

Ireland and Europe in 1825: situating the Banims

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At that moment the lance of an Arab might have changed the destinies of the world.¹

But regret for these changes is futile: there are ruins made by time which time will never repair.²

Why not 1824? Or 1829? 1825 was not after all an *annus mirabilis* – nor more than usual of an *annus horribilis* – for Ireland, in spite of Pastorini's prophecies.³ No important literary work causes the date to resonate in the ways we associate with England in 1819. The publication of the first series of the Banim brothers' *Tales of the O'Hara family* is significant, but not of any obviously greater significance than the publication of Charles R. Maturin's *Melmoth the wanderer* in 1820 or Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians* in 1829. The reason for choosing to situate a discussion of the first series of *Tales by the O'Hara family* so precisely in Ireland in 1825 is to press for a particular attention to ways in which the emergent historical novel of the 1820s was preoccupied with the significance of dates and dating, with periodisation, and with the potentially different historical outcomes available at any particular moment in time. The first series of *Tales by the O'Hara family* might be read as a trilogy on the themes of identity and death. The supernatural figures strongly in these stories, and it is worth pausing to examine what this turn to the supernatural means.

1 Thomas Moore, quoting Edward Gibbon, in *Memoirs of Captain Rock, the celebrated Irish chieftain, with some account of his ancestors, written by himself* (London: Baldwin Cradock, 1824), p. 26. 2 Augustin Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans; its causes and consequences, in England, Scotland, Ireland, and on the Continent*, translated from the seventh Paris edition by William Hazlitt (London: David Bogue, 1847), vol. 2, p. 51. 3 Signor Pastorini was the pseudonym of Charles Walmesley (1722–97), whose *General history of the Christian church* (1771) formed the basis for an outbreak of millenarianism in the 1820s. Walmesley's elaborate interpretation of the Apocalypse of St John seemed to promise the violent destruction of Protestantism in 1825. Pastorini's prophecies and other forms of millenarianism had been popular in the 1790s, in the period leading up to the rebellion. There were also reports of prophetic texts attributed to St Colum Cille in circulation among the Ribbonmen in the 1820s. Thomas Moore, touring Ireland in the summer of 1823, noticed the contribution made by these prophecies in forging solidarity amongst Catholics, for whom they offered alternative forms of knowledge and discourse to those emanating from official sources, including the Catholic Church.

The Irish readership of troubled Irish Protestants and protesting Irish Catholics campaigning for emancipation in the 1820s might well have felt that Ireland had been sidetracked over the Act of Union, and arbitrary power was grounded on occasional arbitrary contingencies. The lance of an Arab might have changed the destinies of the world. Rebellions, revolutions, wars might have had different outcomes. In the 1820s many Irish intellectuals were asking whether Ireland had the same relationship to modernity as other European countries and whether the Irish were experiencing historical time in similar ways to their European counterparts. This comparative impulse led Irish writers to engage with aspects of emerging French historiography, German folklore and romanticism, and Scottish historical fiction as useful analogues for interpreting the state of Ireland.

‘An; doesn’t Pastorini say it? Sure, when Twenty-five comes, we’ll have our own agin, the right will overcome the might – the bottomless pit will be locked – ay, double bolted, if St. Pether gets the kays, for he’s the very boy that will accomodate the heretics wid a warm corner; an’ yit, faith, ther’s many o’ them that myself ’ud put in a good word for, afther all.’⁴

The growing influence of Daniel O’Connell and the strengthening campaign for Catholic Emancipation led government, church leaders, charitable institutions and foreign observers to speculate on the state of Ireland. Like Thomas Moore, though with a different inflection, William Carleton presents an Irish peasantry traumatized by the events of 1798 and the Act of Union, disaffected from official knowledge and from enlightenment scepticism, reliant on the promises held out by superstitions, prophecies and miracles. This strong sense of living at a particular historical juncture was crucial in the shaping of Irish romanticism. Claire Connolly insists on the distinctiveness of the period from the Act of Union to Catholic Emancipation as dating romanticism proper in Ireland:

Hopes that the Act [of Union] might allow Catholics a greater share in public life were swiftly disappointed, and lingered as an open sore on the surface of the new body politic. The literary culture of Irish romanticism is thus strongly marked by a sense of grievance, generated by broken political promises and failed rebellion. The note of complaint, however, was heard alongside persistent calls to mould civil society in a more progressive shape.⁵

Sectarian strife seemed about to come to a head in 1825, following a couple of years of agrarian insurgency, prompting the British government to represent Ireland as in a state of particular crisis.

4 William Carleton, ‘The poor scholar’ in *Traits and stories of the Irish peasantry*, ed. Barbara Hayley (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1990), vol. 2, p. 253. 5 Claire Connolly, ‘Irish Romanticism, 1800–1829’, in Margaret Kelleher and Philip O’Leary (eds), *The Cambridge history of Irish literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, forthcoming 2006).

1825: THE STATE OF THINGS

At this particular moment it seems that over the whole of Europe the old generations are expiring in the persons of their more august representatives; a solemn regeneration is taking place; the sacred heads of the masters of intellect and art are falling down on all sides. In Germany, Goethe, the last of his age, died, after seeing nearly all the poets born with him, or from him, pass away; a different era, an era of politics and social order is being inaugurated, and it is still seeking its men . . . May the continual disappearances, the mysterious blows which strike, as if by design, revered groups of geniuses in their zenith, the last chiefs of a movement that has done its work, have the force of religious warnings, bidding the new generation hasten and draw its ranks closer into the paths in which it is walking, and where soon it will be left to guide itself.⁶

Sainte-Beuve's proclamation of a changing of the guard amongst Europe's intellectual elite is linked to the death of Walter Scott. Scott was credited with inaugurating not only a new genre (the historical novel) but a new kind of historiography, exemplified in the work of Thierry, in which historical narrative was told as a set of stories and driven by close-up representations of character. For Thierry, the story of Ireland was crucial in a narrative of the history of imperialism, but for many Irish writers Scott's trajectory, with its focus on mourning and melancholy in the decline of 'Gaelic' culture, failed to do justice to the disjunctive experience of historical time in Ireland.⁷

There were several investigations into the state of Ireland published or undertaken in 1825. The Ordnance Survey began its project to map Ireland. There was a report of the Royal Commission established to investigate education in Ireland. The third and fourth reports from the Select Committee on the State of Ireland were published. Thomas Crofton Croker produced his influential *Fairy legends and traditions*

6 Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, 'Sir Walter Scott (1832)', in *Essays by Sainte-Beuve*, trans. Elizabeth Lee (London: Walter Scott, n.d.), pp 164–5. 7 These matters are treated at length in Katie Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism: the romantic novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997) and Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and imagination: patterns in the historical and literary representation of Ireland in the nineteenth century* (Cork: Cork UP/Field Day, 1996). 8 See Gillian Doherty, *The Irish Ordnance Survey: history, culture and memory* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004); *First report of the commissioners of education inquiry* (HMSO: 1825); *Second report from the select committee on the state of Ireland* (HMSO: 1825); *Third report from the select committee on the state of Ireland* (HMSO, 1825); Thomas Crofton Croker, *Fairy legends and traditions of the south of Ireland* (London: J. Murray, 1825–8); D. J. O'Donoghue, *Sir Walter Scott's tour in Ireland in 1825 now first fully described* (Glasgow: Gowans and Gray; Dublin: O'Donoghue and Co., 1905); Thomas Carlyle, *The life of Friedrich Schiller: comprehending an examination of his works* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1825); Augustin Thierry, *Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands de ses causes et de ses suites jusqu'à nos jours en Angleterre, en Ecosse, en Irlande, et sur le Continent* (Paris: Didot, pere et fils, 1825).

