

'Raparees' or 'refugees'?: the normative image of involuntary displacement in nineteenth-century Irish literature

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'What a fuss they're making all over the world about these "raparees", or refugees, or whatever they call them', remarks the Irish family matriarch, Jemima Dodd, in Charles Lever's novel *The Dodd family abroad* (1852). 'My notion', she adds, is 'that we who harbour them have the worst of the bargain', because 'we have our own [Irish] villains' and 'considering how plentiful the blackguards are at home, I think it's nothing but greediness in us to want to take Russian and Austrian ones' as well!¹ Jemima's Dodd's confusion between 'raparees' and refugees is clearly intended for comic effect, but it brings into focus a variety of Continental European and Irish images of political exile and involuntary displacement that span a period from the Williamite conquest to the mid-Victorian era. Her conflation of 'raparees' and refugees, or Irish and Continental European political exiles also, points up an ideological contradiction at the heart of what Bernard Porter terms the 'refugee question' in mid-Victorian Britain: namely, that while London was 'the refugee capital of Europe after the revolutions of 1848 [where] exiles of every nationality congregated', were accorded remarkably 'generous treatment' and given refuge as proof of British liberty against Continental despotism,² at the very same time Irish political agitators and Young Ireland rebels were actively repressed after 1848 and driven into exile.³

1 Charles Lever, *The Dodd family abroad* (London, 1898 [1852]), vol. 1, p. 333. 2 Michael Marrus, *The unwanted: European refugees from the First World War to the Cold War* (Oxford, 1985), p. 15. 3 On the one hand, European political outcasts fleeing from despotic regimes were not only tolerated but publicly recognized as 'refugees' in mid-Victorian Britain, the beneficiaries of a durable, humane, and remarkably liberal British tradition of granting asylum that reached its apogee in the aftermath of the failed rebellions of 1848, when a host of exiles from across the European Continent found protection on English soil. According to Bernard Porter, 'the general image or stereotype which attached to [these] refugees . . . in the popular magazines and novels of the time' was 'especially sympathetic towards their causes'. There was 'very little sign', he adds 'that when Victorians thought of . . . political refugee[s], the picture which came to their minds was anything like that which Continental reactionaries would like to have placed there'. And yet, clearly the Victorian public did not extend the same sympathy towards 'the causes' espoused by displaced groups of Irish emigrants in the aftermath of the Irish rebellion of 1848, or regard Irish political agitators and Fenian sympathizers in the decades that followed as a refugee community. Nor did Irish emigrants and Italian refugees in mid-Victorian London always make common cause with one another, but rather tension simmered between them and occasionally broke out into

The question of whether these Irish and European 'raparees' and refugees were perceived to be engaged in similar national struggles or to represent fundamentally different social types in mid-Victorian Irish literature is the starting point for the discussion which follows.

More broadly speaking, I want to examine the social construction of the figure of the 'refugee', and the normative image of involuntary displacement, as it evolves and develops in the period between the late Romantic and mid-Victorian Irish novel, especially as reflected in the works of Charles Maturin, Lady Morgan, Charles Lever and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. My primary argument here is that the normative image of involuntary displacement and the very term 'refugee' itself was highly unstable and over-determined by its political and religious connotations in nineteenth-century Irish writing, because even as the emergent figure of the Continental European political refugee was becoming recognizable as a secular social type, it was already fore-shadowed by and failed to fully supersede the residual image and half-suppressed remembrances of its indigenous Irish equivalent, the dispossessed raparee of centuries earlier. More specifically, these political and religious connotations of the terms 'raparee' and 'refugee' appear to be in a state of flux in nineteenth-century Irish literature, encapsulating within their layers of meaning alternative historical experiences of religious persecution and political dispossession suffered first by Irish Catholics in the wake of the Williamite conquest in the late seventeenth-century – from which the term 'raparee' originates – as well as the arrival of Protestant French Huguenots in Ireland, including the forebears of the Maturin and Le Fanu families, who were fleeing Catholic persecution in Continental Europe. Indeed, it is only in 1796 that the very term 'refugee' itself acquired wider connotations than that of 'expelled French Protestants' to signify 'all such as leave their country in times of distress'.⁴

By contrast, the term 'raparee' is derived from seventeenth-century Gaelic roots, and signifies, according to the *Oxford English dictionary*, 'an Irish pikeman or irregular soldier, of the kind prominent during the war of 1688–92; hence, an Irish bandit, robber, freebooter' or 'recusant' or 'vagabond'. The term 'raparee' still had resonances, though, in nineteenth-century Irish literature, especially in Sydney Owenson or Lady Morgan's novel *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys: a national tale* (1827). In her novel, Owenson invokes folk remembrances of the figure of the 'raparee' which she likens to 'smugglers' or 'other lawless persons' in the historical present of nineteenth-century Ireland, as 'the successors of the Raparees of Queen Ann's and George the

open hostility, culminating in the eruption of the Garibaldi riots of 1862. Nevertheless, there would appear to be a considerable degree of resemblance between these displaced communities of Irish and Continental European migrants as fellow 'refugee peoples' living alongside one another and engaged in similar national struggles to liberate their homelands from their respective 'imperial masters', whether it be Great Britain, Rome, Moscow or Vienna. See Bernard Porter, *The refugee question in mid-Victorian politics* (Cambridge, 1979), pp 80–1; and Sheridan Gilley, 'The Garibaldi riots of 1862', in *Historical Journal*, 5:16 (1973), 697–732. 4 Cited in Marrus, *The unwanted*, p. 8.

