisively political meanings once we begin to examine their ideological bearings.[10] Seen in this light, that the English protagonist of *The Wild Irish Girl*, the text with which I begin, suffers from a crisis of identity both precipitated and resolved by contact with Ireland suggests that we must look to the hero's plot if we are to understand fully why marriage – and the production of "common issue" that marriage implies – provides the necessary closure for this novel.

Younger son of an English earl with extensive Irish holdings, Horatio retires to Ireland after a course of unspecified debaucheries to prepare himself for a legal career he does not really seem to want.[11] What little he knows about the country is based on stereotypes, derived in part from some desultory boyhood reading, such that "whenever the *Irish* were mentioned in my presence, an *Esquimaux* group circling round the fire blazing to dress a dinner or broil an enemy, was the image which presented itself to my mind; and in this trivial source, I believe, originated that early formed opinion of Irish ferocity, which has since been nurtured into a *confirmed prejudice*."[12] As narrated in his first letter to his sole correspondent, J. D., further identified only as an English Member of Parliament, Horatio's arrival in Dublin initiates the process of correcting these impressions, when he finds to his surprise picturesque surroundings, "elegant refinement of life and manners" (4), and natives

who "addressed me in English, at least as pure and correct as a Thames boatman would use" (2). Setting off for Connaught, where he expects to gain "a fair opportunity of beholding the Irish character in its *primeval* ferocity" (4), the hospitality he encounters along the way (e.g., 18–19) forces him to revise his preconceptions of Irish folk: the actions of the "benevolent and generous beings" Horatio meets undo "the prejudices I had hitherto nurtured against [their] natures" (18). The correction of "prejudices," then, also entails the construction of kinder, gentler, if equally stereotypical views, which replace the corrupt, derivative vision Horatio has previously entertained with what the novel presents as a more attractive, "authentic" perspective.

This is, from one angle, the whole point of *The Wild Irish Girl*: to offer English readers an affirmative version of their new partner in Union, the neighboring but distant island about which they had heard so much bad and so little good. What is under dispute among critics of the novel, however, is how exactly to read the ideological bearings of this sort of project. Joep Leerssen has observed that "the perspective of this type of regionalism is always a perspective on Ireland *from outside*; no matter how sympathetic that perspective may be, no matter how much the propagandistic intent of the novel may be to create a positive understanding for Ireland," he argues, Owenson renders Ireland "a passive object of representation."[13] By contrast, Ina Ferris claims that Owenson's "rewriting of the romance trope of transformative encounter" unsettles "imperial identity in a colonial space through the attainment of a problematic proximity," with Ferris's emphasis on transformation assigning narrative agency to Ireland and the Irish in a way that Leerssen's work would not.[14]

I want to intervene in this debate over how to position Owenson's narrative – as the tool of a colonizing project, or as an agent of its disruption – by recalling the particular cross-cultural coordinates that the text sets. The narrative of Horatio's transformation is indeed framed by an appeal to an English reader, but not just any English reader. The status of the letters' explicit addressee as a member of the English Parliament would inevitably call to mind, for a contemporary reader, the recent abolition of the Irish Parliament; the text thus situates its fictive internal audience among those newly empowered to legislate for Ireland. Owenson's representation of an Ireland as different from English stereotypes as it is from England itself therefore has a patently political dimension: the novel's readers are located within the colonial power dynamic in the place of the rulers, whose opinions and assump-

tions are to be adjusted by and through Horatio as he undergoes his own changes in view. These alterations occur within the English hero and the ruling-class position from which – and to which – he writes, even as his old assumptions undergo further revision by his contact with Irish interlocutors: as Trumpener suggests, Horatio and his English readers "are forced to see their own country from the perspective of its victims."[15]

In this context, Ireland becomes a site of difference, as it is in *Castle Rackrent*, but something other than a "passive" site; the ideological work of the text is not to make a case for effacing Irish difference, but rather to highlight its transformative power. Contact with Ireland, *The Wild Irish Girl* contends, can have radical effects, perhaps even on those English people who only experience it vicariously through Horatio's narration. In this sense, Owenson's project for representing Irishness, however contaminated it may seem by metropolitan politics, can also be understood as an engaged ideological effort to reframe the way in which Ireland is seen from a metropolitan point of view. And by contrast in particular with Edgeworth, Owenson aims especially to affirm elements of Irish culture – to construct and perform a certain sort of "romantic" Irishness, and also to deliver a certain take on the Irish historical past – in their ability to disrupt or unsettle the perspective of her English hero.

The novel proceeds to represent Ireland's effect on Horatio by charting a gradual shift in his perspective. In his reeducation, he moves from a state of uninformed prejudice to a kind of parallel mystification within the frame of romance. Jaded and disenchanted by his past experiences, "the most listless knight that ever entered on the lists of errantry" (26) and "a man whose whole life has been a laugh at romancers of every description" (74), Horatio yet looks out at the new world he encounters through a series of hazy filters, veils, and mists, suggesting a renewed susceptibility to the illusions he claims to have foresworn. "All I had lately seen revolved in my mind like some pictured story of romantic fiction" (42), possessed as he becomes by "the spirit of adventure" (34). Under the sign of romance and the pressure of circumstance, he disguises his real identity as "the son of Lord M—, the hereditary object of hereditary detestation" (45), from Glorvina, the wild Irish girl of the title, and her father, the prince of Inismore, so as to remain a guest at their castle and to become their intimate friend: "already deep in adventure, a thousand seducing reasons were suggested by my newly-awakened heart, to proceed with the romance" (45). Severing himself from his proper identity, which he now first recognizes

as having a specifically political valence in the Irish context, Horatio enters into romance. If, as both Leerssen and Ferris contend, Owenson represents the family at Inismore as existing in a space outside of linear history, then Horatio's residence there is similarly constituted as a break with or from his own history, even if, in the end, that break is not nearly so novel as he imagines.[16]

Horatio's transformation from a "listless knight" to something of a "romancer" in his own right is also effected in part by contact with "a sublime female nature" that humanizes him in a new way by bringing him into "more sincere communion with other people."[17] In a typically Romantic paradox, it is by removing himself from the usual practices of social life – "suddenly withdrawn from the world's busiest haunts, its hackneyed modes, its vicious pursuits, and unimportant avocations – dropt as it were amidst scenes of mysterious subliminity [*sic*]" (42) – that Horatio becomes more authentically social. More importantly, in casting the west of Ireland as a land out of time, an other that both does and does not exist on the same temporal plane as England, Owenson revalues the primitive in accord with what Seamus Deane calls "the perceptible shift" around the turn of the nineteenth century "from the pejorative associations of the idea of the primitive and barbaric to the benign connotations of the spontaneous and original."[18] Weaned away by "scenes of solemn interest" from the " 'lying vanities' " (42) associated with metropolitan aristocratic decadence, Horatio's changing perspective on Ireland figures this shift: instead of the "*primeval* ferocity" he had expected to witness, he describes himself, upon leaving the castle for a short time, as having "lived in an age of primeval simplicity and primeval virtue – my senses at rest, my passions soothed, my prejudices vanquished, all the powers of my mind gently breathed into motion, yet calm and unagitated" (117). Although the concept remains in place, the ideological bearings of the "primeval" have changed. What matters most, in terms of the narrative, is the transformation of the individual that transvaluing Irish difference helps to effect.[19]

Kelly has pointed out that Owenson represents Horatio's revised view of Ireland as tapping "what is authentic and natural in him – his passions, his inner self, rather than his merely social, fashionable self."[20] But the turn to emotion is accompanied as well by a simultaneous turn to reason, as Horatio begins to study Irish history, poetry, and language:

> Newly awakened . . . to a lively interest for every thing that concerns a country I once thought so little worthy of consideration . . . I have determined to resort

to the evidence of time, to the light of truth, and the corroboration of living testimony, in the study of a country which I am beginning to think would afford to philosophy a rich subject of analysis, and to poetry a splendid series of romantic detail. (77)

Taking up "an impartial examination and an unbiassed inquiry" (78) into antiquarian myth and legend, he puts aside his English legal studies in " 'Blackstone and Coke' " (82) for the sake of achieving a truer knowledge of the history in which his own family line is implicated. This double movement – which conjoins the recovery of a "natural" self with a like recovery of an Irish "national" tradition – marks a crucial stage in what *The Wild Irish Girl* represents as Horatio's cure, which is contingent on the dual renovation of sensibility and judgment. Horatio becomes a new man, emotionally and intellectually, by his contact with a "primeval" culture: "going native," in this colonial context, figures as a means of becoming another, better self, with Irishness figured as a humanizing force.

Even as he falls under the spell of romance, Horatio must also confront the historical facts of Irish dispossession, the violence that lies at the very heart of his family history. First becoming acquainted with the effects of the seventeenth-century English conquest of Ireland through his contact with the cultural survivals of the years that preceded it, such as the lament sung by the peasant Murtoch (17), Horatio's education in the historical origins of his family's Irish holdings is yet more significant for his transformation. From the caretaker of the lodge on his father's estate, he learns the full story of how a seventeenth-century prince of Inismore, " 'driven with the rest of us beyond the *pale*' " (27), had " 'flourished greater nor ever' " in Connaught " 'until the Cromwellian wars broke out' "; then " 'the poor old Prince was put to death in the arms of his fine young son . . . by one of Cromwell's English generals, who received the town-lands of Inismore . . . as his reward' " (28). As Horatio instantly realizes upon hearing the story, " 'this English general, who murdered the Prince, was no other than the ancestor of [the earl of M—], to whom these estates descended from father to son' " (28), making Horatio's father the "lineal descendent" (21) of that English soldier, and so the inheritor of the town-lands.

That murdered prince's own descendant, by contrast, lives at the time of the story in the ruins of his ancestor's castle. Reduced to penury by his father's extravagance, the current prince lost his former home to the earl's grasping steward because of his high-handedness, since " 'it did not,' " in the caretaker's words, " 'become [the prince] to look after such matters' " (29). While Owenson attributes the initial fall from

power and prestige to the Cromwellian conquest, all future failings are laid, as in *Castle Rackrent*, at the feet of the Irish themselves, who never manage to recover the ground that they have lost, and indeed only make matters worse by their own improvidence. But if Glorvina's father cannot recover ground, he can at least hold a grudge. Despite the passage of time, and his own father's subsequent mismanagement of what resources remained, the present prince's animus toward " 'his hereditary enemy' " (30) has not abated.

Confronted with his family's bloody legacy, Horatio responds with intensity: "It would be vain, it would be impossible, to describe the emotion which the simple tale of this old man awakened. The descendant of a murderer! The very scoundrel steward of my father revelling in the property of a man, who shelters his aged head beneath the ruins of those walls where his ancestors bled under the uplifted sword of mine!" (32). While he had "always [known] the estate fell into our family in the civil wars of Cromwell," Horatio's new sympathy for things Irish causes him to realize the implications of his familial relation to the country. He "seemed to hear it now for the first time," and the tale makes him "wish my family had either never possessed an acre of ground in this country, or had possessed it on other terms" (32); recognizing the fact of conquest from his new perspective, Horatio desires to effect a dispossession of his own. And the revised terms on which he would like to be heir to Inismore differ significantly from those that history has dealt him: "I almost wished I had been born the lord of these beautiful ruins, the prince of this isolated little territory, the adored chieftain of these affectionate and natural people" (42).[21]

Although Horatio cannot blot out the effects of the past on the present, he can entertain what Owenson presents as a compensatory fantasy. To some extent, Horatio repudiates his lineage as one "descended from assassins" (32) in favor of attaching himself to and identifying himself with the prince, "the adored chieftain" whose very name commands respect and affection from his people, despite (or maybe because of) the fact of his worldly dispossession. In transferring his allegiance from his own family line to the prince's, Horatio seeks another kind of possession, which will undo the harm and guilt of the first: not land, but the natural affection the prince paternally garners, even from Horatio himself. Undoing the conquest, from Horatio's perspective, depends on remembering history so as finally to forget it, on healing the wound of dispossession with the balm of affection.

On the question of cultural identity, then, Owenson advocates that the English hero establish a new affective relation to what his family

already holds by force of conquest in order more thoroughly to possess it: it is a little like coming to love the wife you already own. *The Wild Irish Girl* thus foregrounds the moral dimension of securing consent in its hero's plot, which fulfills what Tom Dunne has called "the primary dynamic function of [Owenson's] characters' confrontations with the past and its legacy – that it should be a healing process, and lead to reconciliation."[22] Just as Joseph Lew has described Owenson, Horatio, too, is "a cultural mediator," faced with the narrative task of mending ancestral enmity between two paternal lines.[23] In order for him to do so, their historical breach must be given full play, resolved through Horatio's active intermediacy. In what amounts to a remaking of his own identity, the English hero's plot in *The Wild Irish Girl* explicitly focuses on how familial and national tensions intersect in the narrative of cross-cultural reconciliation. Such a plot inevitably entails an exploration of the paternal legacy Horatio inherits from his own forefathers; while not the eldest son, he does become, unbeknownst to him for most of the novel, his father's direct heir in preparing himself to carry out the positive aristocratic program of securing Ireland by consent that Owenson endorses.

The advocacy of such a program in the post-Union context operates within discernible limits, as the need for remaking Horatio's identity coexists uneasily with the parallel need for keeping history in its place. In one of the novel's many scenes of instruction, the family chaplain Father John comments on how "the followers of many a great family having anciently adopted the name of their chiefs . . . now associate to the name an erroneous claim on the confiscated property of those to whom their progenitors were but vassals or dependents" (189): this is a position that Kevin Whelan has identified as a tenet both of old catholic families before the repeal of the penal laws and of Defender ideology in the 1790s.[24] In a footnote, Owenson pointedly attributes "this erroneous opinion," often cited by ascendancy politicians in the revolutionary context as a sign of pervasive threat to their rule, only to "some of the lower orders of Irish."[25] "The lineal descendants of those whose estates were forfeited shortly after the English invasion, and during the reigns of James the First, Oliver Cromwell, and William the Third," she argues, consent in the present to what has been settled by law, custom, and time: "*They* consider that . . . 'the interests of justice and utility would be more offended by dispossessing [the present proprietors] than they could be advanced by reinstating the original owners'" (189). Rather than recommend the widespread dispossession of established landholders who

gained their estates by conquest, but have passed them down from father to son for several generations, Father John suggests that wiping out "this false but strongly-rooted opinion" among "the lower orders" will take means other than those used to secure Ireland for England in the first place: "it is not by physical force, but moral influence, the illusion is to be dissolved" (189). In the workings of "moral influence" lie the seeds of cultural change – not a particularly novel idea for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but an especially crucial one in enabling the move from coercion to consent that the production of a lasting colonial hegemony requires.

What conquest in its original dispossession did not achieve might instead, Owenson implies, be the work of those who come to possess in addition to their Irish lands a moral and affective hold over Irish people. While she may concur in spirit with Glorvina's statement that she does not "consider mere title in any other light than as a golden toy . . . sometimes given to him who saves, and sometimes bestowed on him who betrays his country," the quotation from Burke that serves as a footnote to this passage underlines Owenson's fundamental adherence to the notion that aristocratic power, properly exercised, can be a force for good: "he feels no ennobling principles in his own heart, who wishes to level all the artificial institutes" – such as primogeniture or, more salient to *The Wild Irish Girl*, prescription – "which have been adopted for giving body to opinion, and permanence to future esteem" (111). To dispossess landowners of their property, even if that property originally came into their hands by violent and oppressive measures, would open up the possibility that the ongoing legacy of conquest might be the continuation of hereditary antagonisms, rather than the establishment of the intercultural means for repairing them.

The challenge to prescriptive rights that Horatio's inquiry into family history initially poses is thus deflected at a later moment in *The Wild Irish Girl*, with the perceived interests of the present taking precedence over the material injuries of the past. In depicting the direct descendants of those Irish chieftains wronged by conquest as actively consenting to Burke's "artificial institutes," Owenson associates dissent from the Burkean position with error, with "the lower orders," and, by implication, with revolutionary violence of the kind that erupted in 1798. Yet the scrutiny Horatio has given to Anglo-Irish history also potentially subverts what Owenson otherwise seems to want to portray as the accomplished fact of prescription: in these textual traces we can glimpse the fractures in the emergent liberal discourse on Ireland that a gendered

paradigm for Union is mobilized to heal. Turning briefly now to some of Burke's writings on prescription, as a way of fleshing out this context for reading *The Wild Irish Girl*, I hope to show that they have a similar kind of doubleness when it comes to the investigation of origins.

As I have already argued in Chapter One, Burke's reading of so momentous an event as England's Glorious Revolution differs altogether when he comes to consider its effects in Ireland: "it was, to say the truth, not a revolution, but a conquest" (*Writings and Speeches* 614). By demonstrating how the "conquest" of catholics resulted in "the *deprivation of some millions of people of all the rights of the citizens, and all interest in the constitution, in and to which they were born*" (614), Burke engages in a strategic demystification of the very principles he so energetically defends in other rhetorical and political contexts.[26] And a similarly context-specific analysis is at work in Burke's writings on prescription, a topic on which he is far less sanguine than Owenson.

Along with primogeniture, prescription typically functions in Burke's anti-Jacobin texts as the bulwark of landed order. Scandalized by the confiscations in France, he argues in the *Reflections* that "if prescription be once shaken, no species of property is secure."[27] And insecurity of property directly undermines the foundations of familial order on which the social good depends: "nothing stable in the modes of holding property or exercising function could form a solid ground on which any parent could speculate in the education of his offspring or in a choice for their future establishment in the world. No principles would be early worked into the habits" of those destined to rule others (*Reflections* 84). Moreover, challenges to prescriptive rights also operate to disturb the smooth reproduction of the status quo by putting in question the very origins of what passes for the legitimate order. Metaphorically linking the birth of a state to the birth of a child, Burke reads prescription in the *Reflections* as a matter of establishing legitimacy, which depends on securing the caring consent of those who can confer that condition upon it: "all those who have affections which lead them to the conservation of civil order would recognize, even in its cradle, the child as legitimate which has been produced from those principles of cogent expediency to which all just governments owe their birth, and on which they justify their continuance" (145). Under these circumstances, even an infant-state spawned by the violence of conquest might achieve legitimate status, for "mankind would anticipate the time of prescription which,

through long usage, mellows into legality governments that were violent in their commencement" (145).

Even as it makes the positive case for prescription, however, Burke's text also invokes the flip side of its own argument: "if prescription could legitimize any historical fact which began in violence and bad faith through the wholesome passage of time," Tom Furniss remarks, "then it could equally go to work on the new political order being put in place in revolutionary France."[28] Because it is grounded, according to Burke's own words, in "principles of cogent expediency" rather than in any higher claim, legitimacy becomes a matter simply of what we agree to in the making of what Burke calls, in another context, "a currency of [our] own fiction" (*Reflections* 134). It is precisely the arbitrariness of just such a ground to which Burke draws attention in the Irish case, in his critique of the protestant ascendancy.

In his *Letter to Richard Burke* (1792), Burke gives full play to the unsettling reading of prescription, the reading that in the *Reflections* he is far more concerned to repress. On the one hand, he somewhat sardonically counsels landed Irish protestants "to let Time draw his oblivious veil over the unpleasant modes by which lordships and demesnes have been acquired in theirs, and almost in all other countries upon earth" (*Writings and Speeches* 653), in the interest of laying to rest "the bitter memory of every dissention [*sic*] which has torn to pieces their miserable Country for ages" (654). On the other, he reveals the tenuous foundation on which landed protestants build their claims in his exposition of the ascendancy argument for continuing to exclude catholic men from full civil rights: "They would not be so fond of titles under Cromwell, who, if he avenged an Irish rebellion against the sovereign authority of the Parliament of England, had himself rebelled against the very Parliament whose sovereignty he asserted" (654–55). Indeed, if "all titles terminate in prescription" (658), all just as assuredly originate in violence and usurpation. Too minute an inquiry into origins runs exactly counter to the defense of the property rights that landed protestants ostensibly intend to protect.

Taken together, the diverse contexts in which Burke invokes "the solid rock of prescription" (*Writings and Speeches* 657) as a bar against revolutionary disorder only partially support Terry Eagleton's claim that, for Burke, "the sources of society are a subject better left alone."[29] Like *The Wild Irish Girl*, Burke's writings about Ireland suggest that they *cannot* be left alone, even by those, like Horatio and his father, whose

material interests are most threatened by the scandal of violent origins: for until this scandal is acknowledged, it seems, there is no possibility of ever moving beyond it. Moreover, as with the child of (sexual) violence who has legitimacy arbitrarily conferred upon it by others, there is something inherently slippery in the ground of consent on which all these imperial fictions of patriarchy depend.

Turning back to Owenson's novel, we can more readily see how the trope of gendered union symbolically operates to suture the wound re-opened by the inquiry into origins even as it performs its own brand of discursive violence. In a letter to the prince of Inismore that appears late in the novel, Horatio finally confesses that he is not who or what he has appeared to be. Without revealing his true identity, Horatio claims the prince as another father: "I have a father, Sir; this father was once so dear, so precious, to my heart! but since I have been your guest, *he*, the whole world, has been forgotten. The first tie of nature was dissolved; and from your hands I seem to have received a new existence" (222). But even as he has come to know and love the prince, Horatio has entertained a seemingly unattainable wish "to unite this old Chieftain in bonds of amity with my father" (75), the prince's "hereditary enemy" (30): "in some happy moment of parental favour, when all my past sins are forgotten, and my present state of regeneration only remembered, I shall find courage to disclose my romantic adventure to my father, and, through the medium of that strong partiality the son has awakened in the heart of the prince, unite in bonds of friendship these two worthy men, but *unknown* enemies" (115). Heralding the cause of reconciliation, Horatio undertakes the work of creating union, here represented as a matter of homosocially bonding one aristocratic man to another, the English conqueror to the Irish subject. But complicating this otherwise fairly simple plot, with its attendant allegory, is another plot of disguise and deception that runs through Owenson's novel, becoming visible only near its conclusion.

Being barred from the castle when Father John perceives his attachment to Glorvina confirms Horatio's hunch that she is already affianced to another, an Englishman of unknown identity. By information received from Glorvina's nurse, Horatio learns that "a stranger of noble stature" arrived at the castle seeking asylum "on a stormy night, in the spring of 17—, during that fatal period when the scarcely cicatrised wounds of this unhappy country bled afresh beneath the uplifted sword of civil contention" (214). According to the words of "this mysterious visitant," he "was some unfortunate gentleman who had attached

himself to the rebellious faction of the day" (215). Not until the novel's final chapter does Horatio discover, as Glorvina stands ready at the altar of the Inismore chapel, that the man she is intended to marry is none other than his own father. The father, like the son, had gained entrance into and intimacy with the prince's family, in an effort to repair their relations, by disguising his true identity. That he has posed as a United Irish rebel, while his son has masqueraded as an itinerant landscape artist, suggests a difference between the two suitors for Glorvina's hand that troubles their structural similarity.

The father's plot therefore repeats the son's plot or, more precisely, anticipates it, since the earl's relationship to Inismore, occluded from our view for almost all of *The Wild Irish Girl*, actually precedes Horatio's entrance there. An early intuition on Horatio's part is thus confirmed: having suspected that his father's revived interest in Ireland was based on his attachment to some Irishwoman, and himself newly enchanted with all he had seen, Horatio had proclaimed that "never was son so tempted to become the rival of his father" (27). Unknowingly retracing the earl's course, Horatio has inadvertently fulfilled that ambition. As the earl goes on to explain in the letter to Horatio that concludes the novel, he has awakened in Glorvina but a "filial interest"; and, likewise, "the sentiment she inspired [in him] never for a moment lost its character of parental affection" (249), thus defusing the potential charge of intergenerational sexual rivalry. But there is another difference between father and son that also matters here, for whereas Horatio has been bonded to Ireland and the Irish, synechdochically represented in the prince's circle, largely in terms of his personal affection for them, his father proceeds from an explicitly political plan of action in seeking Glorvina as his wife.

Few critics have paid any close attention to this narrative twist in *The Wild Irish Girl*; it is generally taken as a sign of bad plotting, or simply ignored altogether, with Leerssen going so far as to assert dismissively "that the story is a mere thread on which [Owenson] strings the beads of her footnotes."[30] Yet like all the other plots in the novel, the father's plot is important, indeed crucial, to understanding the ideological implications of Owenson's fiction, operating as it does in one of the several overtly political registers of the novel. For the doubling-with-a-difference enacted in each man's choice of disguise – United Irish rebel or landscape artist – suggests more than just the opposition of "civil contention," as expressed in the turbulent events of 1798, to cultural and aesthetic appreciation. It also implies the necessary supersession in

Owenson's schema of the former by the latter, the displacement of political violence by an ostensibly more benign aesthetic. That such a displacement puts into play a violence of its own is best illustrated in Burke's words from the *Letter to Richard Burke*: "All titles terminate in prescription; in which . . . the son devours the father, and the last prescription eats up all the former" (*Writings and Speeches* 658). Anne Fogarty correctly suggests that the fiction of both Owenson and Edgeworth represents "the sins of the fathers" as "cancelled out by the actions of sons who know and experience Ireland in an altogether different fashion."[31] But it is also important to recognize what entailments that filial mode of reparation bears along with it. In the intergenerational terms that *The Wild Irish Girl* deploys, this "last prescription," emblematized by the passage of the Act of Union, will not only "devour" the father and his violent ways, but also, albeit less visibly, will reproduce that violence at another level as (and through) marriage to the daughter. When the ineffectual rebel yields to the conquering artist, the trauma of rebellion is formally sealed by the yoke of (marital) union.

The similarity and difference between father and son are signs of Owenson's narrative commitment in *The Wild Irish Girl* to achieving a "last prescription" that would swallow up even the most recent legacy of conquest, the Rebellion of 1798. As Eagleton remarks, "the problem of form" in the novel "is also a problem of politics," in that Owenson's liberal post-Union fiction raises the very issue of the violent origins of English power in Ireland that its conclusion seeks to lay to rest.[32] But while it is indeed "on the traumatic moment of disinheritance that [Owenson's] historical imagination is fixated," with "the displacing device of marriage" between Horatio and Glorvina offering a symbolic resolution to English–Irish conflict, the work of union that *The Wild Irish Girl* seeks narratively to accomplish is more complexly gendered than Eagleton or most other critics of the novel have perceived.[33] For the heterosexual relations of the marriage plot are primarily mobilized to resolve homosocial relations of property and power between men, in keeping with the dictates of the imperial family romance.

As established in the novel's final chapter, the earl of M— wishes to marry Glorvina only so as to repair the hereditary wrongs done to the prince and his family and, by extension, to improve the lot of all those who live on and around his estate. Addressing the prince, he lays out the motivations for his scheme:

to restore you to independence; to raise your daughter to that rank in life her birth, her virtues, and her talents merit; and to obtain your assistance in dissipating the ignorance, improving the state, and ameliorating the situation of those of your poor unhappy compatriots, who, living immediately within your own sphere, might be influenced by your example, and would best be actuated by your counsel; – such were the wishes of my heart (243)

all properly meliorist ones. The marriage would be the earl's means of doing justice to both father and daughter: "give me a legal claim to become the protector of your daughter, and, through her, to restore you to that independence necessary for the repose of a proud and noble spirit" (251), he asks the prince, imprisoned for debt and near death. And in her desire to do her best for her father, Glorvina makes no objection to the marriage, despite her love for Horatio.

If the proposed union is not exactly loveless, it lacks the affective charge that unites Horatio and Glorvina, for in seeking to marry Glorvina, the earl acts from plan, design, and principle, not passionate attachment. Like his son, he wants to undo the past, but ironically, his proposal involves creating yet another "legal claim," routed through lawful possession of the daughter in marriage, a claim which would ostensibly be more binding and benevolent than the prescriptive "right" imposed by conquest. Cast in terms that reinforce Ireland's dependent status – with "protection" for Glorvina and a measure of autonomy for the prince – his offer also echoes the gendered political rhetoric of the Union settlement. And it is a preeminently rational program that he proposes, one that perhaps also deliberately echoes United Irish ideology in that it looks to the future, not the past, and especially to the legal sphere as the remedy for civil divisions.[34] What will insure a "last prescription" is thus the legally sanctioned claim of the husband, along with the continuing subordination of the wife. To pass on this program to his son, who will combine it with the affective dimension it lacks, becomes the earl's – and the novel's – final narrative transaction.

In giving his blessing to the marriage of Horatio and Glorvina, the earl bequeaths to his son not only his Irish holdings – on the condition of his "spending eight months out of every twelve on that spot from whence the very nutrition of your existence is to be derived" – but also the sociopolitical aspiration to improve Irish life that the earl has cherished:

In this, the dearest, most sacred, and most lasting of all human ties, let the names of Inismore and M— be inseparably blended, and the distinctions of English and Irish, of Protestant and Catholic, for ever buried. And, while you

look forward with hope to this family alliance being prophetically typical of a national unity of interests and affections between those who may be factitiously severed, but who are naturally allied, lend your *own individual efforts* towards the consummation of an event so devoutly wished by every liberal mind, by every benevolent heart. (253)

"Prophetically typical," such a union prefigures the end to religious and social divisions that Glorvina had called for earlier in the novel.[35] "Once incorporated in the great mass of general society" by repeal of those laws that confined them to minority status, catholics would lose their individual distinctiveness: "their feelings will become diffusive as their interests; their affections, like their privileges, will be in common" (187). In assigning to his son and daughter-in-law this intercultural labor of merging particularity in marriage, the earl hands on to them a program that entails active work as well as active feeling. To unify "interests and affections" in "a wedding that," in Trumpener's words, "allegorically unites Britain's 'national characters,'" will require Horatio to supply what his father has seemed to lack: a passionate, husbandly attachment – rather than a solely legalistic, paternal one – to wife and nation alike.[36] In *The Wild Irish Girl*, the realm of passionate feeling is consolidated, as a feature of both English husband and Irish wife, as an essential element in creating "national unity" between those "who are naturally allied."

Shifting the burden of reconciliation from father to son, as I have already argued, also constructs this as an intergenerational drama. With marriage as its vehicle, a "family alliance" – in which two formerly antagonistic cultures become a single, internally unified socioethnic unit producing "common issue" – is the goal.[37] Just below this utopian vision, of course, lies a certain equivocation: *The Wild Irish Girl* seems to argue that the problem of cultural difference within a united kingdom, and its attendant connotations of inequality between England and Ireland, can be resolved merely by being "for ever buried," presumably heir to no unquiet slumbers. The union metaphor ultimately serves here to reformulate the imbalance of power between England and Ireland by transposing a problem between fathers and sons onto a gendered paradigm of marriage, which obviously (to us, anyway) also works from and through inequality. As Dunne has argued, "the alliance of the young, liberal Anglo-Irish and Gaelic nobility was an unequal one, the Gaelic partner being in a clearly subordinate position in terms of property and inheritance."[38] Yet this alliance is unequal not just by virtue of the Gaels' earlier dispossession: it is Glorvina's sexed status as one in need of "protection," in exchange for which she confers legit-

imacy on Horatio's repossession of Inismore, that condenses gendered and national inequality in the single figure of the bride.

To be sure, Owenson's Glorvina is not stereotypically dependent and unequal: she represents an affirmative feminine Irish virtue. Her "elevated and sublime" (116) nature combines, in Father John's words, "the extremes of intelligence and simplicity" although she is but "a mere child" (73); most notably, she is a devoted daughter, whose "good sense has frequently retrieved those circumstances the imprudent speculations of her father have as constantly deranged" (178). In "her superior and original character, which is at once both *natural* and *national*" (112), Horatio finds a model for Irish womanhood that conjoins some of the elements crucial to his redemption from the hereditary crime of dispossessing the native Irish from their land and rights. An exemplary figure, "at once both *natural* and *national*," Glorvina typifies what a marriageable woman – or a colonial dependent – should be. And as such, she is an especially choice vehicle for embodying one of the parties to the union that brings England and Ireland into their newly and differently unequal narrative and political alliance.

For her naturalness and her nationalness are, in Owenson's lexicon, unambiguously positive, bearing "the benign connotations of the spontaneous and original" that, to recall Deane's words, come to be attached to the concept of Irish national character around the turn of the nineteenth century, qualities particularly associated in some contexts with the aesthetic, the feminine, and the Irish. In this novel, where the hero's progress takes center stage, Glorvina is always and ever the same; even when Horatio thinks she may love another, and so be unfaithful to him, she remains true. Loving Glorvina provides the best way of owning Ireland, for in possessing her, Horatio possesses as well all that she is made to represent. Glorvina's virtue therefore guarantees that she will fulfill her sociopolitical function – as a good daughter, a constant wife, an attentive and affectionate mother – without the need for the kind of overt coercion brought to bear on the many unruly women of Edgeworth's fiction. What is thus perhaps most thoroughly repressed in Owenson's static representation of her wild Irish girl is wildness itself, for in locating a thoroughly domesticated Glorvina as the source and ground of "the last prescription," the novel indulges in a discursive violence of its own, narratively figuring the resolution to the Rebellion of 1798 as passionate and willing consent on the part of an Irish bride to an English embrace.

Natural and national femininity in *The Wild Irish Girl* – dependent,

unequal, yet virtuous – coalesce in such a way as to make the hegemonic force of the novel's ending apparently unproblematic. The successful suturing of marital to political union is overtly represented instead, in this case, as depending entirely on the character of the groom: an aesthete rather than a rebel, who consummates his conquest of a yielding Ireland with the pen, not the sword. Marriage itself is less the means of transformation in the male protagonist than its emblem or monument; the emphasis falls on Horatio's need to be reborn before he enters into an Irish marriage. Through the workings of its plot, *The Wild Irish Girl* challenges the founding premises for English sovereignty over Ireland by putting into question the stability of origins, histories, rights, and birthrights; the novel raises, that is, the legitimacy of English claims to Ireland through the crisis of English identity that it narrates. While the closure of marriage may be the endpoint toward which the narrative moves, its plots focus on preparing its hero for such a union, as if the trouble with propagating Union lay not with the Irish, as in *Castle Rackrent*, but with the English – and especially Englishmen – themselves.

Whereas *The Wild Irish Girl* attends to the transformation of an errant English son into a steady Anglo-Irish husband and future father, a more purely Burkean narrative of union, such as Edgeworth's *The Absentee*, specifically targets the feminine as the unstable element in need of rehabilitation within the marital/political equation. By contrast with Horatio's plot in *The Wild Irish Girl*, the legitimacy of Colambre, the hero of *The Absentee*, and of his claim to rule Ireland is never called into question; it is rather the legitimacy of his bride-to-be that the hero must establish. Here the inquiry into origins thematizes the threat that female sexual license offers to the founding fictions of the patriarchal state in a way that directly recalls Burke's analysis in the *Reflections*. What *The Absentee* contributes to the figuring of the marriage-and-family paradigm of post-Union fiction is the fullest representation of how the hero's plot depends for its hegemonic force on both the guarantee of domestic feminine virtue and the concomitant rehabilitation of paternal authority. In turning our attention now to that novel, we should bear in mind that the flip side of the coin inscribed with Glorvina's natural, national virtue bears the mark of feminine vice.

Like the *Reflections*, *The Absentee* promotes the family as the mainstay of the orderly society: it affirms that "the domestic peace of families, on which, at last, public as well as private virtue and happiness depend," provides the basis for sociopolitical stability.[39] In this novel, Elizabeth

Kowaleski-Wallace argues, Edgeworth inscribes "a domestic ideology that demands the repression of competing modes of social life," with "domestic" here serving as a key term.[40] While the novel recounts multiple obstacles to the creation of "domestic peace," I want to look first at representations of women in the novel, for like Burke, Edgeworth understands the regulation of sexuality – and particularly women's sexuality – as the linchpin of social order. But while Burke subordinates sexuality to politics, Edgeworth rewrites politics precisely as a familial plot, thereby fictively exposing the interdependence between the political and domestic spheres: like *The Wild Irish Girl*, but with decided differences, *The Absentee* represents the struggle for imperial hegemony within the discursive terms of heterosexual and familial romance that, as Nancy Armstrong has demonstrated, are so central to the politics of the domestic novel.[41]

Briefly put, the novel tells the story of lord Colambre, born in Ireland, but raised largely in England, son of an Irishman and an Irishwoman who tries "to pass for English": as one fashionable Londoner describes Colambre's mother, lady Clonbrony "is not quite Irish *bred and born* – only bred, not born" (2). Colambre seeks both to gain the hand of Grace Nugent, by clearing up the ambiguity about the circumstances of her birth, and to restore the family fortunes, by returning his wayward and extravagant parents to their Irish home. Considering *The Absentee* as a political novel, many critics have noted a Burkean presence in the text: the novel's most idealized character, a good agent for the absentee landlord Clonbrony, actually bears his surname. But few have understood the specific import of Burkean thinking about the family's political function to the novel's plot.[42] Making a generalizing claim about Edgeworth's Irish fiction, Catherine Gallagher asserts that "the Edgeworths avoided the legitimacy issue" precisely because they recognized "the shaky historical grounds of their tenure."[43] More specifically, Marilyn Butler finds it difficult to reconcile what she sees as the novel's message – its critique of absenteeism as an inefficient form of governing Ireland – with its love story, in which "the hero [must] clear away a shadow on the birth of . . . the girl he loves": "no one who reads *The Absentee* can see any immediate connection between the two plots."[44]

Analyzed as part of the contemporary concern with the interrelation of public affections and familial politics exemplified by Burke, the double plot of *The Absentee* begins to make more sense. Because the maintenance of an ordered society, like the English one, or the reformation of a disorderly society, like the Irish one, is understood to depend in

great part on restraining feminine sexuality, the moral character of women takes on specifically political and economic importance. Thus Edgeworth's representation of Grace's purported illegitimacy has a far broader implication than Gallagher or Butler recognizes. The blot on her birth has a political as well as a domestic valence, and part of what holds the two plots together is precisely this ideological linkage.

Although the problem of Grace's birth is not revealed until midway through the novel, Edgeworth's caustic portraits of other female characters prepare us immediately to realize its significance: throughout *The Absentee*, as in Edgeworth's other fictions, any and all irregularities in women's sexual and social identities present serious impediments to both domestic life and male virtue.[45] For example, Edgeworth represents the hybrid lady Clonbrony as willful, prodigal, and socially ambitious; by insisting on remaining at the fashionable metropolitan center, she positions her irresolute husband, against his better judgment, as an erring absentee. (In an event that represents one potential but averted narrative end for the Clonbronys, the father of an English friend of Colambre goes to an early grave because his wife's "passion for living in London and at watering places . . . had made her husband an ABSENTEE" [54], ruining both his financial and physical health.) But damaging as lady Clonbrony's behavior is to her husband's economic and psychic well-being, Edgeworth assigns her no especial role in inculcating morality; removed early from his mother's care, "before he acquired any fixed habits of insolence or tyranny, [Colambre] was carried far away from all that were bound or willing to submit to his commands, far away from all signs of hereditary grandeur – plunged into one of our great public schools" (6).[46] Women who mother daughters, however, come in for a greater share of responsibility owing to the different circumstances of female education. Lady Dashfort, the first to impugn Grace's mother's reputation so as to redirect Colambre's desire to her daughter, is represented as far more dangerous than his own mother to Colambre's adult future, because Isabel learns her viciousness at her mother's knee and reproduces it as an inevitable consequence of her upbringing; she threatens the hero's progress.

The Dashfort women, designing to ensnare Colambre, represent in their own persons the untrammeled feminine appetite so stigmatized by Burke. The lady Isabel, widowed once already at a tender age, is clearly her mother's child in her duplicity and avarice; overhearing her private conversation, Colambre learns that Isabel is an adventuress of a particularly degenerate type.

. . . lady Isabel came into the library with one of the young ladies of the house, talking very eagerly, without perceiving lord Colambre, who was sitting in one of the recesses reading.

"My dear creature, you are quite mistaken," said lady Isabel, "he was never a favourite of mine; I always detested him; I only flirted with him to plague his wife. O that wife! my dear Elizabeth, I do hate," cried she, clasping her hands, and expressing hatred with all her soul, and with all her strength. (126)

Colambre perceives Isabel's conduct as sexual impropriety and thus experiences instant, unmitigated revulsion: "instead of the soft, gentle, amiable female, all sweet charity and tender sympathy, formed to love and to be loved, he beheld one possessed and convulsed by an evil spirit – her beauty, if beauty it could be called, the beauty of a fiend" (126). Minor as it may seem, Isabel's offense – flirting with another woman's husband – signifies both her own and her mother's moral bankruptcy; like Burke's "foul and ravenous birds of prey," this fiendish mother–daughter pair threatens the integrity of the heterosexual dyad. No man, Edgeworth implies, could be sure of the paternity of his heirs with such women for wife and mother-in-law. And Colambre's response here reinforces the narrator's earlier comment regarding his anxiety about Grace's purported illegitimacy: "Colambre had the greatest dread of marrying any woman whose mother had conducted herself ill" (112), for in the world Edgeworth represents, the mother's conduct will be replicated in the daughter's. Anxieties about legitimacy in this novel attach themselves primarily to the threat that unchaste women pose to the patriarchal economic and social order.

While certain women in *The Absentee* therefore embody sexual impropriety as a function of (degraded) feminine character, men in the novel have the role of policing women's sexuality. Setting and maintaining the standards of feminine conduct, a man must choose carefully the wife who will, by her own behavior, prove herself to be a reliable medium for fulfilling the sociopolitical functions of inheritance and transmission. When Colambre's friend, sir James Brooke, selects for his bride one of the worthy Oranmores, a family favorably contrasted throughout with the Dashforts, another friend, count O'Halloran, pronounces a blessing on the marriage which reiterates the link between maternal nature and daughterly virtue:

"Happy man! I give him joy," said lord Colambre; "happy man! going to be married to such a woman – daughter of such a mother."

