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The Irish Landscape in Somerville and Ross's Fiction and Illustrations, 1890 - 1915

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Anglo-Irish Literature at the University of Dublin, Trinity College.

October 2000

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Julie Anne Stevens, October 30, 2000.

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Abstract:

The Irish Landscape in Somerville and Ross's Fiction and Illustrations, 1890-1915, by Julie Anne Stevens

As inheritors of an Anglo-Irish Protestant tradition who wrote in the midst of a vibrant consumer culture of the *fin-de-siècle*, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross developed their satirical fictions to reflect central ambiguities of Irish socio-political life. This study addresses both colonial contexts and aesthetic demands to recontextualize Somerville and Ross's fiction and illustrations. It pays special attention to the writers' involvement in a burlesque tradition, the influence of the British periodical industry, and French art developments. It argues that the works' parodic treatment of the myths and tropes of the Irish landscape depends not only on the writers' colonial inheritance but also on their modern sensibilities as expressed by the complex dynamic of Irish life during this period. The collaborative work from 1890 to 1915, when Martin Ross died, shows a development of form to express the multi-layered landscape of an Anglo-Irish inheritance.

This work is divided into three sections: the colonial vision, which addresses the early novels, Naboth's Vineyard and The Real Charlotte ; the magazine business, which contextualizes the short fiction; and the landscaping process, which concentrates on The Irish R.M. stories. Emphasis in the first section is on the writers' treatment of land issues and religion as they reflect popular cultural production, especially pantomime and farce. The Real Charlotte , this section argues, emerges as an attempt to reconcile an Irish Anglican inheritance with the developments of modern secularized thought. The second section deals with Somerville and Ross's negotiation of the demands of the periodical industry in their fiction and illustrations and pays particular attention to notions of the picturesque and of caricature in England and in France. The writers' treatment of Irishness reveals an awareness of the art of self-parody and the parodox of depicting an impoverished landscape. Section Three looks at Somerville and Ross's parodic treatment of Irish history and politics in their collected short stories, tracing in the process a network of connections which these self-conscious stories suggest.

Summary

The Irish landscape of Somerville and Ross's fiction is multi-layered, a site of multiple discourses rather than one narrative tradition, which reveals in its excavation a network of connections profiling the tensions and undercurrents of Irish affairs at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Using discourse analysis, this study traces the writers' self-conscious display of narrative tropes in their fiction and Edith Somerville's illustrations. It pays particular attention to a nineteenth-century burlesque tradition and the influence of the revived romance, and it employs Bakhtinian theory to investigate the writers' treatment of concepts of time and space in the Irish landscape. I argue that the writers' development of form depends as much upon their involvement in the magazine business of the period as it does upon their intent to create a vehicle to convey the imaginative concepts of their world view.

Section One deals with the writers' treatment of central concerns of the Irish landscape in the 1890s: land and religion. Naboth's Vineyard and The Real Charlotte present shifting perspectives of the Irish terrain which are highlighted by post-colonial analysis. I study the writers' self-conscious use of the colonial perspective, its nightmares and its dreams, to investigate what the writers show to be at the heart of the troubled Irish landscape: colliding concepts of time and space in an unsteady terrain. Excavation of these texts reveals the authors' use of popular material: the revived romance, especially German Romanticism as treated by Martin Ross's cousin, the playwright, William G. Wills, pantomime and farce, newspapers and contemporary fiction. Somerville and Ross's grotesque realism upends a series of established myths to demonstrate a complex reality. At the same time, I argue, the writers instil upon the Irish literary landscape an Anglo-Irish tradition. The Real Charlotte stands as a testament to an Irish Anglican ethos in its attempt to reconcile the inheritance of its traditions with the developments of a secularized Irish world.

Section Two contextualizes Somerville and Ross's developing short fiction. It addresses the writers' negotiation of the demands of the English periodical press and the influence of a French intellectual background in

their treatment of caricature. Edith Somerville's illustrations reveal an awareness of the mask of Irishness in a business trading on an established visual shorthand. The writers' stories exploit notions of the picturesque in an impoverished Irish landscape. To appreciate the use of Irish character in Somerville and Ross's magazine publications, I consider both the notion of the Irish national character throughout the nineteenth century as it is influenced by the requirements of controlling and improving the Irish landscape as well as developments in modern caricature in Baudelaire's theory on the nature of the comic. It becomes apparent that the clowns and fools populating Somerville and Ross's short fiction manifest various discourses reflecting both Irish socio-political concerns as well as modernist theory. The Irish R.M. stories reflect both dimensions so that Flurry Knox, for instance, can be construed as Harlequin in Ireland.

