Theodore Melville’s *The White Knight, or the monastery of Morne* (1802) provides both a useful instance of the convergence of regional, national, and gothic literary forms considered in Chapter 2 and a helpful starting point with which to discuss the geographic settings of Romantic-era Irish gothic literature. Published just two years after *Castle Rackrent* (1800), *The White Knight* presents itself as a quasi-historical account of Irish antiquity and is set entirely in Ireland, with the main activity of the tale occurring in fifteenth-century Munster and Ulster. Melville’s preface explains that its subject matter – the White Knight himself – was a real person: ‘There were formerly three branches of the family of Fitzgerald, distinguished in Ireland by the titles of the White Knight, the Knight of Kerry, and the Knight of Glynn. The first, which I have chosen as the subject of the following pages, is now extinct.’¹ The narrative that follows clearly aligns itself with a Radcliffean tradition of gothic romance in its prominent use of the ‘explained supernatural’ and its tale of abduction, imprisonment, and thwarted love centred in the secret, subterranean passageways of Glanville Castle, the Castle of Dromore, and the nearby Monastery of Morne. At the same time, it bears a significant resemblance to the regional and national fictions of Edgeworth and Owenson. Its conclusion, envisioning the amicable end to the violent clan warfare at the heart of its narrative, maps the political onto the private in the symbolic marriages of once feuding families, thus evoking the nationally significant unions associated with the national tale. Similarly, its attempts to inform its (English) readers about Ireland and its people through lengthy descriptions of Irish landscape as well as explanatory details about Irish language and folklore, recall *Castle Rackrent*’s glossary and foreshadow Owenson’s dense use of topographical and
antiquarian material to establish Ireland’s cultural significance in *The wild Irish girl* (1806).

As in the cases of Roche’s *The children of the abbey* (1796) and Cullen’s *The castle of Inchvally* (1796), *The White Knight* has arguably been neglected because of its association with popular gothic romance. The novel is therefore seen not to seriously engage in the kind of cultural nationalist work associated with Edgeworth, Owenson, and even Melville’s later novel, *The Irish chieftain, and his family* (1809). The flaws in such arguments are discussed in Chapter 2. Melville’s Irish setting reinforces the claims made in Chapter 2 about the formal fluidity of national, regional, and gothic forms; the novel’s publication so soon after *Castle Rackrent*‘s draws attention to contemporary and earlier instances of Irish writing about Ireland – many of them gothic – that situate Edgeworth’s text as part of a long-standing tradition of Irish engagement with specifically Irish material.

If *The White Knight*’s resolute attention to Irish geography encourages us to see a longer, larger trend in Irish literary representations of Ireland, it also highlights some of the problematic issues associated with Romantic-era depictions of the country, especially those composed with an English audience in mind. In particular, Melville’s portrayal of Ireland as a peculiarly gothic landscape appears to confirm the stereotypically English view of Ireland as ‘a spatial and temporal anomaly’. Attention to Irish writers’ acceptance of a colonial ‘version of Ireland as a Gothic madhouse’ has tended to dominate discussion of Irish gothic literature, particularly in psychoanalytically driven criticism of texts by Anglo-Irish authors. Such awareness is not without merit in the case of works by Roche, Maturin, and Owenson, who, in Kilfeather’s terms, ‘establish[ed] Ireland as a primary gothic setting’, in keeping with the understanding that Irish reality brooked no comparison to the wildest romance. As Maturin memorably put it, Ireland is ‘the only country on earth, where, from the strange existing opposition of religion, politics, and manners, the extremes of refinement and barbarism are united, and the most wild and incredible situations of romantic story are hourly passing before modern eyes’ (*The Milesian chief*, vol. 1, p. 54). Significant as these writers have become in the historiography of Irish gothic literature, though, it is worth reflecting on deviations from the norm they are seen to constitute – one based, as many of the accepted traits of Irish and British gothic literature of this period are, on relatively few titles, which are themselves, often too simplistically understood. The variety of (non)interactions with Ireland offered by a wider selection of
late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century texts underlines a much richer, more complex approach to gothic geography than is commonly attributed to Irish writers.

Focus on the diversity of settings in Romantic-era Irish literary gothic also emphasises the falsity of our assumption that contemporary English gothic literature almost universally deploys Catholic Continental locales. Far from anomalous in the British gothic output of his day, Melville’s evocative depictions of local geography represent an established pattern that has been all too often dismissed. As Kilfeather has noted, ‘critical attention to the eighteenth-century female gothic novel has been defined as almost essential to the genre.’ Yet, closer examination of Radcliffe’s oeuvre reveals that even she was not as attached to Catholic Continental settings as we now tend to think. In fact, Radcliffe’s earliest novel The castles of Athlin and Dunbayne (1789) shuns a medieval Catholic European setting in favour of the sublime scenery of contemporary Scotland. If this gestures towards the equation of the so-called ‘Celtic Fringe’ with a barbarity equally terrifying, if not more so, than that of the Catholic Continent, it also refers back to the local, English settings of earlier texts such as Leland’s Longsword (1762), Reeve’s The old English baron (1777), Sophia Lee’s The recess (1783–5), and Fuller’s Alan Fitz-Osborne (1787). Moreover, it anticipates the native Irish and British landscapes of later gothic texts, including, as we have seen, White’s The adventures of John of Gaunt (1790), Maturin’s The Milesian chief (1812), and Le Fanu’s Strathallan (1816). This is not to deny the importance of distant and distancing geography in the literary gothic but instead to argue for a reconsideration of the local in our understanding of gothic literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. What is needed, this chapter suggests, is an expansion of Clery’s observation: ‘Radcliffe may have favoured southern Europe, [but] her followers generally set their novels in Britain.’

Clery’s supposition is that, from the 1790s, the literary gothic experienced a steady movement from the geographical otherness of exotic locations to the uncanny familiarity of ‘home’, just as it gradually transitioned from distant temporal periods to more recent, even contemporary, times. Although persuasive in their insistence on the renegotiation of both temporal and geographical gothic landscapes, Clery’s arguments fail to account for the decisively British settings of texts such as The castles of Athlin and Dunbayne and The old English baron. This latter text, it is worth
remembering, was one of the few novels actually to call itself ‘Gothic’, a term it applied specifically to the ‘times and manners’ of fifteenth-century Yorkshire.\textsuperscript{10} The interest in indigenous scenery, not to mention characters and events, evidenced in these and a multitude of other works in this period forcefully indicates that landscape in the literary gothic is not simply a question of displacement. Rather, much as with the names and titles authors gave to their works, the setting of a given piece of fiction can represent a very particular choice, one with both narratological and ideological import. To ignore the significance of this preference, this chapter contends, is fundamentally to misconstrue the literary gothic.

Here, as in the assessment of titles and nomenclature, quantitative analysis offers a particularly instructive vantage point, allowing us strikingly to visualise the geographical settings of the literary gothic. Figure 3 demonstrates that the vast majority of the works considered in this study locate their narratives primarily in the British Isles, which, for the terms of this discussion, means mainland England, as well as Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. A much smaller percentage of works feature the Catholic Continental settings – France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal – that we have come to expect from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century gothic works. Two reject both Britain and Europe for the more exotic locations of the Holy Land and Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{11}

Secondary, tertiary, and quaternary geographical settings show a general authorial awareness of and interest in more distant locations, but often

Figure 3 Irish gothic novels and their primary geographic settings

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Gothic Geographies via narrative subplots that serve as temporary diversions from the main story line and, as such, never completely draw attention away from the local. Indeed, in many of the works assessed here, foreign locations are frequently framed as the place from which characters continuously strive to return home. As such, they are sites of exile, hardship, enslavement, and imprisonment, but very often only momentarily, as in the case of Longsword, The convent, or Alan Fitz-Osborne. At the same time, the distant geographies in these texts frequently help highlight the terrible disruption, violence, and distress to be discovered at the long-desired home. In other works, as discussed in the final section of this chapter, the characters’ experiences abroad, although often presented as digressions from a more central concern with Ireland, are positively construed as the key to the restoration of rights at home and the construction of new national identities in the wake of the 1798 Rebellion and the Anglo-Irish Union.

These figures strikingly evidence a decided interest in ‘home’ settings in Romantic-era Irish gothic literary production. Certainly, a number of texts adopt the Catholic Continental settings traditionally associated with contemporary gothic: Stephen Cullen’s The haunted priory; or, the fortunes of the house of Rayo (1794), the Reverend Luke Aylmer Conolly’s The friar’s tale; or, memoirs of the chevalier Orsino (1805), Marianne Kenley’s The cottage of the Appenines, or, the Castle of Novina (1806), and Charles Maturin’s The fatal revenge; or, the family of Montorio (1807). But a significant portion of Irish gothic fiction in this period turns its attention to native – specifically English – settings. The thirteenth-century English landscape of Leland’s Longsword is only one instance of such topography found in a number of politically engaged gothic romances. These include, as we have seen, Fuller’s Alan Fitz-Osborne and the works of James White, but also, for instance, Fuller’s The son of Ethelwolf (1789) and Anna Milliken’s Corfe Castle (1793). All of these novels speak to the trend in late eighteenth-century British gothic literature ‘[to] accentuate the “native” associations of the Gothic and of romance, [while] reasserting the dignity of ancestors in the name of a belligerent patriotism.’ In doing so, they exemplify both the overlap of gothic and historical modes discussed in Chapter 1 and the now overlooked tendency in both English and Irish gothic fictions of this period to reject Catholic Continental settings and thus bring terror imaginatively closer to home.

Drawing attention to the local geography of Irish gothic fiction, the first part of this chapter traces the use of Irish topography in the oeuvre of Elizabeth Griffith (1727–93), considering her works as indicative of
the literary gothic’s nuanced engagement with Ireland in the Romantic period. As already noted in the Introduction, Griffith’s fiction has been situated at the start of gothic literary production in Ireland, particularly in its representation of the country as part of the sublime geographical fringes of the British nation. In their emphasis on Ireland as a strange and estranging terrain, works such as The history of Lady Barton (1771), The story of Lady Juliana Harley (1776), and ‘Conjugal fidelity’ (1780) might be considered to embrace rather than reject prevailing English understandings of Ireland as a marginal zone of incomprehensible strangeness. Correspondingly, they lend apparent credence to more recent critical assessments of Irish gothic literature’s obsessive interest in Ireland’s dangerously enchanting geography. Examined collectively, though, Griffith’s works reveal rich and varied constructions of Ireland. In both The history of Lady Barton and The story of Lady Juliana Harley, for example, the colonial cause of Ireland’s unfamiliar and forbidding reputation is repeatedly emphasised, drawing attention away from Irish topography to a lengthy history of violent invasion and dispossession. Indeed, in much of her fiction, Griffith carefully reverses accusations of Irish savagery by investigating the import of terror into Ireland, frequently depicting English villains victimising a blameless, innately noble Irish people. Elsewhere, Griffith employs local and exotic scenery that contributes to a subtle but no less scathing commentary on the state of English modernity.