of the south of Ireland in 1825 and 1828. Meanwhile in Britain in 1825 Thomas Carlyle published his *Life of Schiller*, the first English biography of a major German writer, and in France Augustin Thierry brought out *Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre* (*History of the Conquest of England by the Normans, its causes, and its effects down to the present day, in England, Scotland, Ireland, and on the Continent*), which had an important influence on French and Irish attitudes to historiography.⁸ Anna Doyle Wheeler and William Thompson published their *Appeal of one half the human race, women, against the pretensions of the other half, men, to retain them in political, and thence in civil and domestic slavery; in reply to a paragraph of Mr Mill's celebrated 'Argument on Government'*, although there is little in Wheeler and Thompson's pamphlet to signal their Irish origins, the impact of feminism on Irish cultural life was already beginning to be felt through the novels of Edgeworth and Owenson, and the activities of women in politics and philanthropy.⁹

In the summer of 1825 Sir Walter Scott came over to Ireland from Scotland for a holiday from 13 July to 17 August, visiting Belfast, Dublin, Limerick, Killarney, Kerry and Cork. Concurrent and perhaps coincidentally with the Ordnance Survey's project to map Ireland, 1825 saw a number of writers touring Ireland in search of material for books. I have already mentioned Crofton Croker's researches in the south of Ireland. Samuel Lover was travelling in the west, a journey which bore fruit in his *Legends and stories of Ireland* (1831). When Lover describes one native informant – an old boatman on Lough Corrib – as offering 'his "round, unvarnish'd tale"; and, by the way, in no very measured terms either, whenever his subject happened to touch upon the wrongs his country had sustained in her early wars against England' the nod is to Maria Edgeworth as well as to *Othello*.¹⁰ As the first series of *Tales by the O'Hara family* was coming from the press John and Michael Banim began their researches on another book. In May 1825 John wrote to Michael from London: 'Your guess about Derry is right; and what you recommend is my own plan, long since chalked out. I will visit every necessary spot in the north and south.'¹¹ By the end of the month John was in the north and describing the 'uninterrupted interest' of his route from Belfast. When he returned to London he asked Michael to travel to the West, where Michael 'traced on the spot the localities connected with the last siege of Limerick'.¹² In the introductory letter to *The Boyne Water* (1826) the Banims write about the difficulties and at the same time the necessity of making some intervention into the living history of 'traditionary gossip and popular stories' and 'dispersing the mist' of prejudice.¹³

⁹ See Siobhán Kilfeather, 'Irish feminism', in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge companion to modern Irish culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), pp 96–116.

¹⁰ Samuel Lover, *Legends and stories of Ireland* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, 1831; reprinted London: Richard Edward King, n.d.), p. 13. ¹¹ Letter from John Banim to Michael Banim, quoted by Michael Banim in his preface to *The Boyne water: by the O'Hara family* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1865), p. iii. ¹² Banim, *The Boyne water*, p. iv. ¹³ Banim, *The Boyne water*, pp xii–xiii.

IRISH LITERARY PRODUCTION

The Act of Union had seen the extension of the 1709 Copyright Act to Ireland and that extension effectively suppressed the Irish publishing industry over the first couple of decades of the nineteenth century. In 1825 there were no full-length novels published in Ireland (as far as I have been able to ascertain), but *British fiction, 1800–1829: a database of production, Circulation & Reception* lists seven novels published in London in 1825 with Irish authorship or content. Six of these were historical novels, and all were by men.¹⁴ The 1820s saw a significant masculinization of novel writing in English.¹⁵ Claire Connolly points out the tendency in literary histories to date the historical novel from this period and to discount the precedent of a number of historical novels by women in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, many of which addressed the recent events of the 1798 rebellion. In the late 1820s there was a revival of periodical publication in Ireland – though it was only in the 1830s that periodicals like the *Dublin University Magazine* and the *Dublin Penny Journal* began to occupy a certain cultural centrality. In the mid 1820s *The Rushlight*, the *Belfast Magazine and Literary Journal* and the *Literary and Mathematical Asylum* all had brief runs in Belfast. In Cork *Bolster's Quarterly Magazine* started in 1826 and the *Dublin and London Magazine* began publication in 1825. These periodicals produced a blend of articles of parochial interest with material that looked towards European enlightenment interest in science, folklore and historiography.

APOCALYPSE NOW

One political dimension to the millenarian influence on Irish aesthetics in the 1820s can be seen in the work of the artist, Francis Danby. Danby left Ireland in 1813 with James Arthur O'Connor and George Petrie, travelling to London where they failed to make the impact they desired. They started back to Ireland on foot but Danby stopped and settled in Bristol, where he produced landscapes and watercolours. In the late 1820s, following a domestic crisis, Danby moved on to Switzerland. During his time in Bristol two large paintings in oils, *The Upas, or Poison Tree, in the Island of Java* (1819) and *The Delivery of the Israelites* (1825) brought him some celebrity and led

¹⁴ John Banim and Michael Banim, *Tales, by the O'Hara family: containing 'Crohoore of the bill-hook', 'The Fetches', and 'John Doe'* (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1825); Eyre Evans Crowe, *To-day in Ireland* (London: Charles Knight, 1825); Francis S. Higginson, *Manderville; or, the Hibernian chiliarch: a tale* (London: Thomas Dolby, 1825); Mac-Erin O'TARA [pseud.], *Thomas Fitz-Gerald the lord of Offaley: a romance of the sixteenth century* (London: A.K. Newman, 1825); James MacHenry, *The hearts of steel: an Irish historical tale of the last century*. (London: Wightman and Cramp, 1825); William Hamilton Maxwell, *O'Hara; or, 1798* (London: J. Andrews, 1825); John O'Driscoll, *The Adventurers; or, Scenes in Ireland, in the reign of Elizabeth* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825). ¹⁵ See Peter Garside, 'The English novel and the romantic era', in Peter Garside and Rainer Schöwerling (eds), *The English novel, 1770–1829: a bibliographic survey of prose fiction published in the British Isles, vol. II: 1800–1829* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000).

to his election as an associate of the Royal Academy. In 1828 Danby exhibited his *An Attempt to Illustrate the Opening of the Sixth Seal* at the British Institution, receiving from that body a prize of 200 guineas. The painting was purchased by William Beckford who encouraged Danby to work on further apocalyptic paintings. The central figures in *An Attempt to Illustrate the Opening of the Sixth Seal* are the collapsed tyrant and the newly emancipated slave shaking off his manacles. They are situated in a landscape strewn with corpses. For Danby the apocalypse is also a political revolution. By the early 1830s Beckford, himself a slave owner, had sold on the painting. For Beckford the apocalypse offered an occasion to imagine libertarianism, whereas Danby had taken it as an opportunity to represent liberation. Another scene strewn with corpses is that in *The Upas, or Poison Tree, in the Island of Java*. The legend of the upas tree, popularised by Erasmus Darwin in *The Loves of the Plants* (1789), was that the upas gave off a poisonous odour so intense that it killed all plant and animal life in its vicinity. The air in the vicinity of the upas was reputedly so dangerous that only prisoners already condemned to death could be persuaded to take a risk and gamble with the promise of freedom in return for making an attempt to harvest the tree's sap. In Danby's painting the landscape is that of the charnel house produced by many failed attempts. The upas tree is in allegorical opposition to the tree of liberty, which flourishes when it is watered by blood sacrifice. The upas tree is indifferent to the corpses at its feet. At one level the island of Java is the island of Ireland after 1798, scattered with the corpses of condemned criminals. The bleakness of Danby's vision is also part of a wider preoccupation in European romanticism, one that might be related both to the terror after the French revolution and to the influence (or, more accurately, effects) of Immanuel Kant on certain writers and artists.