First's day'.⁵ As Ina Ferris notes, the novel's protagonist, Murrough O'Brien, 'is brought to tears' after 'reading the final entry of the annals [of his ancestors] by the account of the brutal extermination during the reign of William of Orange of the outlaw Irish figures known as "raparees"',⁶ who happen to prefigure and bear an uncanny resemblance to the character of his Gaelic foster-brother Shane, whom O'Brien 'has been remembering' in the historical present. Indeed, Murrough O'Brien's foster-brother Shane is explicitly described by Lady Morgan as the 'last specimen of the Raparees of the earlier part of the last century', because like them he too has 'the true Irish spirits, formed for every excitement, to madden into riotous gaiety, to sink into gloomy despondency'.⁷

This tension between the political and religious connotations of the terms raparee and refugee, as well as Irish Catholic and Protestant historical memories of religious persecution and political dispossession, would become predominantly registered in nineteenth-century Irish literature, I would suggest, in a gothic narrative mode, particularly as reflected in the literary works of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. In the short stories collected in his *Purcell papers* (1880), and especially 'Ullor De Lacy: a legend of Capercullen',⁸ Le Fanu would deliberately juxtapose and over-layer these Irish Catholic and Huguenot historical memories of religious persecution and political dispossession and conflate both of their reminiscences of conquest and involuntary displacement into a singularly overdetermined and temporally blurred and fluid gothic narrative format. More to the point, it is my contention that these Irish Catholic and Huguenot historical memories of conquest and displacement appear purposely interwoven in Le Fanu's adaptation of the gothic convention of the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait: one that bears a likeness not only of the progenitor of the protagonist's family line, but also attests to the perpetration of an ancestral act of violence, the repercussions of which can only be expiated by his descendants in the historical present. This convention of the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait is prefigured in both Charles Maturin's gothic novel *Melmoth the wanderer* (1820)⁹ as well as Lady Morgan's *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* (1827); but it is only in Le Fanu's short story 'Ullor De Lacy' that both Irish Catholic and Protestant historical memories of religious persecution and political dispossession appear mutually implicated in the shape of a gothic plotline, where they are conflated together into a seemingly singular, trans-historical experience of involuntary displacement.

Le Fanu's version of the Protestant Gothic thus features a particularly heightened form of 'political unconscious'¹⁰ that is predicated upon his social position as a bene-

5 Lady Morgan, *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys: a national tale* (London, 1988 [1827]), p. 57. 6 Cited in Ina Ferris, *The Romantic national tale and the question of Ireland* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 91. 7 Morgan, *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, p. 253. 8 Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's short story 'Ullor De Lacy' was first published in the *Dublin University Magazine*, 58:348 (December, 1861), 694-707. All quotations are taken from the *DUM*. 9 I am grateful to Dr Patrick Maume for suggesting this to me. 10 In *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: studies in Irish culture* (London, 1995), Terry Eagleton discusses at length the idea of

ficiary of the Williamite conquest who nevertheless sympathizes and enters into an imaginative engagement with its victims in his writing. As Norman Vance remarks in *Irish literature since 1800*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, 'like Charles Maturin, was of Huguenot stock, with an hereditary claim on folk-memories of Catholic persecution in Continental Europe'.¹¹ And yet, despite his Tory Unionist sympathies and public persona as a defender of conservative Protestant interests while editor of the *Dublin University Magazine*, Le Fanu 'concerned himself as a writer', notes W.J. McCormack, 'with the defeated heirs to the wars of William and James rather than with the wars themselves. His attention was always drawn', McCormack adds, 'to the displaced and exposed figures who' – like the raparees dispossessed by Le Fanu's own ancestors – 'become representatives of his own class and sect'¹² which are themselves threatened with dispossession and disestablishment as a result of the Tythe War, Repeal Campaign, and Land War over the course of Le Fanu's own lifetime. Le Fanu's short stories exhibit a highly complex form of historical imagination, in other words, whereby the collective angst suffered by his Protestant contemporaries appears mediated and sublimated into an objective historical correlative of Jacobite Ireland.

Through a process of elision of confessional and historical memories of persecution and dispossession, the figures of the 'raparee' and the 'refugee' thus become deliberately conflated in Le Fanu's fiction to heighten the sense of isolation and exposure which are integral aspects of his Gothic sensibility. Furthermore, in 'attributing to a [seventeenth or] eighteenth-century Catholic the anxieties of a nineteenth-century Protestant', notes McCormack,¹³ Le Fanu collapses both communities' collective fears of persecution in order to create a pretext for crises and transgressions that had occurred in the distant past only to be re-enacted and expiated in the historical present, as one of the primary means for the resolution of narrative tension engendered in the development of his gothic plotlines. Yet, having said this, while it is one thing to claim that memories of 1685 and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes were as important an imaginative stimulus for the Protestant Gothic as was 1690 and the battle of the Boyne in the Irish Catholic historical imagination, it is quite another to exemplify and provide detailed textual analysis of the specific ways in which these historical memories of persecution and dispossession actually influence and shape the unfolding narrative plotlines and content, or appear implicated in particular patterns of imagery, in the works of writers like Le Fanu.