The second part of the chapter continues the discussion of the first, concentrating on the use of English settings in a selection of generally overlooked Irish gothic fictions. Julia M. Wright has recently claimed that part of what makes Irish gothic literary production distinctive from English gothic is ‘its use of English settings’; ‘to locate gothic narratives in England’, Wright argues, ‘is unusual in English gothic fiction before the sensation fiction of the 1860s’. While Wright fails adequately to consider the resolutely local settings of earlier English examples of gothic, basing her conclusion on a handful of ‘leading examples of the gothic novel’, her argument is compelling in its emphasis on the ideological importance of local settings in Romantic-era Irish gothic fiction. The works assessed here, including Fuller’s The convent (1786) and The son of Ethelwolf, Millichen’s Corfe Castle, and Catharine Selden’s The English nun (1797), evidence Irish writers’ frequent rejection of the Catholic Continental settings traditionally associated with gothic fiction in order to focus on English locales described as equally dangerous as foreign climes, if not more so. They thus invite their readers to view England as characterised by an
unsetting violence and irrationality normally linked to the Continent and its superstitious, pre-modern, radicalised cultures.

The final section of the chapter charts Irish literary gothic’s participation in the new ‘cartographic consciousness’ that emerges in early nineteenth-century Irish fiction as writers explore ‘the different ways in which place can be inscribed in literature’. Connolly argues that the imagined cultural encounters between England and Ireland in the national tale help forge a ‘new relationship to place’ in the nineteenth-century Irish novel, as writers deploy Irish and English settings to ‘[map] developmental stages topographically, as adjacent worlds in which characters move and then choose between’. The scenes of Anglo-Irish encounter familiar from The wild Irish girl, The absentee, The wild Irish boy, and The Milesian chief have been well documented: through his transformative movement from England to Ireland, and his subsequently enlightening experience of the Irish landscape and its people, the national tale’s hero overcomes his prejudices about the country and cements his newfound appreciation of its culture by marriage to its allegorical female representative. Less well recognised are the symbolic cultural interactions between Ireland and countries other than England in contemporary Irish fiction. The final section of this chapter accordingly explores the more far-reaching cultural exchanges of several nationally minded gothic romances. These works – Henrietta Rouvière Mosse’s The old Irish baronet; or, manners of my country (1808) and Roche’s The tradition of the castle; or, scenes in the Emerald Isle (1824) – adapt the ideas of cultural encounter and national vindication manifest in the national tale, earlier gothic romances, and contemporary travelogues in order to construct various forms of travel as the key to a post-Union Irish national identity that is primarily transnational in nature.

**(Un)Gothicising Ireland: a case study of Elizabeth Griffith (1727–93)**

A prolific writer of drama, fiction, and literary criticism, Elizabeth Griffith is best known today for her career as a playwright and comedies such as The platonic wife (1765), The double mistake (1766), The school for rakes (1769), and A wife in the right (1772). While her fiction has been ‘appreciated’ by scholars, it is telling that only one of her three novels has appeared in a modern edition, whereas her plays have all recently been anthologised. Kilfeather’s pioneering work on Irish gothic literature, particularly that by women writers, gestured to the significance of a wider recognition of
Griffith’s fictional achievements. Arguing that ‘[a] history of Irish gothic fiction might begin with adultery in the works of Frances Sheridan and Elizabeth Griffith’, Kilfeather not only expanded the usual chronology of the ‘Irish Gothic’ but also positioned Griffith’s novels and short stories as important, early instances of the Irish literary gothic. Her focus on Griffith’s use of Irish topography and depiction of symbolic journeys to Ireland amounted to a call for more detailed analysis of late eighteenth-century Irish gothic literature’s engagement with native geography at the same time that it invited further consideration of the connections to be made between Griffith’s gothic fictions and later forms such as the national tale. This section addresses the as-yet-unmet demand for further examination of Griffith’s fiction, concentrating on her short stories and novels as interrogating and deconstructing contemporary depictions of Ireland as ‘an exotic tourist resort’ at best and a hellish zone of perversity and savagery at worst.

Griffith’s earliest novel, *The delicate distress* (1769), offers what might be considered a displaced reflection on English disdain for Ireland. Published as one of two fictions in *Two novels in letters. By the authors of Henry and Frances*. In *four volumes*, the work was situated as a companion piece to another publication, *A series of genuine letters between Henry and Frances* (1757–70). The first two-volume installment of that text, published in 1757, presented Griffith’s correspondence with her husband Richard Griffith (d. 1788) before their clandestine marriage on 12 May 1751. As Elizabeth Eger notes, the Griffiths’ epistolary collection ‘caused an immediate literary sensation’, and they went on to publish several more volumes of *Genuine letters*, which was also reprinted a number of times before the end of the century.

Shaun Regan has compellingly traced the ‘significant, if at times uncertain, role’ Ireland plays in the *Genuine letters*, noting the manner in which the letters of the first edition are addressed largely from England, not Ireland, where much of the original correspondence took place. *Genuine letters* thus appears to renounce Ireland, a repudiation that reflects the complex ‘[a]cts of positioning, literary and geographical’ that mark eighteenth-century Irish fiction and its primarily Protestant authors’ attempts to negotiate their relationship to both Ireland and England. It also indicates the Griffiths’ wariness, in the midst of ‘financial desperation’, to introduce any controversial or unpopular sentiments into a work whose financial success they sorely required. The necessity for such caution was borne out by the Griffiths’ experience of re-introducing Irish geographical
reference points in subsequent instalments and editions of the *Genuine letters*. This act of relocation proved unpopular with readers and elicited mocking responses from reviewers.\textsuperscript{30}

The knowledge gleaned from publishing *Genuine letters* may have advocated caution to Griffith in her engagement with Ireland in her subsequent fiction. Certainly, *The delicate distress* omits all but the occasional reference to Ireland: in volume 1, a minor character is said to ‘liv[e] in Ireland, where her husband had a very large fortune’ – a fact that keeps her from her friends for extended periods.\textsuperscript{31} Volume 2 contains a lengthier nod to Ireland with its inclusion of a brief poem titled ‘Verses written at the fountain at Mallow, in the county of Cork, in Ireland’ (*Delicate distress* vol. 2, p. 84). The lines are sent by the novel’s heroine, Lady Woodville, from her home in York, to her sister elsewhere in England, with the explanation that they were ‘written upon a particular occasion, at a water-drinking place in Ireland, called Mallow, some years ago’ (*Delicate distress*, vol. 2, p. 83). Lady Woodville identifies the poem’s ‘unfortunate subject’ as ‘a much admired character in that place … dignified by the title of Sappho’ (*Delicate distress*, vol. 2, p. 83). Although no reference is given, the poem had earlier appeared in *The memoirs of Mrs Laetitia Pilkington* (1748): ‘Mr. Worsdale to Mrs Pilkington.’\textsuperscript{32} Its association with the infamous Pilkington allows Griffith thematically to emphasise the idea of female moral frailty driving the narrative proper, recalling for readers the accusations of adultery and sexual impropriety levelled at Pilkington by her husband from 1737.\textsuperscript{33}

Neither allusion to Ireland in *The delicate distress* draws particular attention to the country, which instead becomes conspicuous by its very absence, especially in light of the pronounced negative treatment England receives. Set in an English countryside made treacherous by the ravages of smallpox, the machinations of a lustful marchioness who directs her ‘ensnaring wiles’ at the overly sensible and recently married Lord Woodville, and the unjust edicts and actions of a number of tyrannical fathers inclined to imprison their daughters in Continental convents, *The delicate distress* charts an explicitly English geography of terror (*Delicate distress*, vol. 1, p. 25). The novel’s periodic episodes in France and Italy serve not so much to highlight England’s comparative enlightenment as simply to accentuate the borderlessness between iniquities committed abroad and those enacted at home. The narrative’s particular focus on England and English locations thus helps to bear out this study’s contention that local settings are much more prevalent in early gothic fiction than
is generally believed. It also subtly suggests Griffith’s desire to exonerate Ireland from contemporary accusations of savagery linked to the ‘Celtic Fringe’ or ‘Celtic periphery’. Ireland’s notable exclusion from its pages, in other words, assumes a real significance, underlining what Kilfeather calls ‘[e]arly Irish gothic fiction[’s] … surprising reluctance to permit local [Irish] horrors’.34

A similar displaced engagement with Ireland is evident in Griffith’s unproduced dramatic poem, Amana (1764), published just five years before The delicate distress. Clearly indicating the multi-generic nature of eighteenth-century Irish gothic literature, Amana ostensibly concerns itself with a vindication of British modernity by way of comparison with an archaic past represented by ‘Gothic’ Egypt.35 Its exotic, oriental setting calls upon contemporary understanding of the Gothic past and prompts a reading of the text alongside Leland’s Longsword and Reeve’s The old English baron as a dramatic version of Watt’s ‘Loyalist Gothic romance’.36 The work’s praise of Britain as the home of ‘native liberty’ and the propagator of political freedom around the world functions as a rhetoric of patriotism used to validate British intervention in international conflict and to reassure readers of British greatness during a time of continued concern over France following the Seven Years’ War and increasing conflict with the colonies in America (Amana, p. 53).37

In this context, Ireland seems to act simply as a part of the ‘thrice happy kingdoms’ Griffith proclaims to be the seat of ‘peculiar blessings of liberty’ (Amana, p. iv). Yet, Griffith’s dedication of her play suggests a deep-seated concern with exclusively Irish, not British, national valorisation. Recommending Amana to the attention of Elizabeth Percy, the Countess of Northumberland, whose husband acted as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1763 to 1765, Griffith reminds Percy of her family lineage, extolling ‘the names of Percy and Seymour’ as virtually synonymous with ‘Liberty’ and ‘Glory’ (Amana, [p. v]). She moreover praises Percy herself for her ‘humanity, benevolence and affability’, calling the latter ‘the characteristic of true nobility, in opposition to that haughtiness which is frequently observable in those who have sprung from obscurity’ (Amana, [p. v]). Apparently laudatory, Griffith’s comments are nevertheless barbed, ridiculing a woman whose love of lavish entertainment was both well known and much criticised. Horace Walpole – no stranger himself to excess – called her ‘junketaceous’ and considered her ‘aristocratic but vulgar’.38 Percy’s husband catered to her desire for opulence while in Ireland but struggled in his position there, especially with Edmond Pery (1719–1806) and his
group of parliamentary patriots demanding constitutional concessions such as an Irish Habeas Corpus Act, reform of the pensions list, and a dramatic overhaul of the treasury system applied to Ireland. Exasperated, Northumberland appealed to Westminster to be allowed to punish Pery and other troublemakers but was counselled to conciliate them instead. Soon after, but not soon enough for Northumberland, one suspects, he left the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to take up that of vice-admiral of all America.