Somerville and Ross's three collections of stories published from 1898 to 1915 deal with the specificites of the Irish landscape as they interact with modernist concerns. Section Three concentrates on the writers' treatment of Irish history and politics in the R.M. stories. By tracing the background of the main character of the R.M. stories, Florence McCarthy Knox, we become aware of the various 'pictures' of the past which the authors set about exposing. The ballad and the portrait, for instance, become opportunities to display the unreliability of the nationalist romantic discourse (as suggested by the McCarthy side of Flurry's background) or the Protestant ethos (as indicated by the Knox inheritance).

Somerville and Ross's final collaborative work, their third story collection In Mr. Knox's Country, shows the development of their short fiction to become a masterful expression of the Irish landscape. A dominant nineteenth-century Irish cultural concept--the search for the treasures of the hidden Ireland--is explored by considering works like Bram Stoker's The Snake's Pass and George Birmingham's Spanish Gold in relation to Somerville and Ross's comic short fiction. Their parody of this concept relies upon the Anglo-Irish tradition of riding to hounds and concentrates on the multiple possibilities of Reynard. Like Harlequin, the fox acts as a means of transformation in the Irish countryside. However, his potency as an actual manifestation of the land and his significance within the beast fable tradition bring to the fiction a political and aesthetic meaning.

Introduction

They glide so subtly from one mode to another, and the grace notes so freely sport with such abandon and bewitching charm around the steady tone of the heavier sound, that the perfection of their art seems to lie in their concealing it, as if 'it were the better for being hidden. An art revealed brings shame.'

Giraldus Cambrensis, Topographia Hiberniae [1]

The few anecdotes of Violet Martin's childhood include a brief description by her sister, Mrs. Geraldine Dawson. As the youngest daughter of a large household in County Galway, Violet easily escaped notice. Her preferred retreat at four years of age was the drawing room, where the family kept illustrated collections of English poetry. Here she would pore over her favourite book of Milton's works. Mrs. Dawson describes an afternoon party when the lively Irish company are surprised to discover underneath the tea-laden table a little girl napping. Her fair head rests on the dark pictures of Milton's poetry, "frightening" sketches--most likely of the infernal serpent and his angels on the blazingly bright lake of Hell.[2]

Violet Martin's early taste in devils may have originated in the old-world Protestantism of Ross House in Galway, but it was nourished by an unsettled and nomadic life after age ten when her father died. The eldest Martin boy, Robert Martin, leased out the family home and lived in London and Dublin, writing pantomimes and songs for the theatre. Violet's Sunday school in Dublin and the exigencies of living 'on the hoof' were enlivened by frequent trips with her brother to the Gaiety or the Queen's Theatre Royal. There, the youngest sister acquired a taste for farce. By her early twenties, Milton's devil had become for the writer, Martin Ross, Harlequin's Mephistopheles.

Edith Somerville's more settled existence in Castletownshend, West Cork, amidst a large extended family results in a clearer picture of the writer's early life, though one which tends to occlude her work abroad in Europe. Boxes of letters, photographs and drawings lie alongside the

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[1] Giraldus Cambrensis, Topographia Hiberniae, c. 1187, Field Day Vol I (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991) 239-40.

[2] Somerville and Ross, Irish Memories (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918) 97-98. Otto Rauchbauer, The Edith Œ Somerville Archive in Drishane (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1995) M.34. a-c. Hereafter referred to as Drishane Archive.

Somervilles' farming accounts and military mementoes which have been stored as record of Edith Somerville's long life in Drishane House. The Drishane Archive, established by Otto Rauchbauer in 1995, the Edith Somerville Museum at Drishane, and the Big House itself overlooking the small village as it stretches downwards to St. Barrahane's Protestant Church, have become a memorial to a way of life that Edith Somerville was proud to represent. The focus on remembering that way of life, however, can obscure the writer/artist's numerous and extended sorties out of 'Anglo-Ireland' to the Continent.

When Edith Somerville and Martin Ross first met in 1886, they had already set upon their respective careers in painting and writing. Edith spent as much time as possible studying art in Paris. Martin wrote journalistic essays and had served a brief apprenticeship in London with her mother's cousin, the playwright William G. Wills. Somerville and Ross shared a keen interest in language and started collecting stories and sayings, songs and letters from their respective homes in Cork and Connemara. As collaborators, they expanded their repertoire to include an adventure romance, magazine stories, and a series of travelogues illustrated in part by Edith about journeys through Connemara, France, Wales, and Denmark. Together the writer and the writer/illustrator could do much more than a lady alone might. Banding together, they presented an Anglo-Irish front that spanned the southern counties of the island. They appeared to write as one, and yet collaboration--the fact of two voices and two points of view--always disturbs the unity of purpose their works are meant to convey. One author can hide behind the other so that no absolute authority exists, no single ideological purpose stands. From the very start, then, they determined to write in chorus, drawing both strength and the possibility of evasion from a double authorship.