I would like to propose a close reading, then, of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's short story 'Ultor De Lacy' (1861) which examines both its adaptation of the stock motifs of gothic fiction while also drawing upon his nephew Thomas Philip Le Fanu's *Memoir of the Le Fanu family* (1924)¹⁴ in order to illustrate a biographically and historically specific inter-connection between his ancestral memories of persecution and

'Protestant Gothic [which] might be dubbed the political unconscious of Anglo-Irish society, the place where its fears and fantasies most definitely emerge' (p. 187). **11** Norman Vance, *Irish literature since 1800* (Edinburgh, 2002), p. 72. **12** W.J. McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland* (Dublin, 1991), p. 83. **13** *Ibid.*, p. 98. **14** Thomas Philip Le Fanu, *Memoir of the Le Fanu family* (Manchester, 1924).

dispossession and the ways in which they are implicated in the content and shape of his narrative's development. In fact, J.S. Le Fanu's nephew Thomas Philip Le Fanu himself felt an abiding interest in his Huguenot family heritage and was a distinguished scholar in his own right, contributing articles on the history of the Huguenot community in Ireland as well as prominent individual Huguenots such as Abraham Tessereau to the *Huguenot Society's Proceedings*,¹⁵ in addition to compiling the *Memoir of the Le Fanu family*. In his *Memoir*, T.P. Le Fanu recalls a family 'tradition handed down' of religious persecution and flight from the depredations of Louis XIV in their native France, including anecdotes of encounters with French war vessels on the high seas which, he notes, are 'common to many Huguenot families';¹⁶ but the *Memoir of the Le Fanu family* also records that the original forebear of the Le Fanu family in Ireland, namely, Charles Le Fanu de Cresserons – whom J.S. Le Fanu's chief protagonist in *Wylder's hand* (1864) is modelled upon – arrived in Ireland from France not only as a Huguenot refugee but also as a warrior directly in the service of William III. As Thomas Philip Le Fanu recounts in his *Memoir*,

Charles Le Fanu de Cresserons was one of the numerous refugees who escaped immediately before or after the revocation to Holland . . . Joining the army of the Prince of Orange, he served during the Irish campaign as a captain in La Meloniere's regiment of foot . . . He fought at the battle of the Boyne in that regiment which was the first to ford the river at Oldbridge, and a portrait of William III, said to have been given to him by the King, is still in possession of the family. It is referred to as having belonged to him in the will of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, who died in 1873, but the story of its presentation is purely traditional.¹⁷

Whether or not the story is 'purely traditional' or apocryphal in origin, there can be no doubt that Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu was familiar with it because the idea of the presentation of the portrait at the moment of conquest is reproduced as the central, underlying motif in his short story 'Ultor De Lacy'. Like the 'white plump hand' in *The house by the church yard* (1863), or the 'spirit-monkey' in 'Green tea' (1872), the familial portrait of an ancestral conqueror functions metonymically as a disembodied icon – at once a supernatural agent and stock gothic device – that increasingly haunts the narrative's protagonist and precipitates a sense of crisis, whereas it is the discovery of its underlying significance which brings about a resolution of the narrative's fundamental conflict.

Sheridan Le Fanu was hardly the first writer, of course, to have conceived of this gothic premise of the narrative's plot 'matching characters to ancestral portraits or prophecies to fix their identities'¹⁸ in relation to the perpetration of ancestral acts of

¹⁵ See T.P. Le Fanu, 'The Huguenot churches of Dublin and their ministers' in *Huguenot Society Proceedings*, 8:2 (1905); 'Archbishop Marsh and the discipline of the French Church of St Patrick's Dublin, 1694' in *Huguenot Society Proceedings*, 12:4 (1922). ¹⁶ T.P. Le Fanu, *Memoir*, p. 37. ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28. ¹⁸ Katie Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism: the romantic novel*

transgression or violence committed in the distant past which can only be expiated by them in the historical present; for the very same premise lies behind the unfolding of the labyrinthine plotlines of Charles Maturin's gothic novel *Melmoth the wanderer* (1820). Accordingly, before I proceed to examine Le Fanu's short 'Ulltor De Lacy' in more detail, I want to consider the evolution of this gothic narrative convention of the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait as prefigured in the Irish novel in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

In the case of *Melmoth the wanderer*, then, it is the protagonist John Melmoth's discovery of a portrait of his ancestor, 'Jno. Melmoth, anno 1646',¹⁹ on his dying uncle's Wicklow estate that shifts the narrative into a gothic register and provides the first intimation of the transgressive figure of the Wanderer himself, 'a Faust [who] is a Mephistopheles at the same time'.²⁰ After he enters his uncle's closet:

John's eyes were in a moment, and as if by magic, riveted on a portrait that hung on the wall, and appeared, even to his untaught eye, far superior to the tribe of family pictures that are left to moulder on the walls of a family mansion. It represented a man of middle age. There was nothing remarkable in the costume, or in the countenance, but *the eyes*, John felt, were such as one feels they wish they had never seen, and feels they can never forget.²¹

Furthermore, despite the fact that this ancestral portrait which captivates John Melmoth is over one hundred and fifty years old, it is no mere 'family picture', according to his uncle, but rather a supernatural image which bears an uncanny likeness of their demonic predecessor, Melmoth the Wanderer, whose countenance continues to haunt Old Melmoth as he lies 'dying of a fright' because 'the original is still alive'.²² After the death of Old Melmoth, John Melmoth becomes similarly transfixed with terror when he too momentarily catches sight of the figure of the Wanderer and discovers 'in his face the living original of the portrait'.²³ Nevertheless, he carries out 'the injunction of his uncle to destroy the portrait'. Thus:

he tore it from the frame with a cry half terrific, half triumphant . . . He expected to hear some fearful sounds, some unimaginable breathings of prophetic horror follow this act of sacrilege, for such he felt it, to tear the portrait of his ancestor from his native walls.²⁴

Accordingly, John Melmoth's attempt at expiation here takes the form of a symbolic renunciation of his ancestry through the 'sacrilegious' destruction of the familial portrait of his own progenitor, in order to make amends for the ancestral family crime that it is deemed to represent.