"Daughter of such a mother! That is indeed a great addition and a great security to his happiness," said the count. "Such a family to marry into; good

from generation to generation; illustrious by character as well as by genealogy; 'all the sons brave, and all the daughters chaste.' " (221)

Despite the distinction he draws, O'Halloran here perceives the "character" of Brooke's bride precisely as a function of the "security" provided by a proper "genealogy." If she may inherit no property in her own right, she yet inherits the qualities that make her a fit instrument for inheritance, a quintessentially worthy vessel for the reproduction of male heirs and masculine power. "A prudent man," O'Halloran continues, "when he begins to think of the daughter, would look sharp at the mother; ay, and back to the grandmother too, and along the whole female line of ancestry" (222) – for the "female line" contains the concealed (and concealable) history of feminine character. Unlike *The Wild Irish Girl*, in which the historical inquiry into origins specifically focuses on the validity of England's prescriptive claims to Ireland, *The Absentee* proceeds somewhat more obliquely by making another ground for masculine titles to ownership, the issue of women's chastity, one of its central preoccupations.

As it turns out, Grace *is* a legitimate daughter, thus "[eliminating] the anxiety put into play by the question of the mother's influence over the daughter."[47] As a result of Colambre's indefatigable pursuit of the truth about her parentage, she eventually comes to meet O'Halloran's genealogical standard. And so Grace stands to inherit not only the fortune bequeathed her by her newly revealed paternal grandfather, but also the reputation for chastity and sexual discipline which can be passed down to her only by a virtuous mother, who synecdochically represents "the whole female line of ancestry." It is this double inheritance that fits her to be Colambre's wife and the mother of his legitimate heirs, and so the now assuredly pure Grace enables a very Burkean resolution to this strand of the double plot: the union of the happy and virtuous couple embodies the stable fixation of sexual and affective desires across generations so crucial to the sociopolitical ends that both Burke and Edgeworth seek to promote.

As a result of Colambre's discovery of her parents' secret marriage, however, Grace Nugent – whose original surname associates her with "an Irish, aristocratic, Jacobite background" – becomes Grace Reynolds, an Englishman's legitimate daughter whose real ties to Ireland are based less in biology than in "early association" (7).[48] On this basis, Robert Tracy concludes that Grace's "English legitimacy removes her apparent ability . . . to bring the legitimacy of the old Irish

owners of the land to Lord Colambre's legal rights to his estates."[49] More provocatively, Fogarty argues that Grace's "symbolic marriage with Colambre comes about only when her virtue is translated into English terms and she is absolved of any connection with Catholic Ireland."[50] But the newly revealed facts of Grace's birth also support the ideological position of "common naturalization," which depends for its force on identifying partners to Union as neither simply English nor simply Irish, but as something of both. The ideological value of ascertaining Grace's legitimacy, that is, lies not solely in confirming her sexual purity, but in displaying that her attachment to Ireland is a matter of affection, by contrast with her aunt's attachment to England, which is one of affectation. The marriage of Grace and Colambre, then, epitomizes the antiessentializing tenor in Edgeworth's representation of intercultural relations by its insistence that "national origins" matter less than "natural affections."

It is just as important for my purposes here, however, that this marriage between an English heiress and an Irish heir is scheduled to take place in Ireland, not England. Indeed, by the conclusion of the narrative, Colambre has successfully completed his investigation into Grace's lineage, thereby bringing the marriage plot to a safe conclusion, and achieved as well his other goal: the entire Colambre/Clonbrony family is transported to Ireland by the novel's end, with Colambre's mother and father taking up their proper place back on the family estate. This intergenerational restoration of rightful rulers, and particularly of the resident patriarch, is perfectly Burkean insofar as it establishes a legitimating masculine presence as part of the cure for a disordered society. The English-based vision of "public affections" that Burke and Edgeworth share is conceived not as an alien cyon or a counterfeit ware imported to a fundamentally hostile medium, but as the appropriate and indeed necessary means of refiguring and reconstituting Irish political and domestic life.

Thus both the problem Edgeworth constitutes and the solution she imagines are analogous to Burke's. Edgeworth represents "common naturalization" in *The Absentee* as a potential political formula for healing intercultural fragmentation that needed to be enacted in familial and domestic relations. Yet, forty years after Burke had successfully opposed the absentee tax, Edgeworth still considered absenteeism itself as a problem, and perhaps especially so after the Union. The projected alliance at novel's end between Grace Nugent and lord Colambre, as Kowaleski-Wallace observes, portends "the establishment of a new,

younger, and more worthy generation of landowners central to Edgeworth's vision of a restored Ireland," a union that can be entered into only after Grace's purity – that is, her fitness for producing legitimate heirs – has been proven.[51] But every bit as crucial to the Burkean resolution of this fiction is Colambre's mediation of his parents' affairs. Born in Ireland but raised in England, with ties to both nations, Colambre figures as a hybrid subject who embodies in his own person a familial relationship between the two countries, being the product of their literal combination; his narrative task is precisely to naturalize their union.

Unlike the "common issue" of the "Irish heiress" and the "English family" whom Burke imagines as penalized for his residence in England by the proposed absentee tax, the male heir Colambre finds "his natural connection, his family interests, his public and his private duties" are primarily Irish, not English, presumably because his status follows his father's; after the Union, Edgeworth aims not to justify absenteeism, as Burke does, but to abolish it, taking its impact on Ireland rather than England as her primary concern. Within *The Absentee*, moreover, the mixed marriage which produces Colambre initially serves not as a medium for "common naturalization," but rather as a metaphor for the profound alienation between his mother and father, who married for money, not for love (e.g., 42), and expect their son to do the same. Exacerbated by the father's weakness and the mother's unruly appetites, their unhappiness rehearses the very split between England and Ireland that absenteeism, in Edgeworth's view, engenders. To fulfill his role as "common issue" in *The Absentee*, Colambre must institute a new law, Burkean in spirit if not in letter, that will require his father and mother finally to return to their Irish home, reformed of their decadent cosmopolitan habits and committed to realizing middle-class gender ideals. In short, then, Edgeworth's political goal of "improving" Ireland, like Burke's, calls for the restraint of feminine desire and the restoration of a fallen patriarch to his duties.

Our first glimpse of lord Colambre comes through the eyes of two Englishwomen evaluating him as a marriage prospect: one describes him as "a very gentlemanlike looking young man," while the other remarks that he is "not an Irishman, I am sure, by his manner" (3), introducing the idea that Irishness and (English) gentility are incompatible elements. While the narrator attempts to reconcile the mixture in an

appreciative mode, she relies on a similar polarization of English and Irish qualities to make her point:

> The sobriety of English good sense mixed most advantageously with Irish vivacity. English prudence governed, but did not extinguish, his Irish enthusiasm. But, in fact, English and Irish had not been invidiously contrasted in his mind: he had been so long resident in England, and so intimately connected with Englishmen, that he was not obvious to any of the commonplace ridicule thrown upon Hibernians; and he had lived with men who were too well informed and liberal to misjudge or depreciate a sister country . . . He had formed friendships in England; he was fully sensible of the superior comforts, refinement, and information, of English society; but his own country was endeared to him by early association and a sense of duty and patriotism attached him to Ireland. (6–7)

In this passage, Edgeworth's narrator supports the idea of national differences, but critiques the unequal value they have been assigned by the uninformed and illiberal. While relying, for example, on a dichotomous view of the Irish as "vivacious" and the English as "rational," she dismisses the notion that the two could be "invidiously contrasted" by the English gentlemen with whom Colambre has associated. Nonetheless, the narrator also presents Ireland as culturally inferior, lacking the English "comforts, refinement, and information" that Colambre has known as a young adult. Bearing both an English and an Irish identity, one the mature fruit of a refined masculine education, the other a product of "early association," Colambre must combine the best of both cultures in promulgating a new ruling-class norm for the Ireland to which "duty and patriotism" attach him.

His parents, however, bear the worst traits of their class and culture, with their faults exacerbated by the decadent circles in which they move; out of their proper places, the Clonbronys are improvident, wasteful, and dissolute. "Lady Clonbrony, in consequence of her residence in London, had become more of a fine lady . . . [and] by giving splendid entertainments, at an enormous expence, made her way into a certain set of fashionable company" (22): the effort to become "a fine lady" makes her vain and self-seeking, hoping to impress the right people by throwing elaborate parties she cannot afford. Although her desire for social advancement does not take the libidinous form Edgeworth attributes to Isabel and lady Dashfort, it shares a common foundation with their sexual aggressiveness in that both kinds of behavior represent feminine desire unbound, with lady Clonbrony's particular proclivity being social

success and consumer gratification rather than new male conquests. Moreover, her desire for a London triumph leads her to repudiate her Irish background as a strategy of self-invention, which produces "a mixture of constraint, affectation, and indecision" (5) in her public persona. "A natural and unnatural manner seemed struggling in all her gestures, and in every syllable that she articulated," as she vainly attempts to mask her Irishness by "the extraordinary precision of her London phraseology" (5) – which comes across to some only as "pure cockney" (2). Lady Clonbrony's consumerism and linguistic self-display make it both visibly and audibly apparent that she is out of her proper place.

Edgeworth's narrator is equally pointed in diagnosing lord Clonbrony's affliction: "since he left Ireland, [he] had become less of a gentleman . . . lord Clonbrony, who was somebody in Ireland, found himself nobody in England, a mere cipher in London"; "looked down upon by the fine people with whom his lady associated . . . [he] sought entertainment and self-complacency in society beneath him" (22). Becoming "less of a gentleman," because removed to a world in which he has no duties or responsibilities, makes lord Clonbrony "a mere cipher" who passively condones his wife's expensive tastes and actively squanders their joint fortune through unspecified bad habits, presumably gambling. Living well beyond his means, Clonbrony averts ruin only by Colambre's intervention. Both he and his wife ultimately precipitate their own wreck, both morally and financially, by their absenteeism, which induces them to try to be what they are not and to forget what they are. The rehabilitation of both parents, as executed by Colambre, will be closely linked to their conforming to gender ideals of the kind Burke recommends.

Colambre returns to Ireland because of the crisis in his father's financial affairs brought on by his parents' mutual irresponsibility, "determined that he would see and judge of that country for himself, and decide whether his mother's dislike to residing there was founded on caprice or on reasonable causes" (79). Disguising himself "that he might see and hear more than he could as heir apparent to the estate" (129), he first visits the town that bears his name, which is run by a good agent. Here he finds a model estate, "improved, and fostered, and *made*" (131) by the worthy Burke, who is praised in glowing terms for his just treatment of the tenants and for improving their conditions despite their landlord's indifference. Lord Clonbrony "might as well be a West India planter, and we negroes, for any thing he knows to the contrary" (130), claims one townsman, and a tenant on the estate that bears his father's

name, ruled over by the bad agent Garraghty, argues much the same thing: he blames Clonbrony "because he is absent . . . it would not be so was he *prisint*" (145). After visiting both estates, Colambre comes to a similar conclusion: "What I have just seen is the picture only of that to which an Irish estate and Irish tenantry may be degraded in the absence of those whose duty and interest it is to reside in Ireland, to uphold justice by example and authority; but who, neglecting this duty, commit power to bad hands and bad hearts – abandon their tenantry to oppression, and their property to ruin" (162). In Edgeworth's view, reforming Ireland will require the presence of its restored patriarch and his earnest son, who would jointly recognize that their "duty and interest" coincide with the proper supervision and regulation of their tenants. Everyone's well-being and security rest on the father's being reinstalled in his proper position.

Such a conclusion is made difficult by lady Clonbrony's "*Londonomania*" – "I'll never hear of leaving Lon'on – there's no living out of Lon'on – I can't, I won't live out of Lon'on, I say" (199) – yet Colambre's appeal to "her natural feelings, which though smothered, he could not believe were wholly extinguished" (199), does the trick. His argument emphasizes the need for both his father and mother to adopt postures more appropriate to their public and private duties:

"O mother!" cried lord Colambre, throwing himself at lady Clonbrony's feet, "restore my father to himself! Should such feelings be wasted? – No; give them again to expand in benevolent, in kind, useful actions; give him again to his tenantry, his duties, his country, his home; return to that home yourself, dear mother! leave all the nonsense of high life – scorn the impertinence of these dictators of fashion." (201)

The ultimate power to "restore" lord Clonbrony "to himself" lies in his wife's hands, and her consenting to return to Ireland (secured once she is assured that she may redecorate the drawing-room) makes possible his and his dependents' restoration. Realigning power within the family, as in the Burkean model, requires the curtailment of feminine desire and its redirection from immodest public ambition to a more decorous (and decorative) private virtue. Thus *The Absentee*'s comic resolution, interpreted in a political light, signals that familial and public affections have been reconciled, with a gendered ethos of patriarchal responsibility and feminine submission installed as their mainspring.

Normative gender constructions, then, are represented in these novels as crucial to the production of a stable familial order, just as the idea of

familial order underwrites the imperial project in Ireland as at other locations within the emergent empire. In naturalizing the participation of an Irish élite within it, as good fathers and sons and worthy mothers and daughters, Burke, Owenson, and Edgeworth seek to naturalize empire itself, to make the crucial transition from coercion to consent a matter of substituting proper norms for improper ones. The new dispensation inscribes the domestic as the central site for that transition, with the concept of "home" – "a word," as Edward Said observes, "with extremely potent resonances" – bearing the dual weight of family and nation; in that double valence lies the legacy of the ideological work these novels carry out.[52]

But the power of English domesticity to undo the aristocratic corruption of insufficiently private Irish lives had both practical and ideological limits; so, too, did the project of naturalizing Union, undone as it was by the reemergence of popular agitation in Ireland associated with the struggle for catholic emancipation, and the events of the ensuing decades in both England and Ireland. As I have been arguing up to this point, the discursive program for securing Irish consent in place of what had been sheer legal and political coercion proceeds in part by locating the domestic as a crucial site for producing the Burkean "public affections" that would both renovate Irish culture and attach the Irish to England. Bourgeois marriage, as both the proper vehicle of sexual and affective forces and an ideological template for masculine and feminine roles and practices, functions symbolically in the texts I have examined as a model for connecting separate and unlike "partners" even as it simultaneously occludes or minimizes their inequality. But while the familial metaphors deployed in the rhetorical construction of Union were persistent commonplaces with serious implications – especially serious if we recognize their gendered component as a key element in naturalizing English attempts to enforce colonial power – the changing historical and political contexts that reshaped Irish–English relations also reshaped the uses of these tropes, in ways I will explore in subsequent chapters.

One key effect of popular Irish resistance to Union, as exemplified in Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association or in the Young Ireland movement, and of the more general reemergence of democratic struggle within the United Kingdom after 1815 was to explode the idea that Ireland could be secured for the empire through ruling-class family alliances of the sort that Burke, Edgeworth, and Owenson all envision. The words that have passed into literary history as Edgeworth's last

significant statement on Ireland, from a letter of 1834, suggest that all such class-bound plots for improvement, to which she had devoted so much of her life and her fiction, had been shattered by the eruption of popular discontent: "it is impossible to draw Ireland as she now is in the book of fiction – realities are too strong, party passions too violent, to bear to see, or to care to look at their faces in a looking glass. The people would only break the glass and curse the fool who held the mirror up to nature – distorted nature in a fever."[53] What Edgeworth first represents as her own inability even to look at the Irish quickly slides into an angry acknowledgment of Irish resistance to being looked at in the usual Edgeworthian terms: as David Lloyd characterizes the historical shift Edgeworth lived to witness and to lament, "the old resolution that appealed to benevolent and improving landlordism becomes untenable precisely insofar as the growing social and political power of the middle classes undermines the influence formerly taken for granted by the landlords."[54] The growth of that power, registered as early in Edgeworth's career as her writing of *Castle Rackrent*, suggests that narrative as well as political changes in the representation of Ireland were in the offing.

At the same time, as cultural authority was increasingly consolidated in the professional and the scientific spheres, new ideas of national character, rooted in conceptions of racial and cultural difference developed under the aegis of science, began to be articulated within a number of overlapping discourses. And so the perceived intractability of the (catholic) Irish people came to be understood as the fundamental barrier to the full accomplishment of a hegemonic Union: their indifference to order and reason; their predilection for poverty, barbarity, and squalor; their essential inability to rule themselves, or to accept the rule of their betters. That the Irish would, in the coming decades, take up mirrors of their own choosing and forge their own representations of what Edgeworth could not bear to see, and could no longer find a fictional formula to represent, is not the especial concern of this book; that they would increasingly be looked at by English observers, however, as carriers of "distorted nature in a fever," surely is. Turning now to a context in which the Irish became literally visible to the English, as immigrants to the major urban centers of England, we will see the courses that Irish "fever" takes in representations also troubled by the shattering of the glass.

CHAPTER THREE

Troubling others: representing the immigrant Irish in urban England around mid-century

Even before the Great Famine, the presence of displaced Irish women and men who had become the poorest denizens of Great Britain's great towns afforded the opportunity for figuring England, Ireland, and the problems of industrial society in new ways. Consistently traversed by the negative stereotyping of the immigrant population, mid-century fictional and non-fictional representations alike portray the Irish in England as incompetent workers who nonetheless compete for jobs with English labor; as bearers of literal and metaphoric disease who infect an already vitiated English social body; and as potentially violent political insurrectionaries who threaten to ally themselves against the ruling class with English radicals. But if the typing is relatively uniform, the ends these images serve are not; my central aim in this chapter is to demonstrate the multiple uses of Irishness in constituting the discourse on what we still usually refer to as "the condition of England." Understood then and now as a significant agent in changing the material circumstances of English urban life, Irish immigration to England also operates discursively as a crucial element in defining and delimiting the contours of Englishness itself. At home in Ireland, the Irish were themselves to be all changed; but in the English context, they came to be understood as capable of changing others, perhaps even "strong enough," as David Glover has written of the later nineteenth-century context, "to attract, disarm, and absorb [the] English Other."[1]

As I have argued in the first two chapters, one express goal of the liberal narratives of intercultural contact spawned by the Act of Union had been to incorporate and assimilate the Irish – to make "them" more like "us" – in the interests of establishing a durable colonial hegemony. While the "improvement" of the Irish population was always imagined to require proper guidance from above, as the Edgeworth model suggests, that modernizing project had assumed that such a transformation would be not just desirable, but possible; no essential barrier to cultural

change was thought to exist among a people who would readily anglicize once introduced to – and given shares in – the fruits and benefits of enlightenment. Mid-century bourgeois discourse on the Irish presence in England, by contrast, figures the English working classes as especially susceptible to becoming more and more like "them": having failed, by English standards, to make "progress" happen in their own country, the Irish living in the great English towns are said to shed their deleterious moral and physical influence on those around them.

One might imagine that simply by abjecting all that associated with Irishness – the primitive, the diseased, or the essentially inferior, sometimes all three at the same time – the borders of a properly constituted English *polis* could be once and for all firmly established, ideologically speaking. What interests me in these representations, however, is that the Irish discursive presence cannot be so readily exorcised: the persistence with which the Irish are made to appear, disappear, and reappear yet again as central agents of English working-class distress, dirt, and disorder intimates that they operate as something more than or other than just a readily available scapegoat. Indeed, the depiction of an Irish ability to degrade English others through the intimate proximity of contact – a figure that establishes connection and likeness rather than radical, unbridgeable difference – assigns a peculiar agency to those members of a group otherwise typically understood and represented as powerless. In a context in which people of the urban working classes travel across all sorts of boundaries in the course of their everyday lives, the particular ways in which Irishness is racialized at this moment suggest, first, that emergent discourses on race and ethnicity play a critical part in producing differences within the working classes; and second, that the constitution of those differences helped to rationalize the rhetorical and political exclusion of the Irish from the English nation.

The central mechanism for constructing and disseminating the characterological categories that denominate "race" at mid-century was science. Popular racialism gained force, weight, and currency from the new disciplines that claimed scientific authority for their conclusions: indeed, the historian of science Nancy Stepan asserts that "the making of a more racialist science of man was indeed part of the making of these new sciences."[2] "Fixed and distinct racial types provided the key to human history and destiny," with even monogenists increasingly professing a belief in "the idea of a graded series of races" that established racial hierarchies; the older but not entirely discredited findings of the

phrenologists resurfaced in the ethnological notion that "racial types were determined by heredity"; and, after 1860, scientists "stressed the closed nature of racial formation and the fixity and persistence of racial differences."[3] This last idea achieved its apotheosis in the work of Robert Knox, author of *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (1850) and founder of the Ethnological Society in the 1860s, who claimed that the traits separating victorious Saxons from vanquished Celts were a product of racial inheritance: the Irish were in the present what they had been in the past and would remain in the future, racially incapable of self-rule.[4] Racialized categories such as these encoded explicitly political positions as biological facts.

But even as emergent scientific discourse began to pronounce that both Irish and English racial/national characters were fixed, the competing and anxious perception that Irish immigrants had the ability to degrade the character of the English working classes came into uneasy coexistence with that "scientific" view, arising alongside it as its perhaps inevitable, if seemingly contradictory corollary. Knox himself argued that "miscegenation or hybridization of the two races . . . could alter, over a long period of time, those racial distinctions," and conceived this possibility as a direct threat to English national and political hegemony; asserting that "Saxon and Celt were mutually and inherently antagonistic," he asserted that "any mixture of the two peoples invariably resulted in the corruption or adulteration of the better (Anglo-Saxon) blood by the baser (Celtic) blood."[5] In a culture that equates purity with power, the conditions of cross-cultural contact make the construction of borders between "us" and "them" ideologically necessary, as a means of rationalizing the location of power in the hands of those who already have it. At the same time, those very conditions also suggest that borders, once erected, will be endlessly transgressed simply as a function of being policed. In this light, contact may be said both to promote and to threaten the boundaries between "us" and "them," with the explicit aim of dividing those who rule from those who are ruled: making differences, in this case, between English and Irish working people who – divergences in religious affiliation notwithstanding – probably had as much in common as not.

So within representations of cross-cultural contact of the sort I consider in this chapter, the emphasis on Irish inferiority as something unchangeable in itself, yet still capable of changing (English) others by its proximity and power, paradoxically threatens to erode even as it works to construct the differences between Irish and English racial and nation-

al identities on which so many contemporary commentators insist. In this light, the more "Irish" English workers become, the more menacing that hybrid class comes to appear to the established order. In a more general sense, it is my view that the racial terms deployed in the constitution of class discourse come into play as one way of accounting for the unfixing and destabilizing of working-class life. Thus I see "the condition of England," largely represented in contemporary scholarship as a matter of class divisions internal to English culture, as discursively bound within the 1830s and 1840s to the condition of the Irish in England.

The traffic between race and class in representations of English and Irish workers that this chapter charts is therefore complex and various, and very much tied up with the project of defining "who belongs" to the English nation. While the Irish come to function as internal others within the construction of Englishness, English workers are themselves increasingly constituted over the course of the century by an entire ensemble of emergent disciplinary practices as a breed apart from their "betters," supporting Robert J. C. Young's claim that "for the British upper classes, class was increasingly thought of in terms of race."[6] From this angle, I look at the moments at which the Irish are made visible for what they suggest about how Irish immigration operates in an English context sometimes to maintain, sometimes to collapse the boundaries between and within classes and nations. Here, then, as in the next chapters, the production of Irish racial and cultural difference is read not as a matter of mere prejudice, but rather for the political interests it serves in discrete yet related narrative and historical contexts. As ever, such constructions tell us more about those who assemble them than about those they purport to describe: in this spirit I propose that the representation of Irishness is a critical element in the discursive remaking of the English working classes.

To read condition-of-England novels after the works of Edgeworth and Owenson may induce an odd sense of *déjà lu*, in that the narrative structures of these English texts so closely resemble those of the earlier Irish ones. In Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854–55), for example, the pairing of the genteel Margaret Hale and the industrious John Thornton allies the aura of old money with the energy of venture capital, feminine virtues with masculine wisdom, and – in the broader configuration their married life is meant to bring about – men with masters: as Catherine Gallagher comments, "the very conventional

resolution of the novel's love plot appears to be a partial solution to industrial social problems."[7] Such a conclusion purports to reconcile rich and poor, the disparate groups that Benjamin Disraeli had called "the two nations" in *Sybil* (1845), another condition-of-England novel which closes with a projected union between characters who represent antagonistic classes; Ruth Bernard Yeazell observes that Sybil and Egremont are "obvious metonyms" in a text that "contains its political action within a courtship plot and appears to substitute private for public transformations."[8] Set at an earlier historical moment, but deeply engaged with the political terrain of the 1840s, Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) also concludes in a similar way: "the joint marriages with which the novel ends," Firdous Azim maintains, "mark the celebration of the union of English commerce with the old aristocracy and the newly emerging professional middle class"; or, in other words, the novel consolidates a hybrid ruling class united against the insurrectionary fervor of the Luddites-cum-Chartists.[9]

While the specifics of each text vary, taken as a group their conclusions repeat the closing moves of *The Absentee* and *The Wild Irish Girl* (as well as some novels by Walter Scott and Jane Austen), in which the production of affective ties through the courtship plot portends at the close a new (albeit unrepresented) beginning, with all other differences subordinated by and to (hetero)sexual difference. In recent criticism, condition-of-England novels have typically been analyzed in these terms, inspired in particular by Nancy Armstrong, who argues that courtship plots "rewrite political history as personal histories" so that "competing class interests . . . can be completely resolved in terms of the sexual contract."[10] I want first to suggest in this chapter, however, as I did in the previous one, that it is not only class difference, but also national and racial divisions that this narrative structure especially works to display and displace. For even a brief genealogy of the concept of "the two nations" illustrates that the marriage plot, which purports to unite and reconcile by means of love alone, contains and recombines elements of class/race discourse.

Following the lead of Augustin Thierry's *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans* (1825), Disraeli's *Sybil*, for example, represents contemporary class conflict, "resolved" by the marriage of Egremont to the eponymous heroine, as the survival of the medieval racial contest between conquering Normans and conquered Saxons. As Michael Ragussis demonstrates, Thierry locates the source of "the modern nation-state's division through class conflict" in this conquest of one

race by another, with the (medieval) ruling race becoming the (modern) privileged class; "in this light the language of *Sybil* allows for the equivocation between the terms of race (Saxon and Norman) and class (peasantry and aristocracy)."[11] And Thierry's formulation was itself inspired by Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), recently cited by Ann Laura Stoler as the first important nineteenth-century instance of what Michel Foucault identified as "a discourse on conquest and the war of races," which operates discursively as "a means of creating 'biologized' internal enemies, against whom society must defend itself."[12] If in *Sybil*, those "enemies" – embodied in the anarchic population of Wodgate, "which appeared destined through successive ages to retain its heathen character" – are marked especially by and through their class position, then they are also simultaneously racialized by their representation as barbarous, savage, and uncivilized.[13] Through its bifurcation of the broader social terrain into acceptable and unacceptable groups, *Sybil* incorporates some, while excluding others, consolidating a middle position by uniting lovers shorn of the inappropriate traits of the racialized class formations from which they emerge.

"Two nations" novelistic discourse, then, may be understood as founded on and reproduced through a series of binary divisions – of class, of race, and of nation – which a marriage plot works to suture or seal. Especially in their conclusions, many condition-of-England fictions appeal to a shared Englishness as the common denominator that cuts across and supersedes differences of class interest, that makes two nations (economically conceived) into one (ethnically conceived). And in order to do so most effectively, these novels must define some as "others" – as not-English, or beyond the parameters of Englishness – in what Stoler calls "the discursive production of unsuitable participants in the body politic."[14] While quite a few English novels at mid-century directly or obliquely represent the Irish in England as a significant new population, then, they especially affirm that there really is only one nation, not two, whose warring interests they adjudicate; immigrants are deployed *en masse* as a differentiating figure that marks off the borders of inclusion.[15]

To be sure, the tropes and figures typically deployed to racialize the Irish in this period were also used to describe and to denigrate a host of other groups. English images of Africans, Indians, Jamaicans, Native Americans, and Jews, as well as those of native working-class people, were all constructed in terms similar to, and at some points nearly identical with, those I explore here. Moreover, out-groups were

frequently equated with each other, as in the representation of the Irish as "white negroes," while some were also consistently equated with animals: Charles Kingsley's infamous description of the people whom he saw along the Irish roadside as "white chimpanzees" aptly conveys the multivalence of the racist vocabularies on which he draws.[16] None of this is to say that the meanings of such terms and images remain stable when applied to different groups, or that the discourses of racism are always and everywhere the same; rather, a limited nineteenth-century repertoire of racist tropes can be multiply and variously mobilized to apply to any number of distinct and otherwise unrelated peoples and cultures. Reflecting on Carlyle's use of racial discourse, for example, Simon Gikandi traces the ways in which, at the moment of the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865, "Englishness was defined against a disorder associated previously with the Jacobins, the Irish, and the working class" – sometimes all three at once – "and now, conveniently, adduced to blackness."[17] And Luke Gibbons points to the discursive linking at specific moments of the Irish with Native Americans as an example of how distinct colonized populations could be made analogous – as "vanishing races" – and opposed to their masters for particular imperial reasons.[18]

At the same time, the "othering" of the Irish people has its own long and distinctive history, represented most starkly in terms of the contrast between the savage or barbarous on the one hand, and the civilized on the other; it dates back at least to Giraldus Cambrensis and, as Seamus Deane argues in the essay "Civilians and Barbarians," persists even now in some present-day representations of "the troubles."[19] The persistence of this distinction, however, does not mean that it never changes, or that it always says precisely the same thing; exactly who counts as "unsuitable," to use Stoler's term, and on what grounds, is not necessarily given in advance. That, at different moments and for different reasons, Normans were "othered" in relation to Saxons, while Saxons were "othered" to Normans, and Celts "othered" to Saxons, suggests that the discourse can – indeed must – allow for substitution of terms. Its rearticulation with new elements under new conditions in the mid-nineteenth century thus bears close investigation for the historically specific results it yields.

Thus it is not uniqueness of terms or categories that differentiates representations of the Irish from those of other out-groups, since the same ones were relentlessly redeployed in the great English national(ist) project of "othering." In order to determine the meanings and uses of Irishness in English culture at mid-century, we need to attend instead to

the specific history of English–Irish relations, structural changes in economic and material conditions, and the new contexts provided by immigration and working-class political radicalism. The immigrant Irish, I suggest, figure differences of race and class that cannot readily be conceived as entirely external to the English nation. By contrast with Thomas Carlyle's infamous representation of emancipated West Indians in "The Nigger Question" (1849), for example, which juxtaposes the "*Black Ireland*" of Jamaica with what he suggestively calls "our own white or sallow Ireland,"[20] the decidedly ambiguous status of the Irish as a race – proximate but different, like and unlike – persistently works to shape even as it troubles England's own conceptions of itself as an internally unified nation.

I want to look now to the common tropes that Gaskell deploys throughout *North and South* to characterize Irish immigrants – as economically backward, politically immature, and racially deficient – for my first examples here of how a particularly and exclusively English vision of social meliorism depends on reworking the discourse of savagery in a new context. Briefly examining the ways in which Irish people in that novel are portrayed in relation to English workers, as well as historicizing their presence in and ultimate disappearance from it, will also give us a sense of the contours that defined representations of the immigrant Irish in other texts; for Gaskell's depiction of the Irish knobsticks contains in miniature some of the discourse on immigration's most significant features.

Anticipating the approach of the strike that will ultimately contribute to the failure of his mill, John Thornton considers his options, emigration among them: as he tells his mother, "if we don't get a fair share of the profits to compensate us for our wear and tear here in England, we can move off to some other country . . . what with home and foreign competition, we are none of us likely to make above a fair share."[21] Thornton's anxiety that his profits will decline if he is forced to meet his workers' demand for higher wages, combined with his fear of "foreign competition" driving down prices, leads him to think of moving his business elsewhere in search of cheaper labor costs. If English operatives won't work for what he can afford to pay them – pressed as he is by the expense of doing business, the undercutting of his prices, and his eminently reasonable wish for something "above a fair share" – then colonial or other non-English workers presumably will. His mother's solution to the coming walkout and shutdown is altogether simpler than

leaving England or paying higher wages to those she terms "a pack of ungrateful hounds" (115). Bringing over "hands from Ireland" (145), Mrs. Thornton thinks, will do the trick, because they can be hired more cheaply and, presumably, lack solidarity with the men (and, much less visibly, the women) of the English trade union.[22]

Such a means of supplying the place of striking workers during a well-publicized factory lockout in Preston, a Lancashire town near Manchester, had been tried as recently as the winter of 1854, just around the time Gaskell started work on *North and South*, which made its serial debut in *Household Words* in the fall of that year.[23] In February, the Preston manufacturers began to solicit unskilled laborers to work in the mills, a tactic the striking weavers interpreted as "a sinister attempt to provoke them into violence."[24] Among those the mill owners sought to help them break the strike were Irish paupers "apparently recruited in Irish workhouses"; "those foolhardy enough" to undertake the dangerous work of strike-breaking "were more often paupers summoned from Ireland for the purpose than Irish residents in Britain."[25] Yielding to persuasion, or to what a contemporary account calls "a watchful obstruction" and "perhaps . . . a little bribery" from the committee representing the English workers, some of whom were later charged with criminal conspiracy for their actions, a good number of the newly arrived knobsticks, Irish and English, demurred from interfering: of the 141 people that one firm had recruited from the Belfast workhouse, for example, more than two-thirds returned almost immediately to Ireland, while the owners encountered a similar lack of success in their efforts to draw workers from Yorkshire.[26] Once the lockout ended and the former strikers returned to work, "the Irish who had taken jobs were turned out, many in utterly impoverished circumstances."[27]

Following the example of the Preston masters and the advice of his mother, Thornton, too, "import[s]" (e.g., 173, 175, 228, 420) Irish – but not English – women and men to take the place of the striking workers, despite the risk of "trouble and expense" (145) that he knows he is running. While we are not told whether or not Thornton plans to use them to coerce the strikers into returning to work, and the exact procedure by which he "imports" them is likewise obscure, the knobsticks are clearly represented as casual labor, among whom the Irish in England heavily numbered, deployed strategically in the fictional Milton as in the actual Preston both to give the union pause and to fill the need for "hands." And as it happens, trouble and expense do indeed

result from Thornton's decision, as first represented in Chapter Twenty-Two of *North and South*, "A Blow and Its Consequences."

In keeping with the emphasis among materialist feminist critics on how "class conflict comes to be represented as a matter of sexual misconduct and a family scandal,"[28] this chapter of the novel is usually analyzed for its representation of Margaret's bodily mediation between Thornton and the angry crowd of strikers, as well as the repercussions of her impulsive act. The literal "blow" that Margaret receives is registered in her consciousness of having publicly done "a woman's work," but it also issues in both a (premature) proposal of marriage from Thornton and, internally, "a deep sense of shame that she should thus be the object of universal regard" (191–92). That shame will resurface later in slightly different form, regarding the lie she tells to protect her brother Frederick, and her moral lapse will ultimately be revealed and resolved in the interests of the marital happy ending. Yet the blow should also be read, I think, in light of Margaret's ambivalent identification with the crowd itself. Both she and the strikers behave in a fashion implicitly coded as feminine: by giving way to excessive feeling at this critical juncture, they act passionately and without sufficient forethought of consequences. Margaret is thus metaphorically allied with the strikers, even as she is a victim of their violence.

The ostensible targets of the workers in *North and South*, however, never actually appear onstage at all. Thornton's sister Fanny opens the chapter by telling Margaret that the strikers have "frightened these poor Irish starvelings so with their threats, that we daren't let them out. You may see them huddled in that top room in the mill, – and they're to sleep there, to keep them safe from those brutes, who will neither work nor let them work . . . some of the women are crying to go back" (173) – "back," one imagines, to the workhouses of Belfast and Dublin. Although a member of the crowd presses Thornton as to whether or not those "Irish blackguards" will "be packed back again" (178) to Ireland, to which the master angrily responds, "Never, for your bidding!" (179), Thornton perceives the spleen of the crowd as directed at him alone: "it is not them – it is me they want" (178), he says. Despite Thornton's disclaimer, conflict between English and immigrant Irish workers was rife during the period, with "the most frequent and bloodiest clashes [occurring] on the railways, where Irish navvies were prominent from the 1830s onwards."[29] But in the Preston strike, fear of violence emanated largely from the millowners themselves, who at one point had the

Riot Act read out to a crowd, in a move that historians of this strike have interpreted as an overreaction rather than a measured response to an imminent threat of violence by the strikers against the "imported" knobsticks.[30]

From her own class-bound perspective, Gaskell consistently represents the anger of the assembled strikers, through the narrator and the Thorntons, as irrational and animalistic, "gaunt as wolves, and mad for prey" (177). Making "such a fiendlike noise" (176–77) that Thornton, like his sister, fears they will terrify the Irish people "out of their wits" (176), the "fierce growl of low deep angry voices" conveys "the demoniac desire of some terrible wild beast for the food that is withheld from his ravening" (176). Even their silence is described, in Carlylean terms, as being as "inarticulate as that of a troop of animals" (178).[31] With the group understood as having passed beyond sense and into collective irrationality, the strikers' rage for blood, or justice, or higher wages, which Thornton perceives as directed at him, is explicated somewhat differently by the narrator through Margaret: "she knew how it was; they were like Boucher" – described as "the most desperate" (180) workingman in the crowd, and consistently contrasted with the more reasonable Higgins – "with starving children at home – relying on ultimate success in their efforts to get higher wages, and enraged beyond measure at discovering that Irishmen were to be brought in to rob their little ones of bread" (177).

Thornton's reading of the situation is thus displaced, or at least contested, by the narrator's perspective. Even as she, like Margaret, ostensibly sympathizes with the workers' dilemma, the very language the narrator uses to depict the strikers, and her linking of their loss of rational judgment to the presence of the pauper Irish, rewrites the terms of the conflict. The "riot" in which English working men behave like animals begins to seem more the result of Irish competition and scabbery than a struggle between capital and labor. Thornton, like his non-fictional contemporaries in Preston, could count on eliciting just such a response from threatened English workers, who are shown by Gaskell to suffer just as their employers do from "home and foreign competition." According to the narrator's scenario, then, it is not Thornton, but the "Irish starvelings" who "rob their little ones of bread." One source of the conflict between the "two nations" is thus displaced in Gaskell's text onto the Irish.

An ideological alibi of this kind is a necessary feature of *North and South* for several reasons. It masks the various and exploitative uses that

capitalism made of Irish labor, typically unskilled and poorly paid, throughout the century. Additionally, it scapegoats the Irish – neither quite "home" nor fully "foreign" – as the source of internal conflicts among Englishmen of disparate class interests: counter to what Thornton asserts, it does turn out to be "them" after all who cause the trouble, further dividing (English) men from (English) masters. In a letter of 1870, Karl Marx offers an analysis of the lack of solidarity between English and Irish workers that includes these elements and adds to them:

The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor . . . In relation to the Irish worker, he feels himself to be a member of the *ruling nation* and, therefore, makes himself a tool of his aristocrats and capitalists *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself* . . . This antagonism is kept artificially alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling class. *This antagonism* is the *secret of the English working class's impotence*, despite its organisation. It is the secret of the maintenance of power by the capitalist class. And the latter is fully aware of this.[32]

Radically revising the utopian forecast of relations between English and Irish workers made by Friedrich Engels a quarter of a century earlier in *The Condition of the Working Class of England* (1845), Marx reads the antipathy between the two groups as arising from something on the order of a ruling-class conspiracy: the appeal to a shared, hegemonic Englishness, cutting across class differences, keeps English and Irish workers at odds. So, too, I suggest, in the reconciliation of masters and men that *North and South* works to achieve can we discern the outlines of a two-nations plot that reinforces the powers of the ethnically and economically dominant by framing Irish workers as aliens to be excluded from both the English factory and the English nation.

After the "blow," the imported Irish go on to trouble Milton business-as-usual in some particularly important ways, as English masters and men alike, in assertions mediated by Gaskell's narrator, combine to hold the immigrants responsible for local ills. Having refused to yield to the strikers' demands, Thornton employs "his" Irish as laborers in the mill, a move that meets with surprise and indignation from the English working men, "tempered, in some degree, by contempt for 'them Irishers,' and by pleasure at the idea of the bungling way in which they would set to work, and perplex their new masters with their ignorance and stupidity" (228). And the Irish do not disappoint: as the narrator recounts from Thornton's point of view, "the incompetence of the Irish

hands, who had to be trained to their work, at a time requiring unusual activity, was a daily annoyance" (318). Here, too, the Preston Strike provides an analogue, in that one of the Preston newspapers published word that the immigrant workers were "as deficient in quality as they were limited in numbers."[33]

Not until a year and a half after the strike has ended does Thornton feel the full impact of employing the purveyors of such "incompetence": the strike "had prevented his completing some of the large orders he had then on hand . . . That he had not been able to complete them, was owing in some degree to the utter want of skill on the part of the Irish hands whom he had imported; much of their work was damaged and unfit to be sent forth by a house which prided itself on turning out nothing but first-rate articles" (420). Itself arguably a consequence of systematic English industrial underdevelopment in Ireland, Irish lack of skill becomes a key means here for enforcing a contrasting image of working-class English industry and expertise. Moreover, Thornton and the English workers are linked across their differences of class position in their assessment of the Irish, augmenting the sense that expelling the Irish is necessary to put in place the new cross-class national dispensation, founded on ethnic unity, that the narrative implicitly promotes.