MIRACLES

'Pastorini says that there will soon be a change, an' tis a good skame it'll be to have him a sogarth when the fat livins will be walkin' back to their ould owners.'¹⁶

In his fictional *Memoirs of Captain Rock*, published in April 1824, Thomas Moore mischievously lists 'Pastorini's Prophecies, and the Miracles of Prince Hohenloe' amongst the works of 'Theology' as part of the 'course of study for ourselves' adopted by Catholics deprived of formal education.¹⁷ Moore's list was confirmed the following year in Appendix 221 to the *First Report of the Commissioners of Education Inquiry* (1825): 'A List of books used in the various schools situated in the four following counties in Ireland; abstracted from the sworn Returns made to the Commissioners', those counties being Donegal, Kildare, Galway and Kerry. 'Pastorini's Prophecies' and 'Prince Hohenlohe's Prayer Book' both appear under 'Religious Works'.¹⁸

¹⁶ Carleton, 'The poor scholar', p. 261. ¹⁷ Thomas Moore, *Memoirs of Captain Rock*, p. 187. ¹⁸ This appendix is reprinted as an appendix to Antonia McManus, *The Irish hedge*

Alexander Leopold Franz Emmerich, prince of Hohenlohe-Valdenburg-Schillingsfurst (1794–1849) was a German Catholic priest and reputed miracle-worker. He was ordained in 1815, and in the following year he went to Rome, where he entered the society of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart. He acquired fame as a performer of miraculous cures. Pilgrims from various countries flocked to see him, and he also became noted for his distance-cures. On the tenth of every month he would pray for the sick and it became common for people seeking cures to perform novenas for the first nine days of a month and celebrate mass on the tenth. In 1821 Prince Hohenlohe moved to Vienna and then to Hungary, where he became canon at Grosswardein and in 1844 titular bishop of Sardica. He was particularly celebrated for his cures of nuns.

In 1823, Daniel Murray, newly appointed Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, appeared to endorse the testimony of Mary Stuart, a nun in the Ranelagh Convent, that she had received a distance cure from Prince Hohenlohe.¹⁹ These facts were sworn to before a Dublin magistrate. Of course sceptics were inclined to believe that a nervous illness was the product of depression and might rather easily be cured by attention and excitement. For many Catholics, however, the possibility of miraculous intervention in contemporary life offered an alternative to dominant enlightenment modes of scepticism and to the universalist politics which seemed to go hand in hand with the enlightenment. Miracles seemed to justify attachments to the local and particular. Murray's support was something of an anomaly. On the whole the Roman Catholic hierarchy distanced itself from miracles, prophecies, and in many cases from the Irish language and from local cultural expressions of faith. Niall Ó Ciosáin suggests that Pastorini's popularity was found suspect by the Catholic clergy because it was itself a tribute to the effectiveness of the policy of distributing Protestant bibles in the Irish language to Irish-speaking homes.²⁰ Pastorini's exercise in scriptural exegesis led ordinary Catholics to follow his argument in their own bibles. Thomas Moore, in *Memoirs of Captain Rock*, makes the case that the way in which the Catholic hierarchy set its face against bible reading – making a rejection of biblical readings in schools one of the key objections to the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland (from which the Church withdrew support after 1820) – drove hedgeschool teachers and other readers towards the more eccentric theology of Pastorini and Hohenlohe. Catholic witnesses before the parliamentary select committees on the state of Ireland were interrogated

school and its books, 1695–1831 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp 245–53. ¹⁹ Stuart had suffered with a nervous malady for four years. She learned that Prince Hohenlohe had designated 1 August as a day when all sufferers should pray solemnly for relief from their ills. Two priests and four nuns joined her in mass that day, and before the day was over she began to recover. Daniel Murray's pastoral, 'On the miraculous recovery of Sister Mary Stuart', appeared in the *Dublin Evening Post*, 19 August 1823. See Laurence M. Geary, 'Prince Hohenlohe, Signor Pastorini and miraculous healing in early nineteenth-century Ireland', in Elizabeth Malcolm and Greta Jones (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland, 1650–1940* (Cork: Cork UP, 1999), pp 40–58. ²⁰ Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and popular culture in Ireland, 1750–1850* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).

rigorously over prophecies and miracles – indeed a surprisingly high proportion of the evidence selected for publication in 1825 was on this theme. Most of these witnesses trod a line on which they at once argued that Roman Catholics were not as foolishly credulous as widely represented (Catholics did not believe in these miracles), and yet at the same time the witnesses suggested that the widespread circulation of miracle stories was a symptom of profound discontent (Catholics believed in these miracles because they had so little else to believe in):

Can you state to the Committee, whether the prophecies that have circulated of Pastorini have produced any effect in the country with which you are acquainted? – The people laugh at them; nothing beyond that. The pastoral address of the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese lately disabused them of any idea they might have had of their truth.

What has been the opinion entertained with regard to the miracles in your country? – I think it has caused among the people a profound veneration for the Deity, to whom alone they attribute the working of miracles, not to men.

They believe that those miracles have been performed? – There is a general belief, that, in certain cases, people have been restored.

You believe that those miracles have been generally believed amongst the Roman Catholics in that part of Ireland? – They have.

The miracles of Prince Hohenlohe? – They do not consider them the miracles of prince Hohenlohe or any man.²¹

One of Moore's strategies for countering propaganda about the credulity of Catholics is to talk about Protestant superstition – a tactic elaborated upon the following year by John Banim in *The Fetches*.²²

SITUATING CROHOORE-NA-BILEOG/CROHOORE OF THE PAGES

... short as was my absence from London, matters got into a pretty pickle with the printers before I came back. The labour of getting 'Crohoore'

²¹ *The evidence taken before the select committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons appointed in the sessions of 1824 and 1825, to inquire into the state of Ireland* (London: J. Murray, 1825), p.

4. ²² 'That there was, in a conflict so long and so violent, the usual quantum of horrors, which bigotry on both sides is always sure to generate, cannot be denied; but how far those Depositions are worthy of belief, on which the heaviest charge of cruelty against the Catholics rest, may be judged from the following specimen of their rationality. It was deposed that the ghosts of the Protestants drowned by the rebels at Portadown Bridge were seen for a long time moving in various shapes upon the river, and Doctor Maxwell, bishop of Kilmore (one of the most credible, perhaps, of all deponents) enters into grave particulars about these ghosts in his depositions, and describes them as "sometimes having been seen, day and night, walking upon the river; sometimes brandishing their naked swords; sometimes singing psalms, and at other times shrieking in a most hideous and fearful manner." We see by this, too, that Protestant bishops can occasionally rival even Catholic ones in their deglutition of the miraculous': Thomas Moore, *Memoirs of Captain Rock*, pp 93–4.

through the ordeal has been hideous: almost every sheet of him came back to me three or four times. It is tremendous work to compel English types to shape themselves into Irish words. Happily he is now equipped for his début, as well as I can shape him.²³

'Next, then, no books; no stewing of any kind; and, least of all, over the German fairy-tales – agreed also?'