and the British empire (Princeton, 1997), p. 152. ¹⁹ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the wanderer* (Oxford, 1989 [1820]), p. 18. ²⁰ Chris Baldick, 'Introduction' to *Melmoth the wanderer* (Oxford, 1989), p. xvi. ²¹ Maturin, *Melmoth the wanderer*, pp 17–18. ²² *Ibid.*, pp 18–19. ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 20. ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

The motif of the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait thus provides the cornerstone of the frame-tale in *Melmoth the wanderer* which links its numerous gothic subplots and diverse settings of nineteenth-century Ireland and counter-Reformation Spain together across wide swathes of space and time. The ancestral familial portrait of Melmoth the Wanderer also attests to the power of generational memory, not so much in the specific features it records as the sense of foreboding it engenders in those who behold it and then 'feel they can never forget': the portrait itself provides a presentiment of the Wanderer, in other words, which becomes indelibly marked in the mind of the protagonist, even after its physical likeness and 'wrinkled and torn canvas'²⁵ are consigned to the flames. Thus, long before John Melmoth learns of his ancestor's pact with the devil whereby he elongates his natural life span by one hundred and fifty years in exchange not only for his own soul but also his ultimately fruitless endeavours to convert the souls of others' to the devil's cause, the protagonist intimates the Wanderer's sinister past from beholding his lineaments and semblance in the portrait he destroys.

Furthermore, Terry Eagleton argues that it is not only the remembrances of the Wanderer but also those of his creator, Charles Maturin, whose sense of generational and historical memory informs the subject matter of his Gothic novel. As Eagleton notes, 'Maturin, like Le Fanu, came of Huguenot stock, and hailed from a history of religious persecution. The dungeon and locked chamber, the sequestered castle from which there is no escape, is for Maturin Ireland itself, a land thronged with the spectres of the past and haunted by the memory of ancient crimes.'²⁶ 'It is not hard to read this as a metaphor', Eagleton adds, 'of the original crime of forcible settlement and expulsion, which belongs to the period in which Melmoth's bargain with the devil takes place, or to see his preying upon the dispossessed as a nightmarish image of the relations between the Ascendancy and the people.'²⁷ Maturin's own historical memories of religious persecution and political dispossession, in other words, as well as his anxieties about the increasing clamour for Catholic Emancipation, and perceived threats to his own social position as an Anglican curate in the service of the Protestant Ascendancy, would appear to be sublimated and to find an outlet in his flourishes of gothic imagination. Whatever his anti-Catholic animus, however, the sheer convoluted structure and labyrinthine Gothic plotlines of *Melmoth the wanderer*, the spiritual instead of political nature of the Wanderer's 'aboriginal crime . . . in search or expiation',²⁸ and the very tenuous geographical and historical links the novel constructs in its variegated portrayals of displacement between seventeenth-century Spain and nineteenth-century Ireland – as exemplified, not least, in the unlikely flight of the dissident Catholic Monçada from the dungeons of the Inquisition to the coast of Wicklow: all function to obfuscate rather than illuminate the actual legacy of Huguenot flight and Protestant conquest which brought the Maturin family from Europe to Ireland in the first place.

By contrast, the portrayal of displacement and motif of the unveiling of the ances-

tral familial portrait are explicitly invested with political overtones in Lady Morgan's novel *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*. In the final chapter of the second volume of the novel, entitled 'The Raparee', the protagonist Murrough O'Brien is momentarily overcome after reading in the 'Annals of St Grellan' which record his own family history a harrowing account of the Williamite conquest: especially the entry marked '1691. – King William's army plunder and murder the poore Irish at pleasure . . . so that they now began to turn raparees, hiding themselves in the bog-grass . . . and in the glens and crannies of . . . mountaines. And others of the better sort of papists, being driven out of the towne to go upon their keepinge, turn raparees, being forced to unquiet means'. Moreover, Morgan emphasizes the pathos rather than political implications of raparee displacement, noting that 'those who were then called "raparees," and executed as such, were, for the most part, poor harmless country people, that were daily killed in vast numbers, up and down the fields, or taken out of their beds and shot immediately'.²⁹ The figure of the raparee in *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* is thus divested of political agency and imagined as a type of internal exile involuntarily displaced by the spread of colonial terror, which only afterwards becomes invested with the stigma of banditry, outlawry, and recourse to 'unquiet means'.

In reading the Annals of St Grellan, Murrough O'Brien is deeply moved, however, not only by the antiquity but also the seeming *contemporaneity* of its portrayals of displacement. Although a committed republican, a member of the 'brotherhood of United Irishmen'³⁰ on eve of the uprising of 1798 when the novel is set, and a veritable successor of the Wild Geese as a refugee-warrior who has distinguished himself in the military service of the Catholic Hapsburg Austrian empire rather than remaining in his native land, Murrough O'Brien nevertheless experiences the shock of self-recognition and an unexpected sense of continuity upon his return when he discerns in the annals' portrait of a raparee the lineaments of his own family line. The motif of the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait thus leads to a 'blurring of temporal boundaries'³¹ in *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* between 'its graphic delineation [of] the wretched outlawed Irish gentleman, and the hound-hunted Irish peasant of Cromwell's time',³² on the one hand, and Murrough O'Brien's presentiment of personal vulnerability as a descendant of this colonial legacy of raparee displacement in the historical present. Like John Melmoth in Maturin's novel, O'Brien is transfixed when he first discovers the portrait of his ancestor in the annals:

Twice he passed his hand across his humid eyes . . . when, in the next page to the melancholy description that had so deeply affected him, he found its illustration, in the full-length drawing of

A raparee
Or wild Irishman,
Of the 18th century.