And significantly, "Irishness" itself is identified in passing – by a character no less central to Gaskell's so-called sympathetic vision than Margaret Hale herself – as more than just a matter of unskilled incompetence. Commenting on Boucher's suicide, and on the inability of his family to raise itself up thereafter from depression and sloth, Mr. Hale remarks that the Bouchers lack the "granite" his daughter had falsely attributed to "all these northern people." Her further attempt to explain the Bouchers' difference from their neighbors speaks volumes: "I should guess from their tones that they had Irish blood in them" (308).[34] While Margaret explicitly recognizes the family as bearing "Irish blood" from their accent and speech, this characterization also alludes to the manner and bearing of "the most desperate" Boucher, the only member of the angry crowd whom Margaret actually knows by name. In his rage and torpor, as in the lowness and apathy of the rest of his family, we can read the somewhat muted signs of a discourse that racializes Irish "blood" as posing a threat to contaminate the English working classes through proximity and amalgamation.

For if "Irish blood" courses through Boucher's veins, one might expect that it circulates through the bodies of other nominally "English" workers – and strikers – as well, if not by virtue of recent intermarriage

between members of these different ethnic groups, then because of the intercultural mixing of Saxon, Norman, and Celt that had, over time, issued in the racial fiction of an "English" people. In such a representation, we can see how the writing of even the relatively progressive Gaskell – who believed that it was physical and social environments of the kind in which Irish and English workers lived together that led most directly to their degradation – participates in a counterdiscourse that attributes character to the natural and unalterable influence of "blood," and that construes the Irish presence in England as an economic, racial, and political threat.

In a passage from *Sybil* that closely echoes the rhetoric of contemporary commentary on immigration, Disraeli's Walter Gerard does not hesitate to identify "the annual arrival of more than three hundred thousand strangers in this island" as potentially hazardous to the English empire:

> How will you feed them? How will you clothe them? How will you house them? They have given up butcher's meat; must they give up bread? And as for raiment and shelter, the rags of the kingdom are exhausted, and your sinks and cellars already swarm like rabbit warrens . . . What kingdom can stand against it? Why, go to your history . . . and see the fall of the great Roman empire; what was that? Every now and then, there came two or three hundred thousand strangers out of the forests, and crossed the mountains and rivers. They come to us every year, and in greater numbers. What are your invasions of the barbarous nations, your Goths and Visigoths, your Lombards and Huns, to our Population Returns! (137–38)

Immigrant needs for decent food, clothing, shelter – already in short supply for the English working classes – have no chance of being adequately met, according to Gerard's allusive sketch; indeed, the very heightening of demand for basic necessities assists in the rhetorical conversion of those "strangers" from suppliants to semi-barbarous invaders, who threaten imperial stability by the sheer force of their numbers. The nativist logic of this passage thus recapitulates a basic feature of immigration discourse already familiar from *North and South*, whereby the Irish are constituted as outsiders or aliens, whose presence exacerbates the crisis of industrial capitalism to near its breaking point. Like the novelists, the contemporary social observers whose writings I consider below – James Phillips Kay, Thomas Carlyle, and Friedrich Engels – similarly represent the immigrant Irish as a threat to the livelihood of English workers.

Among the millions who emigrated, the poorest Irish went to England, Wales, and Scotland, rather than the United States, Canada, or Australia, owing to cheapness of the fare and ease of access; they arrived in the British cities where they mostly settled with little or no capital other than their labor power to support them. Composing the largest immigrant population in England until the influx of Eastern European and Russian Jews later in the century, the new Irish joined and swelled already sizeable communities of working Irish in the major industrial centers: Lynn Hollen Lees estimates that "between 1841 and 1851 the Irish accounted for 14 percent of the permanent migration into [London] from all places outside the city limits," while W. J. Lowe concludes that "numerically, the Irish in Lancashire's towns were Victorian England's most significant Irish community."[35] In total, however, the Irish-born comprised no more than three percent of England's population in 1851, perhaps becoming "excessively obvious," in David Fitzpatrick's words, "partly because of their concentration in a handful of large towns."[36]

Joined by the fictional Walter Gerard, Lees characterizes this phenomenon as "an urban invasion," while other historians argue, with Graham Davis, that "the sense of being swamped by a flood of Irish immigration" was more a matter of English perception than empirical fact.[37] Such a perception, in any event, undoubtedly articulated a common anxiety about Irish otherness: as M. A. G. Ó Túathaigh puts it, "in the case of attitudes and prejudices, what is demonstrable is very often of less consequence than what is feared; and the Irish were generally perceived as a threat, a nuisance, a contagion."[38] This perception continues even now to shape the researches of most (though not all) historians of Irish immigration.[39] "Channeled into the bottom ranks of [London's] social and economic hierarchy," Lees argues, the Irish "provided a major resource for employers in the metropolis":[40] figured as casual laborers, they took the jobs no one else wanted, and so were (and are still) perceived as providing an important reserve that could be mobilized more or less at the will of employers. Henry Mayhew helped to inaugurate and institutionalize this line of thinking when he hypothesized in *London Labour and the London Poor* (1861–62) that because the most recent immigrants had previously worked solely as agricultural laborers, they lacked the industrial training that would adequately equip them for good jobs; skilled Irish artisans settling in London, he claimed, could find employment only "among the most degraded of the tailors and shoemakers who work at the East-end."[41] Not coincidentally, this is precisely that sector of the working-class Irish population Charles King-

sley focuses on in *Alton Locke* (1850); the mere presence of Irish figures in the novel may well have conjured up a whole host of available associations among those who knew Mayhew's work as well as Carlyle's.

My point here is that generically distinct from one another though they be, novels of the period and contemporary social commentary mutually inform each other, deploying similar terms and frameworks to represent the Irish; since modern historians of immigration also tend to reproduce those same terms and frameworks, there seems to me little use in attempting to gauge their accuracy or truth-value. Rather than see these representations as opening a window onto historical truth, we may choose to study them instead for their persistent recirculation of a set of compelling myths about the relations of the Irish to the English. In Mayhew's representations, for example, as in *North and South*, we see cheap Irish labor, like that of women and children, construed as a source of aggravated competition under capitalism rather than as one of capitalism's myriad effects. Among the street-sellers, Mayhew remarks, "next to a policeman, a genuine London costermonger hates an Irishman" because the immigrant cuts into his business, while another informant reports that he finds the nearly universal respect for catholics among his fellows strangely at odds with their "hatred of the Irish, whom they look upon as intruders and underminers," an attitude Mayhew similarly ascribes to economic rivalry (*London Labour* I. 108, 23). Typically, the Irish presence is directly linked to the lowering of the English family wage and of the wage-earning capacity of the English male head of household. One of Mayhew's *Morning Chronicle* (1849–50) respondents includes the Irish among those who drive down the price of labor: "I attribute the decline in the wages of the operative tailor to the introduction of cheap Irish, foreign, and female labour. Before then we could live and keep our families by our own exertions; now our wives and children must work as well as ourselves to get less money than we alone could earn a few years back."[42] Remarks of this sort are frequently reiterated among the range of representations I consider.

What most nineteenth-century observers fail to register, however, or at least to report, is that the native-born are especially susceptible to Irish competition because of the socioeconomic conditions in which they already live. Themselves represented as debased and degraded by economic exploitation – dwelling among "sinks and cellars" that "swarm like rabbit warrens" – at no point are English workers portrayed as capable of having a potentially beneficial or elevating influence on their Irish fellows. The degree of agency attributed to the Irish (whether by contemporary or modern commentators) depends precisely

on the extent to which the English are represented as capable or, much more typically, incapable of resisting what is increasingly articulated as the disease of Irishness. Indeed, it is the literal and metaphorical linkage of the immigrant Irish with disease – itself a long-standing and pervasive metaphor for poverty and its effects – that proves to be the central discursive element in the racialization of the Irish as lower than and simultaneously threatening to English working-class character.

Even before the Great Famine compelled large numbers of Irish people to emigrate to Liverpool, Manchester, London, and other British cities, a range of social commentators depicted the "lower" Irish as the carriers of physical and moral malady, focusing in particular on the impact that immigration made on the living conditions of the English working classes. "Occupied in tracing the means by which the contagious principle of cholera is disseminated," the sanitary reformer James Phillips Kay, writing in 1832, locates its origins in "the most loathsome haunts of poverty and vice,"[43] with cholera providing what Mary Poovey calls "the metaphor that draws all of society's problems into a single conceptual cluster."[44] In Kay's analysis of *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (1832), poverty and cholera go hand in hand, with the former preparing the way for the latter: "cholera can only be eradicated by raising the physical and moral condition of the community, in such a degree as to remove the predisposition to its reception and propagation, which is created by poverty and immorality" (12).

And the agents largely responsible, in Kay's view, for lowering "the physical and moral condition of the community" are the Irish, who bear all the evils condensed in the figure of cholera:

> Ireland has poured forth the most destitute of her hordes to supply the constantly increasing demand for labour. This immigration has been, in one important respect, a serious evil. The Irish have taught the labouring classes of this country a pernicious lesson . . . Debased alike by ignorance and pauperism, they have discovered with the savage, what is the minimum of the means of life, upon which existence may be prolonged. The paucity of the amount of means and comforts *necessary for the mere support of life*, is not known by a more civilized population, and this secret has been taught the labourers of this country by the Irish. (21)

Settling in the heart of the Manchester slums alongside English neighbors, the Irish carry with them a lower standard of living – what Kay terms their "dissolute" (32) and "barbarous habits and savage want of

economy" (27) – that degrades and debases the "more civilized population" they live among. He presents the "disease" of Irish character as shaped by a set of historical, social, and economic circumstances distinctly different from and inferior to those the English have experienced; at a lower and earlier stage of development, the Irish endanger the English by their savagery. The source of "the contagious principle of cholera" (4) is therefore "the contagious example" (21, 27) of the Irish themselves, who communicate their "barbarous disregard of forethought and economy" (21) to English workers made susceptible by proximity and association to moral and thus physical disease.

As is perhaps already clear, Kay, like Gaskell twenty years later, is concerned to locate the sources of urban misery somewhere other than in the factory system or the operations of capitalism itself. Even as he reports that it is "the constantly increasing demand for labour," particularly of the unskilled and poorly paid variety, that draws the Irish to England; or that the hand-loom weavers (by this point in time, members of a dying occupation largely abandoned by English workers) "consist chiefly of Irish, and are affected by all the causes of moral and physical depression which we have enumerated" (44), Kay regards their troubles as necessary if regrettable ills. These phenomena are but "temporary embarrassments" (44) insofar as "the evils affecting" the working classes of Manchester are said to "result *from foreign and accidental causes*" (78) – like Asiatic cholera and Irish immigration – rather than domestic and structural ones.[45] The more serious long-term problem created by the Irish is that they depress and degrade the character of English workers: "the wages of the English operatives have been exceedingly reduced by this immigration of Irish – their comforts consequently diminished – their manners debased – and the natural influence of manufactures on the people thwarted" (44). Thus the "evils" the immigrants bring may have lasting consequences in that they threaten permanently to "demoralize" (27) English workers, reducing them over time to the barbarous Irish level by thwarting "the natural influence of manufactures," which should be rendering them sober, prudent, hard-working, and provident. A continued Irish presence promises instead English devolution.

The slide in Kay's text from disease-as-cholera to disease-as-Irishness would become a standard rhetorical move among the emergent discursive technologies for representing the poor in the 1830s and 1840s. It is best described by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White in their reading of Edwin Chadwick's *Report* (1842), in which "the metonymic associations

of filth and disease . . . are read at first as the signs of an imposed social condition for which the State is responsible. But the metonymic associations (which trace the *social* articulation of 'depravity') are constantly elided with and displaced by a metaphoric language in which filth stands in for the slum-dweller: the poor *are* pigs."[46] Similarly, once the Irish have been rhetorically converted from those who suffer illness to illness itself, it is but a short step further to understanding the English nation as a relatively healthy body infected by a sick Irish one. Thus a similar rhetoric of endemic disease informs Carlyle's well-known representation of Irish immigration in *Chartism* (1839), intensified by a more liberal use of the languages of the body, in which sundry diseased Irish bodies threaten the well-being of English ones.

The "crowds of miserable Irish" (28) who overpopulate English cities synecdochically represent what *Chartism* diagnoses as the sick state of the Irish national body as a whole: "the oppression has gone far farther than into the economics of Ireland; inwards to her very heart and soul. The Irish National character is degraded, disordered" (26). In coming to England, "such a people circulates not order but disorder, through every vein" of the English social body, too; "and the cure, if it is to be a cure, must begin at the heart: not in his condition only but in himself must the Patient be all changed" (27). If "the Irish National character" and therefore the Irish social body as well are "degraded" and "disordered," then the "cure" needs to start there; in their present state, however, Ireland and the Irish, through emigration, bring English bodies to the point of crisis by circulating their "disorder" within England itself. Like Kay, Carlyle casts Irishness as a contagious illness: "we have quarantines against pestilence; but there is no pestilence like that; and against it what quarantine is possible? . . . The time has come when the Irish population must either be improved a little, or else exterminated" (29), "for the sake of the English if for nothing else" (30–31).

Carlyle's text parts company with Kay's in its specific rearticulation of the disease metaphor with a concept of Irish racial/national character, which *Chartism* represents, in Seamus Deane's words, as "both a product of history and an abiding metaphysical essence."[47] As in so many other mid-century texts, "race" itself is construed in *Chartism* as both historically produced and biologically given; or, to put it differently, as neither fully the one nor the other, but some interactive product of the two. So when the text goes on to elaborate a vision of English racial/national character, the heroic Saxon past confers upon the contemporary Eng-

lish a potential degree of immunity to the Irish disease, converting historical experience into a kind of antibody: "this soil of Britain, these Saxon men have cleared it, made it arable, fertile and a home for them; they and their fathers have done that. Under the sky there exists no force of men who with arms in their hands could drive them out of it" (29). Throughout the chapter, Carlyle sporadically expresses confidence that Saxon character can and will resist the "degradation and disorder" of the Irish, rather than drop "from decent manhood to squalid apehood" (28), by virtue of the racialized qualities it has come to possess over time. "That the Saxon British will ever submit to sink along with [the Celtic Irish] to such a state, we assume as impossible. There is in [the Saxon], thank God, an ingenuity which is not false; a methodic spirit, of insight, of perseverant well-doing; a rationality and veracity" (30), which the Irish – improvident, irrational, and lying as they are, and have always been (e.g., 26) – cannot affect.

Carlyle's analysis thus clearly anticipates the new Anglo-Saxonism, propagated among others by Thomas Arnold and Charles Kingsley, in attributing manly and martial virtues of industry and strength to Englishmen past and present.[48] Simultaneously, *Chartism* participates in the rhetoric of the sick or healthy nation-as-body through which the critical condition of urban English life was consistently portrayed; and in so figuring (diseased) nations as (diseased) bodies, it evokes the gendered and racialized tropes that I will further explore below with reference to Engels and Kingsley. Most importantly for my purposes, however, the pamphlet represents Irish immigration as not solely a social or economic threat, but also and especially a political one. Within the state of crisis that *Chartism* is written to diagnose and cure, what Carlyle apprehends in 1839 is that Irish discontent will join (or has already joined) with working-class English radicalism to produce a united challenge.

Figuring the two "races" as possessed of opposing qualities, Carlyle claims that "with this strong silent people have the noisy vehement Irish now at length got common cause made . . . the wretchedness of Ireland, slowly but inevitably, has crept over to us, and become our own wretchedness" (30). While Kay's text identifies Manchester's "Little Ireland" and other places like it as sites at which "pauperism and disease congregate round the source of social discontent and political disorder in the centre of our large towns . . . in the hot-bed of pestilence" (8), it does not attribute to this conjunction of disruptive forces the character of a potentially organized political movement, as *Chartism* does. Far from being constitutionally immune to Irish contagion, then, Saxon English

workers, and so England itself, are both subject to infiltration by and available for combination with an alien element depicted as a specifically political danger to things as they are. And even for Carlyle, the disease of Irish character in *Chartism*, represented as both cause and sign of English disorder, could become a potential means of hastening England's recovery. "Ireland is in chronic atrophy these five centuries; the disease of nobler England, identified now with that of Ireland, becomes acute, has crises, and will be cured or kill" (35) – an outcome that this self-described "lover of sharp rather than of chronic maladies" was also to read, like John Stuart Mill, as one of the famine's potential benefits.[49] Within this frame, one might argue that despite the seeming xenophobia that he displays in *Chartism*, Carlyle welcomes the immigrant Irish influx as another nail in the coffin of the English status quo he deplored: to kill, in this view, would indeed be to cure.

The political threat that the Irish in England pose for Carlyle is given a much fuller treatment in Engels's *Condition*, presented as a consummation devoutly to be wished. Working with precisely the same discursive repertoire of stock images and "facts" as Mayhew, Kay, or Carlyle, Engels, too, employs tropes of sickness and health to describe the state of urban life.[50] And his text also places the figure of the afflicted body at its center: "the great cities have transformed the disease of the social body, which appears in chronic form in the country, into an acute one, and so made manifest its real nature and the means of curing it."[51] Engels's "cure" lies not in sanitizing the slums, or in expelling the Irish, but in fomenting class consciousness and organized opposition to the ruling class so as to "[accelerate] the course of the disease" (419) that will bring the problem of "the two nations," rich and poor, to its resolution. And Engels assigns Irish immigration a significant role in hastening "the final crisis" (419).

Emphasizing the susceptibility of English character to degrading forces, but extending the discursive logic of contagion in a new direction, Engels reads members of the urban English proletariat as becoming more and more like their Irish neighbors insofar as they, too, are now by "systematic oppression" becoming "a completely wretched nation."[52] He interprets the effects of Irish immigration as precipitating a fortunate fall, with the Irish both bringing English workers down and providing the means of raising them up: if Irish immigration has "degraded the English workers, removed them from civilisation, and aggravated the hardship of their lot," then it has also "thereby deepened

the chasm between workers and bourgeoisie, and hastened the approaching crisis" (419). Repeating the commonplaces about the Irish barbarizing and degrading the English, Engels revises the valence of these characterizations as he goes. His version of "the contagious principle" that the Irish "import" into England is not so much cholera as choleric. A principle represented as internal to Irish racial/national character – indeed as a feature of "Irish blood" – "the passionate, mercurial Irish temperament" (419) provides a crucial motor of the new collectivity.

Revaluing the barbarous character of the Irish and deploying other elements of the Celt and Saxon stereotypes, Engels casts the conditions of urban life as the medium for "the mixing of the more facile, excitable, fiery Irish temperament with the stable, reasoning, persevering English" (419) that will issue in revolution. "In part by a mixture of the races, and in part by the ordinary contact of life," "the Irish nature" – "generous," warm, "ruled by sentiment," all gendered markers that anticipate Ernest Renan's famous characterization of the Celts as "an essentially feminine race" – will woo and win its "cold, rational" (419) English counterpart away from the nation to which English workers nominally, and only nominally in Engels's view, belong.[53] In a new use of the trope of intermarriage, which takes on here a decidedly mid-century sense of amalgamation or (to use a term not invented until 1864) miscegenation, Engels argues that "the working-class has gradually become a race wholly apart from the English bourgeoisie" (419) through the intervention of the Irish element, which inspires "the stable, reasoning, persevering English" with something of its own more passionate, revolutionary fire. Thus what underpins Engels's Disraelian representation of the English bourgeoisie and the English working classes as "two radically dissimilar nations, as unlike as difference of race could make them" (420), are the racialized differences between English *and Irish* character and temperament that help to produce and promote division among English masters and men.

At the same time, Engels still continues to represent English and Irish people, albeit melded together by urban proximity, as themselves belonging to "two radically dissimilar nations" and races, with a common experience of economic exploitation as the one important and determining similarity between them. The ultimate result of their racial intermixture should be to loosen the ties of English workers to their nation of origin and to bond them to a new transnational class forged from elective political affinity:

> [the working-man] can protest with most violent passion against the tyranny of the propertied class, thanks to his education, or rather want of education, and *to the abundance of hot Irish blood that flows in the veins of the English working-class.* The English working-man is no Englishman nowadays . . . He possesses more fully developed feelings, his native northern coldness is overborne by the unrestrained development of his passions and their control over him . . . English nationality is annihilated in the working-man. (501–02; emphasis added)

Associating "Irish blood" with passion, protest, and unreason in contrast to the "native northern coldness" of English workers, as Gaskell would do more obliquely ten years after, enables Engels to cast their mixing in terms that maintain the polarizing stereotypes of national and racial character, even as their combination is imagined to issue in a revolutionary class formation that will transcend fixed categories of nation and race. As members of the proletariat become foreigners to their former nation, "English nationality is annihilated in the working-man" – and so, too, one might add, is Irish nationality, insofar as class becomes the discursive category that mediates differences of nation and race, differences which Engels rejects as artificial yet simultaneously reinforces. The deepening "chasm" between the rich and the poor – what we have come to think of as a war of classes – is discursively effected in large part by means of a racial discourse in which the Irish figure as crucial agents: of disease and barbarity, of passionate, unreasoning feeling, and so of potentially revolutionary change.

Both foregrounding and eliding difference so as to conjure a revolutionary class, *The Condition* thus presents the necessity for English workers to amalgamate with – rather than exclude – those the text represents as both their economic competitors and cultural inferiors if the proletariat is to become authentically revolutionary, a political position promoted but never fully achieved by some English and Irish Chartists throughout the 1840s. But in its nineteenth-century sense, amalgamation means more than establishing political ties across national differences; the language Engels deploys – in taking literally the metaphorics of "body" and "blood," as racialist science would increasingly do – intimates close contact and bodily proximity, probably even implies sex. For if the English become more like the Irish, according to the discursive formation we see in Kay and Carlyle, as a result of the contagion passed from one to another through the air they both breathe or the water they both drink, then in Engels, as in Gaskell, it is the interpenetration of English and Irish bodies that results in the presence of the "hot Irish blood that flows through the veins of the English

working-class." Just as Engels subordinates national differences to the end of creating a transnational working class, he makes the gendered and sexualized work of reproduction – which could, quite literally, bring such a transnational class into being – a relatively subordinate element within the rhetoric of the social body that he deploys. The conflation of the sexual with the political in Engels's text is yet suggestive in its conjoining of spheres otherwise often represented and understood as separate.

Similarly, in the movement from representing the Irish as bearers of cholera to bearers of choleric character, we can see the slippage that enables "Irishness" to be understood almost as a biological principle, as a fact of blood. Amalgamation is valuable insofar as it brings together within one (literal/metaphorical) body the two principles – perseverance and passion – necessary to the successful practice of proletarian politics. Yet "Irish blood" also functions more as supplement than complement to "native northern coldness," incapable perhaps of achieving much on its own in political terms because it lacks the inherent force of Carlyle's "strong silent people." That is, even if "English nationality is annihilated in the working-man," Saxon character is not, although modified or adulterated by its mixture with the Celtic. The unequal construction of Saxon and Celt, English and Irish, that racial discourse supports thus resembles in good part the nineteenth-century mapping of masculine and feminine difference as natural inequality in ascribing essential qualities of character on the basis of blood and biology; the peculiar agency of the Irish, like the influence of middle-class domestic women, is figured as a function not so much of what they do, as of what they are. In what we might think of as the marriage plot of Engels's racialist romance, Irish character is made integral to the production of a new class, yet its own potentially political character is effaced in service to that end. Marrying the Irish to the English, in this context, domesticates Irishness within the frame of English working-class politics.

If we look to a middle-class novelistic representation of the Chartist movement, one heavily shaped by the discourse I have been examining, we can see a similar mode of framing the Irish role within the domestic and political life of the English working classes. The Irish are indubitably a part of the contemporary scene that Kingsley represents in *Alton Locke*, positioned within it in multiple ways: narrated in the voice of the eponymous tailor-poet, the novel associates Irishness with physical and moral disease, economic depression, and political unrest, in ways that

will seem familiar to us from the texts I have already discussed. Despite the vast ideological differences between Engels and Kingsley, that is, the analysis of the Irish role in Chartist politics in *Alton Locke*, as in *The Condition*, proceeds from some very similar assumptions about Irish blood and Irish character, and about the impact of the Irish on English working-class political and domestic life. Unlike Engels's text, however, Kingsley's novel can only imagine a healthy English social body as one made free from the Irish taint.

A week or so before 10 April 1848, as Alton Locke and his fellow Chartist John Crossthwaite leave a meeting of the National Convention, their conversation turns to the prospects for the rising to come: Locke is skeptical about the possibility of prevailing without an adequate supply of guns, while Crossthwaite is more sanguine about the potential for support from government clerks and soldiers. They head off to the lodgings of Crossthwaite's brother-in-law Mike Kelly, described as a "scatter-brained Irish lad," to see the reputed arms-dealer Power, an acquaintance of Kelly's.[54] And on their way, Locke and Crossthwaite begin to debate, from opposing positions, the character and place of the Irish within the Chartist movement. In this revealing dialogue, Kingsley both suggests the centrality of Irishmen to Chartist struggle and locates one cause for Chartism's failure in the flaws that Alton represents as endemic to Irish national character.

Echoing rhetoric he associates with the "glorious" (307) Feargus O'Connor, a prominent Irish Chartist leader caricatured elsewhere in *Alton Locke* as the demagogic journalist O'Flynn, Crossthwaite argues that "Ireland's wrongs are England's. We have the same oppressors. We must make common cause against the tyrants"; indeed, the Irish "have the deepest wrongs," which "makes them most earnest in the cause of right" (306). It is the Irish capacity for feeling that Crossthwaite seems especially to admire and respect: as "noble, enthusiastic, generous fellows" (307), Irishmen possess "the sympathy of suffering [that] . . . has bound them to the English working man" (306–07). And, still sounding very much like Engels in projecting qualities onto the Irish that he perceives the English as lacking, Crossthwaite suggests that "if we English had half as warm hearts, we shouldn't be as we are now" (307); Irish zeal for rebellion in England, fueled by colonial oppression at home, here strikes Crossthwaite as something approaching a choleric catalyst for working-class insurrection.

Among the historians, the kind of claims about cross-national "sym-

pathy" and an active Irish role within Chartist politics that Crossthwaite voices have provoked considerable differences of opinion.[55] While dual participation within English working-class radical and Irish nationalist circles had been officially proscribed for much of the 1840s to Irish followers of Daniel O'Connell's Repeal movement, many historians agree, first, that informal and local associations between English and Irish radicals had always been common, with Dorothy Thompson arguing in particular for a shared tradition of political activism dating back to the revolutionary 1790s.[56] Second, the degree of cooperation between Irish and English Chartists increased after O'Connell's death, and intensified greatly in 1848, with the impetus of revolution across the channel in France providing a unifying bond.[57] Even before that year, however, English radical support for Irish grievances had a pragmatic economic basis. John Belchem argues that "the radical appeal for social justice to Ireland was remarkably persistent" and well received among English Chartists in part because reforms in Ireland would ideally lead to "a cessation of Irish competition in the English labour market":[58] it is competition from "women, and children, and starving Irish" (103), after all, that Crossthwaite identifies in *Alton Locke* as one of the primary forces driving down the tailor's wage. But the central premise of Crossthwaite's argument, once more recalling Engels's *Condition*, emphasizes that the shared degradation of English and Irish workers produces what the Chartist, like Carlyle before him, calls a "common cause." And it is this threat of a united radical challenge to the ruling classes – an alliance analogous to the one Carlyle and Engels had forecast from their different perspectives – that English support for Irish nationalism and Irish support for English Chartism most sharply convey.

Speaking for Kingsley, Crossthwaite's companion takes a distinctly contrasting view. Influenced in good part by the attitude of the Carlylean Scotsman Sandy Mackaye – who "ha' na faith, ye ken, in the Celtic blude, an' its spirit o' lees" (295) – Alton thinks of all Irishmen, "from the nobleman in his castle to the beggar on his dunghill," as citizens of "a nation of liars," whose "eloquence is all bombast" (306):

> I despise these Irish, because I can't trust them – they can't trust each other – they can't trust themselves. You know as well as I that you can't get common justice done in Ireland, because you can depend on no man's oath . . . nine out of ten of them will stick at no lie, even if it has been exposed and refuted fifty times over, provided it serves the purpose of the moment . . . what's the matter with Ireland is just that and nothing else . . . (306)

"Let them fight those oppressors at home, and we'll do the same: that's

the true way to show sympathy" (307), Alton asserts; "they are always crying 'Ireland for the Irish'; why can't they leave England for the English?" (307). In keeping with the stereotyping remark that all that ails Ireland is its national propensity for lies, Alton's nativist, Carlylean rhetoric works both to distance Irish wrongs from English ones, and ultimately to indict the Irish people within the Chartist movement for promulgating the great lie of democratic revolution. Somewhat ironically, then, from his ideological position, Kingsley, too, reads the Irish presence in England as to a degree fortunate, in that it contributes to the downfall of Chartism.

Alton nonetheless pledges to "die in this matter like a man, because it's the cause of liberty," but he has "fearful misgivings about it, just because Irishmen," who cannot be depended on to keep their word, "are at the head of it" (306). In describing the events of 10 April, for example, Alton casts the standard slur on the reputation of Feargus O'Connor, claiming that "his courage failed him after all" in that "he contrived to be called away, at the critical moment" (324) from Kennington Common.[59] Within the properly fictional world of the novel itself, the "passionate, kind-hearted" Mike Kelly – "reckless and scatter-brained enough to get himself into every possible scrape, and weak enough of will never to get himself out of one" (195) – is himself lied to by Power, who turns out to be "a spy o' the goovernment's [*sic*]" (311). This blow dashes all Kelly's hopes: that "London's to be set o' fire in seventeen places at the same moment, an' I'm to light two of them to me own self, and make a hollycrust – ay, that's the word – o' Ireland's scorpions, to sting themselves to death in circling flame" (309); that he will be joined in his revolution against English power by the "two million free and inlightened Irishmen in London" (310) similarly pledged to Irish independence at home and economic justice abroad; and that he will become "Lord Lieutenant o' Dublin Castle meself, if it succades, as shure as there's no snakes in ould Ireland, an' revenge her wrongs ankle deep in the bhlood o' the Saxon!" (308). In these and other episodes of the novel, Kingsley represents both the leaders and the rank-and-file of Irish Chartists – "from the nobleman in his castle to the beggar on his dunghill" – not just as political incendiaries, but as foolish incompetents. Denying the Irish political capacity, as we will see again in the next chapter, is one important if muted strand in how racialization operates.

Alton's predictions of disaster for the movement are of course inevitably borne out: on the day of the rising, "we had arrayed against us, by

our own folly, the very physical force to which we had appealed. The dread of general plunder and outrage by the savages of London, the national hatred of that French and Irish interference of which we had boasted, armed against us thousands of special constables" (323). In light of this passage, and of the pervasive anti-Irish rhetoric that suffuses *Alton Locke*, it is especially tempting to accept Belchem's conclusion about the massing of English state power against the workers' movement as also applicable to Kingsley's representation of the Irish in the novel: "it was the spectre of the Irish, quite as much as the dread of the revolutionary contagion spreading across from the continent, which brought such an accretion of strength to the forces of order in 1848, allowing the ruling class to mount a massive display of its monopoly of legitimate violence."[60] Debates about the level of actual participation of the Irish within Chartism aside, it seems crucial to Kingsley's project – as to the British state's – to characterize the movement, in words Belchem uses to describe the "sustained press campaign" of the spring of 1848, as "criminal, unconstitutional, un-English and, most damning of all, Irish."[61]

From this perspective, Kingsley's repudiation of the Irish is not simply an act of racist or chauvinist scapegoating, although it is assuredly that. More importantly, it provides a way for him to salvage a segment of the English working classes as potentially recoverable from the excesses of revolutionary violence and the deprivations of economic duress. Purified of all elements identified as Irish, a properly English working class would presumably be amenable to the rational and spiritual anodynes offered by the completion of Alton's plot, which sanctifies bodily suffering in the service of creating English brotherhood. Making the Irish responsible, at least in part, for both the rise of Chartism and its fall leaves open manifold possibilities for redeeming Englishness in the remaking of the national body.

Unlike many other major condition-of-England novels, *Alton Locke* lacks a marriage plot and ends with the death of its narrator, structural features which say much about the ideological bearings of the novel as a whole. Although Alton cherishes a doomed desire for the rich and beautiful Lillian Winnstay, which motivates at least some of his actions, this is not a hero destined for biological reproduction and domestic life. By contrast with Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), for example, in which the heroine discards her fantasy of cross-class mobility in favor of a plot that will unite her in emigration with a man and a brother of her own class,

Alton's only material contribution to post-Chartist posterity is the manuscript autobiography he leaves behind on the desk of the cabin on the emigrant ship at his death. "Kingsley's hero does not really need a conventional heroine," Ruth Bernard Yeazell argues, because "Alton is sufficiently 'feminine' and 'unmanned' even without one";[62] the novel situates him as a kind of gender hybrid, even as it also strongly emphasizes the affective bonds that he establishes with other men. Alton's class position is likewise ambiguous: working-class by birth and trade, but upwardly mobile by virtue of self-education and poetic vocation, by the end of the novel Alton is radically detached from the values of both his own class and the one he has aspired to join, having "risen out of his own class without becoming part of" another.[63] In these respects, Kingsley's hero ultimately becomes the poor Christian man's equivalent of Sidonia, whose distance from the domestic and disaffection from the nation confers upon him what Disraeli calls in *Coningsby* (1844) "that absolute freedom from prejudice" that putatively enables clarity of vision:[64] Alton himself ultimately renounces politics altogether as a means of social transformation in favor of the renovating Christianity espoused by the lady Eleanor.

At the same time, *Alton Locke* is deeply concerned with regenerating England, as represented in the laboring English bodies that here, as elsewhere within condition-of-England discourse, convey through their physical condition the moral and social state of the nation. Even as the novel elaborates the immiseration of the English poor, however, it also proffers a vision of healthy bodies emblazoned with English virtues; Kingsley's brand of muscular Christianity conveys some intensely nationalistic associations. In one of many Carlylean moments, Alton celebrates "the true English stuff" that forms the highest incarnation of the national character, historically conceived: "the stuff which has held Gibraltar and conquered at Waterloo – which has created a Birmingham and a Manchester, and colonised every quarter of the globe – that grim, earnest, stubborn energy, which, since the days of the old Romans, the English possess alone of all the nations of the earth" (132), is made manifest through sinewy English bodies, linking the imperial and industrial feats of the nineteenth century to an aboriginal ethnic principle.

Inspired by Alton's viewing of a boat race at Cambridge – in which "some hundred [*sic*] of young men, who might, if they had chosen, been lounging effeminately about the streets, [subjected] themselves voluntarily to that intense exertion, for the mere pleasure of toil" (131–32) – the

panegyric specifically locates this colonizing prowess only in Englishmen of a certain leisured class. David Alderson has suggested that Kingsley, through Alton's voice, puts forth "the ideal masculine body" as a "symbol in which all classes can recognise themselves as part of a superior racial group" that achieved "an empire which surpassed the Romans'."[65] But by contrast with the strong Cambridge men whom he glorifies, Alton's own frail frame is, in this very same scene, knocked to the ground, trampled on by a horse, and sent tumbling down a steep bank into the river below – hardly a contender for reviving the glory that was Rome's. While Alton may be able to identify imaginatively with a masculinized English empire whose historical strength is synecdochically represented in the regatta, Kingsley represents this working-class body as inadequately equipped for participation within the contemporary contest, signifying Alton's distance from the gentlemanly ideal to which he aspires. And Kingsley reinforces Alton's class/gender hybridity by making him unfit for even the mildest of imperial pursuits, emphasizing through his fragility the weakness of the national and social body, conceived across class lines as a whole.

As virtually all readers of Kingsley recognize, Alton's suffering and wasted body, starved and sweated beyond measure, does serve as one crucial indicator of the condition of England, and through its own illness and affliction points the way toward a cure. In the allegorical evolutionary narrative of his feverish dream-vision, which follows immediately on the heels of 10 April 1848, not only must Alton's soul be reborn into Christ, but his body, too, must mutate from a lower to a higher form. Eleanor's voice proclaims that "the madrepore shall become a shell, and the shell a fish, and the fish a bird, and the bird a beast; and then he shall become a man again, and see the glory of the latter days" (336–37); and so Alton "passed, like one who recovers from drowning, through the painful gate of birth into another life" (350), purified of all mortal and fleshly wants. The novel closes with his emigration to Texas, and his death on the boat within an hour of landfall, as reported by his fellow emigrant Crossthwaite. Thus Alton himself is excluded from the post-Chartist nation – first reborn into it, then in some sense martyred for it.

But it is the earlier death of the Scots republican, Sandy Mackaye, the friend and teacher "worn out by long years of manful toil in The People's Cause" (319), on the eve of the failed rising that both sanctifies the suffering of men's bodies and provides the occasion for affirming the affective ties of brotherhood between Alton and Crossthwaite. Between

them, the two friends represent the acceptable, permissible range of Chartist feeling in the novel:

> . . . we knew that evil was coming. We felt all along that we should *not* succeed. But we were desperate; and his death made us more desperate; still at the moment it drew us nearer to each other. Yes – we were rudderless upon a roaring sea, and all before us blank with lurid blinding mist; but still we were together, to live and die; and as we looked into each other's eyes, and clasped each other's hands above the dead man's face, we felt that there was love between us, as of Jonathan and David, passing the love of woman. (320)

What needs to be conserved from Chartism, in Kingsley's view, is exactly this, and no more; what is celebrated, indeed consecrated by the novel is the affective solidarity that links man to man, even in the absence of their moral and spiritual guide. Thus the regenerative emphasis within *Alton Locke* focuses in particular on improving the condition of English men's bodies and spirits, with the English nation conceived as a collectivity in which differences of class between men, and even some – but not all – ethnic and gender differences, would be subordinated to the homosocial bonds of a nationalizing brotherhood.[66]

The vision of such a brotherhood replaces all other ties by the end of the novel, and displaces in particular those connections forged among working-class men by the economic deprivations of the tailoring trade, which lead directly in *Alton Locke* to the collective political experience of Chartism. When Alton's employer – "emulous of Messrs. Aaron, Levi, and the rest of that class" – decides that "all work would in future be given out, to be made up at the men's own homes" (102), so as to cut the cost of wages and raise his own profits, Crossthwaite articulates the multivalent danger of this undercutting gesture to English working-class manhood. He seeks to persuade his fellow workers that "combination among ourselves is the only chance" (104): otherwise, "we shall become the slaves, often the bodily prisoners, of Jews, middlemen, and sweaters, who draw their livelihood out of our starvation," unable to contend with "the competition of women, and children, and starving Irish" (103).

Who constitutes "ourselves" here is quite clearly indicated, even if only in a negative way. Along with English women and children, Jews and Irish – those who are represented as engaging in exploitation and/or whose participation in the labor market is a consequence of that exploitation – are those whom Crossthwaite perforce must organize against in order to forge a collectivity among English workingmen. A nationalizing solidarity within Crossthwaite's working-class community thus conveniently excludes those ethnic strangers who, in Gikandi's

words, "were always conceived as a threat within English culture itself."[67] Misguided and dangerous as Crossthwaite's "combination" no doubt appeared to Kingsley, as to most other Victorians, it is only called into being in response to elements construed as not native, not English; as is implied by the two-nations plot of *North and South*, or by the argument of Kay's pamphlet, Kingsley, too, suggests that the removal of the "foreign and accidental causes" which bring about social misery will speed true regeneration by eliminating the impulse to adopt that promiscuous principle of combination.

Instead, the novel near its close supplies a figure of collectivity that displaces the working-class economic and political groups to which Crossthwaite and Alton have belonged. Before Alton emigrates, his friends gather around his sickbed to receive holy communion: "the high-born countess," Eleanor; her father, "the cultivated philosopher"; and "the repentant rebel," Crossthwaite, joined by his wife Katie, "the wild Irish girl, her slavish and exclusive creed exchanged for one more free and all-embracing" (385). "There was a bond between us, real, eternal, independent of ourselves, knit not by man," Alton intones, "but by God" (386): as an image of cross-class and even cross-gender spiritual solidarity, this grouping only excludes that which it has first cast as "exclusive." Unlike *Alton Locke*'s other Irish characters – her own hapless brother Mike, who disappears altogether after the disappointment of his revolutionary hopes; or Jemmy Downes's "Irish wife" (199), who attempts to lure Alton to the fatal house of slopwork that Downes runs with his partner Shemei Solomons – Katie Crossthwaite does survive the novel. But her happy conversion clearly indicates the contingent grounds on which she may be included within that communion. Like that earlier "wild Irish girl," the Irishness of this wife is figured largely by and through her subordination. But her subjection is enacted not so much for the sake of her English husband – himself in need of repentance and rehabilitation – as on behalf of a particular vision of who will constitute the reformed English national community. Any other configuration of the nation, of a more heterogeneous sort, is put aside. Interpreted in this light, Alton's own passing on the emigrant ship – which recalls even as it displaces all those other nameless, unrepresented Irish fatalities – serves to suggest that in English narratives of the 1840s, life for some can be secured only at the expense of death to some others.