'Also' repeated Tresham, 'though I scarcely know, Doctor Butler, what books you honour with that name.'²⁴

The first series of *Tales by the O'Hara family* is a trilogy of novellas: *Crohoore of the bill-hook*, *The Fetches* and *John Doe*.²⁵ *Tales by the O'Hara family* comes out of the Scottish and Irish national tales pioneered by Maria Edgeworth, Sydney Owenson, John Galt and Walter Scott, by way of the framed novella cycle as developed in German by Weiland, Goethe, Hoffmann and Tieck, and inflected by the Grimm brothers' collection of folk and fairy tales.²⁶

23 Patrick Joseph Murray, *The life of John Banim, the Irish novelist* (London: William Lay, 1857), pp 152–3; quoted in P.D. Garside, J.E. Belanger, and S.A. Ragaz, *British fiction, 1800–1829: a database of production, circulation & reception*, designer A.A. Mandal. Online internet 10 December 2004 <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk>>. 24 Banim, 'The Fetches' in *Tales by the O'Hara family*, vol. 2, pp 269–70. 25 *Crohoore of the bill-hook* seems to have been written by Michael Banim, *The Fetches* by John Banim, and *John Doe* possibly by John Banim, although it may be a collaborative effort. Attribution to each brother of work by the Banims is unsettled; their decision to work collaboratively seems more interesting than the questions of individual authorship, particularly as it echoes the collaboration of the Grimm brothers, who so clearly influence aspects of the Banims. 26 The popularity of the German tale in the Anglophone world in the 1820s is indicated by a spate of translations: see *The devil's elixir from the German of E.T.A. Hoffmann*, a translation of *Die elixiere des teufels* (Berlin, 1815–16) by Robert Pierce Gillies (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, and T. Cadell, London, 1824); Thomas Carlyle's translation, *German romance: specimens of its chief authors; with biographical and critical notices by the translator of Wilhelm Meister, and author of the Life of Schiller* appeared in London and Edinburgh in 1827; Friedrich Heinrich Karl, Baron de la Motte Fouqué (translator: Robert Pierce Gillies), *The magic ring: a romance* a translation of *Der Zauberring* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1825); *German stories: selected from the works of Hoffmann, de la Motte Fouqué, Pichler, Kruse, and others* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, and T. Cadell, London, 1826). The Irish writer was working on his translation of Goethe's *Faust*, which appeared in installments between 1820 and 1835. The publication in 1823 of their fairy tales in an English translation by Edgar Taylor, with illustrations by George Cruickshank, is supposed to have influenced the Grimms to recast their collection less as a scholarly exercise and more as a book for family readership, and particularly for children. The Banims' publisher, Simpkin and Marshall, produced a number of translations from the German: Heinrich Zschokke, *The bravo of Venice: a romance*, translated from the German by M.G. Lewis (1818); Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to every future metaphysic, which can appear as a science* translated by John Richardson (1819); de la Motte Fouqué, *Undine, a romance translated from the German. By George Soane* (1818); de la Motte Fouqué, *Minstrel-Love; from the German of the author of Undine by George Soane* (1821); *Popular tales and romances of the*

Thomas Flanagan in 1959 observed that *Crohoore of the bill-hook* introduces 'a world for which neither the novels of Maria Edgeworth nor those of Lady Morgan have prepared us – the secret, strangely self-sufficient Gaelic world'.²⁷ This attention to Banim's privileged access to Catholic (and Gaelic) Ireland has tended to push critical writing on the Banims in the direction of attending to the brothers' realism and positioning them with Gerald Griffin and William Carleton as proto-Dickensian and proto-Victorian writers who are most modern when they describe the nuances of class conflict and least interesting when they deploy the tropes of the Gothic and the fantastic. For Flanagan it would seem that the O'Hara brothers, unlike Edgeworth's Thady Quirk or Owenson's Glorvina, are authentic native informants. It is their Catholicism more than anything else which seems to give them this authority. The Gaelic world of *Crohoore* is not, after all, self-sufficient, since the un-Gaelic law can and does intervene to collect tithes, and to arrest, prosecute and execute. *Crohoore's* intervention to save Pierce from the gallows depends on soliciting help from a Protestant member of the Irish parliament. But on the whole Flanagan is correct in identifying in the Banims some new narrative strategies for representing Irish character from within. These strategies are indebted to Edgeworth and Owenson; where they part company is that the Banims imagine the possibility of an Irish-speaking readership in a way that unbalances the translation acts characteristic of some of their precursors. Of course, Edgeworth and Owenson were interested in translation and thematized it in a number of ways – through unreliable narration, glossaries, antiquarian annotations, and references to the Irish as practiced translators. In the *Essay on Irish Bulls* (1802) Richard and Maria Edgeworth use trial scenes to demonstrate that translation in Ireland might well be a matter of life and death. One way of reading *Crohoore of the Bill-Hook* would be as a revision of *Castle Rackrent* in which language and narrative command are struggling in a very immediate way with murderous forces.

Michael Banim's *Crohoore of the Bill-Hook* (1825) opens at a wake, and most specifically with corpses: 'The mortal remains of old Tony Dooling and his wife, lay, the moment before interment, side by side, in the awful habiliments of the grave.' The epigraph to Volume 1 of *Tales by the O'Hara family* is from Terence's Latin play *Adelphi* (c.160bc) – "Quid? ille ubi est Milesius?" "What has become of the Milesian?" – and these

northern nations (1823). Simpkin and Marshall were also the London publishers of the *Dublin University Magazine* from 1833. The *DUM* indicated a major engagement between Irish and German romanticism in the 1830s. As regards travel in the other direction, a checklist of fiction in the Corvey collection related to Ireland 1800–29 lists 114 items, of which 15 were quickly translated into German. See also *German popular stories: translated from the Kinder und haus Marchen*, collected by M. M. Grimm, from oral tradition (London: C. Baldwyn, 1823–6); Maria Tatar, 'Folklore and cultural identity', in David E. Wellbery (ed.), *A new history of German literature* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2004), pp 516–521 and Jacqueline Belanger, 'Some preliminary remarks on the production and reception of fiction relating to Ireland, 1800–1829', *Cardiff Corvey: reading the romantic text* 4 (May 2000). Online: Internet 20 October 2005; <http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc04_n02.html>

²⁷ Thomas Flanagan, *The Irish novelists, 1800–1850* (New York: Columbia UP, 1959).

mortal remains, in the text's next sentence, seem to offer the first answer. From 1798 to 1848 the terrain of Irish fiction – and of Irish autobiography – is littered with corpses, intact and dismembered, before interment and disinterred, sometimes piled so deep one can hardly scramble over them to discover plot or understand characters. One commonplace account of the fiction of this period is that it is addressed to an English audience, and that the typical Irish novel attempts to lead its implied readers on an imaginary journey in which the problem of Ireland is described and (always necessarily imperfectly) explained. The imperfection of the explanation is the imperfection of language itself, given a particular emphasis by the way in which the pervasive trope of translation maps onto the landscape, the *terra incognita*, of Gaelic Ireland. Banim's epigraph – text and translation – is one indication of how he sees the job before him. There is a Shandean quality to the epigraph from Terence, since the Milesian in *Adelphi* is no Irishman (nor even a Milesian), but he is an inhabitant of an Athenian colony.