²⁹ Morgan, *The O'Briens*, pp 241–2. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 303. ³¹ Ferris, *The Romantic national tale*, p. 91. ³² Morgan, *The O'Briens*, pp 243–4.

It was evidently a portrait, being marked by all that truth, which a close copy of nature alone preserves. It represented a man in rude vigorous senility. The figure was gaunt, powerful, and athletic; but the countenance (the true physiognomy of the western or Spanish race of Irishmen), was worn, wan, and haggard, and full of that melancholy ferocity, and timid vigilance of look, which ever characterizes man, when hunted from civilized society; or when in his savage, unaccommodated state, ere he has been admitted to its protection. A dark, deep, sunken eye, with the Irish glib, cumhal, and prohibited coolun, or long, black matted lock, hanging down on each side, added to the wild and weird air of a figure, still not divested of manly comeliness. The dress, if the garb so tattered could be called a dress, was singular. It was still worn at the time, by the natives of the isles of Arran: . . . the whole giving a most perfect picture of a *wild Irishman*, as he was called, and exhibited on the stage in his traditional dress and deplorable humiliation, from the time of Charles the Second almost to the present day.³³

In beholding in this ancestral familial portrait 'a most perfect picture of a *wild Irishman*' – 'A raparee or wild Irishman, of the 18th century', singularly conflated with contemporary 'natives of the isles of Arran' – Murrough O'Brien experiences a presentiment of the past, an apprehension of the potential recrudescence of primordial acts of violence that threaten to recur unless the aftershocks of these ancient crimes be expiated in the historical present: no less intensely than John Melmoth in Maturin's text divines the curse of the Wanderer in the lineaments of a portrait that similarly transports him from 'the present day' to 'the time of Charles the Second'. Moreover, whereas the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait of Melmoth the Wanderer presages his multiple acts of displacement between Ireland and Spain from the era of Charles II until the present day, the portrayal of the figure of the raparee in Morgan's text is inversely represented to impress an even earlier, sixteenth-century legacy of Spanish visitants into the recesses of Irish folk-memory, as manifested in 'the true physiognomy of the western or Spanish race of Irishmen'. Yet unlike the figure of the Wanderer who is the feared transgressor and hunter of souls, the raparee is 'hunted from civilized society' whose 'protection' he does not enjoy 'in his savage, unaccommodated state'.

More to the point, *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* differs fundamentally from *Melmoth the wanderer* in so far as the 'memory of ancient crimes' it recollects is politically rather than spiritually inflected. Moreover, the portrait of the figure of the raparee elicits not just Murrough O'Brien's historical memory of the traumatic displacement of his ancestors but also his personal recollection of the public execution of his foster-brother Shane, a native Gael, 'a genuine peasant',³⁴ and an 'Irish Caliban',³⁵ seven years beforehand for a crime that he did not commit. 'The recollection suffocated him with emotion', Morgan writes; 'he flung down the book, and

rose to change the subject of his thoughts'.³⁶ But once again, like John Melmoth before him, O'Brien begins to perceive that the ancestral familial portrait is no ordinary painting but invested with a preternatural significance:

Doubting his senses, and as one spellbound, he stood fixed, gazed intensely, and breathed shortly, but spoke not – for before him, on the threshold of the door, stood the object of his melancholy reminiscence, the awful original of the fearful and affecting picture, which had curdled his blood even to look upon. It was indeed 'the raparee,' not as he had seen him in the prime of manhood, but the same in form, in dress, in attitude, as the vignette represented him, and in the half-crouching position, the habitual posture of vigilance and fear.³⁷

Like in *Melmoth the wanderer*, the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait in *The O'Briens* and *The O'Flahertys* seems a prelude to the actual appearance of 'the awful original of the fearful and affecting picture', but this 'classic gothic moment' is immediately foreclosed in Morgan's text, notes Ina Ferris, as 'the narrative goes on to naturalize the apparition'³⁸ and explain that Shane had escaped the hangman's noose only to become an internal exile living in the guise of a raparee of centuries earlier in a 'habitual posture of vigilance and fear'. As a vestigial raparee suffering internal exile at the end of the eighteenth century, Shane embodies 'the continuation a century later of a subculture of political outlaws and guerrilla fighters, based in the same hills and engaged in the same struggle, [which] makes it difficult to dismiss the chronicle's portrait of "the raparee, or wild Irishmen, of the 18th century" either as mythology or historical aberration'.³⁹ Unlike the republican hero and committed United Irishman Murrough O'Brien, in other words, his foster-brother Shane represents a residual image of involuntary displacement that appears not only co-extensive with the 'raparee or wild Irishman, of the 18th century' or 'hound-hunted Irish peasant of Cromwell's time', but also devoid of any form of historical or political consciousness beyond the blinkered perceptions of a perpetual fugitive.