CHAPTER FOUR

Plotting colonial authority: Trollope's Ireland, 1845–1860

In taking up his position for the Post Office in Ireland in 1841, Anthony Trollope – like so many other men of his time and place – migrated to a colony to better himself professionally and economically.[1] According to his own report in *An Autobiography* (1883), his peers among the clerks in the London office did not view the move as especially clever: "There was . . . a conviction that nothing could be worse than the berth of a surveyor's clerk in Ireland . . . It was probably thought then that none but a man absurdly incapable would go on such a mission to the west of Ireland."[2] Yet the material benefits were considerable, as Trollope soon realized, particularly compared to English conditions of paid work:

> My salary in Ireland was to be but £100 a year; but I was to receive fifteen shillings a day for every day that I was away from home, and sixpence for every mile that I travelled. The same allowances were made in England; but at that time travelling in Ireland was done at half the English prices. My income in Ireland, after paying my expenses, became at once £400. This was the first good fortune of my life. (*An Autobiography* 58–59)

Financially speaking, then, it is no exaggeration to say that "Ireland made Trollope."[3] Moreover, his position there not only increased his income and earned him preferment back in England: it also gave him the material for his first two novels, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran* (1847) and *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* (1848), as well as three subsequent ones – *Castle Richmond* (1860), *An Eye for an Eye* (1879), and *The Landleaguers* (1882–83) – all set primarily in Ireland. Trollope thus experienced the colony as literary capital even after he returned to England. And from the first, his employment as a traveling colonial administrator was intertwined with his work as a novelist-to-be.

By contrast with the previous one, this chapter charts the westward flow of mid-century imperial traffic, with a focus on the "good fortune" of one Englishman rather than the material and discursive immiseration

of the Irish many. In the vast differences between the passage from England to Ireland as against the movement in the other direction, we could no doubt read many lessons about the uneven exchanges that colonial power produced and sanctioned at this moment; some of Trollope's own fictions will refigure the ones I have traced in previous chapters. But rather than dwelling on their differences, I want to begin by acknowledging a single similarity between Trollope and all those nameless immigrants: like those new arrivals he no doubt observed *en masse* on the docks when he boarded his boat, and those he saw leaving Ireland when he disembarked at Kingstown, Trollope traveled not necessarily because he wanted to, or freely chose to, but because he felt he had to. Like those many who would be less fortunate in England than he was in Ireland, and like those few who prospered and succeeded in their new surroundings as he did in his, Trollope, too, was subject to the dislocations of class society, which sent him to the colonies in search of a career and an identity. In this sense, R. F. Foster's placement of Trollope among the "marginal men" who traveled from metropolis to colony to find or make themselves in Ireland could not be more apt.[4]

But while Ireland did indeed "make" Trollope, as I will further analyze below, my central concern in this chapter is with what Trollope made of Ireland. For the most important of all the many things that differentiate him from most travelers in the other direction is that he achieved the power to represent himself and others: the authority to narrate that ultimately enabled his return from the Irish periphery to the metropole made him a new man, no longer marginal, but a prime literary purveyor of Englishness. Itself a material product of the imperial traffic between England and Ireland, Trollope's career provides a paradigmatic example of how Irish colonial space furnishes a field for the making of a singular and particular English identity. And that identity depends in part on its opposition to the group identity forged for the Irish by English observers – Trollope included – both in and out of Ireland.

Here I examine some key textual products of the first fifteen years or so of Trollope's long career as an Irish novelist, the years leading up to and away from the Great Famine, which occupies no less central and vexed a place within his Irish writing than it does in our collective historical memory. After establishing the coordinates for mapping his position as colonial administrator and author, I look at Trollope's first novel, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*, set and written before the famine. The trope of Irish underdevelopment is marked in this text by the

inability of the native Irish to create plots, in several different senses of that word, that would forward their interests; as in the representations of immigrants I have previously discussed, Trollope depicts "the lower Irish" as lacking the capacity for effective political action that distinguishes the civilian from the barbarian, while he more subtly if stringently critiques the colonial Irish ruling class for its failure to rule. By contrast with all the Irish people that *The Macdermots of Ballycloran* represents, Trollope's own powers of observation and plot-making are affirmed in the ideological interests of a new wave of colonial reform.

His remarks on his salary increase suggest that Trollope accrued economic and literary capital by means of the specific nature of his duties. As "a 'deputy inspector' of country post office books he was to investigate complaints from the public about mail service" and "to arrange delivery to distant locations within his district, which comprised roughly the ancient province of Connaught," perhaps the least modernized or anglicized part of Ireland.[5] Eventually he traveled all over the four provinces as a postal inspector: serving in each district, riding from town to town checking routes, and carrying out the work of colonial administration in his everyday contacts with postal employees and customers. His Irish novels are therefore set in locations Trollope came to know well as a result of his labors, represented for the most part with close attention to detail.[6] Developing what the anthropologist James Clifford calls a "travel knowledge," one he regarded as comprehensive in scope, Trollope perceived himself as having a minute understanding of the country.[7] "I do not think any other officer has local knowledge of the whole district except myself," he told a Select Committee on Postal Arrangements in Ireland which convened in London in 1856: "I have local knowledge over the whole of Ireland."[8] As an imperial civil servant operating under "strong cultural, political, and economic compulsions," Trollope relentlessly turned colonial experience to account; his Irish fiction became a most profitable site for putting this professionally accrued "knowledge" to use.[9] And in doing so, the writing encodes a very particular position: Mary Hamer characterizes Trollope as one who "lived and worked in Ireland as the representative of English colonial power," and so produced fictions about Ireland almost as an extension of his administrative labor.[10] If he "found his identity in the making of commodified novels," as Andrew H. Miller suggests, then he found his most fertile ground for producing both identities and novels in a land that his writing commodifies and colonizes.[11]

Gauri Viswanathan's analysis of British identity formation in India provides a way of reading Trollope's double position in terms of how the acquisition and production of knowledge about an "other" provides a basis for establishing colonial authority and subjectivity. Within the framework she describes, "the Englishman actively participating in the cruder realities of conquest, commercial aggrandizement, and disciplinary management of natives" underpins the construction of "the rarefied, more exalted image of the Englishman as *producer* of the knowledge that empowers him to conquer, appropriate, and manage in the first place."[12] What is somewhat unusual about Trollope's situation, however, is that he takes up both these positions – administrator and author – at once. We might read the official Trollope, traveling Ireland and amassing administrative "local knowledge," as authoring the authorial Trollope, who transforms what he acquires into literary currency, and whose representations of Ireland and the Irish justify his (newly achieved) dominance and their subject status. Trollope's doubled claim to "know" the Irish, derived from his position within Ireland as a colonial functionary and his literary endeavor to represent Ireland in realist fiction, thus works to consolidate his superior status vis-à-vis the object of knowledge: in this case, Ireland, but perhaps equally true of the many colonized and imperialized lands and peoples he visited in an official capacity and wrote about over the course of his career – Egypt, the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. As an administrative and authorial subject, Trollope produces Ireland as a field for inventing Irish and English character alike, by instituting more "efficient" technologies for disseminating the written in his postal work, and by creating print images of his own, marked for export back to the English literary marketplace.[13]

Understood as a site for Trollope's subjective development, a place where he achieves a position of authority in becoming both colonial administrator and novelist, Ireland also figures within some critical representations of his writing, as in the writing itself, as a site of underdevelopment from which the fledgling author emerges as a fully fledged novelist. Any number of critics, attempting to redress the relative lack of sustained attention to Trollope's Irish novels, have emphasized their continuity with the "mature" English fiction; it is by no means uncommon to come across references to his "Irish apprenticeship" or his "romance with Ireland."[14] The initial product of that "apprenticeship," *The Macdermots*, thus garners praise for its effort at the "harmonising of private and public themes," its bid at "rendering

private lives emblematic of a whole society":[15] its striving to approximate, in other words, the organic shape and complexity of the "best" novels in the "English" tradition.

While the critical discourse on Trollope's Irish fiction locates the colony as a site for authorial development, the fiction itself constructs an image of Irish culture as underdeveloped or (in a term that would have had something of a positive value for Trollope) "romantic" by English standards of modernity. Just as Ireland provides a space in which Trollope himself "matures," so, too, does it serve to launch his novelistic career, as the place where he finally laid aside his adolescent mental habit of building "some castle in the air" (*An Autobiography* 42) in favor of putting down images of ruined ones on paper. Ireland thus becomes an appropriate point of origin for Trollopian authorship in *The Macdermots of Ballycloran* in that within the developmental terms that structure colonial understanding, the place itself represents a phase or stage necessary to the development of the author, but one that remains perpetually immature, feminized, and romantic to the authorial/administrative eye.

The novel opens under the ideological sign of realism, with Chapter One entitled "Ballycloran House as First Seen by the Author," and the narrator assuming a sociological stance not altogether different from that adopted by Kay or Engels in visiting the Manchester slums. It recounts from the life Trollope's short visit "to the quiet little village of Drumsna, which is in the province of Connaught, County Leitrim, about 72 miles W.N.W. of Dublin, on the mail-coach road to Sligo," and what he saw there on a post-prandial walk: "After proceeding a mile or so, taking two or three turns to look for improvement, I began to perceive evident signs on the part of the road of retrograding into lane-ism . . . Presently the fragments of a bridge presented themselves, but they too were utterly fallen away from their palmy days."[16] Visible signs of ruin and "retrograding," counterpointed by the absence of "improvement," suggest devolution rather than progress, and prepare us for the lamentable sight of "a demesne, of a gentleman's seat, or the place where a gentleman's seat had been" (3). To reach it, the narrator must walk beneath a fallen tree, whose "roots had nearly refixed themselves in their reversed position, showing that the tree had evidently been in that fallen state for years" (3), emblematic of the "retrograding" process he represents.

The visible condition of the estate itself goes on to tell "the usual story . . . of Connaught gentlemen; an extravagant landlord, reckless tenants,

debt, embarrassment, despair, and ruin" (3), a story that corresponds directly to the history the narrator has yet to learn of the family that once lived there. Far from demonstrating the "improvement" for which he looks in vain – that idealized sign of an industrious English husbandry – Ballycloran is a "ruin" and, as such, a "characteristic specimen of Irish life" (5). So Ireland is represented in *The Macdermots* by contrast with an implicit English ideal, as not just a backward, but an actively devolving place. And the narratorial perspective – from the exactness of its geographical notations to the more general knowingness of its tone – establishes this traveler as a skilled reader of what the ruin means, as someone intimately familiar from eyewitness observation with "the usual story."

Whereas the narrator sees Ballycloran "six or seven years" (6) after the final events of the novel have taken place, when the estate has fallen into even greater disrepair than it had displayed during the lifetime of the novel's hero, the ultimate ruin of both the house and its family is implicit in every aspect of their previous history, reminiscent of the way in which Edgeworth presents her similarly fallen family in *Castle Rackrent*. And again like Edgeworth's novel, Trollope's representation of this Irish family is shaped in part by what he interprets as the historical circumstances of eighteenth-century Ireland; and so the story he tells of the family, like the story the house itself wordlessly tells, obliquely encodes that history.

The hero Thady Macdermot's great-grandfather, "disdaining to make anything but estated gentlemen" of his sons, "made over in some fictitious manner (for in those days a Roman Catholic could make no legal will) to his eldest, the estate on which he lived; and to the youngest" – Thady's grandfather, also named Thady – "that of Ballycloran – about six hundred as bad acres as a gentleman might wish to call his own" (8). Despite the narrator's parenthetical reference to the penal laws, they are not explicitly construed as a cause of the family's downward spiral; it is not eighteenth-century discrimination that precipitates Macdermot misfortunes, but what Trollope elsewhere terms the "genteel aspirations" and "pride of station" that lead Thady's ancestor to provide his second son with an estate without the means to maintain, increase, or improve it.[17] While Thady's grandfather "planned, ordered, and agreed for a house, such as he thought the descendant of a Connaught Prince might inhabit without disgrace, it was ill-built, half finished, and paid for by long bills" (8), bills still unpaid sixty years later in young Thady's lifetime. Thady's own father, Larry, similarly promo-

tes the fiction of gentility by refusing to marry into rising middle-class money; by the time our Thady reaches manhood, "brought up to no profession or business" (10), "he felt that his family was sinking lower and lower daily; but . . . he knew not what to do" (10–11).

I wish not so much to quarrel with the way Trollope represents this "characteristic specimen of Irish life" as to highlight its critique of the Macdermot men, which intertextually recalls Edgeworth's plotting in *Castle Rackrent* or Owenson's account of the Prince of Inismore, even as it signals something distinctive about the narratorial perspective in this novel. Each Macdermot is, in his own way, unseeing or unable to foresee the consequences of the short-sighted actions he takes: Thady's great-grandfather consults his own pride rather than his son's circumstances; Thady's grandfather builds "a gentleman's residence" despite his lack of "ready money," a practice "so customary in poor Ireland that it but little harassed" him (8); and Larry Macdermot likewise puts pride before practicality in refusing to marry the daughter of the very man to whom he owes the money that built his grandfather's house, because she is not of the "true descent" (9). Improvident, then, in both senses of that word, the once-regal paternal line that terminates in the last of the Thadys has failed to improve itself and so has retrograded; little wonder that young Thady "knew not what to do," since there is nothing that can undo what has been done or, rather, left undone. Unlike the prototypical "good" Anglo-Irish landlord of Edgeworth's fiction, but like the last of her Rackrents, Trollope's old catholic Irish can make no plans, produce no schemes for improvement. The Macdermots' hereditary improvidence cripples their final heir, for as Keegan, the agent of Larry's major creditor, points out to Thady, "it's quite impossible that the estate should ever come to you" (160), encumbered as Ballycloran is with unpaid debts.

The narrator's all-seeing omniscience is thus established from the earliest scenes of the novel in contrast to the absence of foresight among the Macdermot men. While the narrator can read their history from the condition of their estate in the present, the characters Trollope invents lack the perspicacity to recognize that past acts have consequences or to shape the course of events to come by formulating a plan of action. Even the fact that Thady "is the only hero in all of Trollope's novels who is neither loved by a woman nor falls in love" obliquely bespeaks Trollope's point: the novel cannot project the generative future for the Macdermots that a marriage-and-family plot embodies, because they are represented as having already squandered away the means to that

future in the past.[18] Plot-making in the novel, then, is predicated on an ability to see behind and ahead that the narrator alone possesses. And this feature marks a constitutive divide in Trollope's Irish fiction: between those who can and cannot successfully plot. Judged in this light, perhaps the most significant cultural work that Trollope's Irish writing accomplishes, as part of a larger discursive project devoted to modernizing and rationalizing Ireland, lies in its representation of this ideological English vision as truth: buttressed by the authority of science and political economy, realist narrative at mid-century takes pride of place amongst the diverse discursive forms that defined and established the truth about "others" for those who produced and consumed it.

In a chapter near the end of the first edition of *The Macdermots*, the lawyer O'Malley lays out the manslaughter defense that he will present at the trial of Thady Macdermot for the murder of Myles Ussher.[19] While Thady did indeed kill Ussher, a protestant policeman, he did so not for political reasons, and not with any degree of premeditation; we readers know that Thady had struck Ussher in a moment of passion, upon finding his sister Feemy unconscious in Ussher's arms and wrongly concluding from what he had seen that she was about to be carried off against her will. Complicating O'Malley's defense of Thady is the hero's tangential involvement with a group of local Ribbonmen, a secret society of catholic tenants who have sworn vengeance on Ussher for his vigorous enforcement of the laws against whiskey-making; while not himself actually a Ribbonman, Thady has gained the appearance of impropriety in associating with them, for he has been among them when they threatened Ussher's life. With the circumstantial evidence against Thady, O'Malley fears that just this semblance of a conspiratorial plot will be enough to convict his client.

While the lawyer himself has "no doubt that there was no real connection between [Thady's] joining that meeting, an illegal act in itself, and the death of [Ussher]" (660), he knows that he will have a hard time convincing the jury of the same. The political overtones of the murder are much heightened by the fact that Thady himself is not a tenant farmer, but a landlord charged with upholding the authority of a class of which he, in actuality, is only a nominal member. As the prosecutor somewhat misleadingly puts it to the jury of landed gentlemen at the trial, "the prisoner is from that rank in life to which the greatest number of yourselves belong; and you cannot but see that the fact of his being so, greatly increases the magnitude of his presumed

crime" (538) in murdering one of the King's sworn servants, stationed in Ireland to protect property and its possessors. A rare catholic landlord within the predominantly protestant group, Thady is assumed to side politically with his catholic tenants against the interests of his fellow landowners. But just as importantly, Thady's estate is so overburdened with debt, as described above, that he is almost as poor as his poorest tenant.

Although Thady is therefore doubly estranged from the local arm of the ascendancy by his religious and economic status, he is yet judged to have undermined its authority from within. The unprovable mitigating circumstances of Ussher's death, "joined to [Thady's] own criminal conduct" in associating with the Ribbonmen – which make him, even in O'Malley's view, "guilty as a man; but doubly guilty as a landlord" (660) – deem it likely that the murder will be interpreted as a political act. At the trial, Trollope constructs O'Malley's only conceivable defense as a matter of detaching the (false) politicized reading of Thady's act from the (true) personal and private meaning of it: "it is the two combined together which will render the fight so desperate . . . we must separate the two circumstances, which the other party will use all their efforts to unite – we must shew that at any rate no definite preconcerted plan has been proved to have been arranged" (660). The defense must, then, demonstrate that Thady never entered into a political conspiracy with the Ribbonmen to commit murder; that there is as such no double motive, no connection between the political consciousness (falsely) attributed to Thady and his private quarrel with Ussher; and, moreover, that "no definite preconcerted plan" – no plot of any kind – was conceived before, or executed by Thady at, the moment of the murder. And the defense fails because Feemy, the only other person present at the scene of the crime, dies (along with her unborn child) before she can be forced to testify in her brother's behalf. Thereafter, as Robert Tracy argues, "Thady is executed because most of the local Anglo-Irish gentry and the authorities consider the murder of Ussher a political crime, an act of rebellion against British rule," and "because he can be made to look like an Irish political assassin rather than a man defending his sister's honour."[20] Although Trollope painstakingly depicts the murder for his readers as a spontaneous crime of passion, the jury ineluctably reads it as the outcome of a calculated plot.

The narrative thus makes it clear that no matter what has taken place, or why, the local authorities – the novel's most powerful internal audience – can interpret the event only as a political conspiracy. But in

representing Thady's act to us as unpremeditated, the narrator calls into question both the interpretive frame that members of the jury deploy as well as the capacity of the Irish to plan and execute a successful conspiracy: like Engels's or Kingsley's Irish in England, Trollope's Irish at home are represented as characterologically lacking in this important skill, even as they are endlessly suspected of conspiratorial tendencies. The narrative framing of both the murder and its prosecution casts all those concerned, with the possible exception of the lawyer O'Malley, as in some way deficient or erring as interpreters or actors. For if those gentlemen who judge and convict Thady and his catholic tenants are mired in a panic that prevents them from perceiving that there is no real plot to perceive, then the putative political assassins are shown as too caught up in their private grievances even to spin an efficacious plot.

While Thady does not plan to kill Ussher, the plotlessness of his actions cannot prevent that from happening any more than it can save him from losing his own life on the scaffold; indeed, it is precisely the improvidence of Thady's actions that provides the mainspring of Trollope's own design in the novel. As a legal reader of the extraordinarily tangled plot Trollope has woven in *The Macdermots*, O'Malley attempts to "separate the two circumstances" that will lead to Thady's conviction: but O'Malley's effort cannot succeed lest it undermine the air of uncontrollable inevitability that Trollope has assigned to Thady's fate – and by extension, to Ireland's – from the earliest pages of the novel. Whereas Thady is presented as innocent by reason of extenuating circumstances, both his innocence and the narrator's support of him rest on his complete incapacity for conceiving and carrying out any plan that might issue in an effective result or outcome; if all catholic men are to some extent understood as potential conspirators by the men of the jury, from the narrator's point of view they are shown to lack the ability to conspire. Like that of the culture in which he lives, then, Thady's story – along with the very means for producing and interpreting it – is entirely out of his own control. Progress, intention, and improvement are specifically denied to the Macdermots and the devolving rural world in which they live. Even their crimes against authority issue from nothing that remotely approaches a plot.

In both of the narrative lines that Trollope constructs – Feemy's seduction by Ussher and the local events that lead up to Ussher's death – Thady's lack of authority accounts for his inaction. The social position he ostensibly occupies – as a landowner, an heir, an only son, and a brother – accords him responsibility without power, subjected as he is to

the demands of his tenants, the needs of his family, and the economic situation he inhabits. His impotence is especially evident and disastrous in family matters. Even before the events of the novel utterly destroy his sanity, Thady's father Larry has become a "broken-hearted" and "low-spirited" (29) man, "almost like the tables and chairs in the parlour, only much less useful and more difficult to move" (65), unable to assist his son in any material way and indeed often crazily anxious to thwart him. The father's lack of foresight and prudence leaves his daughter Feemy – "possessed of strong natural powers, stronger passions, and but very indifferent education" (66) – unprotected and vulnerable to Ussher's sexual attention, which Thady fails to prevent. "The father's incapacity, the sister's helplessness, and the brother's weak authority" (72) register at the level of familial relations the larger problematic of Thady's existence. Confronted early in the novel with gossip about Ussher's less-than-honorable intentions toward Feemy, for example, Thady characteristically responds only in immediate emotional terms, and without reflection: "the effect" of the news "was rather to create increased dislike in him against Ussher than to give rise to any properly concerted scheme for his sister's welfare" (30). As interpreted for us by Trollope's narrator, Thady's inability to take up an appropriately authoritative stance toward his querulous father and his erring sister, overdetermined by family history, is of a piece with his subsequent responses.

Feemy's seduction and betrayal by Ussher may be read, then, as symptomatic of the absence of effective masculine authority; as in the class-driven plots of many analogous English fictions, or in the discourse of feminine sexuality I examined in relation to Burke and Edgeworth, Feemy's "fall" is construed as the outcome of her own "stronger passions" going unrestrained by sufficient manly control. Not surprisingly, many critics have also read the novel's seduction plot as a gendered allegory of English–Irish colonial relations, suggesting most generally, in Michael Cotsell's words, that "an unspoken analogy with the relations of cultures and nations underlies [Trollope's] accounts of romance."[21] A conventional representation of Ireland as fallen and feminine signifies an imbalance of colonial power. More particularly, Conor Johnston argues that "the carrying off of Feemy, a descendant of the ancient Irish Macdermot family, by the Anglo-Saxon Ussher," whom Trollope describes in the novel as "a Protestant, from the County Antrim in the north of Ireland, the illegitimate son of a gentleman of large property" (27), represents "the continual exploitation of Ireland by England": "the blow with which Thady lays Ussher low

could be seen as a symbolic attack on that exploitation."[22] Here illicit sexuality may be interpreted as itself a sign of racial difference which marks Irish character as insufficiently disciplined – as, after Renan, "essentially feminine" – with the passions of all three central figures, even Ussher (himself an illegitimate child), demonstrably figured as out of their own control.

But this reading of the plot is one that Trollope himself takes some pains to cancel out: neither Thady's crime nor Ussher's seduction of Feemy is represented as "political" in the contemporary sense of that word, even if we inevitably read the sexual as political in today's terms. By creating two separate narrative lines leading up to the murder, Trollope institutes a discernible division between the familial and the political spheres, which he yet sees as connected by and through an absence of authority common to both. As I will argue below, Trollope does link the scandal of Feemy's fall with the local resistance to Ussher by attributing them to a lack of (masculine) colonial authority, which would keep women and peasants in line. Thus the familial plot does not so much allegorize the political one (à la Edgeworth or Owenson) as point to an underlying problem of failed authority that the two spheres share. Even the ostensibly political plot into which Thady stumbles does not qualify within Trollope's lexicon as truly political, for it is just as inchoate and unreasoned, just as driven by personal grievances, as Thady's muddled response to his sister's situation.

The precipitating factor that leads Thady to consider joining the Ribbonmen is not so much outrage at Ussher's treatment of Feemy as a more general sense of humiliation at his own and his family's loss of reputation, as announced by the attorney Keegan, his prime antagonist. Keegan informs Thady of the impending foreclosure on Ballycloran, repeats the already familiar gossip about Feemy and Ussher, and – worst of all – strikes Thady with his walking stick. After this attack, "determinations of signal vengeance filled [Thady's] imagination, damped by no thought of the punishment to which he might thereby be subjecting himself," but checked almost immediately by "the recollection of [his family's] defenceless state" (169). Yet at this moment of crisis, "he all but made up his mind to join the boys, who, he knew, were meeting with some secret plans for proposed deliverance from their superiors" (170), primarily Ussher, who has arrested and jailed the brother of one of the leading Ribbonmen, Joe Reynolds, for whiskey-making. In a moment of passionate anger, then, Thady forms something like an intention to conspire.

At the first and only Ribbon meeting he attends, Thady arrives late and drunk, "determined, at whatever cost, to revenge himself, by their aid, against Keegan, for the insults he had heaped upon him, and against Ussher for the name which, he believed, he had put upon his sister" (212); "it was by their promise to treat [Keegan]," against whom the Ribbonmen have no specific grudge, "in the same way" as they propose to treat Ussher "that Thady had been induced to come down to them" (216). Trollope, then, makes it clear that Thady's participation has no design, no motive other than "the desire of revenging himself for the gross and palpable injuries with which he had been afflicted, whilst endeavouring to do the best he could for his father, his sister, and his house" (216). And once he confers with Father John, his only real friend as well as his confessor, Thady repents his sin and avoids further association with the potential conspirators.

Trollope's Ribbonmen are similarly characterized as driven largely by personal resentment; while they actually do meet to conspire, very few of their plans come to fruition except for the maiming of Keegan, which they carry out after Thady has been arrested. Even this act, "originally proposed and finally executed more with the intent of avenging Thady, than with any other purpose" (448), has no properly political motive as the narrator presents it. Yet it is seized upon by the local authorities as another sign "that the country was in a disorderly state generally, and that it was therefore necessary to follow up the prosecutions at the Assizes with more than ordinary vigour" (448). As O'Malley discerns, a political slant is put on the crime against Keegan, as on that against Ussher, so "that an end may be put to the agrarian outrages which are now becoming so frightfully prevalent in the country" (579). The disorderly, emotional actions of the Irish thus seem, from the ascendancy point of view embodied in the police and the jury, to license the use of force against them. But the narrator's insider view enables him simultaneously to present the Ribbonmen as a phantom threat: his account suggests that they lack the characteristics that would enable an effective challenge to colonial authority.

Trollope's position on the Ribbonmen, then, may be aligned with a very specific ideological view of the meaning – or, rather, the meaninglessness – of agrarian violence: instead of considering it as an authentic political expression of resistance to the ruling class, the novel represents the Ribbonmen, like Thady, as ineffectual and undirected. While Joe Reynolds predicts that "putting Tim [Reynolds] in gaol shall cost [Ussher] his life!" (140), for example, the circumstances of Ussher's

death bear only a very indirect relation to the plots variously proposed against him. The Ribbonmen are, finally, conspirators without a plan, not really capable of carrying out their purported aims.[23] The political meaning of their actions, the narrator implies, is almost wholly a function of the reading that an unduly paranoid ruling class assigns to them. Trollope's portrayal of Ribbonism thus downplays the actual threat agrarian violence could pose to colonial authority by reading it as random and personally motivated – as, like Thady's actions, decidedly lacking in political content or true force.[24] The shape of this representation reflects Trollope's view, shared by many of his English contemporaries, that in the absence of a leader like Daniel O'Connell to rally them, the Irish did not possess "those qualities . . . required to support a stern struggle for constitutional liberty" ("Letters" 98), as made evident by their recourse to sporadic, random violence. And in the native Irish incapacity for political action the colonial administrator sees the real scandal of contemporary Irish life.

In critiquing the conditions that produce the tragedy of the Macdermots and the poverty of their tenants, Trollope lays some of the responsibility for Irish ruin at the feet of the usual Edgeworthian suspect, the absentee English landlord, at whom the narrator directs considerable if contained sarcasm (127–29). Not coincidentally, in this very same chapter of the novel, the only chapter in which the absentee Lord Birmingham is mentioned, the Ribbonmen make their first appearance, voicing their threats against Ussher at the local pub. Metonymically, then, Trollope connects the absence of one with the presence of the other, suggesting that the lack of effective colonial authority in the person of a resident patriarch gives rise to the Ribbonmen's challenge, however ineffectual, against such pale and corrupted reflections of that authority as Ussher and Keegan.[25] While the novel represents the local ascendancy as overreacting to the phantom political threat of the Ribbonmen, its members yet act in accord with the cultural script elaborated by David Lloyd: "the history of the state requires a substrate which is counter to its laws of civility and which it represents as outrageous and violent, in order that the history of domination and criminalization appear as a legitimate process of civilization and the triumph of law."[26] As in the misreading that they make of Thady's crime, the local forces of domination produce the very violence – or, more precisely, the *perception* of violence as politically driven – that authorizes their suppression of resistance, violence that characterizes the Irish people as "an anarchic and ill-organized population."[27]

It is, therefore, the inability of Thady or his tenants successfully to plot against Ussher, even more than the actual "crimes" that they commit, that becomes the ultimate sign of what Trollope regards as their lack of proper English political maturity. Moreover, as I have suggested above, that their local "betters" wrongly read the Ribbonmen as potentially effective political agents likewise suggests that those who are empowered to rule Ireland are instead ruled by their own exaggerated fears. Ultimately neither the ascendancy class, whose belief that they are being plotted against symptomatically registers their inability to govern, nor their subjects, who are incapable of forging an effective conspiracy plot, escapes Trollope's critique. Like the sexual scandal surrounding Feemy, the political scandal of the Ribbonmen points directly to the absence of (English) patriarchal control; Trollope thus installs the need for reconstituting colonial authority at the very heart of his first (Irish) fiction.[28]

Completed in July 1845, but not published until March 1847, *The Macdermots* was finished just as the famine began and appeared as the devastation neared its peak, at a moment when colonial authority was very visibly under attack in both England and Ireland. The coincidence of its publication in England with the far more newsworthy events of widespread Irish disease and disaster may have insured that Trollope "never heard of a person reading it in those days" (*An Autobiography* 75); by his own report, his second novel, *The Kellys and the O'Kellys*, which appeared the following year, similarly "was not only not read, but was never heard of, – at any rate in Ireland" (*An Autobiography* 76). Neither novel was, to Trollope, really even "contemporary" by the time it was published; taken together, they represent his view of a state of affairs irrevocably altered by the social and economic upheavals that the famine entailed, and so recounted a reading of Irish conditions which, to his mind, no longer obtained even a very few years later.

The pastness of *The Macdermots* and of the pre-famine world Trollope purports to describe in the novel is illuminated by the Irish writing he produced during the famine, some letters published for a metropolitan readership in John Forster's *Examiner*. They serve here as a necessary bridge between the improvidential plots of *The Macdermots* and the highly providential ones of Trollope's "Tale of the Famine Year in Ireland," *Castle Richmond*.[29] Glossing some of the strategies of both novels while accounting as well for differences between them, the *Examiner* letters revisit the issues of political and narrative authority central to *The Macdermots*.[30] As in the fiction I have already examined, the colonial

administrator here, too, promotes the need for rehabilitating English authority in Ireland; for example, Trollope characterizes the "lamentations" of those who criticize the British government as "most injurious" ("Letters" 75) to colonial authority, and instead defends official practices and policies. From the administrative point of view Trollope adopts in these letters, establishing colonial authority as above reproach in the post-famine future would require that all ineffective native elements, be they rulers or ruled, standing in the way of "progress" be removed. Rewriting the famine as, in this respect, providential enables Trollope not only to minimize English responsibility for it, but also to attribute some portion of the damage that it inflicts to Irish improvidence.

Published in 1849–50, the seven letters were prompted by Sydney Godolphin Osborne's earlier dispatches for *The Times*, in which Osborne, an English peer neither native to nor permanently resident in Ireland, indicted government authorities with mismanagement of famine relief. Having himself subtly criticized the failures of colonial rule in *The Macdermots*, Trollope was already on record, so to speak, in favor of reform, and his responses to Osborne promote that agenda even as they also support the actions of the British government.[31] Without disputing Osborne's grasp of the facts, Trollope quarrels with his interpretation of them. He begins by challenging the correspondent's authority – "I do not think he is sufficiently acquainted with the country of which he writes" – while asserting his own Irish credentials in much the same way that he will in *An Autobiography* or *Castle Richmond*. By pointing in the *Examiner* letters to his long-term stay in Ireland, his "continual journeys through its southern, western, and midland portions," his intimacy with "Irishmen of every class" ("Letters" 72), Trollope once again claims "local knowledge" so as to affirm his own interpretive authority.

But he also challenges Osborne's reading of the famine by disparaging the dysphoric narrative that Osborne and other dissenters from English government policy have jointly created in the English press, a narrative of distress and ruin which is, on balance, not all that different from the pre-famine vision of Irish life Trollope himself had presented in *The Macdermots*. At the time of the letters, however, Trollope critiques this rival version for its hopelessness:

> The same descriptions have been given and repeated by almost every class of people able to narrate what they have seen, till such pictures are awfully familiar to the eyes of all men . . . I am sure much good has arisen from these vivid narrations; but what do such tales, true as they are, prove to us, but that there has been a famine and a plague in the land? Have not narratives equally

true and equally fearful been written of other countries so visited by the hand of God? But they have not been taken to show that there was no hope left for the people who had been afflicted. (74)

There is, perhaps, something defensive in Trollope's response here: after all, his own "vivid narrations" of Irish life before the famine had gone more or less unheeded, while Osborne's commanded English readers of *The Times* to pay Ireland some attention, and had achieved a far wider circulation than either of the Irish novels Trollope had published. Even journalists for the Irish press – "not proverbial," in Trollope's estimation, "for a strict adherence to unadorned truth" – could impose on English readers with more assurance of reaching a large and, as Trollope represents it, largely uninformed reading audience: while "it was perhaps not surprising that writers habituated to disdain facts should exaggerate and compose novels," he sarcastically claims, "those horrid novels were copied into English papers, and were then believed by English readers" (83). Because "the subject of Ireland[,] her undoubted grievances, her modern history, her recent sufferings, and her present actual state, are singularly misunderstood by the public in England," the representation of these journalists' "horrid novels" (76–77) as truth is to Trollope doubly dangerous. He depicts his own purpose in writing the letters, Margaret Kelleher suggests, as "primarily one of exposing others' fictions."[32] And the force with which he reiterated some of his conclusions about the famine over ten years later, in *Castle Richmond*, suggests the extent to which he still hoped even then to revise these "fictive" readings of the famine in offering his own eyewitness version of it.

Even more to the point, Trollope critiques Osborne and the Irish press for the ideological position their narratives promote, one directly opposed to the story he wants to tell. For difficult as it may be for twentieth-century readers to fathom, but predictably enough from the position he takes in *The Macdermots*, Trollope saw the famine as a good thing that would enable a fresh start for the Irish, a potential end to the hereditary ruin and improvidence he had represented in his earlier fiction. Nor was he alone in this view: Christopher Morash has demonstrated that many contemporaries took the same stance, supported in it by a Malthusian "metanarrative which could account . . . for starvation, disease, and destitution in the context of human progress."[33] Indeed, Ireland could be construed as the best evidence of Malthusian truth, with the excess population that resulted, in Malthus's words, from "the extended use of potatoes," "the cheapness of this nourishing root,

and the small piece of ground" necessary to support an Irish family virtually crying out for a check in the form of famine, which would "sweep off their thousands and ten thousands."[34] In this light, the famine was not only a good thing, but a necessary thing, ordained by laws of God and nature beyond human (or English) control.

Trollope's letters thus tell a happier story of the famine than Osborne's. They redeem British authorities from charges of mismanagement and promote the production of a post-famine Ireland conducted along "progressive" new lines, based not on misrepresentation and misunderstanding, but on "a well-grounded hope" (76) – grounded, that is, on Trollope's first-hand knowledge and disinterested vision, his grasp of facts which he presents as simply incontestable by any right-minded or experienced observer. Perhaps the best thing about this Malthusian truth coming to pass, from Trollope's perspective, was its promise to destroy what Carlyle called in a contemporary letter "the general high-built, long established *Imposture* of Irish Existence and Society."[35] Just as he opposed the truth of his view to the falsity of journalistic misrepresentation, Trollope's reading of the famine sought to reveal the sham basis on which Irish identities were fabricated so as to expose them, too, as mere fictions. Subordinating differences of status and power among laborers, tenants, farmers, and gentry to the racialized similarity constructed among them, Trollope represents all the Irish as possessed of and by the same faults of character – laziness, love of luxury, improvidence – that the famine would providentially root out. Thus the narrative he shapes in these letters is far less concerned with what the famine destroys than with what it will enable.

Trollope's socioeconomic analysis of why the famine hit Ireland so hard proceeds along lines laid down by the dominant *laissez-faire* interpretation, resting on a critique of Irish land practices and, by extension, of the character of the people of Ireland.[36] The essence of his argument is that "the rent of land in Ireland has been fictitiously increased by an unsound system" because "the wealth of Ireland was almost entirely territorial, and the income arising from that wealth had been overdrawn" (92, 79). The land system before the famine, as Trollope accurately describes it, had relied on the "subdivision of land into small holdings, for which petty farmers and peasants were induced to give very high rents" that lined the pockets of large farmers or middlemen and still larger landlords, while giving even "petty farmers," in Trollope's interpretation, a spurious sense of themselves as "independent tenants" (77). When the famine came, tenants on small holdings were

unable either to pay the rent or to feed themselves and their families because their one means of subsistence had failed. Thrown out of work, or evicted from the land for non-payment of rent, among their sole available means of recourse were emigration and the dreaded workhouse, brought to Ireland through the establishment of the New Poor Law in 1838.

Those Trollope labels "the true landlords," dependent on tenant rents for their own incomes and so likewise straitened in their resources by the potato blight, were of course responsible for the rates that funded the workhouses. And so when those rates rose as high as eighteen shillings in the pound, they were unable to pay them; in the words of one historian, "the burden on the rates was unenforceable, given the limited resources of Irish property."[37] "Labour was suspended and cultivation abandoned, as farmers declared it was impossible to pay both rates and wages" (89), but as Trollope points out with reference to the rates, "suspension of labour would neither tend to [their] reduction nor to [their] payment, but rather to [their] increase and non-payment" (90). Whereas the potato famine could not have been averted, being an act of God (or as it much more mundanely turned out, a fungal infection called *phytophthora infestans*), according to this analysis it had achieved catastrophic proportions because of a land system altogether badly arranged. Although there is no denying that the famine's consequences were all the worse for the fact that many of those hardest hit were living at subsistence level even before its onset, Trollope does not critique the colonial economic policies or the legacy of penal discrimination that directly contributed to this state of affairs. Instead he relates the pre-famine economics of Irish landholding practices to the degraded character of the Irish, so making explicit some of the underlying narratorial dynamics of *The Macdermots* as well as foreshadowing his presentation of similar issues in *Castle Richmond*.

The *Examiner* letters identify three rural constituencies, mentioned above, as the salient social groups that will require post-famine reform, subordinating the differences in their economic situations to the shared faults they all display as a function of what has become, over time, Irish national/racial character. Before the famine, the lowest class of "petty farmers and peasants" or "agricultural labourers" was "enabled by fits of intermittent labour to pay an enormous rent, and to live on the easy root which the land of Ireland has hitherto so generously produced" (77). Trollope goes on to portray the want of industry among peasants as repeated and magnified in the habits of the "middling" class above

them, the large farmers, with the prevalence of this common racialized fault insuring that all will ultimately sink to the same level. Those farmers who sublet their land to laborers thus come in for the same criticism as the laborers themselves, albeit assigned a proportionally greater share. In both cases, this appraisal echoes Carlyle's contemporary representation in "The Nigger Question" of "sallow" Irish and black Jamaicans as enslaved primarily by their own indolent predilection for potatoes and pumpkins rather than by colonial rule or the ongoing legacy of chattel slavery: Trollope asserts that this "kind of life suited a people prone to temporary exertion, but fond of habitual idleness" (77).[38]

While the first Thadys of *The Macdermots* may belong to the landowning class rather than the groups here indicted for indolence and greed, all share the same underlying problem of false pride in a status artificially maintained by subletting rather than actively achieved through hard work:

> . . . the prospect of a comparatively idle life is, I regret to say, seductive to an Irishman: these tenants gave up their occupations, sublet their lands at a great profit . . . and betook themselves to the race-course and the fox-covert. Their genteel aspirations were aided by the cheapness with which gentility is maintained in Ireland . . . with a mushroom rapidity, a class of men was created not to be surpassed in the pride of station or in the want of refinement. (78)

The desire "to live as well as possible, work as little as possible, and make as much show as possible" (87), exemplified in *The Macdermots* by the building of Ballycloran on credit, has contributed to the creation of "a degree of seeming . . . prosperity" (77), which supports an altogether false social system while exacerbating the native Irish disposition to laziness. The famine has destroyed this fiction of prosperity by returning these puffed-up types to their own proper level, while the want the blight has produced has thrust them even below it: "instead of the peasants becoming farmers, the farmers became peasants – they have since become paupers" (88–89). In effect, those who falsely claimed middling status simply disappear altogether from Trollope's canvas, done to death alongside their subletting tenants by the ravages of the great hunger.