Crohoore of the billhook, the first of the *Tales by the O'Hara family* is something new in Irish fiction, but its novelty is deeply engaged with previous Irish fiction. There has been a tendency to see Michael Banim as 'correcting' earlier representations of the Irish peasantry by drawing on resources of knowledge and experience, and the Banims themselves play with notions of authenticity. One of Banim's earliest informed readers was the Irish Catholic novelist Gerald Griffin, then living in London, who admired Banim but suggested that the question of authenticity could be contested.

Griffin wrote to his brother William in 1825:

Have you seen Banim's O'Hara Tales? If not, read them, and say what you think of them. I think them most vigorous and original things; overflowing with the very spirit of poetry, passion and painting. If you think otherwise, don't say so. My friend W— sends me word that they are *well written*. All our critics here say that they are *admirably* written; that nothing since Scott's first novels has equalled them. I differ entirely with W— in his idea of the fidelity of their delineations. He says they argue unacquaintance with the country; I think they are astonishing in nothing so much as in the power of creating an intense interest without stepping out of real life, and in the very easy and natural drama that is carried through them, as well as in the excellent tact which he shows, in seizing on all the points of national character which are capable of effect. Mind I don't speak of the fetches now. That is a romance. But is it not a splendid one?²⁸

Griffin detects an implied difference here between what is 'well written' and what is 'easy and natural'. It is the Banims' selectivity as much as their realism, their 'excellent tact' which distinguishes the stories. The Banims' concept of authenticity is

²⁸ Daniel Griffin, *Life of Gerald Griffin by his brother* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1874), p. 142.

much more theoretically sophisticated than has generally been credited. If the world of Maria Edgeworth and of Sydney Owenson/Lady Morgan does not prepare readers for the world of the Banims, it is not the case that Banim is writing without reference to his predecessors. On the contrary, *Crohoore of the Bill-hook* revisits aspects of *Castle Rackrent*, *The wild Irish girl*, and *Melmoth the wanderer* to engage with as much as to supplant their constructions of time and place. When Banim produced a preface to the James Duffy reissue of *The Croppy* in 1865 he commented on the difficulty of obtaining 'a reliable history of the rebellion of 1798'. *Crohoore of the Bill-hook* is indebted to William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* in that it poses questions as to the reliability of earlier fictional representations in terms of describing 'things as they are' but it doesn't pose those questions in a naive or antagonistic way. It builds on Edgeworth, Owenson, and Maturin to produce a self-consciously Catholic critique that engages with rather than by-passes its predecessors.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century three powerful Irish novelists emerged to dominate fictional representations of Ireland: Maria Edgeworth, Sydney Owenson and Charles Robert Maturin. *Crohoore of the bill-hook*, the first of the *Tales by the O'Hara family* is something new in Irish fiction, but its novelty is more deeply engaged with previous Irish novels than is generally acknowledged. One can trace significant debts to Owenson and Maturin, but the most significant influence is that of Edgeworth. Michael Banim's first novel reponds in a number of ways to incidents and themes in *Ennui*, *Ormond* and particularly *Castle Rackrent*. As in *Ennui* there is a 'changeling' baby. As in *Ormond* there is friendship based on fostering, and a tension as to where the Irish Catholic 'gentleman' can situate himself in relation to his compatriots. The relative influences of nature and nurture and a question mark over the essentially violent or at least unruly character of the Irish peasantry are preoccupations of both writers. Like *Castle Rackrent*, *Crohoore of the Bill-hook* is set in the period before the limited legislative independence of Grattan's parliament, and is thus a very particular kind of historical novel, the kind that can refer to the authority of living memory – *Sketches of Ireland sixty years ago* as J.E. Walsh called his 1847 anecdotal memoir. Its setting in the 1760s, during the Whiteboy agitation, recalls the obsessive historiography of *Captain Rock*:

In the midst of all these transactions I came into the world, – on the very day (as my mother has often mentioned to me, making a sign of the cross on her breast at the very same time), when Father Sheehy, the good parish priest of Clogheen, was hanged at Clonmell on the testimony of a perjured witness, for a crime of which he was as innocent as the babe unborn. This execution of Father Sheehy was one of those coups d'état of the Irish authorities, which they used to perform at stated intervals, and which saved them the trouble of further atrocities for some time to come.²⁹

Castle Rackrent transformed the Irish novel by making servants speak out the secrets of their society and exposed its faultlines, just as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) had done with the English novel. Edgeworth counterpoints Thady's narrative with a standard English editorial voice that tries – and largely fails – to explicate, even to translate, Ireland to its readers.

Something similar seems to be happening at first in *Crohoore of the Bill-hook*. The world of the Irish peasantry is not presented in the first person, as in *Castle Rackrent*, but with enough dialogue to make necessary frequent footnotes translating Irish phrases and explaining customs. Chapter 2 introduces Andrew Muldowney, the district piper:

The insinuating servility of this man's voice, and the broad sychophancy of his grin, as he gave his salutation, 'Go *dthogah diuyh uluig shey-an agus sunus duiv*,*' bespoke his partly mendicant profession, and plainly told, at the same time, his determination to make himself agreeable and delightful in lieu of the shelter and good cheer of which he made no question.³⁰

The asterisk directs the reader to a footnote: "God send luck and a plentiful Christmas to all in this place;" generally given shorter, but the piper will, as they say, "make a *croonawn* or song of it." The footnote on Muldowney seems to say: 'here is a translation of the thing that is usually not said' and moreover has further recourse to Irish to explain it. *Croonawn*, 'an old song',³¹ is close to *Crohoore*, and this is one of the ways in which the mysterious outlaw is made seem present throughout the text. Edgeworth, Owenson and Maturin had trained readers of Irish fiction to recognize footnotes as spaces for cultural translation. The borders of the page at once circumscribe their novels and draw attention to the open boundaries of history and fiction. Notes on Irish history, references to antiquarian sources, and glosses on Irish customs and beliefs suggested a textuality to Irish life that would be opaque to readers who were not equipped with knowledge of certain intertexts. In *Castle Rackrent* the two strands of annotation – the editorial footnotes, and the glossary – draw attention to Irish customs and 'idiomatic phrases' which 'could not be intelligible to the English reader without further explanation'.³² Banim's footnotes work rather differently. They repeatedly reiterate the imperfection of translation. Banim is the first Irish writer in English to use free indirect discourse to represent the interiority of Irish-speaking characters, but in such a way as to suggest that the English translation gives only an outline, or silhouette, and that the relationship between a language and subjectivity can be understood only in its own terms. In the 1820s Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre and Nicéphore Niépce (who eventually became

30 John Banim and Michael Banim, *Tales, by the O'Hara family*, vol. 1, p. 15. 31 Diarmaid Ó Muirthe, *A dictionary of Anglo-Irish: words and phrases from Gaelic in the English of Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996). 32 Jane Desmarais, Tim McLoughlin and Marilyn Butler (eds), *The novels and selected works of Maria Edgeworth* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999), vol. 1, p. 55.

partners) were working separately to capture and fix the images of the camera obscura. One might say of the Banims, deeply interested in questions of vision and visibility, that in their representations of Ireland, that they sought to replace caricatures of Irish characters with daguerrotypes.