Between the characters of Shane and Murrough O'Brien there is thus a doubling of the image of involuntary displacement: one that conflates internal and external types of exile, the figures of the raparee and the refugee they represent, and the residual confessional and emergent national forms of conflict they take flight from until the very face of displacement itself in the novel becomes one of an 'equivocal countenance'.⁴⁰ In recent discussions of *The O'Briens* and *the O'Flahertys*, Ina Ferris, Katie Trumpener, and Julia M. Wright have all noted the effects of temporal disruption that the interpolation of the Annals of St Grellan and appearance of Shane have on the shaping of different types historical consciousness that correspond with emergent and residual or 'inaugural' and 'antiquarian' forms of nationalism exhibited in

36 *Ibid.*, p. 245. 37 *Ibid.* 38 Ferris, *The Romantic national tale*, p. 91. 39 Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism*, p. 153. 40 Morgan, *The O'Briens*, p. 506.

the novel:⁴¹ but none of them fully consider the extent to which this temporal disjunction itself is specifically focalised through the figures of the 'raparee' and the refugee and the dichotomised forms of involuntary displacement they represent. Shane's internal exile and fugitive existence is inversely related, in other words, to Murrough O'Brien's more overtly politicized form of displacement and embrace of the republican ideals of revolutionary France, where he ultimately distinguishes himself in the service of Napoleon after taking flight from Ireland in 1798 in order to escape 'beyond the reach of persecution' as a would-be refugee.⁴² Indeed, even as a youth, O'Brien enacts almost exactly in reverse the flight of the Huguenots, when he recalls being 'dragged by intolerance from my seagirt isles, and forced by that protestant Jesuitism, so similar in its means and ends to the system of Loyola, into a seminary of the established church, – kidnapped into protestantism, as my father had been before me, – witnessing the persecution . . . I escaped from the horrors which bewildered my young imagination, by playing the truant, and embarking on board a French vessel . . . work[ing] my passage to Bordeaux'.⁴³ As a victim of 'protestant Jesuitism' seeking liberty in revolutionary France, Murrough O'Brien explicitly inverts the historical image of Huguenot persecution and dispossession from which the very notion of the refugee originates.

The ancestral crime that the novel explores and the protagonist seeks to expiate is thus not simply one of colonial violence but confessional indoctrination as well. Murrough O'Brien, and the novel's heroine Beauvoine O'Flaherty both seek to escape the cloistered existence of a religious vocation where they would atone and become 'answerable for [their] fathers' sins',⁴⁴ very much in the same mould as Monçada in *Melmoth the wanderer*, but only the former are able to convert their 'expitatory offerings on the altars [their parents] had violated'⁴⁵ into more pragmatic and political forms of service to the would-be Irish nation. It is the act of displacement itself, in other words, that precipitates the mobilization and politicization of a form of national consciousness in the novel: but one that does not extend to the vestigial figure of the raparee, who remains entrapped within an anachronistic and feudal ideology of a 'barbarous people, checked in their natural progress towards civilization by a foreign government'⁴⁶ which he himself comes to emblemise. In the end, the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait in *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* brings together the figures of the observer and the observed, the vestigial raparee and the would-be refugee, who between them disclose a panoply of images of exile from Ireland and move along a geographical and historical continuum of types of involuntary displacement: one which culminates in the flight of O'Brien from Ireland to

41 See Ferris, *The Romantic national tale*, pp 89–92; Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism*, pp 152–153; and Julia M. Wright, "'The nation begins to form": competing nationalisms in Morgan's *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*' in *ELH*, 66 (1999): 939–963. Julia Wright, in particular, argues that 'Morgan's protagonists in *The O'Briens* promote a [progressive or inaugural] brand of nationalism specific to the United Irishmen while devaluing and even mocking, the idealization of the Irish past' (p. 940).

42 Morgan, *The O'Briens*, p. 546.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 301. 44 *Ibid.*, p. 515. 45 *Ibid.*, p. 519. 46 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

seek refuge once again in Continental Europe, where his place of asylum itself now appears troubled by the spectre of authoritarianism in Napoleonic France.

If Morgan's novel politicises the unveiling of the ancestral portrait motif, however, and if 'Morgan's and Owenson's historical Gothics describe a political and historical repetition compulsion'⁴⁷ in their various portrayals of acts of displacement, then it is only in Joeseph Sheridan Le Fanu's short story 'Ultor De Lacy' (1861) that these gothic narrative techniques would be self-consciously extended into an explicitly imperialist pattern of 'repetition compulsion' which is premised upon the culpability of his own family history and forebears in the conquest, religious persecution and political dispossession of Catholic and Gaelic Ireland. Moreover, unlike Maturin and Morgan for whom the motif of the unveiling of the ancestral familial portrait is but a stock convention of Gothic fiction, the presentation of the portrait of William III to Charles Le Fanu de Cresserons after the battle of the Boyne in 1690 consecrates a foundational moment in Le Fanu family history on the occasion of their first arrival on Irish shores. Thus, in Le Fanu's short story 'Ultor De Lacy', the narrative features a typical gothic plotline that centres on a family, which, like the Le Fanus', originated in France – albeit 'in the reign of Henry VIII' – but has been 'long naturalized in Ireland'.⁴⁸ In the first chapter, entitled 'The Jacobite Legacy' and set in 1705, the protagonist Ultor De Lacy is presented with 'a black box containing' a family portrait by his father as he lies dying, like Old Melmoth in Maturin's text, which 'constituted the most important legacy bequeathed to his only child by the ruined Jacobite'.⁴⁹ Ultor De Lacy himself follows in the footsteps of his father to become 'one of the few Irishmen implicated treasonably in that daring and romantic insurrection[,] the Rebellion of '45'.⁵⁰ Although hunted as a fugitive, Ultor De Lacy remains surreptitiously in Ireland to raise his two daughters in a ruined castle in 'the romantic glen of Capperullen near the point where the counties of Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary converge'.⁵¹ A number of fantastic and supernatural incidents follow, and then the story concludes with the elopement of Ultor De Lacy's youngest daughter Una, who was engaged to another and destined to preserve the family line, with a supernatural apparition of an 'outlawed Irish soldier'⁵² – a composite figure of a raparee, a member of the sidhe, and an incubus which has haunted the De Lacy family since the seventeenth century. More to the point, this apparition itself appears highly reminiscent of the 'wild and weird air' depicted in the portrait of the raparee in Morgan's text: its strange 'figure . . . being that of a tall, lean, ungainly man, dressed in a dingy suit, somewhat of the Spanish fashion, with a brown laced cloak and faded red stockings'.⁵³