It is the class of "true landlords" – the class that will primarily occupy him in *Castle Richmond* – to which Trollope also pays most attention in the *Examiner* letters, and once more the twin "seductions" of indolence and high rents are seen as determining the irresponsible behaviors of

pre-famine life. But as the economic stakes are higher, so the social consequences are worse, and Trollope explicitly connects bad economic practices based on false prospects with a danger to familial (and thus political) order, in a manner reminiscent of *The Macdermots*:

> . . . young men in marrying required larger fortunes with their brides, and fathers considered themselves not imprudent in saddling their properties with burdens proportionably heavy; dowers and jointures were arranged, and younger children were provided for accordingly . . . money was borrowed to an extent which the perpetually increasing value of the property seemed perhaps to justify . . . While the encumbrances of former days sat easily on the jaunty shoulders of the happy squire, the future expensive honours of the family were thrown on the coming generation. (78)[39]

Here again Trollope critiques imprudence and improvidence in a neo-Burkean idiom as a failure of vision: the shortsightedness of fathers who attend only to the demands of the day, while ignoring the long-term consequences of endowing sons with "larger fortunes" and giving younger children an equal share, insures the failure of "the coming generation." Like their lesser counterparts, the landlords have been taken in by appearances and blinded to realities, and share with their tenants a common "inactivity and want of self-denial" (80). Trollope represents the continued existence of the landlords in particular as in itself a kind of plague: "the country is afflicted by a race of landlords, who have no longer any property in the land, and who will not, nay too often cannot, escape from the position" (94) to which they have fallen. Among them are "many who have been utterly unable to make exertion; many utterly paralysed by former imprudence, either of their own or of their fathers' " (91).

Trollope's "true landlords," then, would require improving or even replacing for Ireland to be effectively rehabilitated after the famine; and, not coincidentally, changing the ethnic composition of the landowning class had already become a matter of parliamentary legislation at the time Trollope published his views in the *Examiner*. The Encumbered Estates Acts of 1848 and 1849 allowed for the sale of heavily mortgaged estates so as to create new investment by "freeing landed property from legal encumbrances"; according to Foster, "Irish estates worth £20,000,000 changed hands in the 1850s."[40] Oliver MacDonagh characterizes this legislation as aimed "at making all aspects of land tenure subject to the play of capitalism and the market," while another historian concurs that "the famine opened the way for the application to the

land problem of the current panacea for economic ills, which was the principle of free trade."[41]

Like most English political economists, Trollope believed that free-market incentives to the redistribution of land – not to Irish tenants, but to English investors – and the rationalization of Irish land practices on an English model, as forwarded by the Encumbered Estates Acts, would create necessary and desirable progress: "I am convinced," he wrote, "that the facility afforded for the sale and *rapid conveyance* of overburthened property will tend more than any other measure to the prosperity of the country" (95). Such legislation would open the door to English capital investment and to an English land system that would end the cycle of hereditary Irish improvidence. "What measure," he asks, "could be devised more entirely adapted to form a new landed proprietary than that for taking encumbered estates out of the hands of the old disabled landlords?" (97). For those landlords who would be displaced in the interests of modernity, Trollope expresses some limited sympathy: "when we consider their position, we cannot be surprised at their wrath; they are to be banished from the land which their fathers held, to be turned adrift to seek a new method of life, to be pulled down from their position as men of property, and exposed to the world as men of none" (94). But his professed compassion for their suffering yields to a sense that new blood, new money, and new (English) values are necessary to rebuilding Ireland. The racial theorist Robert Knox made the case a good deal more bluntly in *The Races of Men* (1850), asserting that "Sir Robert Peel's Encumbered Estates Bill aims simply at the quiet and gradual extinction of the Celtic race in Ireland: this is its sole aim, and it will prove successful."[42] Writing from another ideological position, but without pulling any rhetorical punches, John Stuart Mill simply states that "the introduction of English farming is another word for the clearing system."[43]

While Trollope never precisely identifies who will compose this "new landed proprietary," it seems clear enough from the context of his argument in the letters that he envisioned something like a revived system of colonial plantation in post-famine Ireland, which would draw clearer lines of class and culture between landed English capital and landless Irish labor. But Trollope's vision of the post-famine future was also partially realized in fiction. "The man who takes a farm in Ireland and lives on it is Ireland's best friend" (101), Trollope wrote in the last of the *Examiner* letters; over thirty years later, in his final, unfinished novel,

The Landleaguers, he created just such a character, Philip Jones, who purchases his Irish property in 1850 "under the Estates Court" established by the Encumbered Estates Acts.[44] Then "there was no quieter spot in all Ireland," while "the lawful requirements of a landlord were more readily performed by a poor and obedient tenantry" (3) – made all the poorer and more obedient, one assumes, by the depopulating force of the famine. Buying the land for thirty thousand pounds, Jones "found that opportunities for improving the property were many and close at hand" (4); as "an aspiring man" (4), he borrows and invests further capital, some of which he devotes to reclaiming marshy land "by means of drains and sluices" (8), thereby demonstrating the (English) spirit of cultivation and ingenuity so many actual (Irish) landlords were perceived to lack. As Trollope writes near the point at which the novel breaks off, "from his first coming into this country his purport had been to do good, as far as the radius of his circle went, to all whom it included" (331): Jones thus exemplifies for Trollope the very sort of English landlord that he hoped would prosper in the post-famine period, one whose economic incentive to improve and neo-Edgeworthian desire "to do good" for the people of "his circle" go hand in hand.

As it turned out, however, such an idealized figure of the post-famine planter came to exist only as fiction, since English prognosticators were entirely wrong in their predictions about an influx of English investment. The Encumbered Estates Acts failed to attract substantial English capital: mortgaged estates were purchased largely by "local speculators, and solvent members of the landlord class," while English capitalists did not "enter the market on a large scale"; indeed, "over ninety-five percent of the five thousand purchasers were Irish."[45] So the establishment of English landed authority that Trollope saw as crucial to reconstructing colonial Ireland did not take place, an historical fact that in my view accounts for a significant difference between how Trollope represents Irish socioeconomic structure in the *Examiner* letters and in *Castle Richmond*.

While the narrative that Trollope had fabricated from the events of the famine and his interpretation of contemporary Irish conditions still forms part of the basis for the novel, *Castle Richmond* necessarily rewrites the plot of the letters ten years on: a dying landlord and his son do come very close to losing their estate, but not for the reasons Trollope had outlined in the *Examiner*, or by the rational economic means he had envisioned there. "Similar to what he had written in his earlier newspaper articles," Judith Knelman argues, Trollope indicates in *Castle*

Richmond that "the Irish upper class – weary and wrung out – is not equipped to lead the population out of the wilderness."[46] He recasts the implications of the *Examiner* critique, however, by associating particular characters from different ethnic and economic groups with the famine-era fate of death or exile. Although *Castle Richmond* does entertain the possibility of ridding Ireland of its apathetic "true landlords," an event which the letters had so confidently predicted, only a highly providential plot, as Trollope constructs it, prevents what he had once heralded as Ireland's salvation from coming to pass. In effect, Trollope rewrites the scenario of the *Examiner* letters in *Castle Richmond* with a new but different happy ending, one which constitutes a particular class form of Englishness as a central rehabilitating presence in Irish life.

"The destruction of the potato was the work of God," Trollope's narrator proclaims in the first of the few chapters in *Castle Richmond* that deal exclusively with the famine, but it is a work much aided by human frailty and ameliorated by divine forgiveness: "when men by their folly and by the shortness of their vision have brought upon themselves penalties which seem to be overwhelming, to which no end can be seen, which would be overwhelming were no aid coming to us but our own, then God raises his hand, not in anger, but in mercy, and by his wisdom does for us that for which our own wisdom has been insufficient" (65–66). As in Trollope's *Examiner* analysis, God's providence both inaugurates the famine – with considerable help from human improvidence – and concludes it, leaving not just "destruction," but also and especially improvement in its path: "the disease, when it has passed by, has taught us lessons of cleanliness which no master less stern would have made acceptable . . . lo! the famine passes by, and a land that had been brought to the dust by man's folly is once more prosperous and happy" (66).

The diagnosis of Ireland's ills in *Castle Richmond* thus proceeds along ideological lines parallel to those laid down in the *Examiner* letters, with a similar mix of divine and human agency situated at its core, as representative extracts from this chapter of the novel testify. Trollope's narrator criticizes landholders for their greed: "men became rapacious, and determined to extract the uttermost farthing out of the land within their power, let the consequences to the people on that land be what they might" (67). With all the energy of a man who must work for a living, he proclaims that "the scourge of Ireland was the existence of a class who looked to be gentlemen living on their property, but who should have

earned their bread by the work of their brain, or, failing that, by the sweat of their brow" (67). And without making any direct reference to the impact of imperial domination on the conditions of Irish land and labor, the narrator concludes that "a state of things was engendered in Ireland which discouraged labour, which discouraged improvements in farming, which discouraged any produce from the land except the potato crop; which maintained one class of men in what they considered to be the gentility of idleness, and another class, the people of the country, in the abjectness of poverty" (68). "With thorough rejoicing, almost with triumph," Trollope announces an end to this proliferation of false identities and bad land practices, with the "beneficent agency" of the famine stepping in to clear and depopulate "our crowded places" (68) regarded as one of the "blessings coming from Omniscience and Omnipotence" (489).

Given the ferocity of this critique, one might imagine that the plot of *Castle Richmond* would enact it, and it does, but not in quite the way the *Examiner* letters might lead us to expect. One major and determining difference between the letters and the novel lies in how Trollope represents the class composition of rural Ireland. The letters refer repeatedly to a tripartite class structure in agriculture, with peasant laborers on the bottom, tenant farmers in the middle, and landowners on top. But as suggested in the passages from *Castle Richmond* cited above, Trollope portrays only two economic sorts in the novel, the gentry and what he calls "the people of the country." Morash argues that this choice reflects Trollope's adherence to "the Malthusian interpretation of the Famine," which locates its proximate cause in "the extravagance of two classes: the aristocracy and the peasantry."[47] However, in a subtle but important revision to both the plot of the *Examiner* letters and to the Malthusian analysis, it is not through their shared improvidence that Trollope links peasants to aristocrats in *Castle Richmond*, but by their common suffering.

No longer considered in the abstract, as in the *Examiner*, "the true landlords" of the novel suffer various misfortunes, which serve in part to personalize the broader catastrophe of the famine. For example, after sir Thomas Fitzgerald, head of the novel's central family, dies at the end of one chapter, the very next opens with a reflection on the growing devastation: "death, who in visiting Castle Richmond may be said to have knocked at the towers of a king, was busy enough also among the cabins of the poor" (345), with Trollope directly connecting the private aristocratic tragedy to the national tragedy of the Irish people. "The fault of the people was apathy" (345), the narrator pronounces, which is

also exactly the problem he assigns to sir Thomas: a victim of moral paralysis in the face of a threat to his family's legitimacy, he becomes incapable of making any effort – "to him as impossible as the labour of Hercules" (343) – to shake off the fears and anxieties that oppress him, just as his tenants become "dull and apathetic" (346) in the face of the blight. Trollope clearly ties sir Thomas's shattered state to that of those below him: although he "had never been extravagant himself" (46), sir Thomas – like both his tenants and "the true landlords" of the *Examiner* – is "utterly unable to make exertion" and "paralysed by former imprudence" ("Letters" 91), albeit not of an economic kind.

In this limited sense, the story of sir Thomas echoes that of those laid low by the famine. The domestic narrative of a private individual's misery and death repeats in miniature the broad outlines of the public drama. It both particularizes the suffering of the landed gentry and makes it representative of what the Irish people endure, even as it links the famine's victims to sir Thomas across substantial class differences by assigning to them the same "fault." Making sir Thomas's plight structurally equivalent with that of other, anonymous sufferers suggests that the two classes are equally victimized by forces beyond their control: thus his death stands in for the nameless, faceless ones who died, symbolizing, too, the demise of the older colonial ruling class Trollope had criticized in *The Macdermots* for its ineffective rule. By this narrative move, sir Thomas and the anonymous dead come to be understood primarily as famine's casualties rather than as its Malthusian agents.

Just as the *Examiner* letters subordinate class differences among the Irish to their shared, racialized faults, *Castle Richmond* also patterns this element of its narrative structure on an Irish variation of the two-nations plot I discussed in Chapter Three. As in *North and South*, differences of class are muted by the representation of shared cross-class sufferings of rich and poor, as sir Thomas and the Irish people meet the same sad fate. That model also suggests, however, that the causation or blame for such suffering must be lodged somewhere, and its instruments excluded from the new order. When sir Thomas, a member of the failed colonial class who is understood more as victim than perpetrator, is killed off, who remains to act as the famine's human agent in *Castle Richmond*? While the Malthusian hero of this class melodrama is sir Thomas's son, Herbert, who embodies the values of the industrious English bourgeoisie, the explicit villains of the piece are those who belong to "the idle, genteel class" (68) that Kelleher correctly associates with the subletting large farmers of the *Examiner* letters.[48] Their false pretensions

to aristocratic or gentlemanly status – as signifiers of what Trollope calls "the lowness of education and consequent want of principle among the middle classes" (67) – both precipitate and are punctured by the famine.

In this respect, Trollope radically departs from his earlier representation of "falseness" as present among all Irish people in varying degrees. *Castle Richmond* rather depicts the middling as the strata most at fault, and thus most in need of replacement by the progressive middle-class element associated with a "good," modernizing Englishness. Even as the novel indicts this middling Irish group, however, it also entirely eliminates it from the narrative: there are no large farmers represented in *Castle Richmond*, only aristocratic landlords and starving, pauperized peasants. As in his wishful creation of Philip Jones in *The Landleaguers*, Trollope shapes his representation largely according to what he would like to be, rather than what is the case.[49] "Cut up root and branch . . . driven forth out of its holding into the wide world," the class of false gentlemen would be "punished with the penalty of extermination" (68), at least in Trollope's vision; those men who, not incidentally, claimed the status closest to his own, but without supplying evidence of hard work, would be reproved for their indolence and aspirations. By separating "the idle, genteel," false middlings from "the true landlords," and by representing the latter primarily as victims, rather than as agents who bear some responsibility for bringing Ireland to the point of crisis, Trollope revises the racialized narrative of Irish improvidence so evident in the *Examiner*.

This strategic evacuation of the middle – consisting of those tenant farmers who "became peasants" and then "paupers" – thus locates the real improvidence of Irish society not with the gentry and the rural poor, as the Malthusian metanarrative would have it, but with an insufficient, underdeveloped Irish middling class that lacks the manly prudence and providence of its idealized English counterpart. While no middling Irish characters appear in *Castle Richmond*, several figures are yet associated with the racialized trope of falsity, indolence, and weakness, and punished for these sins. Despite the absence of the scapegoated group from the novel, that is, the failings associated with the insufficiently cautious and industrious are redistributed among other characters of varying class positions and ethnic origins: sir Thomas dies, as we have seen, for his "apathy," or inability to act in a manly way; Owen Fitzgerald is cast out by the novel for what can only be called his anti-modern wild Irishness; and the English blackmailer Mollett, who drives sir Thomas to his death, is vilified for his lies and greed. By contrast, those among the

landed class whom the novel allows to outlive the famine and remain in Ireland are those most closely aligned with (English) virtues of industry and thrift. *Castle Richmond* indeed narrates aspects of "the transition from an aristocratic to a bourgeois society," as Morash argues; but to put it more precisely, Trollope permits only those aristocratic characters imbued with bourgeois values to form part of the future toward which the novel gestures.[50] By tracking the positions and the fates of those whom the narrative indicts or rewards, we can identify the ways in which the domestic plots of *Castle Richmond* do the heavy cultural and ideological work of clearing the ground for post-famine "improvement."

The ostentatious goodness of the Fitzgeralds of Castle Richmond, which recalls by intertextual contrast the conspicuous degradation of the Rackrents and the Macdermots, is juxtaposed within the novel on the one hand with the once-greater but now-fallen family, the Desmonds of Desmond Court, and on the other with the situation of the rakish Owen Fitzgerald of Hap House, cousin to those at the Castle. Their three homes symbolize "three alternate versions of a ruling class," each with its own internal problems and its own ethnically hybrid history and identity.[51] And the houses are linked especially by the novel's two central domestic dramas, one of which itself rehearses a kind of narrative of progress, mapped in the gendered terms of the marriage plot. Very young and altogether unacquainted with the world, the heroine of *Castle Richmond*, Clara Desmond, is the daughter of an ancient but impoverished house. Much more typically Irish than Castle Richmond in its ruined state, Desmond Court possesses in abundance "those interesting picturesque faults" (3) that the narrator attributes to ancient Irish family homes, if little or nothing in the way of fortune, with its Irishness unmitigated even by the fact that the dowager countess of Desmond is "English to the backbone" (9). Thus it resembles Castle Rackrent or Ballycloran House in its history and contemporary position, suggesting that even if Desmond Court has only its poor but high-born heroine to pass on to the future the novel emplots, it still has much to say about the past that *Castle Richmond* hopes to bury.

The history of the house where Clara lives tells, once more, the usual story. The costs of Desmond Court's construction were "never paid by the rapacious, wicked, bloodthirsty old earl who caused it to be erected" (3); two generations before the story begins, "the grandfather of the present earl had repaired his fortune by selling himself at the time of the Union" (5), while the current countess of Desmond had likewise sold herself into marriage for the sake of rank alone. And the most recent

lord of Desmond Court, the dead husband of the countess, had "[damaged] it by long leases, bad management, lack of outlay, and rackrenting" (5). Descended from those who had "been kings once over those wild mountains; and would be still, some said, if every one had his own" (5), the Irish Desmonds figure here as the improvidents, who have abdicated their once-proud position by their own greed. Their authority has rightly passed on to such as the Fitzgeralds of Castle Richmond, whom Trollope terms "considerable people ever since [their] Norman ancestor had come over to Ireland with Strongbow" (322), and who are decidedly not Irish – or at least not Irish in the degraded sense.

Revising Glorvina's movement from rational father to romantic son in *The Wild Irish Girl*, the heroine's "progress" in *Castle Richmond* consists of renouncing an early passionate attachment, albeit not without a pang, in favor of a more reasonable, improving suitor. Clara first chooses for her husband Owen Fitzgerald, possessed of only a modest competence but with oodles of romantic appeal. Overruled in her preference by her mercenary English mother (who also happens to be secretly in love with Owen), Clara likewise comes to think better of her first thoughtless choice, and engages herself again after a year or so to Owen's cousin Herbert, wealthier but also steadier, a more mature, more prudent, more English hero than the wild Irish Owen. (While Herbert spends much of his time opening soup kitchens, Owen rides to hounds: in their place, Trollope himself might well have done both.) That the terms of her development redirect Clara from passion to reason, from adolescence to maturity, from the indubitably Irish to the recognizably (if not purely) English, suggests one tendency at work in the novel as a whole.

While Owen is every bit the real gentleman, his persistent association with bodily pleasures over rational pursuits marks him as another character in *Castle Richmond* who closely resembles those members of "the idle, genteel class" whom Trollope otherwise banishes from the novel. Indeed, Owen's story allegorizes an older and persistent narrative trope of Irish resistance to English conquest, here represented through the twists of the courtship plot. In his irrational insistence that Clara belongs to him, even in the face of her repeated assertions that she has affianced herself to Herbert of her own volition and not at her mother's behest, Owen enacts one aspect of what the narrative implicitly excludes, the anti-modern attachment of the Irish to "their own." Owen argues that Clara belonged to him first, well before Herbert came along, and only demands what he considers "justice" (350). And yet his claim

to her – like Irish claims not merely to till the soil of Ireland, but to hold it – is one that the novel must set aside as atavistic, albeit with regret. Having lost Clara, and gone away as an emigrant by novel's end, the romantic Owen makes way for those new English settlers Trollope thought would follow: "he who took [Owen's] house as a stranger is a stranger no longer in the country," the narrator says in the novel's last paragraph, "and the place that Owen left vacant has been filled" (492).

In the narrative's elegizing tone here, Owen's fate recalls that future Trollope had forecast in the *Examiner* letters for those who would be forced from Ireland by the workings of a newly free market in land. Although Owen is neither dead nor penniless, he is indeed "turned adrift" ("Letters" 94) by the rationalizing forces associated with Herbert Fitzgerald. And as in the sentimental outburst that the expulsion of sir Condy from Castle Rackrent by Jason Quirk calls forth from the people of his town, or in the mourning for the old order that follows on the death of the Prince of Inismore, the wild Irish Owen's disappearance from the novel is meant to bring a tear to the eye: once more affect is marshalled to lament the consolidation of rationalizing English power. Like the marriage plot of the novel in its attention to the issues of coercion and consent that surround Clara's "choice" of a husband, Owen's fate is clearly allegorical in its implication that old Ireland, noble but "childish" (296), is dead and gone. While I agree in part with the claim that "the outcome of the romantic plot becomes a symbolic enactment of . . . a general rout of the aristocracy in the wake of the Famine," I would argue more particularly that it is only that sector of the aristocracy thoroughly associated with wild Irishness and its anti-colonial claims to "justice" that *Castle Richmond* vanquishes.[52]

For a long portion of the narrative, however, the union of Herbert and Clara is deferred, not primarily because of Owen's increasingly impassioned objections to it, but owing to the impediment raised by the other major domestic plot of the novel, in which the legitimacy of the Fitzgerald children is called into question. Their English mother had made an unfortunate first marriage to Mollett; after he had abandoned her, the circumstantial evidence gathered by her friends suggested that he was dead, and this story was believed. Only late in the novel, after Mollett's blackmail has helped to send sir Thomas to his death, does the lawyer Prendergast discover that Mollett's first and sole legal wife was living at the time of his thus-invalid marriage to Herbert's mother, so removing the false taint of illegitimacy from lady Fitzgerald's children. Even as Trollope borrows once more from the narrative repertoire

established by Edgeworth and Owenson,[53] then, in raising a question about the legitimacy of a family's claim to an Irish estate, this "somewhat sensationalized" strand of *Castle Richmond* masters the anxiety about legitimacy in a way quite different from some of its earlier analogues.[54]

As in the contemporary sensation novels by Mary Elizabeth Braddon or Wilkie Collins that revolve around lost identities and recovered fortunes, *Castle Richmond* goes on to repair the seeming losses its plots induce; by novel's end, familial order is restored and refurbished, with the legitimate heir resuming his political and social place. That restoration can only transpire, however, because the putative threat is proven to be false. And the source of this threat to legitimate order in *Castle Richmond* may once again be traced to the vices associated with Irishness. In the duplicity of Mollett – his falseness at the time of the marriage; his ongoing success at blackmailing sir Thomas into submission and at extorting gross sums of cash from him; his "lowness of education and consequent want of principle" ("Letters" 67) – we see another, more virulent representation of the idly genteel, in this instance stigmatized as criminality. If the Irish people face the worst repercussions of the famine because of the fraudulent gentility of those who will not work, then sir Thomas suffers at the hands of a figure similarly characterized as false and idle. In this particular parable of the danger of sham identities, the peril to the Fitzgeralds from those below them, embodied by an Englishman who threatens to displace them from their estate by a spurious claim, rewrites the legitimacy plot as itself a phantom threat, something akin to the false fears aroused by the ineffectual Ribbonmen of *The Macdermots*.

For the novels I have analyzed in Chapter Two, the question of legitimacy is a pressing concern with a significant historical and cultural dimension; even if the purposes they serve are ultimately unionist ones, both *The Wild Irish Girl* and *The Absentee* take seriously the matter of legitimating English rule in Ireland. The legitimacy plot of *Castle Richmond*, by contrast, may be read as the ultimate depoliticizing gesture of the novel in its insistence that, as in *The Macdermots*, the putative challenge to landed authority is no real threat at all. It is rather those who perpetuate such false threats, be they English or Irish, or who otherwise fail to live up to their duties, that merit exile or extermination. That the main perpetrator of the plot against the Fitzgeralds is English rather than Irish only emphasizes the consistency with which Trollope undercuts and downplays the possibility of native Irish resistance to colonial

rule, even as he makes the inculcation of good English virtues the prime mover of the post-famine plot.

Yet the fact that there *is* a threat to English legitimacy in the novel, even a false one, suggests Trollope's ongoing consciousness of the problem within colonial authority that he had identified in *The Macdermots*, a problem he seeks to contain in *Castle Richmond* by framing it as entirely private and familial. Whereas the perceived "solution" in *The Absentee*, for example, had been securely to establish patriarchal authority in Ireland by effecting a "common naturalization," the terms of that solution are exposed as insufficient by Trollope's novel: two generations on, and still no hegemony. Its providential conclusion sutures the fissure in the text by invalidating the more radical possibility that the Fitzgeralds, good as they may be, have no legitimate claim to Castle Richmond. Thus the novel ultimately returns Herbert Fitzgerald to his rightful position by revealing the threat to his standing to have been fictitious all along: in this way, the character most closely associated in the novel with "good" Englishness both suffers and is saved.

But for a time, in the interim between the publication of Mollett's claim and the proof of its falsity, Herbert is, to all intents and purposes, thoroughly disinherited, and takes up the placeless position that Trollope had forecast for the fallen landlords in the *Examiner*: "he was nameless now, a man utterly without respect or standing-place in the world, a being whom the law ignored except as the possessor of a mere life; such was he now, instead of one whose rights and privileges, whose property and rank all the statutes of the realm and customs of his country delighted to honour and protect" (254). Taken together with his relationship to peasant-class famine victims,[55] Herbert's own personal suffering at experiencing the stain of illegitimacy is meant to constitute part of his moral claim to survive the famine and to inaugurate Irish modernity by English means. In its fortuitous way of restoring Herbert to his place, the novel both raises and resolves the threat to this truest of "the true landlords" by the twists and turns of another, more benignly providential plot. That *Castle Richmond* so obsessively revolves around questions of authority and responsibility, however, suggests the ambiguity at the heart of even so confidently imperial a reading of Ireland as Trollope's.

Writing almost ten years after the famine and on the verge of his own return to England in much improved circumstances, Trollope must have felt that the present state of Ireland justified his view of the

possibility for Ireland's gradual improvement into (English) modernity, as personified in Herbert's providential rescue from what happens to Owen, sir Thomas, and Mollett, or from the fate of so many other Irish men and women. Higher wages for laborers, continued emigration away from the British Isles, and a change in marriage patterns that led to a lower birth rate made for a smaller and more manageable class at the bottom of the rural socioeconomic hierarchy in Ireland after the famine, while "a transition from tillage to pasture combined with a steady consolidation of holdings" meant greater prosperity for those in the middle and at the top.[56] While the Encumbered Estates Acts had failed to produce the hoped-for anglicizing effects on the composition of the landlord class, two further pieces of parliamentary land legislation passed in 1860, the Deasy and the Cardwell Acts, enhanced the workings of free trade in Irish land by denying "legal status to non-contractual agreements" and thus rationalizing Irish land practices according to an English standard.[57] In short, "many landowners appeared optimistic about the future of the land system, and there is little evidence that they thought it was in any great jeopardy."[58] What centuries of military and political intervention had not achieved – the pacification of the Irish people – was seemingly accomplished only with the assistance of divine force.

The condition of Ireland after the famine appeared to present as well a new opportunity for achieving Union even to those less heavily invested than Trollope in seeing the events of the 1840s as providential. In *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), John Stuart Mill asserted his belief that

> the consciousness of being at last treated not only with equal justice but with equal consideration, is making such rapid way in the Irish nation, as to be wearing off all feelings that could make them insensible to the benefits which . . . less numerous and less wealthy people must necessarily derive, from being fellow-citizens instead of foreigners to those who are not only their nearest neighbours, but the wealthiest, and one of the freest, as well as most civilized and powerful, nations of the earth.[59]

Like Trollope, Mill was inclined in the early 1860s to emphasize the possibility of positive good arising from Union. And he articulates this possibility in racialist terms Trollope might well have endorsed: "whatever really tends to the admixture of nationalities, and the blending of their attributes and peculiarities in a common union, is a benefit to the human race. Not by extinguishing types . . . but by softening their extreme forms and filling up the intervals between them"[60] would a truly

united kingdom be achieved, one that would acknowledge and value differences even as it rendered them less absolutely fixed in static binary terms. Creating such an "admixture," for Trollope as for Mill, would depend upon bringing into being a mixed middling group – a racial hybrid, metaphorically speaking, with a decidedly English middle-class cast – from the ruinous aftermath of the famine, as does the marriage plot of *Castle Richmond*. But in their joint emphasis on the possibility of achieving a better Union, neither could anticipate the preparing of new grounds for Irish resistance, in which the famine itself – a non-human agent of both diaspora and modernity – played what might be called, from an Irish nationalist perspective, a providential part.

CHAPTER FIVE

England's opportunity, England's character: Arnold, Mill, and the Union in the 1860s

"We are married to Ireland by the ground-plan of this world – a thick-skinned labouring man to a drunken ill-tongued wife, and dreadful family quarrels have ensued": so wrote Thomas Carlyle to the Irish nationalist Charles Gavan Duffy in 1847, wrenching the Union-as-marriage metaphor in a manner that Edgeworth and Owenson could neither have anticipated nor approved.[1] Such an understanding of the marital as of the imperial bond – as naturally ordained, but also as violently contested – was itself to become the norm in the ensuing decades, testifying to a shift in the social and ideological pressures exerted on each of these fictions of consent. If marriage naturalized and institutionalized gender inequality, the basis for that inequality was increasingly disputed in some arenas, and every bit as persistently justified in others. As in contemporary debates on the politics of marriage, so, too, did the politics of Union undergo a series of challenges – from Irish liberation movements, but also from English liberal thinkers – that seriously tested the assumptions on which English rule in Ireland had been based.

In Trollope's *Phineas Finn* (1869), a bad marriage provides the explicit model for the unhappy union of England and Ireland, as it manifests itself in the conflict over tenant-right that ultimately leads the eponymous Irish catholic M.P. to vote against his party and so to lose his seat. Trollope's narrator represents this marriage as a site for the imposition of relations of unequal power, in which the stronger party uses both coercion and conciliation to avert separation:

England and Ireland had been apparently joined together by laws of nature so fixed, that even politicians liberal as was Mr Monk – liberal as was Mr Turnbull – could not trust themselves to think that disunion could be for the good of the Irish. They had taught themselves that it certainly could not be good for the English. But if it was incumbent on England to force upon Ireland the maintenance of the Union for her own sake, and for England's sake, because

England could not afford independence established so close against her own ribs – it was at any rate necessary to England's character that the bride thus bound in a compulsory wedlock should be endowed with all the best privileges that a wife can enjoy. Let her at least not be a kept mistress. Let it be bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, if we are to live together in the married state. Between husband and wife a warm word now and then matters but little, if there be a thoroughly good understanding at bottom. But let there be that good understanding at bottom.[2]

Within its immediate context, the narratorial commentary resonates with the novel's central unhappy marriage plot, the disastrous union of lady Laura Standish with the wealthy and tyrannical Mr. Kennedy, which Laura enters into so that her beloved but feckless brother's debts will be repaid. In exchange for the protection he affords her through marriage, Kennedy expects dependent submission from his wife, for like the "mother country," and in keeping with one of the tried and true rationales for keeping Ireland tied to England, he "could not afford independence established so close against her" – that is, his – "own ribs." Imagining full equality with a partner is beyond Kennedy's scope, and arguably threatening to his own power, so this loveless domestic union fails because lady Laura resists just as Kennedy seeks to compel: they remain married, but live apart and estranged, once Laura comes to recognize over time that the position into which she has sold herself is no different from or better than that of "a kept mistress."

Returning to affairs in the political sphere from which Trollope generates the analogy, we see that England's imperial security also prescribes "a compulsory wedlock," which the Irish similarly resist, but are not free or forceful enough to break, with a permanent alienation the seeming result. The distasteful imperative of holding another against her will may, presumably, be mitigated for both partners by giving Ireland "all the best privileges," the special imperial status that Union implies. Because the two are "joined together by laws of nature," "by the ground-plan of this world," England and Ireland cannot divorce without damage to both parties. The question, as Trollope frames it, is not can this marriage be saved – it must be – but how can it be made to work. At issue, then, is not only the treatment of the (Irish) wife, but also and especially the conduct of the (English) husband, who will use force if he must, but would prefer instead to bestow on his unwilling spouse the restitution for her troubles that might, over time, make her "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" rather than "a kept mistress."

Thus Trollope adheres to the notion that domination in politics, as in

marriage, works best if the weaker party comes freely to accept her subordination, made easy to her by the stronger; strategically according her "the best privileges" may eventually make the wife amenable to her golden chains. For no Englishman, and no manly nation, maintains control solely by force without staining his own character; the use of coercion is at odds with the image of England as the home of (Saxon) liberty. The legitimate prerogatives of marriage and Union, for those select Englishmen who synecdochically represent "England's character," thus include the expectation that they will, paradoxically, compel consent from all dependents, be they wives or colonials (or both). Securing that consent surfaces as one of the central concerns within liberal discourse on Ireland in the later 1860s.

The failure of force to assure wifely Irish acquiescence has something to do as well, Trollope further implies, with the differences between the partners to Union, but more especially with the unproductive attitude to those differences that Englishmen have not yet given up. As the narrator goes on to argue via Mr. Monk's subsequent reflections on disestablishing the Church of Ireland, creating a "good understanding" between parties to Union requires flexible and enlightened opinion on the part of the English. The prevailing mismatch between English institutions and Irish religious practices, however, is comparable to a case in which "a man had married a woman whom he knew to be of a religion different from his own" and, rather than allow her liberty of conscience, "insisted that his wife should say that she believed those things which he knew very well that she did not believe" (474). The narrator can provide no explicit solution to such a dilemma – "it was one of those matters which almost seemed to require the interposition of some higher power" (474) – yet the guiding moral imperative remains: to act in accordance with what is appropriate to "England's character" under the specific circumstances of increasingly visible Irish resistance to English rule. If some Irish differences, like catholicism, could not be wished away, rooted up, starved out of existence – if the very coercive effort to destroy had indeed served only to promote the growth of resistance – then perhaps what needed to change, what could be changed, was not the Irish, but English attitudes to the Irish. How to deal with Ireland's differences from (and with) England – a problem that the famine had promised to resolve by "the interposition of some higher power," a promise on which it had failed to deliver – became for such liberals as Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill a virtual test case for measuring the ideological strengths and weaknesses of "England's character."

In this chapter I situate my readings of Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), Mill's *England and Ireland* (1868), and some of their other writings on Ireland in relation to two important contemporary developments in the politics of saving or breaking the Union. On the one hand, I cite the spectacular emergence of the Irish Revolutionary (or Republican) Brotherhood (IRB), also known by its American name as fenianism, as a force committed to gaining Irish independence by any means necessary that played an important part in putting Irish disaffection on the imperial map. On the other, I locate the parliamentary efforts of W. E. Gladstone and the Liberal party to conciliate Irish grievances, especially those regarding land issues, through legislation that proceeded from a new political fiction, one that represented Ireland's differences from England as legitimate, historical, and in need of immediate redress. With their very different plans for achieving "justice for Ireland," armed revolutionaries and liberal reformers dually shaped public consciousness of Irish affairs, spawning an ongoing debate about the failure and the future of Union in which both Arnold and Mill attempt to intervene, also by way of new or revised fictions. Whether they proceed from notions of racial difference, as in Arnold's analysis, or from perceptions of historical and economic difference, as in Mill's, the discursive refigurings of Union that I examine in this chapter significantly constitute the unhappiness of Union not primarily as a matter of Irish faults, but rather as a problem arising from "England's character."

As Mill wrote early in 1868, fenianism – "like a clap of thunder in a clear sky" – unsettled the English public, as had the immigrant influx of the generation before to a lesser extent, because the effects of Irish agitation made themselves palpable in England: "the disaffection which [the English people] flattered themselves had been cured, suddenly shows itself more intense, more violent, more unscrupulous, and more universal than ever . . . Repressed by force in Ireland itself, the rebellion visits us in our own homes, scattering death among those who have given no provocation but that of being English-born."[3] Mill refers specifically here to the final jarring blow of the IRB campaign in 1867, an explosion outside the walls of London's Clerkenwell Prison that killed or injured many local residents, and set off an unprecedented wave of terror among the English people. If Trollope had disparaged the efficacy of Irish plotting as recently as a decade or two earlier, then what happened at Clerkenwell, after the other events of the previous few years, demonstrated to the world at large that at least some of the Irish were indeed

capable of carrying out deadly conspiracies against English order. The English cultural perception of an Irish predisposition to violence was thus undoubtedly enforced and intensified, producing an atmosphere of crisis. While Arnold, as we will see, would blame the Philistines for Clerkenwell, the English middle classes blamed the Irish, and responded with fear that the bombing "might presage a campaign of mass murder in British cities; special constables were sworn in by the tens of thousands."[4]

Popular anxiety in England about this new Irish threat also had a significant impact on the course of English politics, as the rise to power of the Liberal Party was intimately connected with garnering catholic Irish electoral support. In December 1867, with his party out of office but on the eve of his introducing the bill that would ultimately disestablish the Church of Ireland, Gladstone succinctly outlined the stance he would take up toward Ireland for remedying disaffection when he became Prime Minister for the first time just one year later: "English policy should set its face two ways like a flint: to support public order, and to make the laws of Ireland such as they should be."[5] In this response to Clerkenwell, the implicit emphasis rests on renewing English security in the face of Irish violence. Increasingly, however, as Gladstone's suitably vague words suggest, the strength of that security was seen to depend on legislating "justice for Ireland" as the primary means of dealing with rural unrest, with nationalist aspirations and, perhaps most importantly, with the perceived international threat to British imperial hegemony that fenianism was understood to express.

Spreading quickly to England and the United States, the Fenian Brotherhood had originated in Ireland in 1858, just a year after the Sepoy Rebellion, when international and imperial affairs were at a critical point. Conflict with France, perpetually imagined as a potential Irish ally, in tandem with the aftershocks in India raised the spectre of widespread imperial instability. Palmerston, then Prime Minister, was so alarmed by the tone of the Irish press on the Indian situation that he advised his Irish viceroy to replace "the militia of Catholic counties . . . with British regiments" so as to insure loyal order.[6] By the early 1860s, R. V. Comerford argues, "Anglo-American tension had taken over as the dominant international influence on Irish nationalist politics," with British support for the Confederacy in the Civil War, mass Irish-American military service, and the growing politicization of immigrants driven across the ocean by the famine contributing to a more generalized sense of transatlantic alarm.[7] Moreover, the events at Morant Bay in Jamaica in 1865, and the subsequent debate over the fate of Governor

Eyre in 1866–67, evinced yet another New World threat to imperial hegemony and to "England's character" that made for a *cause célèbre* at home, during years also marked by rioting in Hyde Park and the tumultuous passing of the Second Reform Bill. By 1867, Gladstone could summarily identify the "one danger" to the British empire as "expressed by the combination of the three names Ireland, United States and Canada" – each the site for fenian activists who commanded money for arms, organized nationalist protests, and committed violence against lives and property.[8] And that fenian campaigns in England itself would be largely funded and staffed by famine-era immigrants to England and North America and their children was but one of the more evident ironies of the moment.

"Our purpose & duty," Gladstone wrote in that same year, "is to endeavour to draw a line between the Fenians & the people of Ireland, & to make the people of Ireland indisposed to cross it."[9] But where and how to draw that line was perhaps more difficult than it seemed. That the IRB was not to be at that (or any other) point in time entirely conflated with "the people of Ireland" is borne out by its historians, who emphasize the relative fragmentation of the movement and the smallness of its numbers.[10] Led in its first phase by James Stephens, a Young Irelander who had fled for asylum to Paris after the abortive rising of 1848, fenianism initially "flourished principally among the urban lower classes" in England, Ireland, and the United States, while its leaders derived mainly from the catholic middle classes; perhaps because of the largely urban origins of its membership, the early IRB tended to regard the question of land ownership in much the same way that marxist movements have responded to the issue of women's disabilities – as secondary to the main chance – in its commitment to "pure nationalism."[11] But rural participation in the IRB rose over the course of the 1860s, spurred by the agricultural depression of 1860–63 and the wide circulation of the IRB newspaper, the *Irish People*, forcibly suppressed by the government in 1865. Paul Bew has suggested that the IRB gained support among agrarian Ribbonmen during this period, while Joseph Lee considers the IRB an important forerunner of the Land League, founded in 1879, in that it was "the first political movement to channel the energies of agricultural labourers and small farmers, hitherto expressed in ribbonism and faction fighting, into a national organisation."[12]

While the IRB of the 1860s, then, took armed insurrection as its preferred method of achieving its ends, and would commit itself to no

"policy" short of that, fenianism made its presence felt in parliament as well as out of it. Even if the Clerkenwell bombing did not entirely motivate Gladstone's conciliatory tactics in the late 1860s, it asserted with a vengeance the need "to pacify Ireland" sooner rather than later, in that it "brought home to the English public some sense of the reality of Irish grievances, destroying the prevalent complacent apathy and creating, as Gladstone discerned, an atmosphere of reluctant English acceptance of the necessity for some Irish reforms."[13] And if it is the case, as Simon Gikandi argues, that "it was only through such imperial crises" as those I have cited above "that the official English mind could reflect on the national character, its economy of representation, and its moral imperative," then the Irish question also presented a like opportunity for Englishmen to reflect on what Englishness itself had come to stand for.[14]

In this context, it may seem surprising that even someone so committed to the rhetorical posture of urbane detachment as Matthew Arnold did not more emphatically convey in *On the Study of Celtic Literature* the anxiety aroused in the English public and its leaders by fenian insurgency in England and Ireland, even before the Clerkenwell explosion. The imprisonment of IRB leaders in England and Ireland in 1865, and the suspension of *habeas corpus* in Ireland in February 1866, followed by many more arrests, had garnered wide attention; relatively small fenian risings in Ireland the following year, in February and March 1867, were similarly reported in the English press. Arnold was quite clearly aware of the fenians, for he refers to them throughout the text of the *Study*, first serialized in the *Cornhill* and then published as a book in the spring of 1867, as well as in its very last, very conciliatory sentence. It may be that as he was preparing the final version of the *Study* for book publication, when "the fenians had been shown to pose no serious threat of revolution," "they became objects of sympathy" to Arnold as they did to Mill, who actively campaigned in Parliament for the release of IRB prisoners.[15] But it may also be that Arnold strategically opted to shift his readers' attention away from deploring Irish outrages and toward acknowledging English complicity in producing Irish unrest. By *not* representing the fenians as an inevitable danger to English power, Arnold leaves open the possibility that Union could be preserved without further rounds of coercion and violence.