Griffith’s dedication to the Countess of Northumberland, read in the light of the latter’s brief but tempestuous stay in Ireland, undermines the piece’s concern with British liberty and suggests instead a veiled commentary on the current state of the Irish nation. In particular, it implicates the Countess of Northumberland, whose attention to political matters was well noted, in the success or failure of the liberation, however limited, of Ireland represented by Pery’s demands. Calling on Percy to do justice to her noble forebears who, as Griffith writes, took ‘[l]iberty [as] their crest’, Griffith invites England itself to do justice to its own ‘Gothick Constitution’ by rethinking its relationship to Ireland (Amana, [p. v]).

The indirect but no less significant deliberations on Ireland, England, and Anglo-Irish relations via non-Irish settings in Amana and The delicate distress anticipate the more obvious and extended treatments of Irish geography in The history of Lady Barton (1771) and The story of Lady Juliana Harley (1776). In both of these novels, Ireland is presented as, alongside Scotland and Wales, an intriguingly liminal area of the British nation that could function, at one and the same time, as retreat or refuge and uncanny, near otherworldly space. Evidently influenced both by Burke and contemporary travel writing, while also foreshadowing the scenes of geographical and cultural encounter made familiar in the national tale and historical novel, The history of Lady Barton opens with its heroine’s descriptions of wild Celtic scenery. Having just been married to the Anglo-Irish Lord Barton, Lady Louisa Barton recounts her adventures travelling from her family seat in England to her husband’s home in Ireland. Upon reaching Holyhead, Louisa writes of her unfamiliar surroundings in explicitly Burkean terms:

The wildness, or even horror, of this place, for we have had a perpetual storm, is so strongly contrasted with the mild scenes of Cleveland Hall, or indeed any other part of England that I have seen, that one would scarce think it possible for a few days journey to transport us into such extremes, of the sublime and beautiful –.
Describing the Welsh landscape as an ‘enchanted ground’ (*The history of Lady Barton*, vol. 1, p. 7), Louisa establishes an immediate social and geographic distinction between England and Wales. Days later, Louisa couches the description of her first encounter with Ireland in similar terms of mystical strangeness. After the ship from Holyhead nearly sinks, Louisa and her party find themselves ‘upon what may almost be called a desert island … uninhabited by every thing but a few goats, and some fishermen, who are almost as wild as they’ (*The history of Lady Barton*, vol. 1, pp. 14–15). Louisa’s husband promptly ventures out ‘to reconnoitre la carte pais, de la terre inconnuë, ou nous etions’ (*The history of Lady Barton*, vol. 1, p. 15). As Kilfeather persuasively contended, the use of the French language to speak of this strange new world poignantly highlights Ireland’s foreign nature, one later reiterated in Louisa’s account of the Irish people she meets. The old Irish families stile themselves Milesians, from Milesius, a Spaniard, who brought over a colony of his countrymen to people the island. – But I should think, from their manners, as I hinted at before, that they were originally derived rather from the French (*The history of Lady Barton*, vol. 1, p. 54).

For Kilfeather, the implications of this passage are clear: on the one hand, it constructs Ireland and its people as intrinsically foreign, more akin to the Catholic Continent than to England. On the other, by underlining the Irish people’s claim to a Milesian identity, it points to the contested nature of the country’s history. Although the Irish families to whom Louisa refers deploy the term ‘Milesian’ as a mark of pride in their lineage, the reminder of their august heritage is also a reminder that, as Kilfeather put it, ‘England is only the latest in a series of colonial powers to invade Ireland, and that the country has no native identity’.

The notion of colonial invasion is supported in the text by the character of Colonel Walter, an early version of the absentee landlord, who has decided to travel to Ireland ‘to take possession of his estate, and a seat in parliament for a borough he never saw’ (*The history of Lady Barton*, vol. 1, p. 10). On this information, Louisa pointedly comments, ‘I am no politician, or I should animadvert a little upon this subject’ (*The history of Lady Barton*, vol. 1, p. 10). While she refuses openly to admit her disapproval of Colonel Walter, her experiences in Ireland overwhelmingly prove the danger he represents. In fact, it is largely through Colonel Walter’s machinations that Louisa’s once charming husband becomes a tyrannical and jealous brute, viewing Louisa with intense suspicion and fundamentally contributing to her eventual death from grief and (largely imagined) guilt. *The history of*
Lady Barton thus forcefully suggests that, while Ireland may be a strange and enchanting world, villainy is not native to its soil.

The story of Lady Juliana Harley describes a similar passage from the mundane reality of life in London and Bath to the sublime environs of Wales and Ireland. If, in The history of Lady Barton, travel to the geographical margins of the nation is a bewildering and terrifying experience, in The story of Lady Juliana Harley it is a much more bland, albeit bemusing, affair. Undertaking his journey in order to forget his love for the eponymous heroine, a young widow around whom some mystery ever hangs, Charles Evelyn tells his correspondent, ‘We arrived at Holyhead – But I shall not attempt to describe the delightfully romantic wildness of the country through which we passed to it – From thence we embarked for Dublin; and without storm, tempest, or any other sinister accident, arrived there in about eight hours.’ Charles and his companions decide ‘to make a tour of this country and visit some of the natural beauties it contains’ (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 9). Enraptured by Killarney Lake, Charles summarises it as ‘past description’, adding that ‘[t]he beautiful and sublime are here mingled in the superlative degree; the great Creator’s works, unspoiled by art, rush on the mind, and fill it with delight and awe’ (Juliana Harley vol. 2, pp. 34, 35). But Charles’s romantic views of Ireland take a more disturbing tone when he journeys to Roscommon, an area surrounded by land ‘less cultivated than any part of Ireland than I have yet seen’ and almost entirely devoid of human society except that promised by ‘a few miserable huts, made up of mud and straw, which appear to be scarcely inhabitable’ (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 38). Romance and reality collide even more spectacularly in Roscommon town, where Charles discovers the windowless home of the Prince of Coolavin, whose ‘ancestors were lords of this wide domain’ and whose ‘proud spirit cannot bear to look upon those lands, which he considers as by right his own, though Cromwell tore the inheritance from his family, and reduced his patrimony to the scanty pittance of two hundred pounds a year’ (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 39). Unlike the proud but sympathetic Prince of Inismore in Owenson’s The wild Irish girl, the Prince of Coolavin is offensive in his arrogance, presiding over his household from ‘an oak great chair’ with an iron hand, refusing to allow his wife to eat with him because she does not derive from royal blood, and maintaining always at the side of his throne, in testament to the respect owed to him, ‘an immense large coffin’ adorned with his ancestral heraldry and flanked by ‘hundreds of wooden cups’ to be filled with whiskey for those who attend his funeral (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 42).
While this ‘old savage’, as Charles calls him, stands as evidence of a misguided attachment to past glories, he is more absurd than threatening (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 43). Taken together, the Irish episodes of The story of Lady Juliana Harley seem calculated to support, if not a positive image of Ireland itself, a least an impression of mainstream English society as infinitely more threatening. Ireland may be a ‘land of genealogers’ obsessed with powerless royal lineages and historic wrongs, but the vestiges of a glorious past never threaten to rise against the present, as they do in a text such as Roche’s The children of the abbey (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 32). Instead, in The story of Lady Juliana Harley, violence and atrocity reside elsewhere, specifically in England, where Juliana repeatedly finds herself a victim to the demands of patriarchal society. Eventually taking refuge in a Continental convent, Juliana discovers peace and the ‘earthly happiness’ available to her only in ‘seclusion’ from England and its ‘world of woe’ (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, pp. 133, 134). And, while ‘the absent forms of those from whom she is banished haunt her retirement’, Juliana prefers the ‘visions’ and ‘spectres’ of her ‘solitary cell’ to her English home, even after her brother – the latest male family member attempting to exert a villainous control over her – repents and begs her to return (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 65). The novel accordingly ends with the news that Juliana has taken her vows and become Sister Mary Magdalen, finding the support and affection refused to her by suspicious family members and treacherous friends at home, in the ‘sensible’ and ‘good’ society of her fellow nuns (Juliana Harley, vol. 2, p. 134).

With this conclusion, The story of Lady Juliana Harley reverses the vilification of the Continent usually associated with ‘the Gothic novel’, locating atrocity instead in a domestic, English setting. At the same time, it counters English stereotypes of Ireland’s gothic terrain. Although its treatment of Irish geography and culture is more tangential and apparently flippant than that of The history of Lady Barton, it nevertheless constructs a striking contrast between Ireland and England that upsets conventional ideas about the ‘Celtic Fringe’ and its relationship to the cosmopolitan centre. Here, despite its sublime landscape, Ireland is an unthreatening realm of hospitality and harmless nostalgia for the past, while England is haunted by the cruelties enacted upon a young heroine who has the misfortune to fall afoul of patriarchal authority.

Griffith’s later fiction continues the attention to English treachery evident in The story of Lady Juliana Harley and The history of Lady Barton. Two of the stories included in Novellettes, selected for the use of young ladies...
and gentlemen (1780) are particularly worth noting in this regard. As discussed in the Introduction, ‘Conjugal fidelity’ appears to confirm stereotypes of gothic Ireland in its focus on a seventeenth-century Irish terrain overwhelmed by ‘storms’ – natural and otherwise – and its detailing of the terrors of the 1641 Rebellion (‘Conjugal fidelity’, p. 186). It nonetheless complicates narratives of Protestant victimhood, in part by suggesting that political and religious strife arrived in Kilkenny with Pansfield’s sixteenth-century English ancestors. As in The history of Lady Barton, however, the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland is only one instance in a long history of successive acts of colonisation. Tellingly, Elvina Butler’s identity as ‘a near relation to the Ormond family’ links her to an illustrious Old English family whose claim to their extensive estates in Munster and Leinster dated back to the twelfth-century Norman invasion, thus emphasising repeated foreign incursions into Ireland over the centuries (‘Conjugal fidelity’, p. 182). Moreover, while Elvina herself is a Catholic and apparently sympathises with the confederates’ cause, her name conjures James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormond (1610–88), who, against his family’s wishes, was raised a Protestant and took an active role in royalist resistance to the 1641 Rebellion. As it does so, it emphasises the continued presence and power of alien forces in Ireland.