There has been no modern scholarly edition of *Crohoore of the bill-hook*, but an initial comparison between the first edition and Michael Banim's revised edition in 1865 suggests very few changes to the text. One striking change, however, is to the title: 'Bill-Hook' loses its hyphen. That hyphen represents a fracture between Irish and English languages, Catholic and Protestant Ireland, enlightenment and counter-enlightenment attitudes to the miraculous and the supernatural. Although the tale is published as *Crohoore of the bill-hook* the character gains his celebrity and his power over the imagination of his townland under the name 'Crohoore-na-bilhogue'. The name is most strikingly inscribed in the text in Chapter 8, when Pierce and Andy capture a would-be assassin, who claims to have been sent by Crohoore. The man is locked in the cellar for the night, prior to being taken to Kilkenny jail. He escapes, leaving the name 'Crohoore-na-bilhogue' scrawled in blood on the cellar wall. The name resonates in interesting ways in both English and Irish. Samuel Johnson, in 1755, recorded two meanings for the word 'bill':

Bill Beak

In his bill,

An olive leaf he brings, pacific sign! (Milton)

Bill a two-edged axe

1. A kind of hatchet with a hooked point, used in country work, as a hedging bill; so-called from its resemblance in form to the beak of a bird of prey. 'Standing troops are servants armed, who use the lance and sword, as other servants do the sickle or the *bill*, at the command of those who entertain them (Temple).
2. A kind of weapon anciently carried by the foot; a battle axe. Yea, distaff women manage rusty *bills*;
Against thy seat both young and old rebel. (Shakespeare)³³

The tension here between war and peace is given a particularly Irish accent by the examples cited from Temple and Shakespeare, where it is Irish rebels who turn the billhook from an agricultural implement into a weapon.

For the Irish resonances it is worth looking not only at Dineen's English for 'bileog' but also at the inflections it might take from words with which it assonates:

³³ Samuel Johnson, *A dictionary of the English language* (London: W. Strahan, 1755); quotations from John Milton, *Paradise lost*, Book XI, lines 859-60; John Temple, *The Irish rebellion, true and impartial history* (1644); William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act 3, Scene 2, lines 118-9.

bile a sacred or historic tree; . . . *fig.* a scion, a progenitor; . . . a man of distinction

bile a welt; a border (of a shield); rim (of a vessel)

bileach covered with large trees

bilemhail tree-like

bileog, -oige, oga a leaf, a plant; . . . wood sorrel; . . . the 'leaf' or flat part of a table; a leaf of a book

bileogach, -aighe leafy; flaky, as snow

bille, -Íf, a note; a bill

billéad, -éid, a billet; a note in writing; billeted; a children's game

billeog, -oige a bill-hook; a leaf.³⁴

If the more respectable part of Clarrah suspects Crohoore of having murdered his adoptive parents with a billhook, turning back on them the instrument they had given him for labour, gratitude and self-improvement, the novella shows the creeping in of a wilder, more superstitious understanding of Crohoore, as a figure from the leaf of a book – the remarkably popular Freney, for example – or from older legend. Crohoore is not simply a figure from Irish books, however. Compared with Edgeworth, Maturin, and Owenson, the Banims' work at first seems almost naked of literary allusion, at a period when the presence of quotation and allusion in novels was of epidemic proportions. There are only three explicit quotations in *Crohoore of the bill-hook* – from William Cowper, from Walter Scott and a parody of Scott by Byron, and from an anonymous English ballad – but there are marked stylistic resemblances to Crofton Croker's *Fairy tales*. Crofton Croker's book makes newly visible in academic discourse and in print culture the kinds of knowledge and the belief systems that were part of Ireland's oral tradition. It necessarily involves acts of translation, from Irish to English, storytelling to print, local to general. He and the Banims had different kinds of access to oral tradition, the one scholarly and ethnographic, the other closer to lived experience.

Banim's story also resembles the fairy stories by Grimm, which influenced Crofton Croker, and also the fantastic tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann. Hoffmann's 'Das Fräulein von Scuderi' (1820) has a small, red-haired villain, Cardillac, whose twisted face seems to indicate his guilt, and who is apparently capable of appearing and disappearing at will, thus thwarting the Paris police force, who employ increasingly Draconian measures against what they suspect is a politically motivated secret society. In *Crohoore of the bill-hook*, the trial scene in which Pierce is found guilty and sentenced to die, poses questions not simply about the nature of law and justice in Ireland, but about the nature of literary evidence and of judgements in general.³⁵

³⁴ Patrick S. Dinneen, *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla/Irish-English dictionary* (Dublin: Irish Texts Society 1904), rev. & enl. 1927. ³⁵ One might elaborate with reference to the trial scene in Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians* (1829).

There has been an obvious temptation to see the difference of the Banims in terms of 'content' – their access to or insight into the *mentalité* of an emerging Catholic middle class. Willa Murphy has drawn on the work of D.A. Miller to argue that the obsession with secrecy in the work of the Banims is a particularly Irish, Catholic response to the emergence of a 'regulating narrative voice' and a 'panoptic mode of vision' in the nineteenth-century realist novel:

Their narrative voice, like the Irish characters they write about, is split and slippery, unable to speak in an 'authentic Irish voice', because there isn't one. There is no heart, no core of identity, no authentic self in a country of super-vised subjects driven into secrecy.³⁶

It would be foolish not to build on Flanagan and Murphy's adumbrations of the ways in which the fact that the Banims were Catholics – if not the first Irish Catholic novelists writing in English, then the first to make that identity their marker in the market-place – and that the subject matter of their novels signalled a marked shift in what the Irish novel would or could do. But it also worth emphasising that John Banim, in *The Fetches*, explores the terrors haunting the Protestant imagination.

PERSISTENCE OF VISION: 'THE FETCHES'

'I admit I am no casuist, Anna, and you will not therefore expect from me a very correct method; nor indeed, the good words you use with such ease to yourself; yet I can point out a particular passage. the object of the entire paper is to prove the re-appearance on earth of the dead; and history, biography, and anecdote, nay, scripture itself, are all quoted to support the now childish belief. But the essayist, having to get over one implausible common-place, namely, the rare occurrence, at present, of his supernatural visitations, has recourse to a theory of his own; he supposes' –

'that the visitation does not cease, although we are blind to it!' interrupted Anna, in a deep whisper, suddenly bending forward and taking her sister's arm – that they come and go, over and around us, and are with us, and present to us in our blindness! – that the air, and the shadows of the air, and the recesses, and the depths of place, teem with the busy and mysterious denizens of another world! – while to the eyes, made dim by the gross mind of our latter days, there has ceased to be given the seeing power of the days that are gone; though, if the primitive spirit could be reinstated within – and there is a way sister to bring that to pass – it would see, and hear, and understand, in a total

³⁶ Willa Murphy, 'The subaltern can whisper: secrecy and solidarity in the fiction of John and Michael Banim', in Terence McDonough (ed.), *Was Ireland a colony? Economics, politics and culture in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), pp 280–98, p. 281, p. 294; see also D.A. Miller, *The novel and the police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

freedom from vulgar fear, and in the wonder of knowledge, only, such signs and whispers . . . as must redeem us out of the bondage of mere human speculation, and elevate man's soul, even while pent up in man's body, to the intelligence of angels.³⁷

It is not hard to imagine why the events of 1798 might have reinvigorated a belief or at least a hope that death is not final. *The Fetches* is one of many European romantic novellas to draw on superstition and folklore for a reservoir of strategies by which to imagine possible relations between the living and the dead.³⁸ But memory is not the only way in which the living and the dead jostle up against one another in the 1820s. At either end of the decade Charles Robert Maturin and Jonah Barrington create extended prose works which demand that their readers look at the faces of the dead in a very direct and specific way.³⁹ From young John Melmoth's initial confrontation with his ancestor's portrait, looking into the face of the wanderer is a demand repeatedly made of characters in the novel. Such a gaze brings death or madness, because it forces the character in his or her notional present to recognise the undeadness of the dead, and to feel their pain. The past will not go away and leave people in peace. Since Melmoth's mission is to exchange places with a new victim of his curse, he necessarily poses as a doppelgänger in each of his encounters with putative victims. Jonah Barrington brings the Gothic crashing up against the conventions of realism by weaving it through his autobiography. He is one of many memoirists to recognize his own life as gothic. Like Maturin and many other Gothic writers Barrington is a comedian. His dead bodies engage in a macabre spectacle that has frequent notes of jubilation.