As he writes in the *Study*, from his characteristic rhetorical position somewhere above the fray of party politics, "the release from alarm and struggle, the sense of firm possession, solid security, and overwhelming

power; no doubt these, allowing and encouraging humane feelings to spring up in us, have done much" to alter English attitudes to Ireland; Arnold presents it as entirely likely, however, that "a state of fear and danger, Ireland in hostile conflict with us, our union violently disturbed, might, while it drove back all humane feelings, make also the old sense of utter estrangement revive."[16] Such a claim testifies, on the one hand, to Arnold's confidence that Union could endure its latest violent challenge from the IRB, but on the other, to his awareness that no permanent settlement of conflict within the United Kingdom had been achieved. "There is no vital union between [the Englishman] and the races he has annexed," he asserts in the Introduction to the *Study*; "in England the Englishman proper is in union of spirit with no one except other Englishmen proper like himself. His Welsh and Irish fellow-citizens are hardly more amalgamated with him now than they were when Wales and Ireland were first conquered" (392–93). The two dominant notes of the text as a whole are that the conquest has been incompletely achieved, and that its final success will depend on racial "amalgamation," with the accomplishment of the "work of fusion" (392) among the distinct races that compose the United Kingdom as the preferred means for establishing a "vital union."

Viewed in relation to the transnational rise of visible opposition to Union, the *Study* responds to the threat of Irish insurrection and the fact of Irish violence by downplaying it to English readers; in his deployment of racialist categories similar to those I have examined in Chapter Three, Arnold, like Trollope, denies the Irish any effective political capacity by casting the revolutionary violence of the fenians as just another sporadic outbreak of Irish distemper. Yet at the same time, in diagnosing England's failure to achieve hegemony in Ireland in terms that he also draws from racialist discourse, Arnold reconceives both the failure of Union and the means for successfully consummating it in the ambivalent idiom of marital and familial mixture. The *Study* identifies England's inability to marry itself to Ireland, and so to produce a united British family, as a sign of what the English lack.

In keeping with the tenor of his entire analysis, Arnold describes the absence of "vital union" in its psychological effects. His own early lessons in race from his father, whose convictions of Teutonic superiority Arnold figures as belonging to an earlier historical moment and a now-superseded way of thinking, had emphasized the difference of Celts from Teutons in absolute terms:

> I remember, when I was young, I was taught to think of Celt as separated by an impassable gulf from Teuton; my father, in particular, was never weary of contrasting them; he insisted much oftener on the separation between us and them than on the separation between us and any other race in the world . . . This naturally created a profound sense of estrangement; it doubled the estrangement which political and religious differences already made between us and the Irish: it seemed to make this estrangement immense, incurable, fatal. (300–01)[17]

It would indeed be difficult to imagine Arnold – the relentless advocate of continental Euroculture as a remedy for English provinciality – ever indulging in his father's "Teutomania."[18] Where Thomas Arnold had seen "an impassable gulf," constituted in part by historic political conflict between the Celts of France and Ireland and the Teutons of England, his son glimpsed within the newer ideologies of racial science and comparative linguistics the discursive means for bridging that divide. Through the language of "separation" and "estrangement," Arnold represents the failed Union not only as an unhappy marriage of unlike, antagonistic parties, but also as an internal state of alienation. Divided from the teachings of his father, from the "brother Saxons" (*Study* 298) whose values he also condemns, and from what he goes on to identify in the *Study* in racialist terms as the particular feminine disposition of the Celts, Arnold rhetorically figures his own lack of psychic wholeness as the individual equivalent to political fragmentation within Union.

One of Arnold's biographers, Park Honan, proposes that his "comparativist interest in nations, peoples, and races is related to [his] desire for a deeper self-definition": "Arnold uses the terms 'Celtic' and 'German' and 'Saxon' to define aspects of himself."[19] His mother's Cornish ancestry – "our own semi-celtic origin," as he called it in a letter to his sister Jane – gave him insight into Celtic people, Arnold believed, and an imaginative ground for identifying with them.[20] "I have a great *penchant* for the Celtic races," he told Louisa de Rothschild in 1864, on his return from a summer holiday in Wales; that trip provided the opening anecdote for the 1865–66 Oxford lectures later reworked for publication, first in the *Cornhill*, in the spring of 1866, and then the next year in book form. The traits he identifies in that letter as essentially Celtic – "their melancholy and unprogressiveness" – function both as a means of glossing such elements within his own mixed character and as a basis for the portrait of Celtic character that he was on the verge of creating.[21]

Representing the political as psychic, and the psychic as political,

with both realms constituted by and through division and alienation, clearly locates Arnold's strategy in the *Study* as a new racialist version of the gendered allegory of Union discourse. What the coercive masculinist regime of "firm possession, solid security, and overwhelming power" could not accomplish Arnold sought to secure by affective means. In this liberal tactic of reconciliation – an early version of what would come to be called "killing Home Rule with kindness" – he both recalls Burke's critique of the protestant ascendancy's inability to attach the Irish and anticipates Gladstone's parliamentary strategy of winning Ireland by concessions if possible, combined with coercion when necessary. As another contemporary writer on Ireland also put it in Burkean terms, "an alien and disaffected element incorporated in an empire can only be a source of internal division and weakness"; for Arnold, too, eliminating Irish disaffection would shore up imperial strength.[22] Ironically, even disingenuously, a text that calls for the disinterested scholarly study of the literature of the Celts as a means of bridging the "impassable gulf" has for its very interested motive the incorporation of the Irish within the political pale of the United Kingdom.

Unsurprisingly, the end Arnold had in view and the means he recommended for securing it have been rendered more than a little ideologically suspect in our own time, especially to some working in postcolonial Irish studies. Seamus Deane asserts that the *Study* consists of "an absurdly naive use of racial theory to glamorize (by pretending to solve) the unlovely and brutalized relationship between Ireland and England"; Arnold is, in Deane's estimation, no more and no less than "an apologist for power."[23] Working from Edward Said's notion of flexible positional superiority, David Cairns and Shaun Richards argue along the same lines that while "simianization placed the English in only one possible relationship with the Irish – domination," the racialist discourse of Celticism that shapes Arnold's more sophisticated approach "offered a whole range of positions, which in their more positive responses could be represented as highly complementary [*sic*]"; they characterize the arguments of the *Study* as "deployed by Arnold for the purpose of developing a bourgeois hegemony, and safeguarding the public order of the British Isles."[24] Also from within Irish studies, Joep Leerssen has taken the compromise stance that "unsettling" as his racialism is, Arnold strategically adopts such attitudes "merely as a rhetorical springboard from which he could launch into his defence of Celtic culture."[25] But even this qualified view underestimates the use-value of those racialized categories for Arnold's analysis.

Michael Ragussis has suggested, from a disciplinary location in English studies, that Arnold's interest in "the preservation of cultural diversity" was "a minority position increasingly difficult to maintain as the century progressed and as the ideology of cultural and national homogeneity, based on the notion of the superiority of some races, became more and more popular."[26] According to this properly historicist viewpoint on the *Study*, Arnold's dissent from his father's Anglo-Saxonism looks less like a capitulation to one flank of the new racialist hegemony than a struggle against it, an effort to "dislodge the English from a conception of themselves as a unicultural and uniracial nation."[27] For Ragussis, as for Robert J. C. Young, what Arnold begins to develop in the *Study*, and expands considerably in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), is "a theory of English culture as multicultural."[28]

That Arnold is heavily, even naively, indebted to racialist notions now discredited, at least among progressive academics, is not in dispute here. The imperial form of his thinking is further illuminated in how completely he subscribes to the hegemonic – some would say genocidal – view from the metropolitan center on the destiny of what Carlyle had called the "constituent part[s]" of the United Kingdom.[29] Commenting on the necessary disappearance of the Welsh language, Arnold confidently regards "the fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands into one homogeneous, English-speaking whole, the breaking down of barriers between us, the swallowing up of separate provincial nationalities, [as] a consummation to which the natural course of things irresistibly tends": "it is a necessity of what is called modern civilisation, and modern civilisation is a real, legitimate force; the change must come, and its accomplishment is a mere affair of time" (296–97). The ideological bias of this naturalizing imperial discourse of "progress" notwithstanding, it is my contention that situating the *Study* within its own moment – as part of a broader English public discourse that sought to refigure Union at a moment of perceived crisis – is crucial to understanding its rhetoric and politics. In particular, I want to track the fate of the political metaphor of union as cross-cultural mixture in Arnold's discourse so as to demonstrate that its gendered and racialized components operate under new conditions to provide a different way of imaging that relation.

Reading Arnold in the context of shifting relations between Ireland and England in the 1860s suggests that his articulation of Celtic and Saxon character, like the earlier deployment of those terms in another rhetorical and political situation by Engels, marks an effort to reconfigure cultural difference as the basis for what he conceives as a new and

better order.[30] To be sure, this effort aims to construct "a bourgeois hegemony," as is most readily apparent in Arnold's modeling of the political conflict between Irish and English as a spiritual and psychological imbalance within the individual, and largely internal to English national/racial character. Yet Arnold's willingness to imagine that Union could no longer be conceived as a matter of Ireland becoming more like England, but must instead proceed on principles that would newly articulate the meanings and uses of cultural difference, also constitutes a powerful critique of Englishness that I want to emphasize. Rather than argue for the elimination of difference, whether by transforming the Irish or by simply excluding them from the English nation, Arnold presents cultural variety within the United Kingdom, and within Englishness itself, as an historical fact with contemporary implications; rather than represent the Irish as an external source of contagion or a threat, he presents their influence as, for good or ill, internal to and part of what makes up Englishness. In shifting the ground for critical discussion from Arnold's stereotyping of "the Celt" to his mode of representing the English, I hope not to minimize the conclusions to which his argument tends, but rather to demonstrate a critical change between Arnold's way of thinking through the issues and those modes operative in earlier texts that I have discussed. That Arnold's means of attempting to resolve the "Irish question" is to make it in every respect an "English question" may indicate a profound and unplumbed chauvinism on the part of a man widely criticized in his own day for lack of patriotism. But it may also, alternatively, bespeak a significant metamorphosis in thinking among liberal intellectuals that radically challenged assumptions about Ireland and England which had shaped both colonial politics and narrative representations of Union over the course of the previous century.

The Celts are a dying race, doomed to extinction in Arnold's view, as in Trollope's, because of their inherent political incapacity and inability to develop. The *Study* presents the common mid-Victorian stereotype of them, said to lack "balance, measure, and patience" (344) in their "want of sanity and steadfastness" (345). Their language – in Ireland "above all" – is "the badge of the beaten race, the property of the vanquished" (293); "constant in resistance" to modernity, as Renan put it, according to Arnold the Celtic peoples never accomplished, and cannot now achieve, "the skilful and resolute appliance of means to ends which is needed both to make progress in material civilisation, and also to form

powerful states" (345).[31] Their true place in contemporary culture is as "an object of science" and "a spiritual power" (298), a field for antiquarianism of the sort in which Arnold engages for much of the text (and, according to most of his critics then as now, rather amateurishly at that). Killing the Celts into art, Arnold asserts that "it is not in the outward and visible world of material life that the Celtic genius of Wales or Ireland can at this day hope to count for much; it is in the inward world of thought and science. What it *has* been, what it *has* done, let it ask us to attend to that, as a matter of science and history; not to what it will be or will do, as a matter of modern politics" (298).

In this line of argument, Arnold recalls both Edgeworth's representation of a vanished Ireland and Owenson's more celebratory affirmation of Irish antiquity, in that he, too, seeks to conserve some version of the Irish past as a resource for the politics of the present. His emphasis, however, falls on demonstrating that the Irish present will not provide an adequate medium for the growth of the active agency that political life requires, because Celtic peoples are altogether racially unfit for democratic "modern politics." Drawing on the standard English reading of Daniel O'Connell's appeal, Arnold argues that a Celt's vulnerability to sentimental attachments leaves him open to demagoguery: "undisciplinable, anarchical, and turbulent by nature, but out of affection and admiration giving himself body and soul to some leader, that is not a promising political temperament"; the tendency to hero-worship makes the Celtic character "just the opposite of the Anglo-Saxon temperament, disciplinable and steadily obedient within certain limits, but retaining an inalienable part of freedom and self-dependence" (347) that insures vigilance against tyranny. Representing Celts as unsuited for "modern politics," and Saxons as ideally fit for them, thereby appears to establish the appropriate political relation between the two. "Only the Saxons and their English descendants knew how to live in freedom under law and had succeeded in reconciling monarchy with principles of popular sovereignty," as L. P. Curtis, Jr. draws out the implications of this view; "all other races, in particular the Celts, required highly centralized or authoritarian institutions in order to prevent violent political and social upheaval."[32] Such beliefs continued to justify England holding Ireland, for decades to come, against what would increasingly be articulated by Irish and English voices as Ireland's national will: the Irish being "deemed unfit for self-government," Vincent J. Cheng concludes, "has a very direct effect on the political arena of Home Rule."[33]

There are obvious parallels here between Arnold's implicit argument for maintaining English rule in Ireland and the contemporary case against enfranchising women, which is comparably rooted in the positing of natural limits to women's capacity for reason and autonomous agency. In both arenas, the discursive formation works to legitimate dominance and subordination, primarily through defining subordinated groups as lacking in political capability. And the racialist terms in which Arnold describes the Celts are also simultaneously gendered terms: "no doubt the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have something feminine in them" (347). Thus linked to another influential scientific discourse that constructed even normative femininity as closely bordering on madness, the seemingly immutable racial hierarchy of manly Saxons over womanly Celts is discursively established. In the overlapping of gendered terms with racial ones, another sort of marital and familial paradigm materializes, and a specifically sexual paradigm for Union as racial amalgamation emerges.

Philip Dodd has written that "the definition of the English is inseparable from that of the non-English"; just as one "knows" what is "masculine" only by reference to what one "knows" to be "feminine," so "Englishness is not so much a category as a relationship."[34] Arnold, too, conceives "Englishness" and "Irishness" as terms of relation rather than opposition; there is latitude within his text for negotiation and play between them, room for locating what he calls "a root of the poetical Celtic nature in us" (370), with "our" interest in the Celt being "wonderfully enhanced if we find him to have actually a part in us" (337). This, I suggest, is the real heart of Arnold's strategy in the *Study*: to make the Celt always already "a part," albeit an antagonistic and essentially unassimilable part, of the racial melange that had issued in "the English." Arnold's analysis aims to demonstrate why union with a feminized Ireland had not been completely achieved; thus his representation of the Celtic as what the predominantly Saxon masculinist ruling classes lack (or have abjected) in their own psychic and social composition becomes part of the basis for his critique of the English. Lacking "vital union" within themselves makes the English incapable of achieving it with others.

Arnold's project depends on a selective reading of the findings of philology and ethnology, the disciplines he refers to most broadly as "science" and whose influence he reads as unambiguously benign, in terms of how they establish proximity between Saxons and Celts. As K. Anthony Appiah suggests, Arnold deploys philology in particular as "a

guide to racial filiation, with those whose languages are most closely related being also most closely related by blood."[35] "The doctrine of a great Indo-European unity" (300) of race and language, which tells us "that there is no such original chasm between the Celt and the Saxon as we once popularly imagined . . . that they are our brothers in the great Indo-European family" (302), discursively establishes the fact of "kinship" rather than absolute otherness, a basis for (fraternal) relation in the present rather than an "impassable gulf" that separates and divides. In race, in language, in literature, too, "science exercises the reconciling, the uniting influence" in uncovering "traces of kinship, and the most essential sort of kinship, spiritual kinship, between us and the Celt, of which we had never dreamed" (335). A family likeness thus anchors the argument for connection and similarity between "us" and "them," albeit without any suggestion of an identity of interests or equivalence of position between Saxons and Celts. Representing both as members of the same "family," indeed as "brothers" – a figure that once more recalls Benedict Anderson's claim that the national community is imagined "as a deep, horizontal comradeship" – licenses a reading of the historical that seeks to delineate the contemporary uses and meanings of that kinship.[36]

Conquest, which Arnold more often euphemistically refers to as "contact," provides the meeting-ground between races from which "the English" would ultimately spring. Discarding the idea that the English are racially pure, Arnold locates the Celt (a.k.a. the Briton) as an ingredient in the mix that makes up Englishness by positing intercourse between distinct races in the past as the literal, biological source for the "traces of kinship" between Saxon and Celt that science discovers in the present:

> . . . here in our country, in historic times, long after the Celtic embryo had crystallised into the Celt proper, long after the Germanic embryo had crystallised into the German proper, there was an important contact between the two peoples; the Saxons invaded the Britons and settled themselves in the Britons' country . . . here was a contact which one might expect would leave its traces; if the Saxons got the upper hand, as we all know they did, and made our country be England and us be English, there must yet, one would think, be some trace of the Saxon having met the Briton; there must be some Celtic vein or other running through us. (336)

The "Celtic vein" of style in English poetry is what primarily preoccupies Arnold in the concluding section of the *Study* (361–83), but here he attempts to follow that bloody poetic vein back to its historical, putatively biological source. In accordance with the particular strand he pulls

from the tangled weave of racialist thinking, Arnold identifies the races as having fixed traits and characters; the Celtic constitution at the original moment of conquest and in 1867 can be understood as more or less the same in racialist terms. Somewhat paradoxically, then, the perceived fixity of racial character does not prevent a crossing of these fixed races from producing progeny. Although Cannon Schmitt has argued that this marks a "deep contradiction" in Arnold's racialism, allowing him to oscillate between essentialism and historicism in his articulation of how English national character was produced, the contradiction is by no means Arnold's alone; in the enormous textual archive of nineteenth-century racial theory, such is actually the norm rather than the exception.[37]

So even after "the Celtic embryo" had become "the Celt proper," which Arnold suggests was already the case by the original moment of contact/conquest, the intermingling of Celts with other fixed racial types insured that some trace of this subordinate, subjected, feminized race would enter into the blood of the dominant and persist there, "literally joined through intermarriage," as Appiah describes this most metaphorical feature of racial discourse.[38] For getting "the upper hand," we might imagine, requires rather than prohibits intimate contact between conquerors and conquered in Arnold's fiction, especially given that the sexualized dynamics of subordination often although not always identify the Celt with the feminine, and the feminine with subjection. In these oblique references to specifically sexual practices of conquest, Arnold constructs a kind of racial underclass whose blood had been (forcibly?) blended with that of their betters. "A great mass of [Celtic Britons] must have remained in the country, their lot the obscure and, so to speak, underground lot of a subject race"; "insensibly getting mixed with their conquerors, and their blood entering into the composition of a new people," the defeated Celts are yet made part of "the stock" (337–38) that breeds Englishness over generations.[39]

By representing the contemporary English as a people of hybrid stock, mixed in blood and in character, Arnold disrupts the assumption of English racial purity and, by implication, further undoes the basis for asserting absolute difference and opposition between Irish and English in the present: for how can "we" differ entirely from something that is part of "us"? But, perhaps more importantly for his argument, the contemporary legacy of that "Celtic vein" in the English is itself very much mixed, because these "hauntings of Celtism" (360) combine uneasily with "the Saxon's phlegm" (348), sign of the Philistinism that

Arnold identifies in the *Study*, as in *Culture and Anarchy*, as the vicious virtue of the English. "Here, then, if commingling there is in our race, are two very unlike elements to commingle; the steady-going Saxon temperament and the sentimental Celtic temperament" (349): while the Saxon predominates, as Arnold argues that it does to far too large a degree, the Celtic acts as a continual irritant, "a conflicting force" (348). Refiguring the English character as a composite or hybrid type thus enables Arnold to read "a certain mixture and strife" (359) as a product of the clash of racial elements within English national character (or what he would call "personality"), and something on the order of Carlyle's "dreadful family quarrels" as the result.

While Engels had understood intermixture between English and Irish as itself the remedy to a contemporary problem, Arnold rather sees the persistence of "the Celtic vein" within Englishness as calling out for correction. The solution he offers to the internal contest between Saxon phlegm and Celtic sentiment, as for the external one between different cultures, is to exert some unifying force over the mix, to bring the heterogeneous whole under firmer pressure and control:

> so long as this mixed constitution of our nature possesses us, we pay it tribute and serve it; so soon as we possess it, it pays us tribute and serves us. So long as we are blindly and ignorantly rolled about by the forces of our nature, their contradiction baffles us and lames us; so soon as we have clearly discerned what they are, and begun to apply to them a law of measure, control, and guidance, they may be made to work for our good and to carry us forward. (383)

For Arnold, the failure to resolve the internal "contradiction" among conflicting elements within Englishness is writ large in the political sphere of English–Irish relations, with one conflict mirroring the other in perfect symmetry. As he wrote to his mother just after the explosion at Clerkenwell, "who can wonder at these Irish, who have cause to hate us and who do not own their allegiance to us, making war on a State and Society which has shown itself irresolute and feeble?"[40] By this light, it is England's failure to resolve the conflict internal to "England's character" – the unhappy marriage of racial mixture – that has made England "irresolute and feeble," incapable of either attaching the Irish or governing them.

The proposed solution to Irish political grievances that Arnold proffered six months before Clerkenwell, in the final sentence of the *Study*, returns to science as the salvific force that both establishes the historical fact of kinship between Saxons and Celts and provides the ground for

reconciling "us" to "them" – and to each other – in the present: "Let us reunite ourselves with our better mind and with the world through science; and let it be one of our angelic revenges on the Philistines, who among their other sins are the guilty authors of Fenianism, to found at Oxford a chair of Celtic, and to send, through the gentle ministration of science, a message of peace to Ireland" (386). Such a peace offering is entirely consistent with Arnold's call in the Introduction to the *Study* for transforming and developing English character, so as "to remove the main ground of the Celt's alienation from the Englishman, by substituting, in place of that type of Englishman with whom alone the Celt has too long been familiar, a new type, more intelligent, more gracious, and more humane" (395) – and so, perhaps, more Celtic. Arnold calls for tempering power with justice, for replacing force by making right at last ready. Whatever else they might have owed the Irish, he suggests, "the guilty authors of Fenianism" owed themselves no less.

Reviewing the whole corpus of Arnold's Irish writing into the 1880s, Seamus Deane aptly remarks that it "establishe[s] a link between Burke's view of Ireland . . . and what we may call the Gladstonian view of Ireland," with Arnold relying more and more over time on Burke's thought as the guide for his own.[41] Even with almost a century's difference between Burke and these two of his many nineteenth-century heirs, all three could be said to agree on the source of the English failure to achieve hegemony in Ireland as a defect in the character of the ruling classes. "Throughout the 1868 campaign," Jonathan Parry writes, drawing on the language of the soon-to-be Prime Minister's public speeches, "Gladstone poured out his distaste at the 'painful' and 'shameful' state of Irish political culture, the failure of the British to secure 'love' for the law, and the urgent 'responsibility' of British voters, if they called themselves 'a Christian people,' to work to create that love."[42] In his contribution to a later and slightly different debate, on the Irish university question, Arnold also adhered to the spirit of Burke's critique of protestant ascendancy in diagnosing "the great failure in our actual national life" as "the imperfect civilisation of our middle class," and attributing to both the old ascendancy and the new "British Puritans" a narrow self-interestedness inimical to achieving "justice for Ireland."[43]

And in another essay, "The Incompatibles" (1881), published at the height of the 1879–82 Land War, with Burke repeatedly cited as "a guide whom we can thus trust," Arnold borrows heavily from Burke's

appraisal of the penal laws, and in particular from his more radical remarks on prescription.[44] Eschewing the language of racial essentialism, here he argues that the incompatibility of Ireland and England – a word that clearly evokes divorce and disunion – has discernible historical causes. Indeed, Arnold follows Burke's analysis nearly to the letter:

> Almost all countries have undergone conquest and confiscation; and almost all property, if we go back far enough, has its source in these violent proceedings . . . But in Ireland it did not happen that people went about their daily business, that their condition improved, that things settled down, that the country became peaceful and prosperous, and that gradually all remembrance of conquest and confiscation died out. On the contrary the conquest had again and again to be renewed; the sense of prescription, the true security of all property, never arose. (242–43)

In his earlier advocacy of a harmonizing racial intermixture as a way of achieving hegemony, Arnold had put a racialist spin on the older Burkean model of promoting intermarriage between the natives of both nations as a means of "common naturalization." But here he acknowledges, following another strand in Burke, that a conquest that needs to be perpetually "renewed" is no conquest at all. If prescription will not take hold, then perhaps it is owing not solely to the intractability of the conquered, but also to the erring preconceptions of the conquerors.

In turning his attention in this essay away from the fiction of racial (in)compatibility and toward the matter of landholding, Arnold somewhat belatedly takes up what had already been the key item on the Liberal agenda for over a decade. After the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869, a widely popular move in both Ireland and England which "united the liberal party . . . and healed the breach" opened by protracted struggle around the Reform Bill of 1867, Irish land reform was the next particular of Gladstone's legislative program, and it was on this issue that the deepest differences between English and Irish attitudes and practices revealed themselves.[45] Moreover, the land question became a discursive site at which the failure of conquest was endlessly revisited, in large part through the mediating textual presence of Burke; at which fictions of historical and cultural difference competed with scientific discourse for interpretive priority in Irish affairs; and, as in the *Study*, at which the ideological basis of English superiority, and of "Englishness" itself, was laid open to question.

As I have discussed in Chapter Four, the English assumption that post-famine Ireland could, should, and would be improved by English economic practices had issued in some major pieces of legislation, the

Encumbered Estates Acts (1848 and 1849) and the Deasy and Cardwell Acts (both 1860), which extended the principle of free trade or *laissez-faire* to land. From the point of view embodied in this legislation, firmly establishing English land practices in Ireland, with their utility justified by the universal truths of political economy, would insure a gradual "transition to a large-scale capitalist agricultural system"; it would also, of course, require both large amounts of English or Irish capital and the continued emigration – or forced clearance – of small tenants squeezed out by the consolidation of estates into larger holdings.[46] And as Oliver MacDonagh points out in accord with most other historians of the period, until the advent of Gladstone's first administration, this policy "[proceeded] from concepts of property and from analyses of Irish economic difficulties which were totally alien to Ireland"; the laws neither achieved their desired economic effects nor eliminated the popular agrarian resistance that they, in combination with perennial Coercion Acts, were intended to crush.[47]

Although some have interpreted Gladstone's express policy of conciliating Ireland as a matter of political expediency alone, the broader picture suggests a number of different factors working together to produce a major change in English strategy concerning the Union. The main thrust of the new tactic was to govern Ireland by "Irish ideas" rather than English ones, and Comerford remarks that "no other 'Irish idea' carried remotely as much power as the demand for a change in the balance of land legislation in favour of the tenant."[48] Since at least 1850, Irish legislators, land agents, and progressive landholders had been evolving their own program for land reform, popularly termed "the three Fs": fixity of tenure for tenants; free sale of that tenancy to a newcomer upon relinquishment by the old tenant; and fair rents determined not by the market or the landlord, but by what the tenant could afford to pay. Such a program assumed, as a first principle, that the historical conditions of landholding in Ireland differed from those in England, and attempted to correct the imbalance of power between landlords and tenants that contributed to perceptions of tenurial insecurity.[49] Resisting the guiding English notion that a free market in land would regulate itself by laws of supply and demand, what Irish large farmers in particular wanted after the famine was more government intervention, not less, so that "security of possession of the tenant and rent control" would "be enforced by the state upon the proprietor."[50]

Against these unorthodox Irish complaints, English political economy asserted the weight of its authority, with its status as science serving

also as its warrant. "Political economy claimed ideological neutrality and the universal validity of its laws," as Thomas A. Boylan and Timothy P. Foley argue in their study of Irish resistance to English economics, and so the naturalizing wisdom of contemporary economic dogma defended and supported "the absolutist doctrine of private property in land" and "the sacredness of contract" as universally appropriate modes of establishing prosperity and progress.[51] But an historicist turn in political economy, implemented by Irish scholars and theorists beginning late in the 1850s, sent the discipline in another direction, toward an analysis of Irish difference that enabled the articulation of alternative perspectives on the land question, and so directly contributed to the position Gladstone was to take in framing the 1870 Land Act. "Where it was accepted, as it increasingly was, that Irish conditions were anomalous, this provided justification for differences in legislation, especially with respect to the role of the state"; moreover, such a representation of the Irish situation as anomalous, albeit couched within "highly problematic" assumptions about Irish underdevelopment, also raised the question of how truly universal the "laws" of political economy, and the "English ideas" legitimated for imperial export, could be said to be.[52]

Based on his reading of contemporary Irish and English economic and legal theorists, Clive Dewey argues that the model of assimilation approved by the *laissez-faire* school "was systematically refuted" by the revisionists, as part of "the supersession of utilitarian modes of thought by a historicist reaction" within political economy.[53] For example, while a conventional English reading of Irish agrarian agitation might chalk it up to the pressures of Malthusian overpopulation, "historicists attributed agrarian unrest to a conflict of laws – a conflict between Celtic customs, sociologically apposite in primitive peasant societies, and English 'commercial' laws, sociologically irrelevant" to Ireland.[54] Framed in these terms as well by the new historical school in jurisprudence, such a characterization was, quite obviously, one with which many English observers, including Arnold and Mill, could feel comfortable, for it represented Irish difference in a familiar way, as a sign of Ireland's underdeveloped or "primitive" status in relation to England. Boylan and Foley comment that "in terms of the currently fashionable evolutionary theory, Ireland was seen as being at a more rudimentary state of development than England"; as such, the pre-modern or even antimodern character of the Irish economy could be hegemonically rein-

scribed in its subordinate place under the benevolent Gladstonian (or Arnoldian) aegis of conciliation.[55]

Following the example of those who read Arnold solely in terms of his racialist will to hegemony, one might thus claim that the historicist turn, even in its comparativist and relativist orientation, not only fails to dislodge, but actively reinforces the underlying ideological assumption of Irish inferiority. Terry Eagleton correctly asserts, for example, that when Irish political economists "question the applicability to Irish conditions of the natural operation of market forces, they are countering naturalism with the language of culturalism" – with his implication being that such a substitution might not mark all that much of an improvement in and of itself.[56] Yet once more I want to concede the viability of this view and, at the same time, argue that something other than this is just as important here. For as Dewey suggests, the uses to which the essentializing historicist representation could be put depended to a large degree on the political and ideological interests of those who mobilized it. Taking a position very much in line with the main thrust of English attitudes to Ireland since the Union, "Anglo-Irish historians saw the communal property, the determination of rights and obligations by status, the consensual quality of law which characterized early Irish society as evidence of Ireland's barbarity, prior to its civilisation through conquest"; by contrast, Irish "nationalists saw the same characteristics as proof of the superiority of Celtic culture," and deployed this reading as "convenient propaganda in their campaign for tenant right."[57] Thus either side could deploy the historicist argument to advance its own naturalist or culturalist position; and so the political effects of the positions they took cannot be easily or readily adduced from the representations alone.

In and out of parliament, those who might well have accepted the underdevelopment argument in its entirety as "proof" of Irish backwardness did ultimately assent to the effectivity of legislating differently for Ireland. Even if the representation of the Irish as unsuited to the rule of "advanced" or "developed" commercial law did not discomfit some, it still succeeded in converting many to a different view, a different theory, a different mode of practicing Union. I want to focus on one aspect of how an emergent liberal counterhegemony in England – constructed through some of the same tropes that had been deployed to articulate the hegemonic – attempted to change the terms in which Irish matters were construed by English publics. That John Stuart Mill, the

most celebrated exponent of mid-Victorian political economy, became what T. W. Moody calls "the most damaging critic of the economic orthodoxy that dominated English policy towards Irish land down to 1870" suggests that advocates for heterodoxy may be found in any number of places.[58]

During the same years that Arnold was writing and revising the *Study*, Mill was busy getting himself elected as a Liberal M.P. for Westminster: among his very first actions on taking his seat in the House of Commons in February 1866 was to speak against – but abstain from voting on – a bill for the suspension of *habeas corpus* in Ireland, which Russell's Liberal ministry had introduced in response to agrarian and fenian unrest.[59] Unwilling to condone what he saw as the failure of English government in Ireland, as attested to almost annually by the passage of coercion acts that suspended the constitutional liberties of Irish subjects, Mill was perhaps equally unwilling to break with his party by voting against it, for he believed the best chance of achieving "justice for Ireland" lay with the advanced Liberals. The necessity for walking the line between holding to his own views and supporting his party even when he disagreed with its policies – the delicate balancing act that Trollope so well represents in *Phineas Finn* – led Mill on a later occasion to speak in favor of land legislation for Ireland that he could only have viewed as, at best, a temporary expedient rather than a final settlement of the land question, in a situation in which political exigencies once more took precedence.[60]

In this context, it is significant that Mill eventually chose an extra-parliamentary means for delivering his ideas on "what is to be done with Ireland";[61] that he did so only after almost two years of sitting in the House, and after the passage of the Second Reform Bill; and that the writing and publication of *England and Ireland* coincided so neatly with the Clerkenwell explosion and its aftermath. Upon the appearance of the pamphlet in February 1868, Mill defended his positions against all comers in the Commons debates of the following month, and this level of public discussion is no doubt what he most wanted to achieve. As he wrote to John Elliot Cairnes, the Irish political economist whose work had effected a radical change in Mill's views on Ireland, "nothing less than some very startling proposal would have any chance of whipping up the languid interest of English public men in the subject."[62] In both the timing and the means of making his views public, Mill put to good use the lessons he had learned not as a Liberal M.P., but as a veteran

contributor to the periodical press of more than forty years' standing. "The object was to strike hard, and compel people to listen to the largest possible proposal," he told Cairnes just before the Commons debate in March 1868; "this has been accomplished, and now the time is come for discussing in detail the manner in which the plan, if adopted, would work."[63] Hoping to shape English public opinion, as well as to influence such prominent Liberal leaders as Gladstone, Mill engaged in conscious polemic for practical political ends. The intellectual historian Stefan Collini characterizes Mill as "keenly aware of the persuasive arts needed to hold" public attention, which should surprise only those who subscribe to an idealized view of Mill as a bookish and withdrawn theorist – a view which he no doubt cultivated at times for strategic purposes of his own.[64]

Whereas "Ireland was for Gladstone a preoccupation, not an interest, an embarrassment, not an intellectual attraction," it was for Mill a matter of genuine and longstanding concern: his earliest essay on Ireland, a discussion of the parliamentary debate on catholic emancipation, was published in 1825, when he was just nineteen.[65] More pertinent here are his leaders for the *Morning Chronicle*, written and published in 1846–47, which recommend peasant proprietorship of reclaimed waste-lands as a potential means of both famine relief and long-term economic development.[66] It is in these leaders that Mill first enunciates the critique of English insularity that would later loom so large in *England and Ireland*: "how gladly [England] would make sacrifices to promote Irish well-being, provided that it could be done without deviating one-tenth from some extremely beaten track; without introducing a single principle not already familiar even to triteness in English practice; without alarming the most insignificant English vested interest that chanced to be called by the same name as some Irish nuisance."[67] Whatever other changes Mill's attitudes on the proper course for Ireland went through in the intervening twenty years (and the evidence suggests that his claims and prescriptions varied a great deal),[68] the chauvinist practice of "holding up England and things English as the standard of excellence for all the world" (*Morning Chronicle* 883) remained firmly established in his thinking as a chief source of the English muddle in Ireland. It provided "the most unqualified instance of signal failure which the practical genius of the English people has exhibited" (*Morning Chronicle* 890), and offered as well an important key to the puzzle presented by "Irish disaffection" (*England and Ireland* 507).

Aside from their practical recommendations and their critique of

English governance, the *Morning Chronicle* articles on the famine focus on how best to exploit the modernizing opportunity provided by "the unrivalled facilities which this emergency has brought within our reach, for doing a century's work of Irish civilization in a single year" (920). Like most of his contemporaries, Mill subscribes to the view that the Irish are in desperate need of improvement, yet he also assumes, in defiance of racialist wisdom, that such improvement is possible. His plan is "to make an indolent people industrious, to gift an improvident people with prudence and forethought" (880), thereby changing the conditions of character that he ascribes, as Trollope also did at that moment, to both Anglo-Irish landlords and native tenants. But Mill disavows the idea that the people of Ireland are "indolent" and "improvident" "by nature and because of a difference of race" (891). "The real effective education of a people is given them by the circumstances by which they are surrounded . . . What shapes the character is not what is purposely taught, so much as the unintentional teaching of institutions and social relations" (955): clearly parallel in form to his assertion in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) that "what is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing," this environmentalist argument forms the basis for both Mill's criticism of English methods and his view of the possibilities for reforming Ireland and the Irish.[69]

Rejecting proposals for outdoor relief and wholesale clearances, Mill argues that to improve the position of the Irish will require giving at least some of them their own land: "the secret for converting an indolent and reckless into a laborious, provident, and careful people" (897) is to destroy the cottier-tenant system and to put in its place a limited degree of peasant proprietorship, which would induce the development of industrious habits. Alongside reclamation of wastelands for some, Mill believed, English farming could be introduced for others, "because the cottier population would no longer exceed the numbers who could, with benefit to the farmer, be retained on the land as labourers. Then, and then only, would English capital find its way to Ireland, for then, and only then, would its owner have nothing to fear from the 'wild justice' of an ejected tenantry" (901). Only in endorsing the value of a limited peasant proprietary does Mill deviate here from the main tendency of English thought on post-famine reconstruction, which emphasized the consolidation of small holdings into large capital-intensive estates; that he supported the passage of the Encumbered Estates Acts later in the decade thus comes as no surprise, albeit he did even then suggest that some of the new estates might be bought up by cooperative societies and

peopled by peasant proprietors.[70] Yet, orthodox as they are in terms of their acceptance of the prevailing view of the Irish, and in their recommendations for importing some English methods to repair Irish ills, the *Morning Chronicle* leaders also contain the seeds of another view of "what is to be done with Ireland," a view that helps to explicate the more radical approach that Mill would polemically promote twenty years later.

Consistent with his position that prescriptive rights to landed property should be interfered with only for the benefit of the whole community, Mill asserts that endowing all Irish tenants with fixity of tenure "would be a violent disturbance of legal rights, amounting almost to a social revolution" (897) in that it would expropriate the landlord class. As in the *Principles of Political Economy*, he stops short of advocating such a change:

> . . . to those who understand the fixed habits of thought, and artificial feelings stronger than nature itself, which must be broken through before an English legislature could sanction so drastic a process; and who appreciate the danger of tampering, in times of political and moral change, with the salutary prepossessions by which property is protected against spoliation; a measure like this must be looked upon as an extreme remedy, justifiable only as remedies even more revolutionary would be justified if there existed no other means of overcoming evils like those of Ireland. (*Morning Chronicle* 897–98)

Mill makes a kind of negative argument against "social revolution" here: the situation that would justify it has not come to pass, and need not if his advice is followed; moreover, such "an extreme remedy" as the dispossession of all landlords would require the transformation of Burkean attitudes "stronger than nature itself" among the English Members of Parliament who would have to approve such a plan. But merely by pointing to how difficult such a transformation would be, Mill implies that it is not only Irish character, but also the ideological makeup of the English, and especially English notions of the rights of the propertied and the sanctity of prescription, that would need to be transformed before "so drastic a process" could be undertaken.

In 1847, then, and well on into the 1860s, Mill's "reluctance to urge a massive violation of established property rights" thus may be assumed to depend in part on his sense that forwarding a limited "social revolution" in Ireland, given the opening that the famine provided, would be far easier and more expedient than making a revolution in English attitudes.[71] In this way of looking at the situation, Mill adheres to the anti-Jacobinist strand of Burke's thinking on prescription.[72] By 1867,

however, Mill had radically shifted his focus in adopting the other side of Burke's argument. The explicit charge of *England and Ireland* is that transforming English views on the Irish is more primary and necessary to the solution Mill seeks than changing the Irish themselves, who have undergone a very different kind of change than that which Mill had earlier anticipated, in that at least some of them have indeed become armed and organized revolutionaries. As he puts it in terms that make very clear the bearing of his whole argument in the later 1860s, "the difficulty of governing Ireland lies entirely in our own minds; it is an incapability of understanding" (*England and Ireland* 529). Like Arnold, Mill comes to read the failure of prescription as an essentially English failure, with a specifically English remedy.