In contrast to ‘Conjugal fidelity’, ‘Story of Lady Fanny Beaumont and Lord Layton’ omits Ireland altogether to concentrate on an unambiguously English setting. The relationship between its eponymous characters, the married couple Lady Beaumont and Lord Layton, anticipates the violence of male oppression so common to later British gothic fiction. Like Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, Lady Beaumont and Lord Layton are star-crossed lovers belonging to rival families. When they fall in love, they elope to Scotland and find themselves ‘curse[d]’ by their parents. Horrified by the effects of her filial disobedience, the scrupulous Lady Beaumont soon learns to regret her clandestine marriage for other reasons as well when Lord Layton proves a fickle lover. Four years after their marriage and two after the birth of their daughter, Lord Layton conceives an all-consuming passion for a young Frenchwoman named Louisa. Desperate to be rid of his wife so that he can persuade Louisa to accept his advances, Lord Layton banishes his wife to a ‘dismal Castle’ in Westmoreland, ‘[un]inhabited by any of his family for above a century’ (‘Story of Lady Fanny Beaumont and Lord Layton’, p. 198). In a twisted perversion of the ruse by which Romeo and Juliet intend to be united, Lord Layton convinces his wife to consent to a plan by which she will first feign sickness and death, then allow herself to
be taken from the castle in a hearse, only then to conceal herself on the Continent for the rest of her life. Unable fully to commit herself to Lord Layton’s designs, Lady Beaumont decides, like Elvina in ‘Conjugal fidelity’, to take matters into her own hands, fatally stabbing herself with a rusty dagger that she discovers in the castle. As in Romeo and Juliet, however, there is a moment of dreadful realisation that death was not necessary: the noises Lady Beaumont had taken for the beginning of Lord Layton’s plot are actually her young daughter, come to find her after Lord Layton had been mortally wounded in a duel with Lady Beaumont’s brother, thus freeing her from both literal and figurative confinement.

At the conclusion of her tale, Griffith provides the following moral: ‘From this sad Story let the young and thoughtless learn, that the smallest deviation from the paths of virtue is liable to plunge the soul and body into the extremes of vice and misery; for none can say to themselves, “Thus far, and no farther will I go”’ (‘Story of Lady Fanny Beaumont and Lord Layton’, p. 202). The tale’s straightforward warning against excessive sensibility looks forward to similar cautions that appear in later gothic fictions such as The mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian, but there is an intriguing twist here. Not only is it a man, rather than a woman, who is seen to be the principal victim of unbridled emotion, it is a well-respected English peer. In this, Lord Layton prefigures the English villains of William Godwin’s fiction, at the same time that he evinces Griffith’s interest in linking England, not Ireland, to gothic atrocity in the form of dangerous sensibility as well as patriarchal violence and oppression. ‘Story of Lady Fanny Beaumont and Lord Layton’ thus constructs an explicitly English topography of terror, symbolically re-locating barbarism and savagery from Ireland and the Continent to England.

Mapping the English landscapes of Romantic Irish gothic fiction

The many, varied (non)representations of Ireland evident in Griffith’s oeuvre underline the often subtle, often complex nature of eighteenth-century Irish literature’s engagement with questions of identity, origins, and national affiliation. Exploring and charting Irish terrain, but also conspicuously ignoring it at times, Griffith’s works reveal early Irish gothic’s nuanced considerations of Ireland’s placement in the period’s ‘“map” of Gothicity.’ As they do so, they embody the overlooked trend in late eighteenth-century Irish and British gothic literary production to focus on local, autochthonous
– rather than foreign, Continental – settings. Griffith’s frequent depiction of England as a peculiarly gothic landscape is particularly worth noting in this regard. Whereas Ireland and the ‘Celtic Fringe’ might reasonably be associated with the Catholic Continent and considered exotic and bizarre in this period, mainland England was supposed to be different: enlightened, rational, civilised. Hence, the conventional argument goes, English gothic literature deployed European settings as a method of tacitly confirming English modernity. Yet, many Romantic gothic texts anxiously interrogate English political and cultural progress by way of native settings that allow for meaningful explorations of the Gothic past and its relationship to present-day England. This is evident in the historic English settings of works such as *The old English baron*, *The recess*, and Richard Warner’s *Netley Abbey; a gothic story* (1795).52 Similarly, as we have already seen in Chapter 1, many Irish authors, including Thomas Leland, Anne Fuller, and James White, adopt medieval English settings in their gothic fictions as a method of debating eighteenth-century society’s advancement – or lack thereof – from the past.

Examination of the native geography of several further examples of historical gothic fiction demonstrates the central – if varied – role English settings played in the development of Irish and English gothic literature. Fuller’s *The son of Ethelwolf* (1789) considers the reign of Alfred the Great (r. 848/9–99), who is described as valiantly resisting the incursions of the ‘licentious [Danish] invaders who disturb his throne, and deluge his country with blood!’53 His eventual triumph over the Danes is lauded as a pivotal moment in English history: restored to the throne, Alfred is said ‘to dispense the blessings of peace and security to his people’, through the exercise of ‘his military abilities’ and ‘his just and vigorous laws’ (*Son of Ethelwolf*, p. 277). Under his leadership, ‘[c]ommerce, till then unknown or neglected, poured the products of far distant realms into his dominions, and learning, cherished by his fostering care, broke the fetters with which superstitious ignorance had bound her’ (*Son of Ethelwolf*, p. 277). Fuller’s valorisation of Alfred – ‘the paradigmatic hero of reformist patriotism in the eighteenth century, an iconically “English” figure widely credited with the institution of a bicameral national Parliament, as well as trial by jury’ – aligns her novel with contemporary English works such as Joseph Cottle’s *Alfred, an epic poem* (1800) and Henry Pye’s *Alfred; an epic poem* (1801).54 As it does so, it suggests her interest – shared with a number of Irish as well as English writers – in the ‘construction of a living – and sometimes explicitly Gothic – past with an exemplary meaning for the present.’55
If Fuller’s *The son of Ethelwolf* participates in the broadly apologist vein of the Loyalist gothic romance identified by Watt, Mrs F.C. Patrick’s later text, *The Jesuit; or, the history of Anthony Babington, Esq.* (1799), deploys its historic English setting to a much more critical end.\(^5\) Set during the religious warfare of the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603), *The Jesuit* catalogues the series of events by which its eponymous protagonist becomes embroiled in, and condemned for, treasonous plotting against the queen. Although he has been committed from his youth by his zealously Catholic father to such activity, Babington finds himself appalled by the sectarian horrors he witnesses and is convinced of ‘the consequences of rebellion and disturbance.’\(^5\) Nevertheless, Catholicism repeatedly overcomes Babington’s better nature and the ‘glimmerings of a Protestant conscience’ that momentarily cause him to hesitate in his loyalty to his father’s religion.\(^5\)

While, as Connolly argues, the novel’s ‘iconography of anti-Catholicism’ implicates it in a prevailing tendency of late eighteenth-century English gothic fiction, it also refuses solely to displace the violence and upheaval of sectarian discord to the Continent.\(^5\) Babington’s recognition of the desirability of ‘a well-regulated settled government’ is prompted by the assassination of the Duke de Guise in France, but his experience of his homeland is of a nation similarly riven by bloody religious disputes (*The Jesuit*, vol. 3, p. 20). After all, it is in England, as Babington admits in his prison-cell confession, that ‘the artifices to which, throughout my whole life, I have been the victim’ were conceived and deployed; it is in England, Babington writes, that he first embarked on the series of events that transformed him into little more than ‘a monster’ (*The Jesuit*, vol. 3, p. 336); and it is England, the novel suggests, that continues to evidence the markers of an atavistic, Gothic savagery supposedly left behind in the ensuing centuries of progress and enlightenment.

*The Jesuit’s* questioning of English modernity by way of its setting assumes a particularly poignant significance in Patrick’s overt linking of it to recent rebellious activity in Ireland. Presenting the novel as a redacted manuscript containing Babington’s eyewitness testimony, Patrick encourages her readers to use it ‘to penetrate into the real motives of revolutions’ (*The Jesuit*, vol. 1, p. x).\(^6\) Coming so soon after the 1798 Rebellion, Patrick’s advice strikingly conflates past and present at the same time that it suggests the ways in which English settings could be used by Irish gothicists to explore issues of Anglo-Irish relations, often in defence of Irish patriotism. Meanwhile, despite its Loyalist perspective, Fuller’s *The son of Ethelwolf* might be read as commenting negatively on the English presence in Ireland,
reflecting a revolutionary zeal no doubt connected to the fall of the Bastille and the start of the French Revolution in the year of the novel’s publication. Indicatively, Loeber and Loeber present the novel as ‘an allegory of contemporary conditions in Ireland’; Kilfeather, meanwhile, argued that it prompts comparisons with eighteenth-century Ireland in its representation of the Danes ‘as colonial destroyers’ pitted against a noble but usurped king described as ‘a patriot sovereign’.

Similar arguments might be advanced about Milliken’s *Corfe Castle* (1793), which, much like Leland’s *Longsword* and Fuller’s *Alan Fitz-Osborne*, explores the disastrous effects of a ‘weak minded’ king – Ethelred the Unready (r. 978–1013, 1014–16) – too easily swayed by the influence of villainous confidants at a time when strong leadership is most needed: the Danish invasions of England in the early eleventh century. With the bloodthirsty Danish warrior Swain having temporarily vanquished Ethelred from his throne, the people lament their powerless and imperiled position:

> Those were the days of England’s mourning! when an usurper sat upon her throne! when her Nobles were slaughtered, and their treasures sent into a foreign land! when her matrons toiled to deck the spoilers out in gorgeous weeds! when her trembling Virgins were torn from the arms of their widowed mothers, to gratify the brutal passions of those, who had murdered their sires! when the temples dedicated to the worship of their God! were turned into scenes of the most savage riot! – when avarice and oppression laid her cities waste, and all were subject to a tyrant[‘]s will! – those were days of mourning! – those were days of horror! (*Corfe Castle*, vol. 1, pp. 266–7)

The language of usurpation, tyranny, rapine, and pillage anticipates the graphic descriptions of government force in what Niall Gillespie has identified as Irish Jacobin gothic, a form that became increasingly popular after 1795 and the violent disarmament of the then illegal United Irishmen Society. The novel’s consideration of the reign of Ethelred the Unready moreover conjures the related historical crises in Ireland, namely Brian Boru’s death at the Battle of Clontarf (1014) and the succession crisis that followed. With Brian Boru often quasi-mythologised as the victorious liberator of Ireland from the bloodthirsty Vikings, the narrative’s implied connection to ongoing unrest in contemporary Ireland assumes an even keener edge.