Although John Banim's *The Fetches* is very precisely situated in Kilkenny in the late 1750s, with descriptions of the town, the river, the college, and the local landscape, it is a Kilkenny out of Goethe, Hoffmann and Kleist.⁴⁰ Two young lovers, Anna and Tresham, are drawn together by an interest in (unnamed) German tales of the supernatural and by their philosophical debates on the possibility of life after death. He is a student, she is the daughter of his tutor. They read together, play music, and take gloomy twilight walks by the River Nore, frightening one another with ghost stories. Part of the narrative structure is indebted to Jane Austen's *Sense and sensibility* (1811). The romantic Anna, throbbing with sensibility, has a more sensible older sister, Maria, who confides her worries in her own lover, Mortimer, when he returns from military service in the American colonies:

³⁷ John Banim and Michael Banim, *Tales by the O'Hara family*, vol. 2, pp 177–9. ³⁸ In Irish romanticism 'the memory of the dead' has a very specific reference to the dead of 1798, through John Kells Ingram's ballad 'The Memory of the Dead' first published in *The Nation* (April 1843). ³⁹ Charles Robert Maturin, *Melmoth the wanderer: a tale* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company; and Hurst, Robinson, and Co., London, 1820); Jonah Barrington, *Personal sketches of his own time* (Dublin: Ashfield Press, 1998). ⁴⁰ It is possible to date the action so exactly because Mortimer has just returned from campaign with General Wolfe in North America.

'Oh! she dearly loves him; with all a pure girl's first love; and most, I believe, for the sake of his theories. I have seen them talk together of shades, and shadows, and of the world of shadows, until their voices sunk into whispers, and you could hear their hearts beating in the echo of the fear they had made contagious to one another.'⁴¹

The contagion of fear runs through the novella, and at first seems excessive. As in most romantic, fantastic tales the sinister atmosphere precedes and predicts subsequent events. Terrible things happen partly because the characters, and – more significantly – the reader, are expecting them to happen. It is, perhaps, worth being overly-literal at this point, and asking why *The Fetches* opens with such a degree of fatalism? Like many other Irish gothic and/or historical fictions, the pre-history of the narrative in *The Fetches* is sketched in by way of an allusion to Oliver Cromwell, and with the conceit that historical atrocities have an after-life in the places where they occurred. The action of *The Fetches* occurs when 'Ireland once more rested beneath the reflux of protestantism'. The 'reflux of protestantism' is a deeply strange phrase, of course, with its overtones of cauldrons, pressure and condensation, and signals some of the ways in which the tale will mix the vocabularies of natural science and traditional beliefs. Such 'hauntings' as that by Cromwell are the staple of the Gothic. In John Banim they take on a particular form, connected to issues of visibility.

The 'fetch' or 'döppelganger' is a very specific, very spectral manifestation of the supernatural. Tresham describes it in discussion with Anna:

'Tresham – that superstition of the Fetch, about which we spoke so much while approaching the house, interests me beyond expression. Let me hear more exactly the popular account you have received of it.'

'Thus, Anna. Of some person appointed to die, a double or counter-part becomes visible, before his or her death, at a time and place where the original could not by any possibility appear? Is this your Kilkenny creed?' –

'Exactly; with the addition that the Fetch or double must – to insure the death of the reality – be seen in the night, or evening.'⁴²

In December 1824 Peter Mark Roget gave a paper to the Royal Society entitled 'Explanation of an optical deception in the appearance of the spokes of a wheel when seen through vertical apertures', published a few months later.⁴³ Roget's paper has often been identified by film theorists as the origin of an idea of the 'persistence of vision' although this interpretation of the essay has been contested.⁴⁴ The aspect of Roget's work relevant to *The Fetches* is his speculation that bright objects leave

⁴¹ John Banim and Michael Banim, *Tales by the O'Hara family*, vol. 2, pp 150–51. ⁴² *Ibid.*, pp 160–6. ⁴³ *Royal Society of London: philosophical transactions*, MDCCCXXV, Pt. I (London: Nicol, 1825), pp 131–40. ⁴⁴ Joseph Anderson and Barbara Fisher, 'The myth of persistence of vision' in *Journal of the University Film Association* 30:4 (1978), 3–8; Joseph and Barbara Anderson, 'The myth of persistence of vision revisited' in *Journal of Film and Video*, 45:1 (1993), 3–12.

after images on the retina; and that when an image is fragmented (in Roget's case by looking at a wheel through slatted blinds) these after images can produce an optical illusion. The invention in 1825 of the thaumatrope, a parlour toy consisting of a rotating cardboard disc, with different images on each side, which – when spun – produced the illusion of movement, has been attributed to Roget, but more usually to an English doctor, John Ayrton Paris, who based his idea on work by the astronomer, William Herschel. These developments in 1825 were part of a larger set of experiments and theorisation around vision in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. There were both prototypes of early cameras and experiments in photography; developments in knowledge of the science of light; and new exhibition spaces – the diorama and the panorama – which demanded that the spectator take on board a way of viewing painting as historical narrative. The panorama was popular in Dublin, and in 1821 Marshalls' Moving Panorama of the wreck of *The Medusa*, accompanied by band music, was considerably more popular than Théodore Géricault's six-week exhibition of *The Raft of the Medusa* in the Rotunda.

It is not necessary to demonstrate that either John Banim, living in London, or Michael Banim, in Kilkenny, was aware of these developments in visual culture, any more than it is necessary to argue that the brothers were influenced by the completion of the first railway locomotive and the opening of the Stockton–Darlington railway line in 1825, to suggest that their fiction articulates a sense of subjectivity in time and motion that, for all its historical settings and preoccupation with traditional belief forms, engages with modernity in a very different way from the earlier novels of Edgeworth, Owenson and even Maturin.

Edgeworth and Owenson had long publishing careers, and their interests developed over time. It would be a mistake to suggest that they were not interested in modernity – in many ways Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), for example, engages with theories of vision in a quite *avant-garde* fashion through such scenes as the diagnosis carried out by Dr X. when he sees the shadow of lady Delacour projected on a wall and observes the throbbing of her ruff (she is costumed as Elizabeth I, but discussing her heroine, Mary Queen of Scots). This extraordinarily complex image is grounded in Edgeworth's own interest in the natural sciences, and the knowledge of both theory and practice she acquired in conversation with her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, and his friends in the Lunar Society, as well as her stay in Bristol with her sister and brother-in-law, Anna and Thomas Beddoes. Beddoes' experiences as a doctor and chemist are central to *Belinda*, as is his argument on the necessity of translating Kant into English. Luisa Calé reads Fuseli's Milton Gallery in terms of archaeologies of montage, through Sergei Eisenstein as a reader of G. E. Lessing. She produces a montage reading of the Milton Gallery informed by an exploration of eighteenth-century visual technologies and interest in the physiology of perception.⁴⁵ The Milton Gallery, other exhibition spaces, and a series of mechanical toys

⁴⁵ Luisa Calé, 'Literature, montage, moving pictures: viewing Milton in 1800', a paper delivered at the University of Sussex English Graduate Colloquium on 12 May 2004. Calé is completing a book on *Henry Fuseli's Milton gallery: 'turning readers into spectators' in late*

exploiting the new theories of vision are central to the way in which Edgeworth represents urban space as the site of a troubled modernity, in which new subjectivities are invested in the denial of traditional forms of knowledge and belief. *The Fetches* illustrates a self-harming, suicidal, interiorisation of the forces of modernity as they were displaced – post-Act of Union – from public into private lives. This is a different version of different version of state terror than that narrated by Michael Banim in *Crohoore of the bill-hook*.