By contrast with some of Mill's earlier writings on Ireland, including the *Morning Chronicle* leaders, *England and Ireland* is entirely free from the language of Celt and Saxon, yet it is also quite deliberately inflammatory. Analyzing his rhetoric here and elsewhere, Collini suggests that Mill's "typically Manichaean vision" of good in pitched battle with evil helps to explain the force of his rhetoric and his directly polemical stance as a call to action.[73] His first aim in the pamphlet is to convince his English readers that the "familiar fact" of "Irish disaffection" is due not to "a special taint or infirmity in the Irish character," but rather "to the multitude of unredressed wrongs" (507) that neither the passage of time nor the perceived benefits of English rule has erased from Irish historical memory. "The whole land of the island had been confiscated three times over"; "the manufactures of Ireland," except those of the protestant colonists, "were deliberately crushed"; "despoiled of all their political and most of their civil rights" by the penal laws, "the vast majority of the native Irish" were reduced to the status of virtual prisoners in their own country by "English and Scotch colonists, who held, and were intended to hold it as a garrison against the Irish" (507). Enumerating the legislative measures that have, since the late eighteenth century, removed "these just causes of disloyalty" (507), Mill cites the familiar Malthusian perception, enunciated earlier in the decade even by him in the *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), that "an appalling famine, followed by an unexampled and continuous emigration" (*England and Ireland* 508), had contributed to Irish improvement and prosperity. "Surely," he writes in concluding his opening statement with an ironic flourish, "the troubles of the British nation about Ireland were now at an end" (508).

But it is in the kind of attention that the English have paid to Ireland – to particular wrongs rather than to what he characterizes as a pervasive and justifiable hostility – that Mill locates the evidence of their incomprehension in the aftermath of Clerkenwell, in the refusal to recognize that further reforms are not the real answer because they do not address the real question:

> Our rulers are helpless to deal with this new outburst of enmity, because they are unable to see that anything on their part has given cause for it. They are brought face to face with a spirit which will as little tolerate what we think our good government as our bad, and they have not been trained to manage problems of that difficulty. But though their statesmanship is at fault, their conscience is at ease, because the rebellion, they think, is not one of grievance or suffering; it is a rebellion for an idea – the idea of nationality. Alas for the self-complacent ignorance of irresponsible rulers, be they monarchs, classes, or nations! If there is anything sadder than the calamity itself, it is the unmistakeable sincerity and good faith with which numbers of Englishmen confess themselves incapable of understanding it. (509)

In the argument Mill spins for readers he rhetorically situates as progressive, responsible, and sympathetic, English rule has been too much of the letter, and not enough of the spirit. While formal rights have been extended to Irish catholic subjects, parliamentary legislation has done nothing to address the needs and wishes of those among whom disaffection flourishes. Laws have instead only promoted the growth of Irish resistance, Mill claims, borrowing from the new Irish historicist idiom; so opposed are English and Irish notions of justice, that "in their outrages against the landlord," agrarian agitators "fought for, not against, the sacredness of what was property in their eyes" (513). "A spirit which will as little tolerate what we think our good government as our bad" cannot be mollified by anything short of the removal of that government in its entirety: "revolt against practical ill-usage may be quelled by concessions; but wait till all practical grievances have merged in the demand for independence, and there is no knowing that any concession, short of independence, will appease the quarrel" (509). Dramatizing the state of affairs in Ireland in this way is a strategy for getting the government and the people of England to confront – as a matter of national conscience and national security – the means and ends of producing a true, just, and lasting Union. From here on in, Mill's rhetorical and political goal in *England and Ireland* is to produce a revolution in English thinking about Ireland that will forestall separation.

Once again, the tutelary spirit guiding Mill's rhetoric is undoubtedly Burke, but more particularly the Burke who demystified prescription so as to threaten the ruling classes rather than the Burke who defended it in their interests. Mill tacitly draws on and revises Burke's critique of trying to govern Ireland as if it were England without promoting the growth of "public affections" that would make Ireland more like England – or, perhaps, would just make the Irish like the English more. Paramount among Mill's Burkean criticisms is that English institutions are alien to Ireland because of historical and cultural differences that seventy years of Union have accentuated rather than softened, in defiance of what Burke might have expected or hoped, due to the "self-complacent ignorance" that has led English statesmen to believe "there could be no boon to any country equal to that of imparting these institutions to her" (511). Even on the heels of the passage of the Second Reform Bill, when "our governing classes are now quite accustomed to be told that the institutions which they thought must suit all mankind since they suited us" have been proven to "require far greater alteration than they dream of to be fit even for ourselves" (511), the English are unwilling to govern Ireland as a nation different from their own, rather than as if it were just an England *manqué*. Here Mill construes difference not as inferiority or lack, but as sheer unlikeness; the inability to comprehend this stands in the way, as Arnold might put it, of seeing the thing as in itself it really is.

Two impediments thus block England's achieving a "good understanding," a better understanding, of Ireland: "first, there is no other civilized nation which is so conceited of its own institutions, and of all its modes of public action, as England is; and secondly, there is no other civilized nation which is so far apart from Ireland in the character of its history, or so unlike it in the whole constitution of its social economy" (511). Indeed, the first impediment in itself prevents the recognition of the second: those members of the ruling classes opposed to reform in England plead as their rationale for maintaining the status quo that "suitability to the opinions, feelings, and historical antecedents of those who live under them is the best recommendation of institutions"; yet they simultaneously fail to acknowledge "that the opinions, feelings, and historical antecedents of the Irish people are totally different from, and in many respects contrary to those of the English" (511). Abandoning the paradigm of conversion and assimilation in which Burke, too, had placed some of his faith, Mill forswears as well the gendered notion of English–Irish complementarity to which he had subscribed as recently as his publication of the *Considerations*: far from being "perhaps the

most fitted of any two [races] in the world to be the completing counterpart of one another," Mill represents their relation in *England and Ireland* as marked historically and politically by contrariety, contention, and conflict.[74] While the partial parallel to the way in which Arnold figures that mix is striking, so, too, is the shared emphasis on finding ways – flawed though they be – to maintain rather than eliminate cultural difference.

Mill's exposition and analysis of Irish difference focuses specifically on "that one of our institutions which has the most direct connexion with the worst practical grievances of Ireland": "absolute property in land" (512). Writing against the tenor of classical thought, Mill had produced in the *Principles of Political Economy* a powerful critique of "the legitimacy of absolute private property in land, adopting the argument that land, as a vital commodity not produced by man and limited in quantity, rightfully belonged to the community."[75] Acceptable at the level of theory, the position would be dangerously destabilizing to the order of things if put into practice: as E. D. Steele describes his position up to 1867, Mill was "disinclined to jeopardize existing institutions for the sake of theoretical ideals."[76] Mill does, however, go on in *England and Ireland* to apply this argument in full to the Irish situation, justifying its aptness by a rhetorical appeal to Irish difference in citing the recently minted historical fiction concerning Irish landholding practices before the English confiscations.

Land is "a thing which no man made, which exists in limited quantity, which was the original inheritance of all mankind, and which whoever appropriates, keeps others out of its possession. Such appropriation, when there is not enough left for all, is at the first aspect, an usurpation on the rights of other people" (512). While moveable property may not be exactly theft in Mill's view, landed property owned by individuals and entailed in perpetuity on their descendants may well be. And Irish landed property is nothing but, held as it is by "proprietors who reap but do not sow, and who assume the right of ejecting those who do":

> . . . when the general condition of the land of a country is such as this, its title to the submission and attachment of those whom it seems to disinherit, is by no means obvious. It is a state of things which requires great extrinsic recommendations. It requires to be rooted in the traditions and oldest recollections of the people; the landed families must be identified with the religion of the country, with its nationality, with its ancient rulers, leaders, defenders, teachers, and other objects of gratitude and veneration, or at least of ungrudging obedience. (512)

That such is the case in England Mill does not question; that it is not the case in Ireland is almost too obvious for him even to assert. Twenty years earlier, in the *Morning Chronicle*, he had similarly claimed, in Burkean tones, that "the right of the Irish landlord to his rent is only that of prescription; a valid title, but one which it is extremely difficult to commend to those who do not profit by it" (892). According to the view he borrows from Cairnes and other contemporary researchers, Mill asserts in 1868 that in Ireland "the right to hold the land goes, as it did in the beginning, with the right to till it" (*England and Ireland* 513); that England "should persist to this hour in forcing upon a people with such feelings, and such antecedents, her own idea of absolute property in land" is sufficient proof that prescription has not taken hold, because there is no harmony between "certain English institutions" and "the feelings and prepossessions of the Irish people" (514).

The failure of the English to achieve hegemony in Ireland, through coercion, conciliation, or any combination of the two, makes necessary a new approach: "the rule of Ireland now rightfully belongs to those who, by means consistent with justice, will make the cultivators of the soil of Ireland the owners of it; and the English nation has got to decide whether it will be that just ruler or not" (519). Faced with this impasse, Mill argues that there is only one very un-Burkean solution left to consider: "no accommodation is henceforth possible which does not give the Irish peasant all that he could gain by a revolution – permanent possession of the land, subject to fixed burthens. Such a change may be revolutionary; but revolutionary measures are the thing now required" (518). The "social revolution" he had dangled as a threat to élites in the *Morning Chronicle* leaders is precisely what Mill comes around to recommending twenty years on: "there has been a time for proposals to effect this change by a gradual process, by encouragement of voluntary arrangements; but the volume of the Sibyl's books which contained them has been burned. If ever, in our time, Ireland is to be a consenting party to her union with England, the changes must be so made that the existing generation of Irish farmers shall at once enter upon their benefits" (519). In good part, then, Mill calls for immediate and radical change to address Irish disaffection, but, significantly, without abandoning the political framework of Union: "an absolute or a qualified separation of the two countries" would be "a dishonor to one, and a serious misfortune to both" (521).

Many of Mill's arguments for the necessity of maintaining Union retrace familiar ground, in that they emphasize the dangers and costs

that would devolve on both parties were they to separate. For example, while its proximity to England would require a newly independent Irish state always expensively to arm itself against its former master, its proximity to the continent would make Ireland a battlefield for European wars; Ireland might ally itself out of economic expediency with a foreign nation, or "be invaded and conquered by a great military power. She might become a province of France," or fall under the papal spell and thereby join "the side opposed to modern civilization and progress" (523). On the international relations front, an Ireland held "permanently by the old bad means is simply impossible" insofar as it would affront democratic sensibilities abroad: "neither Europe nor America would now bear the sight of a Poland across the Irish Channel" (520). And within the United Kingdom, pressures for reestablishing the Union on a better footing also prevail. Newly enfranchised by the Reform Bill, "the rising power in our affairs, the democracy of Great Britain, is opposed, on principle, to holding any people in subjection against their will" (520–21), even as Mill also claims that the British people have no particular affection for Irish catholicism. Foregoing its representation in parliament would leave Ireland without the protection of "a Pro-Catholic element in the House of Commons, which no English Government can venture to despise," and which "helps to prevent the whole power of Great Britain from being in the hands of the Anti-Catholic element still so strong in England and Scotland" (524).

Emphasizing the vulnerability of both Ireland and England to external and internal forces, as well as the potential political embarrassment to the English in the international spectacle of their holding the Irish people to the Union "against their will," Mill tries to reconceive Union as a strategic necessity for both partners. And perhaps more importantly, he represents it as well as an ideological necessity for the modern democratic state – bearer of what Collini calls "a special responsibility for maintaining and improving standards of international morality" – that England is ostensibly in the process of becoming.[77] "It would be a deep disgrace to us, that having the choice of, on the one hand, a peaceful legislative revolution in the laws and rules affecting the relation of the inhabitants to the soil, or on the other, of abandoning a task beyond our skill, and leaving Ireland to rule herself, incapacity for the better of the two courses should drive us to the worse" (521): such a "disgrace" would arise, Mill argues, from the contradiction between England's theoretical commitment to principles of liberty and justice and its coercive and unjust practices in Ireland. Either "to wait till

[England] is compelled by uncontrollable circumstances to resign that which it cannot in conscience hold" or to continue "the attempt to maintain English dominion over Ireland by brute force" (519) is completely unacceptable, because neither option accords with "the general fitness of things and the rules of morality" (520).

Ultimately, it is on the grounds of how England has failed in its conduct, derived from an abstract notion of "fitness" and a concrete sense of "morality" – from a sense, that is, of what is "necessary to England's character" – that Mill announces that Irish resistance to English rule heralds an ongoing ideological crisis for English imperialism:

> Let our statesmen be assured that now, when the long deferred day of Fenianism has come, nothing which is not accepted by the Irish tenantry as a permanent solution of the land difficulty, will prevent Fenianism, or something equivalent to it, from being the standing torment of the English Government and people. If without removing this difficulty, we attempt to hold Ireland by force, it will be at the expense of all the character we possess as lovers and maintainers of free government, or respecters of any rights except our own; it will most dangerously aggravate all our chances of misunderstandings with any of the great powers of the world, culminating in war; we shall be in a state of open revolt against the universal conscience of Europe and Christendom, and more and more against our own. (532)

In the final analysis, the logic of Mill's liberal argument depends for its force on the crucial premise that righting Ireland's wrongs, while both just and expedient in the Irish context, has superadded value in the English context, as a means of satisfying both the demands of Christian conscience and the claims of English character. In order not to remain "the guilty authors of Fenianism," the unknowing or miscomprehending agents of revolution against their own rule, England and the English must become that which they already profess to be.

While *England and Ireland* proved controversial on its publication, the pamphlet had little direct or immediate impact on the course that Irish land legislation was to take over the next few years; it did, however, influence the views of George Campbell, a civil servant with considerable experience in India, whose arguments for extending legal protection to customary rights of occupancy to all Irish tenants Gladstone accepted and tried unsuccessfully to write into law.[78] The Land Act eventually passed by parliament in 1870 fell far short of what Mill or even Gladstone himself imagined as suitable legislation. Although it

gave "legal recognition to the tenant's interest in his holding by entitling him, if evicted from it, to claim compensation for disturbance . . . and for improvements made by him with his landlord's consent," it by no means met fully the Irish demand for "the three Fs"; it did, however, acknowledge that tenants indeed had some interests which had not previously been perceived as in any way valid under English law.[79] And while many historians agree that the Act "had no economic, and indeed few social, consequences" for the practice of landlord–tenant relations in Ireland, others read its ideological import as extending well beyond its actual provisions.[80] It marked "the interference of parliament with previously sacrosanct property rights"; "effected a fundamental divergence between the land law of England and that of Ireland"; and became, by its very insufficiency from an Irish point of view, "a goad to agitation for effective reform" which contributed in part to the formation of the Land League in 1879 and the more sweeping concessions to Irish demands enacted by the Land Act of 1881.[81]

At this level, then, one might say as well that the liberal position Arnold and Mill jointly represent in their advocacy of conciliating Irish grievances so as better to secure the Union had the very opposite effect over time, in that their work helped to articulate for broader publics the discursive grounds on which it would ultimately be broken. Such a reading may appear entirely to depend on the advantages of hindsight; or to partake of the triumphalist view of the inevitability of independence promoted by Irish nationalists then and now; or even to make the achievement of Irish national autonomy wholly a matter of English politics. But from the perspective I am taking it is yet necessary to understand the English recognition and articulation of Irish difference in new terms as a key turning point in English–Irish relations. It marked the beginning of the end of Union as they had known it, as the moment at which the political fiction that had governed those relations for seven decades finally fractured, by virtue of the very effort to shore it up.

Afterword

> . . . we should not imagine that the world presents us with a legible face, leaving us merely to decipher it; it does not work hand in glove with what we already know; there is no prediscursive fate disposing the word in our favour. We must conceive discourse as a violence we do to things . . .[1]

In the works selected for consideration in this study, I have chosen to read the making or breaking of domestic unions as, in part, allegorical figures for a colonial relation. Whether they appear in fictional or non-fictional writing, tropes and plots associated with the private sphere that enact familial intimacies do at least double duty, in that they "negotiate the figured distance between their fictional status and what we call history," as Theresa M. Kelley characterizes the work of allegory, operating "as though the barrier between reality or history and abstraction were a porous membrane instead of a guarded wall that protects what is true from what is not."[2] My practice as a reader of these tropes and plots has been to tease out their analogical implications, to read back and forth across the barriers or borders between historical fictions and fictive histories, perhaps because the critical and theoretical frames that underpin my work are themselves covertly allegorical. Feminist, materialist, and postcolonial modes of interpretation all teach us to look for "hidden" or "repressed" signs of the cultural and political embedded within representations of the private and domestic, to see them pointing to something outside or beyond the text, to be alert to what their doubleness may conceal or reveal.

What I want especially to emphasize in conclusion is that reading allegorically is not a means for shutting down the ongoing project of rereading across borders, but another method for keeping it open. The effort to locate aspects of political allegory within colonial discourse may create an unduly static or falsely stable ground for interpretation, whereby elements allegorized through domestic plots always refer to a

political level known and constituted in advance. But there may also be a good deal of traffic between the separate and unequal levels at which allegory is said to operate. "A standard definition of allegory," Doris Sommer suggests, encourages us to see the "two parallel levels of signification" as "temporally differentiated," with the immanent "revealing or 'repeating' " the transcendent.[3] According to this view of how allegory works, my own readings of domestic plots and racialist romances could imply that significant action happens only at the transcendent level of Politics or History, where the real story has already unfolded as a complete action and merely awaits its latest retelling in a novel by Trollope or a tract by Arnold. But in adapting for my own purposes the more dynamic sense of allegory that informs Sommer's work – in which the relationship between the two levels is imagined as "mutually constructive," in that "one discourse consistently represents the other and invites a double reading of narrative events" – I have chosen to see the immanent, or what happens at the level of plot and character, as itself political and historical, not simply as a belated, repetitive redaction.[4] Interpreted in this light, allegorical fictions can be understood as just as critical to the imagining of histories as histories are to the making of allegorical fictions.

The final text I want to consider, however, situates allegorical practices in a more ambiguous frame. Written around the same time as the works I discuss in Chapter Five, *An Eye for An Eye* is transparently and no doubt deliberately allegorical, containing "Trollope's most thorough critique of the characterization of the non-English as a field for romance and adventure":[5] this is an allegory which is at the same time an anxious critique of allegorical reading, as the very title of the story itself suggests. The biblical phrase is repeated by an Irish mother who pleads for justice on behalf of her ruined daughter, Kate, seduced and abandoned by an Englishman, as Mrs. O'Hara herself had once been. In this figure, Trollope evokes the most durable of tropes for representing the conquered nation in the Irish literary tradition, as in the annals of many another colonized country. Appropriating it as a central motif for the novella, he clearly meant to invoke as well the rhetoric of the contemporary Liberal campaign to save the Union that English recklessness had endangered by instituting "justice for Ireland"; moreover, the violent conclusion to the story, in which the Irish mother kills the English seducer, draws from the iconography of popular Irish violence and insurrection newly embodied in the fenians. Trollope's use of this allegorical figure in a plot that refers by indirection alone to the contem-

porary politics of Union might be said, then, to cast this present episode in the mold of a past already completed and once more repeated, with some new elements. It regards with a cold eye the spirit of the betrayer and the temperament of the betrayed, the immoral ungentlemanliness of Fred Neville's (or England's) mean and misguided actions and the passionate unwomanliness of Mrs. O'Hara's (or Ireland's) making him pay for what he has done by the act of violence that ends his life. *An Eye for An Eye* thus allegorizes what we could take to be a political perspective already in place, one that we have seen represented in Mill and in Arnold, with its plot situated at the intersection of the contemporary with the conventional.

Unlike most of the other narratives I have interpreted in this book, however, this story takes shape wholly within the generic terms of tragedy, and in doing so it also critically rewrites those other narrative structures. Revising the comic plot of *The Wild Irish Girl* in particular, Trollope sends a young Englishman, having been made the heir-at-law to an old English estate, to spend his final year of freedom without responsibility with his regiment in County Clare, eager to "indulge in that wild district the spirit of adventure which was strong within him."[6] Located in relation to Fred Neville's multiply overdetermined position of class, gender, and cultural privilege, Ireland functions for him as a feminized space, one of those "departures from a realist norm" that Kelley has associated with allegory itself, where the hero's desire for the romantic and the erotic may be pursued and gratified.[7] Running counter to Fred's mode of reading Ireland, however, is a strongly and emphatically unallegorical desire for union on the part of the Irishwomen he encounters: his lover and her mother view Fred's romance as the literal arbiter of their own reality, so that when Kate turns up pregnant, the catastrophic clash of positions and interpretations is almost complete. Unable to form what is known as a morganatic union – in which a man of high rank marries a woman of lower station with the stipulation that neither she nor their children, if any, will have a claim to his rank or property – Fred must contract no marriage at all rather than make Kate an equal partner. In the dénouement, Kate's mother sends Fred to his death by shoving him off the Cliffs of Moher into the rocky shoals of the Atlantic. "It is justice, and I have done it," she tells her priest: "An Eye for an Eye!" (196).

Fred makes his fatal error in creating someone else's reality as an imaginative field for his own romance, for reading the space he has imagined as given over entirely to his pursuit of pleasure and fantasy –

juxtaposed to a "real" England where manly adult responsibility awaits – as if it were precisely what he wanted it to be, and no more. While Kate and her mother also read events as signs of a secret plan to be revealed, they cannot make their hoped-for conclusion come true, either, if for quite different reasons. Ultimately, however, Mrs. O'Hara enforces her own will through seizing power: most strikingly, the angry mother herself refuses to perform the substitutions associated with trope and figure, and insists instead on a one-to-one correspondence between the damage the Englishman inflicted and the revenge she takes. Unlike the erring Fred – who mistook the real for the romantic, reversing the movement of colonial encounter in *The Wild Irish Girl*, at the cost of his own life – Kate's allegorical mother finds no value at all in reading allegorically and instead exacts her price. At the center of this tragedy, then, we should note this suggestion: that the allegorical form in which this old story has been written and rewritten is very much complicit with its tragic conclusion; or, to put it another way, that what is ultimately responsible for Fred's death as Trollope narrates it is narrative itself, in the way the story has been and continues to be told. In another historical moment than that one, finding new figures to do the work of telling different stories may turn out to be no less a matter of life or death.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Seamus Heaney, "Act of Union," *Poems 1965–1975* (New York, 1980) 204–05, lines 19 and 8; all further line numbers appear within the text.
2 Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, " 'Thinking of Her . . . as . . . Ireland': Yeats, Pearse, and Heaney," *Textual Practice* 4 (1990) 3.
3 Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley, CA, 1991) x.
4 Enda Duffy, *The Subaltern 'Ulysses'* (Minneapolis, MN, 1994) 136.
5 For an introduction to these debates, see the essays collected in Ciaran Brady, ed., *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938–1994* (Dublin, 1994); D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day, eds., *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London and New York, 1996); as well as L. P. Curtis, Jr., "The Greening of Irish History," *Éire-Ireland* 29 (1994) 7–28.
6 Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (Cambridge, MA, 1995) 643, 644.
7 Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (New York and London, 1989) 33.
8 Stuart Hall, "When Was 'the Post-Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit," *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (London and New York, 1996) 246, 247.
9 David Lloyd, *Nationalism and Minor Literature: James Clarence Mangan and the Emergence of Irish Cultural Nationalism* (Berkeley, CA, 1987) ix.
10 Catherine Hall, "Histories, Empires, and the Post-Colonial Moment," *The Post-Colonial Question* 72.
11 Susan Morgan, *Place Matters: Gendered Geography in Victorian Women's Travel Books about Southeast Asia* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1996) 7.
12 *Ibid.* 3.
13 Colin MacCabe, "Broken English," *Futures for English*, ed. Colin MacCabe (New York, 1988) 12.
14 The representation of Ireland as part of the UK's Celtic periphery arises largely from the work of Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536–1966* (Berkeley, CA, 1974).

15 The ambivalent reception of Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1992), which may be read alongside her defense of her own exclusions ("Britishness and Otherness: An Argument," *Journal of British Studies* 31 [1992] 309–29), demonstrates the pitfalls of an historical approach to nationalism and nation-formation that occludes consideration of Irish and Africans. For an eighteenth-century historian who presents a fuller view of ethnic and racial diversity within England, see Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 1981). For the history of the black presence in the UK, see especially F. O. Shyllon, *Black People in Britain, 1555–1833* (London and New York, 1977); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1984); and Gretchen Gerzina, *Black London: Life Before Emancipation* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1995). Generally speaking, my argument on this point is deeply indebted to the ongoing work of Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall.

16 For some good recent examples of this movement in novel studies, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1988); Suvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire: The English Novel from Edgeworth to Dickens* (New York, 1991); Firdous Azim, *The Colonial Rise of the Novel* (London and New York, 1993); Deirdre David, *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1995); Susan Meyer, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1996); and Cannon Schmitt, *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality* (Philadelphia, PA, 1997).

17 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993) 70.

18 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York, 1992).

19 Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York, 1987); Joseph Allen Boone, *Tradition Counter Tradition: Love and the Form of Fiction* (Chicago, IL, 1987); Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*.

20 Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), and Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, NJ, 1997); see also Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN, 1997), on the nineteenth-century construction of the regional, as against the national, as a place with "no centre and no history" (186), for a reminder of how these terms have always constituted one another.

21 Douglas Hyde, "The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland," *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols., ed. Seamus Deane (Derry, 1991) II. 528.

22 Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 141.

23 Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London and New York, 1995); Seamus Deane, *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880–1980* (London and Boston, MA, 1985), and *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford, 1997).

24 Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1988) 42, 44.
25 For useful discussions of this construction, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London, 1995) 36–56; and Catherine Hall, " 'From Greenland's Icy Mountains . . . to Afric's Golden Sand': Ethnicity, Race and Nation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England," *Gender & History* 5 (1993) 212–230.
26 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978) 98.
27 David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture* (New York, 1988) 45.
28 Ruth Padel, *Fusewire* (London, 1996) 1; line numbers for cited poems will be included in the text. I am grateful to an anonymous reader for Cambridge University Press for bringing Padel's collection to my attention.
29 John Hewitt, "The Search," *The Collected Poems of John Hewitt*, ed. Frank Ormsby (Belfast, 1991) 160–61, lines 9, 17, and 22; all further line numbers will be included in the text.
30 Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, in *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, 11 vols., ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor, 1962) III. 386.

1 PUBLIC AFFECTIONS AND FAMILIAL POLITICS: BURKE, EDGEWORTH, AND IRELAND IN THE 1790S

1 To William Smith, 29 January 1795, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, volume IX: *The Revolutionary War, 1794–1797, and Ireland*, ed. R. B. McDowell (Oxford, 1991) 661. With the exception of the *Reflections* and some correspondence, all subsequent references to Burke's writings will be to this volume of *Writings and Speeches* and appear within the text.
2 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis, IN, 1987) 132. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.
3 Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford, 1997) 16, 20.
4 Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution, 1789–1820* (New Haven, 1983) 60. Also on this point, see James T. Boulton, *The Language of Politics in the Age of Wilkes and Burke* (London, 1963).
5 J. G. A. Pocock, "Burke and the Ancient Constitution: A Problem in the History of Ideas," *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York, 1971) 212.
6 Steven Blakemore, *Burke and the Fall of Language: The French Revolution as Linguistic Event* (Hanover, NH, and London, 1988).
7 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (Chicago, IL, 1987) 32.
8 Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790–1827* (Oxford, 1993) 5–6.
9 As Deidre Lynch also argues, "when Burke construes Englishness as patrimony – when he delineates history as the transmission of economic value and nationality from father to son – he disinherits women" ("Domesticating

Fictions and Nationalizing Women: Edmund Burke, Property, and the Reproduction of Englishness," *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780–1834*, ed. Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh [Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, 1996] 48).

10 Paulson, *Representations* 57–87; Blakemore, *Burke* 31–60; and Isaac Kramnick, *The Rage of Edmund Burke: Portrait of an Ambivalent Conservative* (New York, 1977).

11 See Kramnick, *Rage* 122.

12 Linda M. G. Zerilli, *Signifying Woman: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke, and Mill* (Ithaca, NY, 1994) 62. For a similar argument, also see Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution* (Cambridge, 1993) 169–74.

13 In *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA, 1988), Carole Pateman offers a thorough and provocative discussion of the gendering of political theory on which I draw here. Catherine Gallagher also makes a similar point – that "the assumed sexual property of women underlies both property relations and semiotics" – in her response to Neil Hertz's essay, "Medusa's Head: Male Hysteria Under Political Pressure," included in Hertz, *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York, 1985) 194–96. I am grateful to my colleague Tim Melley for reminding me of Gallagher's argument.

14 Furniss, *Aesthetic Ideology* 170.

15 See Lynch, "Domesticating Fictions" 41, as well as Blakemore, *Burke* 58–59, and Zerilli, *Signifying Woman* 91–94, for other readings of this passage.

16 Zerilli, *Signifying Woman* 84.

17 To William Windham, *ca.* 24 January 1789, *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, 10 vols., ed. Thomas W. Copeland (Chicago, IL, 1965) V. 444–45.

18 Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London and New York, 1995) 48; the identical phrase also appears in Eagleton's earlier discussion of Burke in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford, 1990) 58. As Furniss points out in his reading of this passage, "the law in itself, without the super-added illusions which foster 'public affections,' is inadequate" (*Aesthetic Ideology* 179), thereby necessitating what Furniss represents in Derridean terms as the beautiful or feminine supplement.

19 Eagleton, *Heathcliff* 52.

20 Thomas H. D. Mahoney, *Edmund Burke and Ireland* (Cambridge, MA, 1960) 83. The degree of Burke's commitment to Ireland has been much debated by historians. For a range of viewpoints, see Louis Cullen, "Burke, Ireland, and Revolution," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 16 (1992) 21–42; Conor Cruise O'Brien, Introduction to *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Harmondsworth, 1968) especially 22–41; R. B. McDowell, "Burke and Ireland," *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism and Rebellion*, eds. David Dickson, Daíre Keogh, and Kevin Whelan (Dublin, 1993) 102–14; and also by McDowell, Introduction to Part II, *Writings and Speeches* IX. 389–428.

21 My account here is especially informed by Thomas Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation: The Catholic Question, 1690–1830* (Savage, MD, 1992); and Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760–1830* (Notre Dame, IN, 1996).

22 See Thomas Bartlett, "The Origins and Progress of the Catholic Question in Ireland, 1690–1800," *Endurance and Emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. T. P. Power and Kevin Whelan (Dublin, 1990) 1–19; and Whelan, *Tree of Liberty* 99–130.

23 Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, volume I: *Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London and New York, 1994) 83.

24 Jim Smyth, *The Men of No Property: Irish Radicals and Popular Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century* (London, 1992) 13. Brief but lucid discussions of the penal laws appear in R. B. McDowell, *Ireland in the Age of Imperialism and Revolution, 1760–1801* (Oxford, 1979) 173–79; and R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (London, 1988) 153–63. In "Origins and Progress," Bartlett provides a concise study of the penal laws within the broader context of majority–minority relations, including how the situation of presbyterians made possible an alliance between dissenters and catholics in the 1790s.

25 Conor Cruise O'Brien argues throughout *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke* (Chicago, IL, 1992), that Burke's support for catholic relief from penal disabilities lay in his fear that "their not being treated as full and equal citizens" left the Irish "most open to the seductions of Jacobin ideology" (472), thus posing an internal threat to the security of Great Britain. See also Blakemore, *Burke* 47–49, for a discussion of the "Tracts" that proceeds along lines similar to my own, albeit argued from another ideological position.

26 Whelan, *Tree of Liberty* 37.

27 Seamus Deane, "Edmund Burke and the Ideology of Irish Liberalism," *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions*, ed. Richard Kearney (Dublin, 1985) 145. See also by Deane, *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England 1789–1832* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1988) 4–20, for an argument that is compatible in some respects with my own.

28 My thinking on the operations of colonial hegemony is most indebted to Abdul R. JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," *"Race," Writing and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago, IL, 1986) 59–87; more recently, a similar position has been elaborated in the Irish context by Eagleton, in *Heathcliff* 27–103, and in Latin American studies by Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley, CA, 1991) 30–51.

29 Gavelkind had originally been an indigenous Gaelic landowning practice of "corporate and redivisible proprietorship" (Foster, *Modern Ireland* 10); first outlawed by the English in 1606, in the eighteenth century gavelkind obviously functions very differently under penal conditions than it did in Old Irish culture.

30 Blakemore, *Burke* 48.
31 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn. (London and New York, 1991) 7.
32 Whelan, *Tree of Liberty* 37.
33 For a thoughtful consideration of this mode of representing Ireland's difference from England, particularly in regard to how it has shaped scholarly thinking about the status of the nineteenth-century Irish novel, see David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Durham, NC, 1993) 128–41.
34 Deane, *Strange Country* 32.
35 Tom Dunne, "Maria Edgeworth and the Colonial Mind" (Cork, 1984) 8; Robert Tracy, "Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan: Legality versus Legitimacy," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 40 (1985) 4.
36 Deane, *Strange Country* 33, 31.
37 Quoted in Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford, 1972) 77.
38 Here I follow Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace's discussion of Richard Edgeworth as a practitioner of "new-style patriarchy," in *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity* (New York, 1991).
39 Marilyn Butler, Introduction to *"Castle Rackrent" and "Ennui"* (London, 1992) 32.
40 See Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN, 1997) 12–29.
41 Maria Edgeworth, *"Castle Rackrent" and "Ennui"*, ed. and intro. Marilyn Butler (London, 1992) 61. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text. For an excellent extended reading of the editorial apparatus of *Castle Rackrent*, see Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca, NY, 1991) 112–22.
42 Butler, Introduction 16.
43 See Anderson, *Imagined Communities.*
44 In *The Politics of Language, 1791–1819* (Oxford, 1984), Olivia Smith offers a thorough and persuasive argument on this point. But see as well Butler, Introduction 16–23, for another view of late eighteenth-century language politics.
45 John Barrell, *English Literature in History 1730–80: An Equal, Wide Survey* (New York, 1983) 127.
46 *Ibid.* 175.
47 Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution* 185–86.
48 Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789–1830* (London and New York, 1989) 78. In the Preface, the editor uses the word "illiterate" to describe Thady, yet he can most certainly read English, if not write it. My feeling is that Edgeworth uses this word, somewhat ironically, in the eighteenth-century sense as defined by Chesterfield in 1748: "The word

illiterate, in its common acceptation, means a man who is ignorant of [Greek and Latin]" (*OED*).

49 Ferris, *Achievement* 115. Leerssen makes a similar claim about Sydney Owenson's use of supplementary material in *The Wild Irish Girl*: "the footnotes, by the very act of explaining such points, presuppose the need for such explanation and underline the exotic and alien nature of the *explicandum*" (*Remembrance and Imagination* 56).

50 Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and Its Aftermath* (London, 1977) 33. For some provocative reflections on the mix of identity and difference that Union implies, see Eagleton, *Heathcliff* 129–38.

51 See W. J. McCormack, *Ascendancy and Tradition in Anglo-Irish Literary History from 1789 to 1939* (Oxford, 1985) 108–22; but for a more thorough (and more feminist) reading of the Rackrent men as husbands and masters, also consult Ann Owens Weekes, *Irish Women Writers: An Uncharted Tradition* (Lexington, KY, 1990) 41–59, to which my own argument is indebted.

52 Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Berkeley, CA, 1994) 295. While I subscribe to Gallagher's view that conversion is the unspoken fact here, some other critics are somewhat more tentative on this point. McCormack, for instance, writes that "the change of name is maybe the mute signal of a change of sectarian allegiance" (*Ascendancy and Tradition* 108); for his further qualifications, see 118–20.

53 Tracy, "Legality versus Legitimacy" 3.

54 Joseph Lew, "Sydney Owenson and the Fate of Empire," *Keats-Shelley Journal* 39 (1990) 61–62.

55 Gene W. Ruoff, "1800 and the Future of the Novel: William Wordsworth, Maria Edgeworth, and the Vagaries of Literary History," *The Age of William Wordsworth: Critical Essays on the Romantic Tradition*, eds. Kenneth R. Johnston and Gene W. Ruoff (New Brunswick, NJ, 1987) 309.

56 Ferris characterizes the narrative design of the novel as possessing "the static, spatial contours of the rise-and-fall pattern of older histories, fables, and didactic tales" (*Achievement* 117), while Iain Topliss uses the phrase "episodic plot" to characterize the novel's form, in "Maria Edgeworth: The Novelist and the Union," *Ireland and the Union*, eds. Oliver MacDonagh and W. F. Mandle (London, 1986) 275.

57 By contrast with Weekes's careful detailing of the ways in which women do (and do not) matter to *Castle Rackrent*, McCormack terms the "repression" of the female line "deliberate if arbitrary" (*Ascendancy and Tradition* 110).

58 Weekes, *Irish Women Writers* 32.

59 In the case of Kit's wife, as Thomas Flanagan points out, "Kitt [*sic*] cannot touch [her fortune] without her consent" because her family has entailed it, thereby providing her with an effective legal means of resistance to his efforts (*The Irish Novelists, 1800–1850* [New York, 1958] 73). For more on Thady's relation to "the Jewish," see my "Another Tale to Tell: Postcolonial Theory and the Case of *Castle Rackrent*," *Criticism* 36 (1994) 383–400.

60 Colin Graham concludes much the same, in his assertion that "Jason's triumph is achieved through the tactics and strategies he has learnt from his father" ("History, Gender and the Colonial Moment: *Castle Rackrent*," *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: Public and Private Spheres*, eds. Margaret Kelleher and James H. Murphy [Dublin, 1997] 102).

61 Topliss, "The Novelist and the Union" 275. This is the view of Jason to which McCormack also subscribes (*Ascendancy and Tradition* 121–22).

62 Dunne, "Colonial Mind" 10; Tracy, "Legality versus Legitimacy" 4. For a similar line of argument, see Julian Moynahan, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1995) 27.

63 See Flanagan for a similar conclusion about Edgeworth's Jason as demonstrating a "shrewd understanding . . . of the new class which was rising to power" (*Irish Novelists* 78). In *The Absentee*, Edgeworth presents a view of Dublin immediately after the Union that expresses her fears of class mobility: "commerce rose into the vacated seats of rank[, and] wealth rose into the place of birth," and so "the whole *tone* of society was altered," with the *nouveaux riches* of the merchant class vulgarly aspiring to the status of gentlemen and gentlewomen (*The Absentee*, eds. W. J. McCormack and Kim Walker [Oxford and New York, 1988] 85). For a subsequent reworking of this motif of class confusion, see my discussion of Trollope's *Examiner* letters on the famine in Chapter Four.

64 Eagleton, *Heathcliff* 166. Seamus Deane makes a similar point regarding post-Union fiction in "Irish National Character, 1790–1900," *The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical Evidence*, ed. Tom Dunne (Cork, 1987): "retrospect is important in these works. It allows us to witness the disappearance of a class while retaining our affection for it" (104).

2 ALLEGORIES OF PRESCRIPTION: ENGENDERING UNION IN OWENSON AND EDGEWORTH

1 The most immediate cause for Burke's opposition to the proposed absentee tax, as Conor Cruise O'Brien suggests in *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke* (Chicago, IL, 1992) 70–71, was Rockingham's holding of large estates in Ireland, which would have been heavily taxed under the legislation. For more on Burke's position on the absentee tax, see R. B. McDowell's Introduction to Part II, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, volume IX: *The Revolutionary War, 1794–1797, and Ireland* (Oxford, 1991) 397–99; and Thomas H. D. Mahoney, *Edmund Burke and Ireland* (Cambridge, MA, 1960) 50–51.

2 *Writings and Speeches*, IX. 491, 489–90. Further references to this edition appear within the text.

3 Gary Kelly, "Jane Austen and the English Novel of the 1790s," *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670–1815*, eds. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens, OH, 1986) 290.

4 For some suggestive contemporary examples of how union was imagined as

marriage, see the anti-union satires that Katie Trumpener analyzes in *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, NJ, 1997) 134–37.

5 Tony Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore, MD, 1979) 15.

6 Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York and London, 1993) 80; Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley, CA, 1991) 6.

7 Joseph Allen Boone, *Tradition Counter Tradition: Love and the Form of Fiction* (Chicago, IL, 1987) 9, 7.

8 Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism* 141.

9 Kelly, "Jane Austen" 288.

10 Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity* (Durham, NC, and London, 1995).

11 While the hero is known to us for most of the novel only as "H. M.," for convenience's sake, I will be calling him Horatio, which we only learn to be his birth name at the end of the novel, in a letter addressed to him by his father.

12 Sydney Owenson [Lady Morgan], *The Wild Irish Girl* (London, 1986) 1. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

13 Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN, 1997) 36.

14 Ina Ferris, "Narrating Cultural Encounter: Lady Morgan and the Irish National Tale," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 51 (1996) 299. See also on this point Barry Sloan, *The Pioneers of Anglo-Irish Fiction, 1800–1850* (Totowa, NJ, 1987) 9; Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789–1830* (London and New York, 1989) 93–94; and Joseph Lew, "Sydney Owenson and the Fate of Empire," *Keats-Shelley Journal* 39 (1990) 53.

15 Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism* 137. For information on the English reception of *The Wild Irish Girl*, see Mary Campbell, *Lady Morgan: The Life and Times of Sydney Owenson* (London, 1988) 60–78.

16 See Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca, NY, 1991) 132, and Leerssen's discussion on this point, also influenced by Bakhtin (*Remembrance and Imagination* 38–42).

17 Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* 99, 101.

18 Seamus Deane, "Irish National Character, 1790–1900," *The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical Evidence*, ed. Tom Dunne (Cork, 1987) 94.

19 The concept of "flexible positional superiority," first articulated by Edward W. Said, is key to my understanding here; see the Introduction to *Orientalism* (New York, 1978) 4–9.

20 Kelly, *English Fiction* 94.

21 As Tom Dunne points out, such a wish is never again entertained in Owenson's fiction: see his essay, "Fiction as 'The Best History of Nations': Lady Morgan's Irish Novels," *The Writer as Witness* 133–59.

22 *Ibid.* 137.