Ultimately, Milliken’s novel sounds a conservative note. With the accession to the English throne of Swain’s son, Canute, order is restored under a ruler who, though foreign, is presented as merciful, just, and capable. Unlike either the Anglo-Saxon Ethelred or his own father, Swain
is said to look to ‘his people’s happiness’, seeking to ensure it ‘by the institution of wholesome laws, and the impartial administration of justice’ (Corfe Castle, vol. 2, p. 283). His marriage to Emma, Ethelred’s widow, ensures political continuity, not least because Emma accepts Canute only on condition ‘that his children by her should inherit the crown of England in preference to any others he might hereafter have, and in case of a failure of issue by this marriage, that the sons of Ethelred or [Ethelred’s son] Edmond should be restored to their right’ (Corfe Castle vol. 2, p. 304).

Canute’s ability to bring peace to the land and broker a lasting union between Anglo-Saxon and Danish peoples, partially through his own marriage, speaks presciently to Irish politics in the run-up to the 1798 Rebellion and ensuing Anglo-Irish Union while it anticipates the allegorical marriages of the later national tale. Caution is needed, of course, in the interpretation as allegorical of texts such as Corfe Castle and The son of Ethelwolf, as Jarlath Killeen reminds us. These works are not textbook examples of literary allegory; nevertheless, contemporary Ireland frequently becomes symbolically spread through their narratives by way of romance’s tendency ‘[to provoke] alternative meanings.’ Although neither text is directly about Ireland, they both contain paratextual reminders of their authors’ home country that frame their interpretations of English history. Milliken, for instance, dedicates her novel to the Irish MP Henry Boyle, 3rd Earl of Shannon (1771–1842) and numbers among her patrons, as does Fuller, several prominent Irish peers, as indicated in the subscription lists included in both of their novels. Milliken’s decision to publish her novel with Cork-based James Haly, moreover, suggests her targeting of a specifically Irish readership. Fuller’s The son of Ethelwolf, too, though initially published in London, was immediately reprinted in Dublin, revealing both its general popularity and its perceived appeal to an Irish audience.

The material history of these novels, like their paratextual reminders of Ireland, does not, in itself, make them allegorical, but an awareness of it can – and often does – inflect our reading of their versions of English history. While, therefore, these texts are not unique in their use of England’s past, drawing attention instead to the widespread focus on local historical settings in contemporary Irish and English gothic literature, they point to the potential added interest Irish writers had in exploring the annals of British history. At the same time, these texts are not simply evidence of ‘the Irish gothic’s much-discussed concern with the colonial problem’; rather they underline eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Irish literature’s frequent ‘engage[ment] with the gothic to critique English structures on
broader terms." As is the case with texts such as *Longsword* and *The castle of Otranto*, *The son of Ethelwolf* and *Corfe Castle* adopt a historical perspective that works effectively to collapse the distance between past and present, thus expressing doubts about eighteenth-century England’s enlightened modernity. In these novels, ‘the myth of English modernity’ is alternately confirmed and eroded as Fuller and Milliken revisit and rewrite moments of transition from pre-modernity to modernity.

Where *Corfe Castle* and *The son of Ethelwolf* use the past in order to displace, at least temporally, any negative understandings of England’s Gothic identity, other Irish gothic texts offer much more urgent, present-day constructions of the English landscape. By refusing any kind of imaginative displacement, they force their readers to consider the sheer proximity – geographically and temporally – of gothic atrocity. In these works, England is never a place or time of security, nor does it allow readers to indulge in a mental buttressing of rational, Protestant English-ness. Instead, contemporary England itself becomes the seat of horrifying misery, iniquity, and religious prejudice, placing in question the reader’s understood equation of the English nation with modernity and the Catholic Continent with backward barbarism. As an example, Fuller’s *The convent* (1786) repeatedly affirms the danger represented to the English home by recurrent memories of a violent and unsettling past. Initially, the novel appears to engage in a vindication of England by way of a denigration of the Catholic Continent, adding potency to its depiction of Sophia battling an army of French nuns and priests by its clearly contemporary setting. Sophia’s assertions of her national loyalties – ‘I have friends … who will not tamely see me injured – detain me therefore at your peril! I am a British subject, and you have no right to control me’ (*The convent*, vol. 2, pp. 184–5) – reflect concerns over increasing revolutionary unrest in France and the potential threat it posed to English national security. They also appear to voice the defences of English national identity and character now understood to underwrite ‘the Gothic novel’ as it develops at the close of the eighteenth century. As such, *The convent* might be read as confirming traditional critical views of the use of Continental settings in ‘the Gothic novel’ as intended to allow its ‘middle-class Protestant readership … to thrill to the scenes of political and religious persecution safe in the knowledge that they themselves had awoken from such historical nightmares’.

Yet, the terrors faced by Sophia in France are a secondary narrative focus. Indeed, Sophia’s convent immurement occupies a relatively brief interlude and is relayed to readers in the curiously indirect manner of
letters exchanged by Sophia’s friends and family members. Sophia herself remains largely silent, and the details of her experiences in France are primarily secondhand. A partial consequence of the novel’s epistolary format, this oblique treatment of the titular convent serves not so much to underscore French treachery as to draw attention to the more obvious and pronounced villainy of Sophia’s own family in England, her guardian Mr Woodville in particular. Sophia may be subject to zealous Catholic evangelism in France, but, the novel forcefully indicates, the real danger to both her life and her liberty resides at home with her scheming uncle. Only with his death can Sophia achieve true freedom from fear; even then Sophia is reminded of the power Woodville wields as well as the reasons behind her exile to France. Confessing, on his deathbed, that he had intended ‘to make away with Sophia some way or other’, Woodville confirms the threateningly violent terrain of Sophia’s own home in England (The convent, vol. 2, p. 307).

In a similar manner, Selden’s The English nun (1797) places a marked emphasis on England as a disturbing landscape haunted continuously by patriarchal violence and its long-lasting effects. Relating the sufferings of Louisa Percy, the daughter of the Catholic Scottish Peer, the Earl of Montrose, the novel tells of her abrupt removal from the English convent in Portugal in which she is educated to England upon the deaths of her three elder brothers. It is her father’s intention ‘literally to be disposed of [her]’ through marriage, but he disapproves of her chosen lover, Lord Edward Lumley, the third son of the Duke of Beaufort. As it happens, Edward’s father also objects to Louisa, who is presented to him as a ‘Caledonian belle’ and a ‘pretty papist beggar’ (The English nun, pp. 11, 78). With both fathers insisting that their children have nothing to do with each other, Louisa and Edward resign themselves to separation, and Edward soon after travels to Switzerland, intending to remain there for several years. While he is gone, Louisa’s parents die, leaving her a penniless orphan, and she returns to the English convent in Portugal with the purpose of immediately taking the veil.

Louisa’s journey to Portugal is pregnant with her devastation over leaving her native land, an exit that becomes chillingly linked to her own impending change in cultural and social status. Embarking on the ship that will take her to Portugal for what she assumes will be the rest of her life, Louisa is struck with ‘the painful idea of abandoning her native land’ (The English nun, p. 114). Upon arriving in Portugal, Louisa sends a miniature portrait of herself to Edward’s sympathetic mother, the Duchess
of Beaufort, begging her to look upon it occasionally and ‘remember that such a being as myself once existed’ (*The English nun*, p. 121). Banishment from her home country, Louisa’s words suggest, coincides with the existential death of Louisa Percy and her replacement by Sister Louisa. For the rest of the narrative, this imagery of Louisa as somehow other-worldly will persist, as when, for instance, she once again sees Edward upon an unexpected return to England to claim the property left to her by a distant relation. Arguing against Edward’s frantic insistence that, with the Duke of Beaufort now dead, they can obtain an absolution of Louisa’s vows and marry, Louisa conjures him, ‘Consider me as your sister; fancy that I am the one you most loved, risen from the grave, and then I shall glory in your affection’ (*The English nun*, p. 186). Styling herself as Edward’s long-dead twin sister, Frances, risen again, Louisa affirms her supernatural existence, one that fits her only for future, rather than present, happiness with Edward. Accordingly, once her business in England is completed, Louisa returns to Portugal and is soon after made abbess of the English convent in Lisbon. Edward, in his turn, enlists in the Russian army to fight against the Turks and is killed in battle. Days after hearing this news, Louisa herself succumbs not so much to grief but to a belief that now, finally, she and Edward might be together: ‘It is now no violation of the tenderest friendship to wish to die. Lumley no longer lives, to have his sad existence embittered by my death. He expects me in a better world, and I hasten to rejoin him’ (*The English nun*, p. 211).

While it is exile from their native land that is associated with the death of Louisa and Edward’s wishes for a future together, England is repeatedly presented as a barren landscape hostile to its sons and daughters. Contemplating a return to England after having lived in Portugal for seven years, Louisa says that to do so would not make her content but would instead revive the bitter memories of her youth: ‘wherever I lay me, my bed will be strewed with thorns; for where is the oblivious cup that will annihilate memory?’ (*The English nun*, p. 126). Although Edward accuses Louisa of having ‘a memory so little retentive’, the problem is that she, like Edward himself, can only wish for ‘some charm to banish recollection’ (*The English nun*, p. 135). For him, England can never be his home again, because ‘the contrast that it every moment presents, between the present time and the past, is too wounding to feelings irascible [sic] by nature, and rendered more so by affliction’ (*The English nun*, p. 135). Even with the concluding deaths of Edward and Louisa, England retains its strangely disconsolate character. Upon his brother’s death, the profligate William
Harcourt Lumley suddenly reforms, cares for his grieving mother, assumes his position as the new Duke of Beaufort, and marries the sister of Louisa’s last remaining relative, the Earl of Montrose. Louisa’s former admirer, the Marquis of Halifax, marries the sister of Lady Emmeline, a young woman of whom Louisa had become fond during her education at the English convent in Portugal. Together, these families ‘lived in the most perfect union’ and ‘would have been perfectly happy’, were it not for occasional reminders of the escapades of remaining unruly relatives (The English nun, p. 214). Referring to a past that continues to disrupt a settled and contented present, these traces of discontent find their contrast in the continued memory of Louisa and Edward:

They were all too sensible of the happy release from sorrow that death had afforded to their beloved friends, to mourn for them without measure, or without end; but they never forgot them: and Emmeline and Julie often held up as an example to their daughters the virtues of the English nun. (The English nun, p. 215)

These constant reminders of Louisa and Edward, however positively construed, nevertheless refer the reader back to Edward’s earlier descriptions of England as a peculiarly haunted mental, if not geographical, landscape. Moreover, when combined with the disruptive potential of Edward’s jealous sister, Cecilia, who had purposely assisted her father in thwarting the love between Edward and Louisa because of her own disappointment in not securing the Marquis of Halifax for herself, this gentle and commemorative memory of the now happy couple threatens to transform, suddenly and violently, into a dangerous force of ongoing destruction and misery.