MEET JOHN DOE

In July 1825 Sir Walter Scott came to Ireland from 13 July to 17 August, visiting Belfast, Dublin, Limerick, Killarney, Kerry and Cork. After his return to Scotland he wrote to Joanna Baillie:

I never saw a richer country, or, to speak my mind, a finer people; the worst of them is the bitter and envenomed dislike which they have to each other. Their factions have been so long envenomed, and they have such narrow ground to do their battle in, that they are like people fighting with daggers in a hogshead. This, however, is getting better, for as the Government temporises between the parties, and does not throw, as formerly, its whole weight into the Protestant scale, there is more appearance of things settling into concord and good order. The Protestants of the old school, the determined Orangemen, are a very fine race, but dangerous for the quiet of the country; they reminded me of the Spaniard in Mexico, and seemed still to walk among the Catholics with all the pride of the conquerors of the Boyne and the captors of Limerick. Their own belief is completely fixed that there are enough men in Down and Antrim to conquer all Ireland again; and when one considers the habitual authority they have exercised, their energetic and military character, and the singular way in which they are united and banded together, they may be right enough for what I know, for they have all one mind and one way of pursuing it. But the Catholic is holding up his head now in a different way from what they did in former days, though still with a touch of the savage about them . . . It is rare to see the Catholic rise above the position he is born in. The Protestant part of the country is as improved as many parts of England.⁴⁶

Scott's image of the factionalism, claustrophobia and tension of Ireland in 1825 – 'like people fighting with daggers in a hogshead' – captures the mood of Irish writing in the 1820s and 1830s, an atmosphere in which dispute takes on pathological charac-

eighteenth-century London, in which she explores exhibition culture as a means of production, adaptation, and circulation for literary texts, and the role of practices of reading in constructing the experience of exhibitions. 46 D.J. O'Donoghue, *Sir Walter Scott's tour in Ireland in 1825 now first fully described* (Dublin: O'Donoghue and Co., 1905), p. 74.

teristics. What justifies describing the writing of this period as pathological is the set of disjunctions between apparent causes and effects, and the excess of rage that is repeatedly released in these writings.

One might quote a number of examples of such pathological excess. In the overall histrionics of *Melmoth the wanderer* one can nevertheless isolate a particular set of disputes, including the madhouse scenes, and the tales of the Guzmans and the Mortimers, in which contention escalates far out of the control of the protagonists. *Melmoth the Wanderer* pioneers the tropes of the glare and the howl, both of which indicate a horror beyond language; these tropes were repeatedly mined for effect in the Irish gothic of the nineteenth century.

Jonah Barrington's autobiography, *Personal sketches of his own time* (1827–32), is particularly interested in duelling as a symptom of a society in which the integrity of quarrels has replaced any call to other duties and ethics. Barrington makes the duel one of a number of practices which suggest that Ireland is a nation in which people repeatedly meet with their *doppelgängers*. E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (Berlin, 1815–16), which introduced the German folkloric figure of the *doppelgänger* into the fantastic tale, was first translated into English in 1824 by Robert Pierce Gillies, and published in Edinburgh and London.⁴⁷ It is probably the German tale alluded to in *The Fetches*, which suggests that Irish folklore shares the superstition of the wraith, or double, who can be seen when someone's death is imminent.⁴⁸ Barrington repeatedly returns to the metaphoric resonance of two men facing one another, pistols raised, in a quarrel that is utterly pointless, and where quarrelling itself takes on an almost abstract quality. These duels echo other uncanny moments of self-division in the text, as in the peasant who accidentally decapitates himself.

The death of his own brother, William, in a duel, becomes the occasion for Barrington to develop a recurring motif of two young men mirroring each other, as they stand taking aim over some notional point of honour. And among his more haunting images from the rebellion is that of the priest whose body is severed by a portcullis and whose buttocks are eaten by Waddy, the terrified Protestant besieged in the old castle.

John Doe (later republished as *The Peep O'Day; or John Doe*) was praised by a reviewer for its representation of violence and low life in Ireland:

Here is the finest description of an Irish row, at a pattern, or fair, that we have seen. Throughout the story, a perfect and profound knowledge of the Irish – the low Irish character, is evinced. As a bad specimen of that character, Jack Mullins is a master-piece. Altogether the painting is from nature – vivid, deep, and powerful, contrasting the most exquisite humour with the most thrilling pathos.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The devil's elixir*, trans. Gillies. ⁴⁸ John Banim and Michael Banim, *Tales by the O'Hara family*, vol. 2, p. 269. ⁴⁹ *La belle assemblée*, 3rd ser., 1 (May 1825): 217–18.

“Merciful God! What will become of us?” is its theme.⁵⁰ Michael Banim, who attributes authorship of the tale to John, with the exception of the ‘rout’, wrote in 1865 that the original name was to have been Captain Rock, until Moore’s book appeared. The final choice of John Doe, a named deployed if not invented by Blackstone to represent a plaintiff in an act of ejectment, resonates in terms of its status both as a victim of land abuse and as an everyman. In Banim’s story the protagonists are eventually driven from Ireland and everything connected with them, bar the memory of their existence, erased. Scott identified the ‘envenomed factions’ and the ‘narrow ground’ of sectarianism as crowding the possibilities for imaginative literature or even realist representation. It is in this context that so many Catholic writers began to blend fantasy and realism in melodrama and sensation fiction, and so many Protestants turned to the Gothic.

For the Protestant writers of the *Dublin University Magazine*, Daniel O’Connell’s speech introducing his first motion to Repeal the Act of Union on 29 April 1834, ‘was devoted to the unhallowed purpose of raking from the tombs of the past, the crimes and horrors of the conquest, and evoking from the grave the unshrouded spectres of those dismal and blood-crimsoned times’.⁵¹ One of the distinguishing features of Irish gothic is its interest in dismemberment. The discovery of a skull in a grave, as happens at the opening of Sheridan Le Fanu’s *The house by the churchyard* (1863), is a favourite trope. Nineteenth-century Irish gothic engages with the generic dominance of realist fiction through a poetics of fragmentation. In the context of such atrocities as the 1798 rebellion and the famine, the ‘morselization’ of bodies is both ultra-realist as well as ultra-fantastic. In periodicals, particularly the *Dublin University Magazine* and the *Dublin Penny Journal* gothic texts were fragmented by serialisation and illustration and contaminated by contiguous political discourses. The Banim’s blend of fantasy and realism involves an understanding of fragmentation that incorporates a sophisticated linguistic strategy for mis-representing the Irish language in deformed morsels, and challenges corporeal theories of identity.

⁵⁰ John Banim and Michael Banim, *Tales by the O’Hara family*, vol. 2, p. 117. ⁵¹ ‘Emigration of the Protestants of Ireland’ in *Dublin University Magazine*, 4:19 (July 1834), 8.