It is only in the final chapter of the story, however, that the significance of this apparition as well as the unveiled ancestral portrait is finally revealed 'in the plenitude of its sinister peculiarities'.⁵⁴ The narrative concludes with Ultor De Lacy's other daughter, Sister Agnes, examining his possessions after his death, when she comes

47 Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism*, p. 152. 48 'Ultor De Lacy', p. 694. 49 *Ibid.*, p. 695.
50 *Ibid.* 51 *Ibid.*, p. 694. 52 *Ibid.*, p. 705. 53 *Ibid.*, pp 701–2. 54 *Ibid.*, p. 706.

across the family portrait that 'faithfully portrayed the phantom which lived with a vivid and horrible accuracy in her remembrance',⁵⁵ the very apparition of the raparee who stole away her sister. Furthermore, 'folded in the same box' as the family portrait 'was a brief narrative stating that':

A.D. 1601, in the month of December, Walter de Lacy, of Capperullen, made many prisoners at the ford of Ownhey, or Abington⁵⁶ of Irish and Spanish soldiers, flying from the great overthrow of the rebel powers at Kinsale, and among the number one Roderick O'Donnell . . . who, claiming kinship through his mother to De Lacy, sued for his life with instant and miserable entreaty . . . but was by De Lacy, through great zeal for the queen . . . cruelly put to death. When he went to the tower top, where was the gallows, finding himself in extremity and no hope of mercy, he swore . . . that he would devote himself thereafter to blast the greatness of the De Lacys, and never leave them till his work was done. He hath been seen often since, and always for that family perniciously, insomuch that it hath been the custom to show the young children of that lineage the picture of the said O'Donnell, in little, taken among his few valuables, to prevent their being misled by him unawares, so that he should not have his will, who by devilish wiles and hell-born cunning, hath steadfastly sought the ruin of that ancient house, and especially to leave that *stemma generosum* destitute of issue for the transmission of their pure blood and worshipful name.⁵⁷

The revenant that haunts the De Lacy family is thus a representative of Catholic and Gaelic Ireland who prefigures the raparees displaced by Le Fanu's own ancestor Charles Le Fanu de Cresserons during the battle of the Boyne some ninety years later, just as Le Fanu substitutes the Oldbridge Ford for the very place of his childhood at Abington as the original site of an ancestral act of violence that brought his family to Ireland in the first place. The narrative's unfolding sense of crisis is only resolved, in other words, in typical gothic fashion, with the disclosure of an ancestral crime and transgression, the repercussions of which haunt the protagonists because it can only be expiated in the historical present. Indeed, the expiation of this ancestral act of violence can only be achieved in the narrative through the ultimate extermination of the conqueror's family line, even though Ultor De Lacy like Le Fanu himself is not personally but only genealogically implicated in the perpetration of this ancient crime. Le Fanu thus inverts the motif of the presentation of the family portrait at the moment of conquest so that it is the likeness of the vanquished rather than the victor that is handed down to subsequent generations, as a kind of talisman

55 Ibid. 56 'In 1823', writes W.J. McCormack, when Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu was nine years old, his father 'Thomas Le Fanu was appointed rector of Abington, a parish on the borders of counties Limerick and Tipperary, on the edge of the Slieve Felim Mountains . . . Abington, by all accounts, was a place to avoid in 1823' (*Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, pp 18–19). 57 'Ultor De Lacy', p. 706.

to ward off and guard against supernatural visitations from 'the said O'Donnell', who would threaten 'the transmission' of his conqueror's 'pure blood and worshipful name'.

Yet behind the narrative's apprehension of elopement with the revenant of a raparee lie the much more contemporary anxieties of Ascendancy Protestants like Le Fanu about interbreeding with the oppressed and about the increasing politicisation of the masses of Roman Catholicism in Ireland, who might eventually 'blast the greatness' of the Protestant Irish nation not through the pollution of its bloodline or 'devilish wiles and hell-born cunning', but the more imminent means of Disestablishment and Repeal which haunted the Protestant political unconscious. The unveiling of the ancestral portrait in Le Fanu's narrative thus leads to a genealogical and fictional doubling of the ancestral and imaginary figures of Charles Le Fanu de Cresserons and Ultor De Lacy's ancestor Walter De Lacy, both of whom represent the perpetration of ancestral acts of violence as reflected in the obverse images of the victor and the vanquished engraved in the portraits they receive, whereby the visage of the Protestant conqueror William of Orange becomes conflated with the ghostly impression of a revenant of a raparee. These inverted images of William of Orange and the revenant of a raparee blend together into the likeness of one another, in other words, through the gothic convention of the unveiling of the ancestral portrait: but it is the defining experience of religious persecution and political dispossession that ultimately binds the respective legacies of the Le Fanu family of Huguenot refugees and the raparees they subjugated into a singular, highly complex, and historically over-determined image of involuntary displacement. Put another way, it is the recrudescence of the threat of persecution and dispossession initially suffered by Irish raparees that Le Fanu revisits as a source of gothic narrative tension that is projected in his short stories such as 'Ultor De Lacy' into the historical present of Ascendancy Ireland, which is itself threatened with a form of involuntary displacement already prefigured by the fate of those their forebears dispossessed. Thus, there is a highly complex historical imagination and political unconscious at work in Le Fanu's short story 'Ultor De Lacy' which becomes a meditation on the social position of exposed and isolated conservative Irish Protestants in the mid-Victorian period that is at the same time infused with a sense of Williamite guilt; but it is also a form of political unconscious that is specifically, thematically, and verifiably rooted in Le Fanu's own family history that brought his Huguenot refugee forebears to Ireland and into conflict with Irish Catholic raparees who they dispossessed.