Asserting the veracity of her account of an English landscape so inhospitable as to be dismissed for a Portuguese convent, Selden refers her reader to the ‘the well known circumstances mentioned by Mr. Barretti [sic], in the First Volume of his Travels through Spain and Portugal’ (The English nun, p. ii). Evidently referencing Joseph Baretti’s Journey from England to Genoa (1770), Selden appears to call upon traditional, anti-Catholic depictions of the Continent in a bid to triumph English modernity. Baretti’s travelogue, as Nathalie C. Hester notes, depicts Portugal ‘on the far-flung margins of Europe’, both geographically and culturally, using this portrayal as a method of aligning Italy with England and thereby ‘confirm[ing] Italy’s enduring centrality to western civilization.’ In its pointedly negative stereotyping of Portugal, Baretti’s account sits comfortably alongside contemporary English texts such as Richard Twiss’s Travels
through Portugal and Spain (1775), William Dalrymple’s Travels through Spain and Portugal, in 1774 (1777) and Alexander Jardine’s Letters from Barbary, France, Spain, Portugal (1788), which emphasise the country’s barbarism, primarily through its continued attachment to Catholicism.76 Whereas Baretti, Twiss, Dalrymple, and Jardine focus on Portuguese depravity in order to contrast the country with more enlightened English and, in Baretti’s case, Italian societies, Selden offers a much more sympathetic account of Portugal that reverses these dichotomies. By doing so, Selden upsets the comparative framework of eighteenth-century British travelogues – one also traditionally linked to gothic literature in this period – and locates, both imaginatively and geographically, the bewildering violence enacted against her heroine at home rather than abroad.77

That Selden, like Fuller before her, chooses a deliberately contemporary time period makes her depictions of a gothic English landscape even more unsettling, as it insists on both the temporal and geographical proximity of barbarism.78 In these works, the map of gothic atrocity is re-centred from the Catholic Continent (and the ‘Celtic Fringe’) to mainland England. Like contemporary and near-contemporary works interested in particular periods of English history, therefore, The convent and The English nun urge a reconsideration of current literary criticism’s view of the traditional settings of Romantic gothic literature, pointing to a pronounced late eighteenth-century concern with England’s precarious state of modernity.

**IRISH GOTHIC FICTION AND THE CULTURAL NATIONALISM OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

In their multi-faceted and varied interactions with Ireland and England, the works discussed in this chapter evidence the decidedly autochthonous focus of late eighteenth-century Irish gothic literature. By the first two decades of the nineteenth century, such local and regional settings would become a hallmark of the national tale and its defence of the Irish people by way of an extensive exploration of customs, culture, and geography. Traditionally understood, the national tale revolves around an imaginative juxtaposition of Ireland and England, allowing readers to learn, alongside the usually uninformed and prejudiced hero, of the beauties of the Irish countryside, the innate nobility of its people, and the august nature of its culture. The English or Anglo-Irish hero’s experience of the foreign landscape and people of Ireland convinces him of its worth and helps to reconcile England to political union. For this reason, Ina Ferris has spoken
cogently of the national tale as instituting a ‘dynamic notion of culture as encounter, often of an abrasive kind’. But the symbolic, often fraught meetings of the national tale do not always occur between England and Ireland, as conventional readings of the form would suggest. *The fair Hibernian* (1789), for instance, may be classified as an early example of the national tale and focuses, as Ian Campbell Ross notes, on ‘a clash of cultures – though not, interestingly, the more familiar Irish-English one but rather Irish-French relations’. Owenson’s *The missionary* (1811), subtitled ‘an Indian tale’, but frequently read as a displaced consideration of Irish national politics, envisions a fatal meeting of Eastern and Western cultures in its concentration on seventeenth-century India. Similarly, Owenson’s *The novice of Saint Dominick* (1805) operates as what Wright identifies as an ‘outsider national tale’, or ‘[a] national [tale] about nations of which the author is not a member’. Its consideration of fourteenth-century France and its interfaith marriage of Catholic heroine and Huguenot hero point to the complex ways in which Irish authors looked beyond Anglo-Irish encounters in their works to negotiate and define modern nationhood in the early nineteenth century.

Underlining the varied nature of the national tale and the cultural encounters it envisions, Miranda Burgess claims that it is predominantly ‘dialogical’ in nature, ‘reproducing diverse accents, vocabularies and sometimes languages as it attempts to provide an overview of a national community – a national community that is continually in contact with representatives from other nations’. Burgess’s emphasis on the international aspect of the national tale harmonises well with recent analyses of Irish fiction presented by Wright and Connolly, amongst others. For her part, Wright argues that nineteenth-century Irish nationalist writing ‘often explicitly draws on larger geographical networks that establish wide-ranging international comparisons’. Connolly, meanwhile, contends that much nineteenth-century Irish fiction displays ‘a transnational dimension’ devolving from the Irish novel’s location at the ‘intersection of [the] dynamics of proximity and distance’ inherent to the realities of the contemporary print industry: with native publishing annihilated in the wake of Union, the migration of Irish authors to London intensified just as the numbers of Irish novels specifically concerned with Ireland or the Irish people markedly increased.

Chapter 4 considers in more detail the transnational element of gothic fiction produced by Irish émigré authors publishing with the Minerva Press, a notorious London-based producer of popular hack fiction, gothic
romances in particular. The discussion here, though, focuses on two rarely read Irish gothic narratives that translate the national tale’s ideas of cultural encounter into explorations of the role of travel in the assertion of a new Irish national identity following the 1798 Rebellion and Anglo-Irish Union. These novels, Henrietta Rouvière Mosse’s *The old Irish baronet; or, manners of my country* (1808) and Roche’s *The tradition of the castle; or, scenes in the Emerald Isle* (1824), exemplify the overlap of gothic and national forms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, twinning an interest in the legacy of the past and a related examination of romance with extensive explorations of Irish national identity. Significantly, they do so through heroes and heroines who are not purposefully grounded in Ireland, like Glorvina O’Melville is, but are instead inveterate travellers and exiled wanderers, functioning as exemplars of both the disastrous effects of rebellion and dispossession as well as the potential advantages of the consequent Irish exposure to international communities and participation in global events. Although written from varying perspectives and at differing historical junctures, these novels attest to the significance of travel in the renegotiation of Irish national identity in the first three decades following the 1798 Rebellion and the Anglo-Irish Union.

Published just two years after *The wild Irish girl*, Mosse’s *The old Irish baronet* appears, at first glance, to be an opportunistic imitation of Owenson’s model. It tells the tale of the apparently orphaned and inconspicuous tutor Ferdinand Sylvester as he discovers his true parentage, is reinstated as the heir apparent to the Duncarty family estate in Co. Kildare, and validates his newfound identity by way of the national tale’s characteristic ‘Glorvina solution’. The marriage between Sylvester (really Mr Netterville, future Lord Duncarty of Princely Hall) and Ellen O’Callaghan, daughter of the man who had assumed ownership of the Duncarty estates in the absence of its rightful owner, signifies a union of legal and inherited rights, much as do the nuptials in *The wild Irish girl* and *The absentee*. There is a difference here, however. Although Netterville has spent much of his youth and early adulthood outside of Ireland and, in this sense, assumes the role of ‘stranger’ inhabited by Horatio Mortimer and, later, Lord Colambre, as suggested by the temporary, albeit involuntary, suspension of his identity, he nevertheless represents, like Glorvina and Grace Nugent, the dispossession and political allegiances of Gaelic Ireland. This is apparent in the associations conjured by his various names. ‘Ferdinand Sylvester’ recalls the eighteenth-century antiquarian, Sylvester O’Halloran (1728–1807), while ‘Netterville’ raises the spectre of the recusant John
Netterville, 2nd Viscount Netterville of Dowth (d. 1659), and his father, both of whom were implicated in the 1641 Rebellion and consequently lost both title and estates. Mosse’s novel thus envisions a triumphant return of native Irishness in both Netterville’s physical relocation to Ireland and his reinstatement as heir apparent to the Duncarty estate. His marriage to Ellen O’Callaghan, although outwardly suggestive of a cross-cultural, Anglo-Irish accord, further reinforces the novel’s interest in Catholic re-possession, recalling as her name does Cornelius O’Callaghan, 1st Baron Lismore (1741–97), the eighteenth-century descendant of one of the few native families gifted with an Irish peerage. Rather than unsettle the country, Netterville’s relocation to Ireland and marriage to Ellen is applauded as ‘a happy pledge’ of future ‘bounty.’ More than that, it implicitly helps to put an end to the superstitious beliefs of credulous servants who understand that Netterville’s father was ‘carried off for a sartinty by the good people’ (The old Irish baronet, vol. 1, p. 16). Allowing for the reinterment of his grandparents, whose bones periodically and inexplicably unearth themselves in the ruined chapel graveyard of Princely Hall, Netterville’s return concludes – even as it also confirms – the local belief that their bodies ‘never will rest in peace till the lawful heirs of those deceased persons are discovered’ (The old Irish baronet, vol. 1, p. 15).