23 Lew, "Sydney Owenson" 39.
24 In *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760–1830* (Notre Dame, IN, 1995), Kevin Whelan discusses the different interest groups that promoted this idea in the later eighteenth century (3–56).
25 As Leerssen correctly argues, Owenson's footnotes "tend to be of an intertextual nature and invoke, not so much a Real Ireland as previous discourse about Ireland" (*Remembrance and Imagination* 60).
26 For the classic example of Burke's ability to argue the other side of the case on prescription, see *Letter to a Noble Lord*, *Writings and Speeches* 145–87.
27 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis, 1987) 133. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.
28 Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution* (Cambridge, 1993) 209. For more about prescription, see Steven Blakemore, *Burke and the Fall of Language: The French Revolution as Linguistic Event* (Hanover, NH and London, 1988) 61–76, and Paul Lucas, "On Edmund Burke's Doctrine of Prescription; or, An Appeal from the New to the Old Lawyers," *The Historical Journal* 11 (1968) 35–63.
29 Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London and New York, 1995) 43.
30 Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination* 56.
31 Anne Fogarty, "Imperfect Concord: Spectres of History in the Irish Novels of Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan," *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: Public and Private Spheres*, eds. Margaret Kelleher and James H. Murphy (Dublin, 1997) 118.
32 Eagleton, *Heathcliff* 179.
33 *Ibid.* 179.
34 See Whelan, *Tree of Liberty* 59–61, for a concise reading of the United Irish version of the Enlightenment project.
35 The dichotomizing here, of catholic Irish against protestant English, of course reduces the social and ethnic composition of Irish society to a convenient binary, whereas Owenson could not but be aware, as Thomas Flanagan points out, "that there were many Irelands: there were Catholics of Norman or English blood, 'Old English' Protestants who were more in sympathy with the native nobility than with the Cromwellian interlopers, Gaelic families who had thrown in their lot with the Ascendancy and others who maintained amidst poverty the trappings of feudal splendor" (*The Irish Novelists, 1800–1850* [New York, 1958] 116–17).
36 Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism* 141.
37 My thinking on this point has been deeply informed by Ragussis's work on Scott's *Ivanhoe* in *Figures of Conversion* 89–126.
38 Dunne, "Fiction" 150.
39 Maria Edgeworth, *The Absentee*, eds. W. J. McCormack and Kim Walker

(Oxford and New York, 1988) 248. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

40 Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity* (New York, 1991) 174.

41 Here I am revising Nancy Armstrong's thesis about the eighteenth-century novel, whereby class difference is displaced by the "natural" workings of heterosexual romance, to include the imperial difference between England and Ireland. See *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York, 1987) 59–160.

42 W. J. McCormack comes closest to positing the kind of connection between Burke and Edgeworth that I am making here (*Ascendancy and Tradition in Anglo-Irish Literary History from 1789 to 1939* [Oxford, 1985] 165). See also *Ascendancy and Tradition* 139–46, and McCormack and Walker, Introduction to *The Absentee* xxii–xxiv, for a valuable reading of the significance of Grace Nugent in historical context which has influenced my argument. Robert Tracy also presents some relevant material in "Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan: Legality versus Legitimacy," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 40 (1985) 1–22.

43 Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Berkeley, CA, 1994) 289.

44 Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford, 1972) 332.

45 For a more comprehensive treatment of this point in relation to other works in Edgeworth's *oeuvre*, see Kowaleski-Wallace, *Their Fathers' Daughters* 109–37, 173–97.

46 See Regenia Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832–1920* (New York, 1991) 171–94, for an analysis of how the experience of boys' public schools – places from which women were largely absent – contributed to the making of masculine identities.

47 Kowaleski-Wallace, *Their Fathers' Daughters* 179.

48 McCormack, *Ascendancy and Tradition* 142. I'm grateful to Alan Richardson of Boston College for raising the point about Grace's "biological" Englishness, and for the discussion that ensued, when I gave a paper drawn from this chapter at the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Association meeting at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, in April 1994.

49 Tracy, "Legality versus Legitimacy" 13.

50 Fogarty, "Imperfect Concord" 123.

51 Kowaleski-Wallace, *Their Fathers' Daughters* 177.

52 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993) 57–58.

53 Quoted in Butler, *Maria Edgeworth* 452. See as well Eagleton's remarks on this passage in *Heathcliff* 176–77.

54 David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Durham, NC, 1993) 141.

3 TROUBLING OTHERS: REPRESENTING THE IMMIGRANT IRISH IN URBAN ENGLAND AROUND MID-CENTURY

1 David Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham, NC, and London, 1996) 38.
2 Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800–1960* (Hamden, CT, 1982) 5.
3 *Ibid.* 4, 18, 25, 88.
4 For more on Knox, see Reginald Horsman, "Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism in Great Britain before 1850," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37 (1976) 405–07; Vincent J. Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge, 1995) 29–30; Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York, 1995) 14–17; Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge, 1987) 54–60; George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987) 64–65; and Ronald Rainger, "Race, Politics, and Science: The Anthropological Society of London in the 1860s," *Victorian Studies* 22 (1978) 64–65.
5 L. P. Curtis, Jr., *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Bridgeport, CT, 1968) 31, 70, 36.
6 Young, *Colonial Desire* 96. For an incisive analysis of how the new human sciences constituted the English poor as an object of scrutiny, see Anita Levy, *Other Women: The Writing of Class, Race, and Gender, 1832–1898* (Princeton, NJ, 1991).
7 Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832–1867* (Chicago, IL, 1985) 170.
8 Ruth Bernard Yeazell, "Why Political Novels Have Heroines: *Sybil*, *Mary Barton*, and *Felix Holt*," *Novel* 18 (1985) 129, 132.
9 Firdous Azim, *The Colonial Rise of the Novel* (London and New York, 1993) 199. Azim's analysis is itself indebted to Terry Eagleton's groundbreaking discussion of *Shirley* in *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (London, 1975) 45–60.
10 Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York and Oxford, 1987) 38, 41.
11 Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity* (Durham, NC, and London, 1995) 193. For more on Scott's influence on Thierry, Carlyle, and Disraeli, see Clare A. Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1990) 87–107. Daniel Bivona provides a useful reading of Disraeli's trilogy that considers intersections of class and race discourse in *Desire and Contradiction: Imperial Visions and Domestic Debates in Victorian Literature* (Manchester and New York, 1990) 1–31.
12 Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's "History of Sexuality" and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC, and London, 1995) 73, 59.
13 Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil; or, The Two Nations*, ed. Sheila M. Smith (Oxford

and New York, 1981) 161. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

14 Stoler, *Education of Desire* 62.

15 My thinking on how narrative issues are framed in terms of exclusion and inclusion has been very much informed by D. A. Miller, *Narrative and its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel* (Princeton, NJ, 1981).

16 Quoted in Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts* 84. For two recent discussions of representations of the Irish as "white negroes," see Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* 19–41; and Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London, 1995) 52–56.

17 Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York, 1996) 55.

18 Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Notre Dame, IN, 1996) 150–53.

19 Seamus Deane, "Civilians and Barbarians," *Ireland's Field Day* (Notre Dame, IN, 1986) 33–42.

20 Thomas Carlyle, "The Nigger Question," *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 5 vols. (London, 1899; rpt. New York, 1969) IV. 353. For a very useful discussion of Carlyle's increasingly vicious racism and the links he forged between the Irish and West Indians, see Chris R. Vanden Bossche, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus, OH, 1991) 126–41, as well as Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness* 57–69; and for the broader context, Catherine Hall, "Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre," *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York, 1992) 255–95.

21 Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, ed. Angus Easson (Oxford and New York, 1982) 145. Subsequent references to this edition of the novel appear within the text.

22 For a reading that argues for the strategic suppression on Gaskell's part of any extended analysis of working-class women's position in the novel, see Catherine Barnes Stevenson, " 'What Must Not Be Said': *North and South* and the Problem of Women's Work," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 19 (1991) 67–84.

23 See Geoffrey Carnall, "Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Preston Strike," *Victorian Studies* 8 (1964) 31–48, for more on the uses these novelists made of this event.

24 H. I. Dutton and J. E. King, *"Ten Per Cent and No Surrender": The Preston Strike, 1853–1854* (Cambridge, 1981) 115.

25 W. J. Lowe, *The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire: The Shaping of a Working Class Community* (New York, 1989) 99; David Fitzpatrick, " 'A Peculiar Tramping People': The Irish in Britain, 1801–1870," *A New History of Ireland*, volume V: *Ireland Under the Union, I (1801–1870)*, ed. W. E. Vaughan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 644. Arthur Redford also briefly refers to this incident in *Labour Migration in England, 1800–1850*, 2nd edn., ed. W. H. Chaloner (New York, 1968) 161.

26 The contemporary account is from the *Annual Register*, May 1854, cited in *Hard Times*, eds. George Ford and Sylvère Monod (New York, 1990) 280; also see Dutton and King, *"Ten Per Cent"* 178–84.
27 Lowe, *Mid-Victorian Lancashire* 100.
28 Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* 178; while she is describing the plot of *Mary Barton* (1848), her words apply just as well to *North and South*.
29 Fitzpatrick, " 'Peculiar Tramping People' " 643.
30 Dutton and King, *"Ten Per Cent"* 125–27.
31 For an alternative reading of the riot scene which argues that Gaskell "relies on the familiar melodramatic language of bestiality," yet also "later works against those conventions by focusing on Margaret's identification of human faces and individual sufferings in the crowd" (60), see Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1988).
32 Karl Marx to Sigfrid Meyer and August Vogt, 9 April 1870, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (New York, 1988) XLIII. 474–75.
33 Dutton and King, *"Ten Per Cent"* 179.
34 Deirdre David makes a similar point about Boucher's Irishness, albeit in passing, in *Fictions of Resolution in Three Victorian Novels* (New York, 1981) 44.
35 Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Ithaca, NY, 1979) 46; Lowe, *Mid-Victorian Lancashire* 46. Another older but still useful source of information on Irish immigration in this period is John Archer Jackson, *The Irish in Britain* (London, 1963). For a more recent overview, see Roger Swift, "The Historiography of the Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, 3 vols., ed. Patrick O'Sullivan (Leicester and London, 1992) vol. II *The Irish in the New Communities*, 52–81. And for a more localized study of the impact of Irish immigration, see Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot, 1995) 72–94.
36 Fitzpatrick, " 'Peculiar Tramping People' " 633.
37 Lees, *Exiles of Erin* 15; for the contrasting view, see Graham Davis, "Little Irelands," *The Irish in Britain, 1815–1939*, eds. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (Savage, MD, 1989) 107. Other uses of the term "invasion" include Fergus D'Arcy, "St. Patrick's Other Island: The Irish Invasion of Britain," *Éire-Ireland* 28 (1993) 8, 11; Alan O'Day, "Varieties of Anti-Irish Behaviour in Britain, 1846–1922," *Racial Violence in Britain, 1840–1950*, ed. Panikos Panayi (Leicester and London, 1993) 27; and E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963; rpt. New York, 1966) 430.
38 M. A. G. Ó Túathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration," *The Irish in the Victorian City*, eds. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London, 1985) 22.
39 The question of whether or not the Irish did indeed drive down English workers' wages, for example, is by no means resolved. The contemporary texts I cite here all work from the assumption that they did, as, for example, in Carlyle's 1839 claim "that whatsoever labour, to which mere strength

with little skill will suffice, is to be done, will be done not at the English price, but at an approximation to the Irish price" (in *Chartism* [London, 1839] 31; subsequent references appear within the text). As Redford was first to claim, "Irish labour was indispensable to the prosperity of both the manufactures and the agriculture of Great Britain; and the Irish undoubtedly proved useful to the employers in keeping down the level of wages" (*Labour Migration* 162). But more recent historiography challenges this position: see, for example, Lowe, *Mid-Victorian Lancashire* 79–107.

40 Lees, *Exiles of Erin* 88.

41 Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 4 vols. (New York, 1968) I. 108. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

42 Quoted in *The Unknown Mayhew*, eds. Eileen Yeo and E. P. Thompson (New York, 1971) 209.

43 James Phillips Kay[-Shuttleworth], *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester*, 2nd edn. (New York, 1970) 4. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

44 Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830–1864* (Chicago, IL, and London, 1995) 58. Although our emphases differ considerably, my reading of Kay's text parallels Poovey's in several important respects, and particularly in our shared sense, in her words, that "throughout his pamphlet, Kay associates every English problem with the Irish" (65). For other important readings of Kay's work, see Levy, *Other Women* 35–40, and Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* 170–73, neither of which deal with Irish questions.

45 In addition, Poovey argues, "cholera proved the perfect vehicle for Kay's position because it enabled him to harness one kind of 'remote and accidental' affliction (the Corn Laws) to another (the Irish) and to propose the removal of both as a cure for all of England's ills" (*Making a Social Body* 71).

46 Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY, 1986) 131.

47 Seamus Deane, "Irish National Character, 1790–1900," *The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical Evidence*, ed. Tom Dunne (Cork, 1987) 103.

48 As Reginald Horsman describes the phenomenon, terming the 1840s "a watershed in the surging growth of Anglo-Saxonism," "those ideas of Anglo-Saxon freedom that had persisted in English thought since the sixteenth century were now melded, on the one hand, with the ideas of Teutonic greatness and destiny developed by the comparative philologists and German nationalists, and on the other, with ideas of inherent Caucasian superiority developed by those interested in the science of man" ("Origins" 399).

49 Carlyle to John Greig, 17 April 1847, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, eds. Clyde de L. Ryals and Kenneth J. Fielding (Durham, NC, and London, 1993) XXI. 196. Mill expressed this same attitude in quite Carlylean terms in one of the leaders concerning the famine published in

the *Morning Chronicle* in 1846: "the present condition of Ireland . . . has brought things to a crisis. It has converted a chronic into an acute disease, which will either kill or be cured" (*The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, eds. Ann P. Robson and John M. Robson [Toronto, 1986] XXIV. 880).

50 For a discussion of Engels's work in the context of Kay's and, more extensively, of Carlyle's, see Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class* (New York, 1974) 53–55, 102–12.

51 Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class of England*, *Collected Works* IV. 418. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

52 Engels to Marx, 23 May 1856, *Collected Works* XL. 50. The sentence continues: "and now, as everyone knows, fulfill the function of supplying England, America, Australia, etc., with prostitutes, casual labourers, pimps, pickpockets, swindlers, beggars, and other rabble."

53 In the phrase "a mixture of the races," Engels obliquely refers, I think, to the increasingly common practice of intermarriage between English workers and second-generation Irish immigrants. See Lees, *Exiles of Erin* 140–62, on marriage among the Irish, and between Irish and English, in London. For Renan's oft-cited phrase, see "The Poetry of the Celtic Races," *The Poetry of the Celtic Races, and Other Essays*, trans. William G. Hutchison (London, n.d.) 8.

54 Charles Kingsley, *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet*, ed. Elizabeth A. Cripps (Oxford and New York, 1983) 126. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

55 Concerning the relation of the Irish in England to Chartist activity, Rachel O'Higgins argues that "it was undeniably in the Chartist movement that the Irish made their most important contribution to the growth of political radicalism among the working classes in nineteenth-century Britain" ("The Irish Influence in the Chartist Movement," *Past and Present* 20 [1961] 83). By contrast, J. H. Treble claims "that despite the firm grip which individual Irishmen" – such as Feargus O'Connor and Bronterre O'Brien – "exercised over Chartism's destinies, the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen . . . had little contact with the movement until 1848" ("O'Connor, O'Connell and the Attitudes of Irish Immigrants towards Chartism in the North of England 1838–1848," *The Victorians and Social Protest: A Symposium*, eds. J. Butt and I. F. Clarke [Hamden, CT, 1973] 34). More recently, both Dorothy Thompson and John Belchem have modified O'Higgins's premise with further archival work: see Thompson, "Ireland and the Irish in English Radicalism before 1850," in her *Outsiders: Class, Gender and Nation* (London, 1993) 103–33; and Belchem, "1848: Feargus O'Connor and the Collapse of The Mass Platform," *The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working-Class Radicalism and Culture, 1830–1860*, eds. James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson (London, 1982) 269–310, as well as "English Working-Class Radicalism and the Irish, 1815–1850," Swift and Gilley, *The Irish in the Victorian City* 85–105. For a more general survey of immigrant political activity, see Lees, *Exiles of Erin* 213–43.

56 Dorothy Thompson, "Seceding from the Seceders: The Decline of the Jacobin Tradition in Ireland, 1790–1850," *Outsiders* 134–63.
57 The strongest proponent of this view is John Saville, *1848: The British State and the Chartist Movement* (Cambridge, 1987).
58 Belchem, "Working-Class Radicalism" 87.
59 This is a charge repeated, for example, in Donald Read and Eric Glasgow, *Feargus O'Connor: Irishman and Chartist* (London, 1961), who describe O'Connor as having "lost his nerve" and becoming "abjectly conciliatory" (131) in the days leading up to 10 April. For a less charged reading of O'Connor's role, see Belchem, "1848," and his *Popular Radicalism in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (New York, 1996) 91–93.
60 Belchem, "Working-Class Radicalism" 93.
61 Belchem, *Popular Radicalism* 91.
62 Yeazell, "Political Novels" 127.
63 Suzanne Keen, *Victorian Renovations of the Novel: Narrative Annexes and the Boundaries of Representation* (Cambridge, 1998) 119. See also Bodenheimer, *Politics of Story* 135–50; and Patrick Brantlinger, *The Spirit of Reform: British Literature and Politics, 1832–1867* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1977) 137–41.
64 Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby; or, The New Generation*, ed. Thom Braun (Harmondsworth, 1983) 239.
65 David Alderson, "An Anatomy of the British Polity: *Alton Locke* and Christian Manliness," *Victorian Identities: Social and Cultural Formations in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, eds. Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (New York, 1996) 56.
66 For useful readings of homosociality in *Alton Locke*, see Alderson, "An Anatomy" as well as Donald E. Hall, *Fixing Patriarchy: Feminism and Mid-Victorian Male Novelists* (New York, 1996) 63–83. The *locus classicus* for any discussion of homosociality in the English literary tradition is Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, 1985).
67 Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness* 70.

4 PLOTTING COLONIAL AUTHORITY: TROLLOPE'S IRELAND, 1845–1860

1 For a detailed account of Trollope's association with the post office, see R. H. Super, *Trollope in the Post Office* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1981), as well as his *The Chronicler of Barsetshire: A Life of Anthony Trollope* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1988).
2 Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*, eds. Michael Sadleir and Frederick Page (Oxford and New York, 1980) 58. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.
3 Robert Tracy, " 'The Unnatural Ruin': Trollope and Nineteenth-Century Irish Fiction," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37 (1982) 359.
4 R. F. Foster, "Marginal Men and Micks on the Make: The Uses of Irish Exile, c. 1840–1922," *Paddy & Mr. Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1995) 292–93.

5 N. John Hall, *Trollope: A Biography* (Oxford, 1991) 82.
6 See especially Janet Egleson Dunleavy, "Trollope and Ireland," *Trollope: Centenary Essays*, ed. John Halperin (New York, 1982) 53–69, for an account of Trollope's fidelity to the Irish locales he represented.
7 James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," *Cultural Studies*, eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York, 1992) 96–116.
8 Quoted in Hall, *Trollope: A Biography* 141.
9 Clifford, "Traveling Cultures" 108.
10 Mary Hamer, Introduction to *Castle Richmond* (Oxford and New York, 1989) xii.
11 Andrew H. Miller, *Novels Behind Glass: Commodity Culture and Victorian Narrative* (Cambridge, 1995) 173.
12 Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York, 1989) 20.
13 I am grateful to my colleague Kate McCullough for prodding me to think about the specific literary significance of Trollope's work for the post office.
14 Hall uses the phrase "romance with Ireland" in *Trollope: A Biography* 84, as does R. C. Terry in *Anthony Trollope: The Artist in Hiding* (London, 1977) 180, while Tracy writes of Trollope's "Irish apprenticeship" in " 'The Unnatural Ruin' " 380.
15 Hall, *Trollope: A Biography* 100; Terry, *Anthony Trollope* 186. For a similar view of the relations between Trollope's Irish fiction and the English tradition, see Owen Dudley Edwards, "Anthony Trollope, the Irish Writer," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 38 (1983) 1–42.
16 Anthony Trollope, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*, ed. Robert Tracy (Oxford and New York, 1989) 1, 2. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text. Also see *An Autobiography* 70–71, for Trollope's brief account of the genesis of the novel.
17 Helen Garlinghouse King, ed., "Trollope's Letters to the *Examiner*," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 26 (1965) 78. Subsequent references to these letters appear within the text.
18 Coral Lansbury, *The Reasonable Man: Trollope's Legal Fiction* (Princeton, NJ, 1981) 118.
19 This conversation between O'Malley and Father John McGrath, Thady's closest ally, takes place in one of three chapters Trollope later suppressed in preparing a new edition of the novel; they are reprinted as an appendix to the Tracy edition.
20 Tracy, Introduction to *The Macdermots* xvi.
21 Michael Cotsell, "Trollope: The International Theme," *English Literature and the Wider World*, volume III: *Creditable Warriors, 1830–1876*, ed. Michael Cotsell (London, 1990) 248.
22 Conor Johnston, "*The Macdermots of Ballycloran*: Trollope as Conservative-Liberal," *Éire-Ireland* 16 (1981) 85–86. See also Tracy, " 'The Unnatural Ruin' " 360, and his Introduction to *The Macdermots* xiv, for a similar point.
23 Interestingly, British representations of the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion in India follow a similar pattern: "although there is some evidence that the Mutiny

was partially planned," according to Patrick Brantlinger, many Victorian writers "emphasize conspiracy while often insisting that the rebels were racially incapable of following a coordinated plan" (*Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* [Ithaca, NY, and London, 1988] 203).

24 In the voluminous literature on agrarian protest groups, I have found the following especially helpful: Samuel Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, NJ, 1979) 65–104; Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly, Jr., eds., *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest, 1780–1914* (Madison, WI, 1983); and Tom Garvin, "Defenders, Ribbonmen and Others: Underground Political Networks in Pre-Famine Ireland," *Past and Present* 96 (1982) 133–55. See as well the brief remarks on agrarian protest in Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Notre Dame, IN, 1996) 137–43; and the more extended discussion in David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Durham, NC, 1993) 125–55.

25 Joel Mokyr argues that "the real original sources of agrarian outrage were the oversupply of labor and the inefficiency of agriculture, ignorance, and the want of employment," in *Why Ireland Starved: A Quantitative and Analytical History of the Irish Economy, 1800–1850* (London, 1983) 134.

26 Lloyd, *Anomalous States* 127.

27 *Ibid.* 144; on this point, also see Mokyr, *Why Ireland Starved* 146.

28 In *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis, MN, 1993), Jenny Sharpe comes to a similar conclusion in analyzing British and Anglo-Indian representations of the 1857 Rebellion: "suturing the rupture of rebellion back into the grand narrative of the civilizing mission, the tales of atrocities [against English 'ladies'] served as a screen discourse for the savage methods used to ensure that natives knew their proper place – but also for the vulnerability of colonial authority" (81).

29 Trollope makes this his subtitle for *Castle Richmond*, ed. Mary Hamer (Oxford and New York, 1989) 488. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

30 The first essay to deal with the relation of the *Examiner* letters to Trollope's fiction is Judith Knelman, "Anthony Trollope; English Journalist and Novelist, Writing about the Famine in Ireland," *Ére-Ireland* 23 (1988) 57–67, which is concerned mainly with placing the letters in the context of *Castle Richmond*. I am indebted to this essay for provoking the train of thought I follow here. See as well the more recent work on the relation of the letters to *Castle Richmond* in Margaret Kelleher, *The Feminization of Famine: Expressions of the Inexpressible?* (Durham, NC, 1997) 39–57; and Suzanne Keen, *Victorian Renovations of the Novel: Narrative Annexes and the Boundaries of Representation* (Cambridge, 1998) 53–55.

31 See also Trollope's remarks on how the letters came to be written and published, and on the famine more generally, in *An Autobiography* 81–84.

32 Kelleher, *Feminization of Famine* 42.

33 Christopher Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* (Oxford, 1995) 18.

34 T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, 2 vols., ed. Patricia James (Cambridge, 1989) I. 291, 304.

35 Thomas Carlyle to Edward FitzGerald, 12 January 1847, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, eds. Clyde de L. Ryals and Kenneth J. Fielding (Durham, NC, and London, 1993) XXI. 134.
36 Like his view of the famine, Trollope's criticism of Irish land practices was by no means idiosyncratic: Mokyr points out that "of all the explanations proposed in the nineteenth century for Ireland's economic woes, one of the most influential is the hypothesis which places the responsibility on the system of land tenancy" (*Why Ireland Starved* 81, 100). My understanding of famine economics is guided by Mokyr's work, as well as by the chapter on the famine in Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780–1939* (Oxford, 1994) 173–209.
37 R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (New York, 1988) 328.
38 Catherine Hall offers a reading of the discursive parameters within which English bourgeois manliness was constituted that resonates strongly with Trollope's thematics here, particularly around the issue of work, in *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York, 1992) esp. 255–95.
39 See Mokyr, *Why Ireland Starved* 189–90, for a discussion of family settlements as a "drain on the rental income of Irish landlords."
40 Foster, *Modern Ireland* 336.
41 Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and Its Aftermath* (London, 1977) 45; J. C. Brady, "Legal Developments, 1801–1879," *A New History of Ireland*, volume V: *Ireland Under the Union, I (1801–1870)*, ed. W. E. Vaughan (Oxford, 1989) 456. See also MacDonagh's excellent chapter on property in *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780–1980* (London, 1983) 34–51.
42 Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Rpt. Miami, FL, 1969) 27.
43 John Stuart Mill, "The Condition of Ireland," *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, eds. Ann P. Robson and John M. Robson (Toronto, 1986) XXIV. 894. I discuss Mill's *Morning Chronicle* leaders on the famine in Chapter Five.
44 Anthony Trollope, *The Landleaguers*, ed. Mary Hamer (Oxford and New York, 1993) 3; subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.
45 Foster, *Modern Ireland* 336; Joseph Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1973) 37. See also Clark, *Social Origins* 120–21, 171–74.
46 Knelman, "Journalist and Novelist" 62.
47 Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* 32.
48 Kelleher, *Feminization of Famine* 44. Her reading of *Castle Richmond* focuses in part on how Herbert does and does not share the fate of the "idly genteel."
49 Morash points out in *Writing the Irish Famine* that such "wishful thinking" (47) also had some consequences for famine narratives published after *Castle Richmond*, but before *The Landleaguers*, such as William Steuart Trench's *Realities of Irish Life* (1868) and Annie Keary's *Castle Daly* (1875).
50 Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* 31. John Kucich's discussion of Trollope's "primarily aristocratic subject matter" as "a fluid social background on which a middle-class moral hierarchy is clearly superimposed" offers a useful corrective to Morash's rather flat use of the terms "aristocratic" and

"bourgeois"; see *The Power of Lies: Transgression in Victorian Fiction* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1994) 50–51.

51 Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* 35.

52 *Ibid.* 36.

53 Even as it refers back to the plots of the novels I have discussed in Chapter Two, *Castle Richmond* also clearly reworks the legitimacy plot of another Edgeworth novel, *Ennui* (1809), in which the protagonist Glenthorn discovers that he was switched at birth with the real heir to the estate. For a fuller discussion of that novel than I can offer here, see Tracy, " 'The Unnatural Ruin.' "

54 The phrase is from Hamer, Introduction to *Castle Richmond* xiii. On sensation fiction more generally, see in particular Jonathan Loesberg, "The Ideology of Narrative Form in Sensation Fiction," *Representations* 13 (1986) 115–38; D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley, CA, 1988); and Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1992).

55 For useful discussions of the ways in which Trollope represents peasant-class famine victims in the novel, see Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* 42–45; Kelleher, *Feminization of Famine* 45–57; and Keen, *Victorian Renovations* 45–53.

56 Paul Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland, 1858–1882* (Dublin, 1978) 8.

57 Clark, *Social Origins* 175.

58 *Ibid.* 155.

59 John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, *Collected Works* XIX. 551.

60 *Ibid.* 549.

5 ENGLAND'S OPPORTUNITY, ENGLAND'S CHARACTER: ARNOLD, MILL, AND THE UNION IN THE 1860S

1 Thomas Carlyle to Charles Gavan Duffy, 1 March 1847, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, eds. Clyde de L. Ryals and Kenneth J. Fielding (Durham, NC and London, 1993) XXI. 169.

2 Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Finn, The Irish Member* (London, 1989) 473–74. Subsequent references to this edition appear within the text.

3 John Stuart Mill, *England and Ireland*, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, gen. ed. John M. Robson (Toronto, 1982) VI. 508. Subsequent references to this work appear within the text.

4 R. V. Comerford, "Gladstone's First Irish Enterprise, 1864–1870," *A New History of Ireland*, volume V: *Ireland Under the Union, I (1801–70)*, ed. W. E. Vaughan (Oxford, 1989) 442.

5 Quoted in H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone: 1809–1874* (Oxford, 1986) 146.

6 E. D. Steele, *Irish Land and British Politics: Tenant-Right and Nationality, 1865–1870* (Cambridge, 1974) 37.

7 Richard V. Comerford, "Anglo-French Tension and the Origins of Fenianism," *Ireland Under the Union: Varieties of Tension*, eds. F. S. L. Lyons and R. A.

J. Hawkins (Oxford, 1980) 166.

8 Quoted in Matthew, *Gladstone* 192.

9 *Ibid.* 192.

10 My understanding of the fenian movement depends in large part on the following sources: Paul Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland, 1858–1882* (Dublin, 1978); Samuel Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, NJ, 1979); the two essays by R. V. Comerford cited above, as well as "Conspiring Brotherhoods and Contending Elites, 1857–1863," in Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland* 415–30, and *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society 1848–1882* (Dublin, 1985); Tom Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858–1928* (Oxford, 1987); Joseph Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1973) 53–62; Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780–1980* (London, 1983) 80–85; T. W. Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846–1882* (Oxford, 1981); John Newsinger, *Fenianism in Mid-Victorian Britain* (London, 1994); Leon Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever: An Anglo-American Dilemma* (New York, 1971); and K. R. M. Short, *The Dynamite War: Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain* (Dublin, 1979).

11 Clark, *Social Origins* 204, 202.

12 Bew, *National Question* 43 and Lee, *Modernisation* 57. By contrast with these views, Comerford argues in *The Fenians in Context* that "the fenians in the eyes of friend and foe stood for both expropriation of the landlords and for a redistribution of land" (115).

13 Patrick O'Farrell, *Ireland's English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations 1534–1970* (New York, 1971) 143; see also 154–60; Comerford, "Gladstone's First"; and Matthew, *Gladstone.*

14 Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York, 1996) 51. As Catherine Hall points out in her discussion of the Jamaica Committee and the Eyre Defence Committee, chaired by Mill and Carlyle respectively, "frequent recourse was made to ideas of the honour of England and how that honour could only be saved by specific courses of action" (279) by both sides in the debate, a concern echoed by both Mill and Arnold in their articulations of the Irish question. See her essay, "Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre," *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York, 1992) 255–95.

15 Comerford, "Gladstone's First" 439.

16 Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R. H. Super, 11 vols. (Ann Arbor, MI, 1962) III. 302. Subsequent references to this edition will appear within the text.

17 On Dr. Arnold's Anglo-Saxonist views, see Frederic E. Faverty, *Matthew Arnold the Ethnologist* (Evanston, IL, 1951) 117–18, and Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN, 1997) 98–100, which also notes the possibility that "there may even be a slight Oedipal distortion at work" (98) in the son's representation of the father's views.

18 Faverty, *Matthew Arnold the Ethnologist* 33.
19 Park Honan, *Matthew Arnold: A Life* (London, 1981) 138, 334.
20 Matthew Arnold to Jane Forster, 24 December 1859, *Selected Letters of Matthew Arnold*, eds. Clinton Machann and Forrest D. Burt (Ann Arbor, MI, 1993) 131.
21 Matthew Arnold to Louisa de Rothschild, 25 September 1864, *ibid.* 165.
22 Goldwin Smith, *Irish History and Irish Character*, 2nd edn. (Oxford and London, 1862) 179.
23 Seamus Deane, "'Masked with Matthew Arnold's Face': Joyce and Liberalism," *James Joyce: The Centennial Symposium*, eds. Morris Beja, Phillip Herring, Maurice Harmon, and David Norris (Urbana, IL, 1986) 14. Deane takes a more moderate view of the same issue in *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature, 1880–1980* (London and Boston, MA, 1985) 17–27.
24 David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture* (New York, 1988) 48, 46. For similar arguments about the ideological bearings of the *Study*, see Leith Davis, "'Origins of the Specious': James Macpherson's Ossian and the Forging of the British Empire," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 34 (1993) 145–47; and Dillon Johnston, "Cross-Currencies in the Culture Market: Arnold, Yeats, Joyce," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 95 (1996) 45–77.
25 Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination* 95.
26 Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity* (Durham, NC, and London, 1995) 215.
27 *Ibid.* 214.
28 Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York, 1995) 17. Young's work on Arnold (55–89) has been especially helpful to me in this chapter.
29 Thomas Carlyle to Charles Gavan Duffy, 12 March 1846, *Collected Letters* XX. 141–42.
30 While linking Engels to Arnold may seem rather startling, Young points out that like both Scott and Marx, Arnold was influenced by the French historians, the Thierry brothers, albeit in Arnold's case somewhat more indirectly, through the mediating work of the ethnologist W. F. Edwards (*Colonial Desire* 72–82).
31 Ernest Renan, *The Poetry of the Celtic Races, and Other Essays*, trans. William G. Hutchison (London, n.d.) 5.
32 L. P. Curtis, Jr., *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Bridgeport, CT, 1968) 32.
33 Vincent J. Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge, 1995) 23. See also Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, on the same subject (216).
34 Philip Dodd, "Englishness and the National Culture," *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920*, eds. Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London, 1986) 12.
35 K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann, *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* (Princeton, NJ, 1996) 54.
36 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of*

Nationalism, rev. edn. (London and New York, 1991) 7.

37 Cannon Schmitt, *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality* (Philadelphia, PA, 1997) 121.

38 Appiah and Gutmann, *Color Conscious* 56.

39 David Glover's work on Bram Stoker and Irish nationalism in the 1880s and 90s offers an interesting gloss on later permutations of the sexualization of racial discourse; see his *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham, NC, and London, 1996) 35–43.

40 Matthew Arnold to Mary Arnold, 14 December 1867, *Selected Letters* 205–06.

41 Deane, *Celtic Revivals* 22.

42 Jonathan Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, CT, 1993) 255. Phrases quoted are from speeches Gladstone made in October, 1868.

43 Matthew Arnold, "Irish Catholicism and British Liberalism," *Complete Prose Works* IX. 322.

44 Arnold, "The Incompatibles," *ibid.* IX. 246. Subsequent references to this essay appear within the text.

45 Steele, *Irish Land* 63.

46 Bew, *National Question* 14.

47 Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and Its Aftermath* (London, 1977) 14; see also his *States of Mind* 34–51.

48 Comerford, "Gladstone's First" 447. For the most substantial argument that Gladstone's Irish policy was dictated by political expediency, see Comerford, *The Fenians in Context* 131–60.

49 See MacDonagh, *Ireland* 45–52, for a useful overview.

50 *Ibid.* 45.

51 Thomas A. Boylan and Timothy P. Foley, *Political Economy and Colonial Ireland: The Propagation and Ideological Function of Economic Discourse in the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York, 1992) 117, 154.

52 *Ibid.* 135, 155.

53 Clive Dewey, "Celtic Agrarian Legislation and the Celtic Revival: Historicist Implications of Gladstone's Irish and Scottish Land Acts 1870–1886," *Past and Present* 64 (1974) 31.

54 *Ibid.* 34.

55 Boylan and Foley, *Political Economy* 155.

56 Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London and New York, 1995) 10.

57 Dewey, "Celtic Agrarian Legislation" 49.

58 Moody, *Davitt* 37.

59 My account of Mill's parliamentary doings is largely indebted to E. D. Steele, "J. S. Mill and the Irish Question: Reform, and the Integrity of the Empire, 1865–1870," *The Historical Journal* 13 (1970) 419–50; and Bruce L. Kinzer, Ann P. Robson, and John M. Robson, *A Moralist In and Out of Parliament: John Stuart Mill at Westminster 1865–1868* (Toronto, 1992), which includes a full chapter on Mill and Ireland (149–83).

60 See Kinzer, Robson, and Robson, *Moralist* 166–69, for an analysis of why Mill in 1866 supported an Irish land bill that fell far short of what he was to present two years later, in *England and Ireland*, as his own position.

61 The title of an unpublished essay of Mill's, dated to 1848, and a phrase he repeats in the first sentence of *England and Ireland* (*Collected Works* 507).

62 John Stuart Mill to John Elliot Cairnes, 1 March 1868, *The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1849–1873*, *Collected Works*, eds. Francis E. Mineka and Dwight N. Lindley (Toronto, 1972) XVI. 1369. See Steele, "Reform" 438–42, on the press's reception of the pamphlet, and 444–46, for the Commons debate. From my perspective, Steele's comment that this was "not the most auspicious time" (426) for Mill to go into print on Ireland really misses the point.

63 Mill to John Elliot Cairnes, 10 March 1868, *Collected Works* XVI. 1373.

64 Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850–1930* (Oxford, 1991) 124.

65 Matthew, *Gladstone* 192.

66 The only work I have found that discusses these leaders in any detail is Lynn Zastoupil, "Moral Government: J. S. Mill on Ireland," *The Historical Journal* 26 (1983) 707–17. For an extremely useful critique of Zastoupil's argument, see Bruce L. Kinzer, "J. S. Mill and Irish Land: A Reassessment," *The Historical Journal* 27 (1984) 111–27.

67 John Stuart Mill, "The Condition of Ireland," *Collected Works*, eds. Ann P. Robson and John M. Robson (Toronto, 1986) XXIV. 881. Subsequent references to these articles appear within the text.

68 In *Irish Land* 48–55, and at greater length in "J. S. Mill and the Irish Question: The *Principles of Political Economy*, 1848–1865," *The Historical Journal* 13 (1970) 216–36, Steele argues from his examination of six successive editions of the *Principles of Political Economy* that Mill was inconsistent and ambivalent in his attitudes to such fundamental questions of land policy as fixity of tenure; and that he was, for the most part, "badly informed" ("*Principles*" 230) and "gravely misleading" ("*Principles*" 224) about the actual economic conditions that prevailed in Ireland after the famine, including the failure of the Encumbered Estates Act to do its appointed work. The reformist optimism Mill displayed in his remarks on Ireland in *Considerations on Representative Government* is, in Steele's reading, reflected in changes to the fifth and sixth editions of the *Principles* that suggest Mill believed there was "no longer any question of radical reform" ("*Principles*" 225) since conditions were so greatly improved. Following Steele, Richard Ned Lebow similarly finds Mill "contradictory" (8) in his views; see his "J. S. Mill and the Irish Land Question," *John Stuart Mill on Ireland* (Philadelphia, PA, 1979) 3–22. Against Steele and Lebow's charges of inconsistency, Zastoupil uses the evidence of the *Morning Chronicle* leaders to argue that it is "Mill's continued concern for moral affairs in Ireland" that produces the shift in his position in *England and Ireland*, and locates the reason for that shift in "a changed perception by Mill of the moral development of the Irish

national character" ("Moral Government" 708). But Kinzer agrees with Steele that "the single major substantive change in Mill's position on Ireland" in the *Principles* "comes with the publication of the 1862 edition" ("Reassessment" 117), in which Mill argues optimistically that positive change is well underway, in a passage that he edited out of the subsequent revision of 1864–65 under the influence of Cairnes. Whatever argument one adopts or supports, it does seem very much to the point to suggest, as does Thomas C. Holt, that while "Mill's basic ideas had not changed" over the twenty years between the *Morning Chronicle* leaders and *England and Ireland*, "the political situation had" (*The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938* [Baltimore, MD, 1992] 327).

69 John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, *Collected Works*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto, 1984) XXI. 276.

70 As Kinzer notes ("Reassessment" 117), the 1852 and 1857 editions of the *Principles of Political Economy* introduced this idea.

71 Kinzer, "Reassessment" 116.

72 Eagleton also connects Burke and Mill in passing (*Heathcliff* 41).

73 Collini, *Public Moralists* 129.

74 John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, *Collected Works*, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto, 1977) XIX. 551.

75 Steele, *Irish Land* 49.

76 Steele, "*Principles*" 236.

77 Collini, *Public Moralists* 134.

78 See Dewey, "Celtic Agrarian Legislation" 560–63.

79 Moody, *Davitt* 118.

80 Lee, *Modernisation* 61.

81 Comerford, "Gladstone's First" 450; Moody, *Davitt* 119; O'Farrell, *Ireland's English Question* 125.

AFTERWORD

1 Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York, 1972) 229.

2 Theresa M. Kelley, *Reinventing Allegory* (Cambridge, 1997) 144, 75.

3 Doris Sommer, "Allegory and Dialectics: A Match Made in Romance," *boundary 2* 18 (1991) 63.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Michael Cotsell, "Trollope: The International Theme," in *English Literature and the Wider World*, volume III: *Creditable Warriors, 1830–1876*, ed. Michael Cotsell (London, 1990) 254.

6 Anthony Trollope, *An Eye for An Eye*, ed. John Sutherland (Oxford and New York, 1992) 14; subsequent references to this edition appear within the text. Albeit written in 1870, it was not published until 1879.

7 Kelley, *Reinventing Allegory* 131.

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