If the image of the refugee was highly over-determined by its residual political and religious connotations in nineteenth-century Irish writing, and in Morgan's and Le Fanu's literary works in particular, however, then it must also be interpreted against the backdrop of the emergence of the secularised political exiles engaged in nationalist struggles across the European Continent after 1848. This was increasingly becoming the normative image of involuntary displacement in nineteenth-century Irish writing, against which the figure of the raparee had long since calcified into an archaic seventeenth-century mould of recusant aspirations and Jacobite revenge.

Thus, it is not the works of Lady Morgan or J.S. Le Fanu, which exist very much in a state of suspended animation between these two worlds, that one must turn to in order to trace the emergence of the secular nationalist revolutionary and political exile as normative images of involuntary displacement, but rather to the fiction of Charles Lever.

By way of conclusion, I want to offer a few points of comparison between Lady Morgan and Le Fanu's works, on the one hand, and Charles Lever's novel *The Dodd family abroad*, in order to sketch out more fully this normative image of involuntary displacement as it develops in nineteenth-century Irish writing, because in contrast with Morgan's national tale and Le Fanu's Gothic narrative constructions, Lever's *The Dodd family abroad* was the first Irish novel to feature the modern 'refugee' or secular political exile as not only an object of satire but a recognizable social type. Through its use of the epistolary form, or what Lever terms a 'story in letters',⁵⁸ *The Dodd family abroad* both foregrounds and invites the reader to make comparisons between different types of travel and a diverse array of traveller types, including Irish and Italian political discontents, as one of the most complex literary portrayals of human mobility in the Victorian period. Indeed, the novel brings together various elements of the aristocratic 'Grand Tour', the rise of recreational travel and the burgeoning popularity of institutionalized mass-tourism in the form of Cook's and Murray's tours (against which Lever would publicly fulminate in *Blackwood's* in 1865), as well as more involuntary forms of movement and political displacement, all of which circulate alongside the itinerant and frequently belligerent Dodd family as they make their way through Continental Europe. More to the point, *The Dodd Family abroad* also tacitly points up the ideological contradiction underpinning the refugee question in mid-Victorian Britain, by acknowledging the similarities between Young Ireland and Young Italy, that in spite of Great Britain's much lauded tradition of extending tolerance to European political exiles in the aftermath of 1848 as proof of British liberty, they actually appear to have a lot in common with their Irish counterparts.

For the most part, Lever treats both Irish and Continental European political exiles, such as the Polish refugee Kossuth, the Italian Mazzini, or the French Ledru-Rollin as objects of satire and figures of fun. For example, the novel's protagonist, Kenny James Dodd, remarks that: 'Whenever we have a grudge with a foreign state we should not begin to fit our fleets or armaments, but just send a steamer off to the nearest port with one of [these] refugees aboard. I'd keep Kossuth at Malta; . . . Ledru Rollin at Jersey; . . . and have Mazzini and some of the rest cruising about for any service they might be wanted on. In that way, we'd keep these Governments in order, and . . . be turning our vermin to a good account besides'.⁵⁹ Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, Lever's character also recognizes that the nationalist movements sweeping across Europe leading up to the 1848 rebellion have their equivalent in Ireland, and that those Irish political agitators who fled or were expelled after the

58 Lever, *The Dodd family abroad*, vol. 1, p. xvii. 59 Ibid. vol. 2, p. 245.

uprising are refugees themselves in all but name. Thus, he remarks from his vantage point in Italy that: 'These Italians . . . are very like the Irish', for between them 'there is the same blending of mirth and melancholy in the national temperament, the same imaginative cast of thought, the same hopefulness, and the same indolence'.⁶⁰ More to the point, the 'national temperament' of both 'peoples' have been similarly warped by the experience of colonization, he avows, because 'for centuries [they] have been subjected to every species of misrule'.

Finally, then, I would suggest that in at least recognizing the outward affinities and convergent interests between these discontented groups of Irish and Italian subject populations under the auspices of British and French or Austrian colonial rule, Charles Lever's novel *The Dodd family abroad* begins to expose the ideological contradiction at the heart of the 'refugee question' in mid-Victorian Britain, and that it is the exposure of this contradiction which provides the novel with one of its many sources of comic irony. By contrast, it is in the writing of Lady Morgan and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu that one might begin to discern a narrative movement towards the resolution of this contradiction, in their repeated insistence that the disparate figures of the 'raparee' and the 'refugee', as well as the divergent histories of Catholic and Protestant religious persecution and political dispossession they figuratively represent, are in effect one and the same, brought together in a set of actual and fictional family portraits that attest to the likeness of Irish Catholic raparees and Protestant Huguenot refugees in a singular, historically over-determined image of involuntary displacement. Whatever the degree of resemblance, then, between the types of displacement experienced by Irish Protestants or Catholics in the distant past or the historical present, as reflected in the works of either Lady Morgan, Le Fanu or Lever, it is only by adopting a sweeping perspective that examines the outflow of the unwanted between both Ireland and Continental Europe that one can begin to trace the emergence of the normative image of involuntary displacement in nineteenth-century Irish writing as it was both constructed and contested.