Gifted with this inheritance, Netterville does not, like Mortimer or Colambre, require an education in Irish customs, society, or culture, despite his long absence from his homeland. While Mortimer and Colambre must travel through Ireland and come to an appreciation of its true nature and worth in order to assume their positions of privilege, Netterville is instead empowered to re-inhabit his ancestral home in Ireland as he travels through Britain, Europe, and, figuratively at least, North America as well. Accompanying Sir Thomas O’Callaghan on a European tour after the peer has been deprived of his seat in parliament by Union, Netterville discovers the treachery enacted against his grandparents in the abduction of their only son by the duplicitous Fr Jeronome, former confessor to Netterville’s Spanish great-grandfather, who had disapproved of his daughter’s marriage. This revelation restores Netterville to his rightful identity and position, paving the way for his eventual return to Ireland in his capacity as gentleman and landowner. But travel plays a more significant role in the novel than simply the setting for the disclosures by which Netterville becomes himself, as it were. Indeed, travel is portrayed as the key to the ‘amelioration’ of governance at home (The old Irish baronet, vol. 1, p. 198). It is travel, the
narrative maintains, that allows for domestic reform, not simply through a comparison of modern Britain with more Gothic geographical zones on the Continent, but through a recognition of current deficiencies in present-day British institutions. Specifically countering the geographical and ideological dichotomy associated with English gothic fiction of this period, *The old Irish baronet* suggests that travel broadens the mind and prompts a consideration of potential areas of improvement in systems at home. It cautions its readers, moreover, against the assumption that nineteenth-century Britain had reached the pinnacle of enlightenment: ‘[t]he elements that compose the present edifice of British freedom, are excellent. … But let us not evoke the bugbear of antiquity to oppose their practical amelioration’ (*The old Irish baronet*, vol. 1, pp. 197–8). Britain, Mosse’s tale contends, is not that far removed – temporally or geographically – from the barbarity it detected in foreign cultures:

The present degree of perfection to which the structure of public weal has attained, is the result of successive improvements, and the farther we trace back our steps (and reform has no other meaning), the nearer we come to those times when barbarism and servitude went hand in hand. (*The old Irish baronet*, vol. 1, pp. 197–8)

Recalling the native geography of atrocity found in *The convent, The son of Ethelwolf, Corfe Castle, The English nun*, and the works of Elizabeth Griffith, *The old Irish baronet* turns attention to the potentially atavistic elements of the British nation, suggesting that these Gothic remainders lie primarily in Anglo-Irish relations. Ned Newburgh, the ‘fashionable’ gentleman and profligate absentee set to inherit from O’Callaghan before the discovery of Netterville’s true identity is particularly noteworthy in this regard (*The old Irish baronet*, vol. 1, p. 139).² Apparent as modern as they come, Newburgh nevertheless represents irresponsibly outdated attitudes and behaviours. His plan to deforest Princely Hall in order to pay his many creditors while continuing to live in London epitomises negligent English and Anglo-Irish stewardship of Ireland, emphasising the culpability of those Sir Thomas calls ‘noble aliens’ in the rebellious feelings of the Irish peasantry and the devastation of the Irish economy (*The old Irish baronet*, vol. 1, p. 180). Netterville’s return and the promise of a Catholic restoration envisions a new future for Ireland enabled by travel, which, the novel suggests, provides for the ‘successive improvements’ lauded as the key to the present-day ‘perfection’ of the British state. The importance of mobility is further reinforced by Netterville’s transnational
Irish identity, bequeathed to him by his Canadian Quaker mother and Spanish Catholic grandmother. He thus gestures towards an ‘amelioration’ of Ireland and, concomitantly, Britain dependent not just on the restoration of Gaelic Catholic rights but also on a transcontinental and transatlantic perspective underwritten by various forms of travel, including tourism, but also exile and trade.93

Roche’s *The tradition of the castle* even more forcefully delineates the importance of travel in its many guises to the future of the nation. Like *The old Irish baronet*, it appears, at first glance, to offer a conventional national tale narrative and conclusion revolving around the return of the Anglo-Irish hero, Donaghue O’Brien – a direct descendant of Brian Boru himself – to Ireland to take up residence there and correct the misdeeds of his father, who had not only moved to London with the establishment of Anglo-Irish Union but had also voted that Union into place. A heavily intertextual novel, *The tradition of the castle* most immediately recalls Edgeworth’s *The absentee* as it sketches the O’Brien family’s relocation to London, against the wishes of Donaghue’s mother, and their subsequent experiences of ‘severe mortification’ upon realising that ‘the rank and fortune that in [their] own country were thought so much of, [were] here, comparatively, little regarded’.94 Like Lady Clonbrony before him, O’Brien senior attempts to dissuade his son from returning to Ireland by describing it in the most disadvantageous terms as

> a place from which every person of respectability had fled since the union, leaving it in possession of a set of beings, who, neither the one thing nor the other, still disgusted by their imprudent assumption of consequence; while the land was rude and uncultivated, the tenantry lawless, and the common people, in short, no better than a set of wild savages, ready to start into rebellion on the slightest imaginary provocation. (*The tradition of the castle*, vol. 1, p. 48)

Such representations of Ireland find further purchase in Donaghue’s mind by the arguments of his would-be lover, Lady Jane Doyle, who resembles *The absentee’s* Lady Dashfort in her prejudicial views of Ireland as a ‘sweet land of blunders’ peopled by ‘wild savages’ (*The tradition of the castle*, vol. 1, pp. 50, 51). Unlike Colambre, Donaghue is much swayed by these narrow-minded perceptions of Ireland, finding ‘much to censure, but nothing to admire’ upon his first arrival (*The tradition of the castle*, vol. 1, p. 57). So intolerant of the country has he become, that Donaghue refuses to socialise with any but a few select acquaintances from London forced for financial reasons to ‘rusticat[e] amidst
the barbarous wilds of Ireland’ (The tradition of the castle, vol. 1, p. 69).
In the process, he offends both his mother and the woman she intends for his bride, Eveleen Erin. He soon after leaves for London, thoroughly unreformed.

While in London, Donaghue’s life takes a strange and unexpected turn. There, he discovers that his father has become an inveterate gambler in his absence, partially in an attempt to recoup the extensive financial ruin he has hidden from his family. When confronted, O’Brien becomes violent, stabbing Donaghue in the chest before drowning himself in the Thames. Donaghue’s mother later dies, and Donaghue, now deprived of his rightful inheritance due to his father’s debts, accepts a commission in the British army and departs for the Continent, where he undergoes the kind of alienating experience traditionally associated with the depiction of Catholic European countries in ‘the Gothic novel’. Travelling to Spain after serving in the British army at Waterloo, for instance, Donaghue is taken prisoner by the Inquisition and, in a scene reminiscent of Maturin’s Melmoth the wanderer, is forced to escape via underground passages led by a suspicious figure acting as an agent of the Inquisition. Repeatedly linked to the Goths and an associated, pejoratively construed Gothic civilisation, the Spanish people are represented as credulous in the extreme, blindly committed to Roman Catholicism, and trapped in a deeply unenlightened way of life. Return to England, in this context, is presented as a welcome homecoming. In England, Donaghue’s travelling companion, Rosebud, asserts, ‘we neither fear racks on one side, or stilettos on the other’; here, ‘the accusation of man against man is bold and open as his own nature’. It is in short, a ‘region of liberty’ characterised by ‘virtuous and generous sentiments’ and enjoying ‘a peculiar Providence’ that ‘watch[es] over and bless[es] the land that has been instrumental to restoring man to his natural charter’ (The tradition of the castle, vol. 2, p. 56).

If The tradition of the castle’s depictions of Spain appear to conform to conventional understandings of the geography of contemporary gothic literature, the descriptions of Ireland upon Donaghue’s later return there also recall the estranging encounters with the ‘Celtic periphery’ familiar from The history of Lady Barton, The wild Irish girl, and The children of the abbey. Journeying home after his experiences abroad, Donaghue is filled with ‘painful feelings’ and describes his ancestral home as ‘cold’, ‘dreary’, and ‘desolate’ (The tradition of the castle, vol. 2, pp. 160, 161). Such emotions are directly related to the death of his mother, whose absence affects Donaghue acutely:
[I am now] returned to my home. But what a home! without a being to sympathize in my feelings – what a contrast to that of past times, when I had the first, the most exalted of women, the tenderest of mothers, to recover me, sooth any care that might have obtruded by her mild counsel, or check any impatience. (Tradition of the castle, vol. 2, p. 170)

More broadly, the negative contrast of past and present renders the country as a whole a miserable landscape of devastation and ruin, haunted by the memory of former greatness. Contemplating the scenery as he approaches Dublin harbour, Donaghue picks out the spot at which his ancestor was said to have fallen and reflects on the decline of the country since Brian Boru was alive:

[N]o wonder he conquered [at Clontarf], for neither the physical strength, nor the spirit of Irishmen, in those days, was impaired or crushed. A chief was then a father to his followers, nor fled to another land, forgetful of their claim on his kindness, and took care not to squander what he wrung from their toil, or acquired through their valour. – ‘But now!’ Donaghue sighed at the melancholy contrast. (Tradition of the castle, vol. 2, p. 63)

Here, Donaghue’s re-encounter with his homeland conflates personal and political loss, suggesting that the cause of Ireland’s current degradation is the profligate absenteeism represented by Donaghue’s own father. The Spanish people may misguidedly persist in antiquated manners and customs bequeathed by former generations, the narrative suggests, but Ireland too easily squanders its noble heritage. As a result, Irish and Spanish geographies become equally gothicised, if for different reasons.

The solution to alienating domestic and public environments, the novel proposes, is a rejection of the absentee landlordism that had first caused problems for Donaghue and Ireland alike. In this, Roche offers a conventional national tale conclusion, contending that ‘many of the evils now complained of [in Ireland] would be avoided’ if Irish men and women would make ‘the land of their forefathers … their permanent residence’ (The tradition of the castle, vol. 3, p. 222). As in The old Irish baronet, however, this denouement is enabled not by the tours around Ireland familiar from The wild Irish girl and The absentee, but by Donaghue’s experiences abroad. It transpires, in fact, that Donaghue’s persecutor in Spain is none other than the son of the greedy agent who had manufactured O’Brien’s pro-Union vote, encouraged his extensive debts, and entailed the O’Brien estates to himself. Donaghue’s encounters with don Callan/O’Callaghan in Spain enable a decisive meeting in Ireland by
which Donaghue is re-possessed of his ancestral estates. More than that, Donaghue’s travels are attendant upon his entry into the British military, a step he is all but forced to take by his father’s actions. Effectively exiled from Ireland, as suggested by the novel’s epigraph, excerpted from the famous ballad, ‘The exile of Erin’ (1801), Donaghue becomes involved in key moments of British and Continental history, fighting at the Battle of Waterloo, for example, and escaping from the Inquisition just days before its abolition by Spanish authorities. In this, he exemplifies the tendency, located by Wright in a number of Irish Romantic texts, to ‘suggest … that the abjection of Irish men through exile ironically allows the demonstration of their merits’. Donaghue’s travels thus function as ‘a kind of colonial Grand Tour’ by which he can counter ‘colonial disempowerment’ through ‘[the demonstration] of individual merit in a larger international arena.’

As with Netterville’s return to Ireland in The old Irish baronet, Donaghue’s reinstatement as rightful owner of his ancestral home and estates reads as a wilful act of Catholic enfranchisement. Descended from Brian Boru on his father’s side and, on his mother’s from both ‘O’Donaghue, lord, by descent, of the lakes, but known in after times as king’ and ‘Cormac M’Culinan, at once archbishop and king of Cashell’ as well as author of ‘The Psalter of Cashell’, Donaghue represents a long history of colonial violence, dispossession, and Gaelic resistance (The tradition of the castle, vol. 1, pp. 35, 36). His return to Ireland after an absence depicted as imposed upon him insists that the solution to Ireland’s ills lay not just in the overthrow of absenteeism but in the restoration of Catholic rights.

In both novels, indeed, the atavistic elements of Irish society are insistently coded as Anglo-Irish rather than Catholic, with the ‘return’ of the latter – both physically and imaginatively – portrayed as the key to modern Irish nationhood. As is the nature of returns, though, these movements are only made possible by absence, however forcefully inflicted. Against the irresponsible and destructive absenteeism of O’Brien and Ned Newburgh, the travels and military escapades of Donaghue and Netterville instil in them the necessary perspective, insight, and qualities with which to assume their rightful positions at home.

CONCLUSION

Written by émigrée authors who were themselves all but forced out of Ireland for personal and professional reasons, The old Irish baronet and
The tradition of the castle imagine remigration to Ireland at the same time that they invest travel and exile themselves with the potential to recover Irish cultural and economic, if not political, power. In these novels, Irish experiences of other cultures and communities become precisely that which enables the righting of historic wrongs at home, consequently brightening Ireland’s future prospects. These works thus adapt the scenes of cultural encounter made familiar by the contemporary national tale and gothic fiction alike in order to enlarge the geography underpinning Irish national identity. As they do so, they underline the exceptionally expansive map of topographical settings drawn by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century gothic literary production. Far from simply confining themselves to the Catholic Continental and ‘Celtic Fringe’ zones commonly linked to gothic fiction of this period, the works assessed in this chapter evidence the widely varied use of local and exotic geography in Romantic-era gothic. More than that, as Chapter 4 contends, they reflect the increasing mobility of Irish authors themselves as well as the expanding material circulation of Irish gothic literature in the Romantic literary marketplace.

NOTES

1 Theodore Melville, The White Knight, or the monastery of Morne. A romance, 3 vols (London: Crosby & Letterman, 1802), vol. 1, [p. iii]. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text. Original italics.

2 Anthony Mandal notes the manner in which publication with Crosby would have branded The White Knight as a particular kind of fiction – a ‘run-of-the mill’ gothic/sentimental romance unworthy of serious scholarly attention; Jane Austen and the popular novel: the determined author (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 67.

3 Tellingly, The White Knight is excluded from the list of Ireland-related fiction produced in Jacqueline Belanger, ‘Some preliminary remarks on the production and reception of fiction relating to Ireland, 1800–1829’, Cardiff Corvey: reading the Romantic text, 4.2 (2000), 1–31, www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc04_n02.html, accessed 15 June 2017. Nothing has been written of it in recent accounts of the Irish novel, including edited collections and monographs such as Jacqueline Belanger (ed.), The Irish novel in the nineteenth century: facts and fictions (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005); Connolly, A cultural history of the Irish novel; Foster, The Cambridge companion to the Irish novel; and Hand, A history of the Irish novel. And, while it appears in the Loebers’ A guide to Irish fiction, the narrative synopsis attached to it seems partly based on another
novel altogether; see A guide to Irish fiction, p. 896. For the recognition of The Irish chieftain as fully engaged in cultural nationalist attempts to prove and vindicate Ireland's cultural worth, see Trumpener, Bardic nationalism, p. 45.


5 Killeen, The emergence of Irish gothic fiction, p. 9.

6 Ibid., p. 10.


9 Clery, The rise of supernatural fiction, p. 129.

10 Reeve, The old English baron, p. 2.

11 This graph is based on a sampling of 90 texts drawn from the 114 titles catalogued in the Appendix, which indicates both the works included in this sampling and their geographical settings.

12 Watt, Contesting the gothic, pp. 43–4.


14 Wright, Representing the national landscape, p. 131.

15 Ibid.


17 Ibid.

18 Trumpener, Bardic nationalism, p. 141.


[Elizabeth Griffith], *The delicate distress, a novel: in letters*, 2 vols (1769; Dublin, 1787), vol. 1, p. 63. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.


‘A Lady’ [Elizabeth Griffith], *Amana; a dramatic poem* (London, 1764), p. 35. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text. The castle of the despotic Egyptian ruler – the villain of the piece – is specifically described in the stage directions as ‘A Gothic building, representing the palace of Sakara’ (*Amana*, p. 35). Original emphasis.

Watt, *Contesting the gothic*, p. 49.

In the course of the play, Britain’s ‘protector’ – presumably George III – is lauded as one ‘Who not in Britain’s cause alone sustains / The toils of council, and of hostile plains: / The world’s great champion, born for all mankind, / In whom the oppressed a certain refuge find: / Whose sword, but like the lancet, wounds to heal, / Where moral lenitives can naught avail; / Whose olive bearing laurel peace restores, / And calms the discord of contending powers’ (*Amana*, p. 54).


For a more detailed consideration of *Amana* as well as the manner in which it highlights the multi-generic nature of gothic literary production in eighteenth-century Ireland, Britain, and Europe, see Morin, “Theorizing “gothic” in eighteenth-century Ireland.” It is tempting to read Griffith's dedication of *The delicate distress* to John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford (1710–71), who acted as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1756 to 1760, in a similar manner. In that case, however, the brief words of gratitude Griffith includes seem to owe to Bedford's granting of a post to Richard Griffith in 1760 or thereabouts, though few details of the transaction survive. See Sidney Lee, ‘Griffith, Richard (d. 1788),’ rev. Ian Campbell Ross, *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn, 2008), www.oxforddnb.com, accessed 15 August 2013.

41 Elizabeth Griffith, *The history of Lady Barton, a novel, in letters*, 3 vols (London, 1771), vol. 1, p. 7. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.


43 Original italics.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.


50 See Douglas, ‘The novel before 1800’.

Like Reeve’s *The old English baron*, *Netley Abbey* is one of the few novels of the period purposely to refer to itself as gothic.

Anne Fuller, *The son of Ethelwolf; an historical tale* (Dublin [1789]), p. 4. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.


Mrs F.C. Patrick, *The Jesuit; or, the history of Anthony Babington, Esq., an historical novel*, 3 vols (Bath, 1799), vol. 3, p. 20. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.


Original emphasis.


Anna Milliken, *Corfe Castle; or, historic tracts. A novel, in two volumes* (Cork: James Haly, 1793), vol. 1, p. 61. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.


*Ibid.*, p. 88. The notion of ‘symbolic spread’ is Northrop Frye’s; see Frye, *The secular scripture*, p. 59


Wright, *Representing the national landscape*, p. 132.


There is little indication of the time period in Fuller’s novel. The letters exchanged between the characters remain undated, and, while there are many plot similarities to Radcliffe’s later, more temporally and geographically distanced novels, the letters’ pointed interest in female modesty and the containment of excessive sensibility, as discussed briefly in Chapter 2, creates an immediacy that places the novel directly within contemporary debates about fiction and its revolutionary potential. It is thus fundamentally linked to a late eighteenth-century English cultural and geographic landscape. On these debates and the epistolary form, see, for instance, Linda S. Kauffman,


74 Catharine Selden, The English nun; a novel (London, 1797), p. 8. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.


76 On enduring eighteenth-century British dread of the Portuguese Inquisition and the accompanying understanding of Lisbon ‘as a city of violent death’, characterised in British accounts of the period by frequent reference to underground Inquisition torture chambers and nuns immured behind convent walls, see Richard Hamblyn, ‘Notes from underground: Lisbon after the earthquake’, Romanticism, 14.2 (2008), 113–16.

77 On the ‘binary, symmetrical oppositions between the familiar and the foreign’ in eighteenth-century British travel writing, see Chloe Chard, Pleasure and guilt on the Grand Tour: travel writing and imaginative geography, 1600–1830 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 40. See also the discussion of the similarities between eighteenth-century English travel writing and gothic fiction in Mighall, A geography of Victorian gothic fiction, pp. 16–26.

78 The date of the events in The English nun can be pinpointed by the passing reference made upon Sister Louisa’s return to England to the beginning of the Swedish Revolution on 19 August 1772. The concluding events of the novel, including Edward’s death fighting in the ongoing Russo-Turkish wars (1768–74) and Louisa’s own subsequent death, occur within months of this date. Earlier events in the novel may be dated to approximately seven years previously, for Louisa is said to pass seven years in the convent before returning to England to claim her inheritance.


82 Wright, Representing the national landscape, pp. 173–4.


84 Wright, Representing the national landscape, p. xiii.


Netterville’s own father, for instance, is effectively banished from Ireland after being abducted from his parents and sent to live in secret seclusion in England. The next chapter will return to the issue of the print trade and the manner in which the dissemination of Irish gothic fiction became central to contemporary discourses of both nationalism and transnationalism in Ireland and elsewhere.

Regina Maria Roche, *The tradition of the castle; or, scenes in the Emerald Isle*, 4 vols (London: A.K. Newman & Co., 1824), vol. 1, p. 42. Further references are to this edition and are given in parentheses in the text.

Further suggesting Roche’s debt to Maturin, a minor character in the novel bears the name of don Alonzo de Guzman, recalling two separate characters from *Melmoth* – Alonzo di Monçada and the wealthy merchant known simply as Guzman. Later, a character named Brennan conjures the Brennan of Maturin’s *The Milesian chief* and is implicated in a similar tale of long-cherished rebellion and star-crossed love that forms the ‘tradition of the castle’ linked to Donaghue’s Irish home, Altoir-na-Grenie.

Here again, Roche’s intertextuality appears evident, with the deceptions practised on O’Brien echoing those of the hapless Sir Condy in Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent*. I am grateful to Ian Campbell Ross for highlighting these similarities to me.

A poem lamenting the exile enforced upon individuals involved in the 1798 Rebellion, ‘The exile of Erin’ is popularly attributed to Thomas Campbell but may have been written by George Nugent Reynolds. See Wright, *Representing*...

99 Wright, Representing the national landscape, p. xiii.

100 Ibid., p. xiv.


102 Roche’s own religious affiliations and sympathies are a matter of some debate, with several scholars actively identifying Roche as Catholic and others detecting a strong pro-Catholic perspective in her works. See, for example, Purves, The gothic and Catholicism, p. 122 and Killeen, Gothic Ireland, pp. 182–90. Diane Long Hoeveler contested such views, querying attempts to read a Catholic agenda in The children of the abbey and, indeed, in female gothic as a whole; ‘Regina Maria Roche’s The children of the abbey: contesting the Catholic presence in female gothic fiction’, Tulsa studies in women’s literature, 31.1/2 (2012), 137–58.