In 1888, Martin Ross returned with her mother to Ross House where she remained until her mother's death in 1906. She then joined Edith Somerville in Castletownshend until her own death nine years later. Thus, although both writers trained in the theatre halls of Dublin and London or studied art developments in Paris and the south of France, they retained a vital connection to the Irish countryside. Their work draws upon land issues of the nineteenth century: eviction, improvement, estate management, agrarian outrage, boycotting, the land war between casual labourers, peasant proprietors, and gombeen entrepreneurs. Novels, like Naboth's Vineyard (1891) and The Real Charlotte (1894), satirize the scramble for land, using caricature and the grotesque to mock land greed.

Two realistic sporting novels, The Silver Fox (1898) and Dan Russel the Fox (1911), concentrate on the Irish Hunt to show how different ranks and races come together in a series of mock skirmishes across the bogland of Connemara and the hillocks of West Cork. Their three collections of stories, published initially in English magazines, use the folk humour of Irish country living. Some Experiences of an Irish R.M. (1899), Further Experiences of an Irish R.M. (1908) and In Mr. Knox's Country (1915) enter into what Mikhail Bakhtin has described as the chronotope of the *entr'acte*, in-between time when clowns and fools ring the changes and expose the masks of officialdom.[3]

Somerville and Ross position themselves within a conservative, Protestant-Irish tradition. They consciously adopt Maria Edgeworth as their female progenitor[4] and, perhaps unconsciously, take up Oliver Goldsmith as their comic forerunner. In 1910, after publishing their first two collections of comic short fiction, they defended the 'High Art of Comedy' in an essay called "The Anglo-Irish Language" in which they argue that sententious and sentimental self-consciousness weighs down contemporary Irish writing:

> [Ireland] now insists on being taken seriously, and will no more pose as the Agreeable Rattle. Her precious gifts of humour and of laughter are in danger of extinction, gloomed over monotonously as they are by clouds laden with artistic tears. Ireland is to be treated as an invalid, and must be approached with the hushed step of the sick-room.[5]

As Ireland "will no more pose as the Agreeable Rattle," the collaborators deliberately don Oliver Goldsmith's mantle. Goldsmith called his romantic lead of She Stoops to Conquer, Charles Marlow, an "agreeable rattle" and revived the dying comic muse in 1773 with the mischief and tricks of the country rustic, Tony Lumpkin. Somerville and Ross restore in fiction Goldsmith's beloved stage buffoon with the character of Flurry Knox (nick-named Tony Lumpkin), and the Irish squireen remains centre stage thoughout most of the R.M. stories so that the final collaborative fiction, In Mr. Knox's Country, takes on his name.

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[3] Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981) 163.

[4] Somerville and Ross, chapter III, Irish Memories; Somerville and Ross, chapter XXII, Stray-Aways (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1920).

[5] Stray-Aways 186. The writers exclude "Lady Gregory and a few others" who appreciate Irish humour and who "know how to weave together the gold and the grey."

However consciously or otherwise Somerville and Ross may have adopted an Anglo-Irish stance, they also wrote and published in the midst of the vibrant consumer culture of the *fin-de-siècle*. They were closely involved with the periodical press throughout their writing career, publishing in mainstream magazines like Strand, Blackwood's, and The Graphic. They worked in Germany, France, and London, and in 1897 took on as their literary agent the forward-thinking Scotsman, James Pinker, who included the Irish cousins within his stable of commercial and noncommercial writers: H.G, Wells, Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane, Henry James. Pinker brought the Irish women writers right into the middle of things, and they handled with finesse both the demands of the different magazines and the tastes of an expanded middle-class readership by publishing their immensely popular Irish R.M. series. In short, Somerville and Ross worked successfully within a fast-moving British culture preoccupied with the issues of New Woman thought, Social Darwinism, colonial expansion, and the revived romance. Thus, their awareness of themselves as Anglo-Irish writers, as spokeswomen for particular traditions in a turbulent Irish world, is refracted and altered by a modern self-consciousness and an ironic sensibility which just as frequently subverts as it promotes certain ideologies. Though Somerville and Ross's artful treatment of the Irish landscape is directed by modern concerns, it recalls in a way a central motif of Irish art, one which Giraldus Cambrensis noted as early as the twelfth century. The Irish music he listened to possessed a subtle play of major and minor chords, a kind of evasiveness which pervades the forms of Irish culture to this day. On hearing the lively music of the Irish, he noted that "the perfection in their art seems to lie in their concealing it, as if 'it were the better for being hidden. An art revealed brings shame.'"

Methodology

From the publication of Naboth's Vineyard in 1891, a novel based on the land wars of the early 1880s, up until In Mr. Knox's Country in 1915, a series of stories addressing land transfer in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century, Somerville and Ross focus on the issue of land ownership and remain intent on inscribing an Anglo-Irish Protestant tradition within the landscape of Irish national literature. They achieve their end through comic means and modern device, frequently employing parody, which typically subverts more than one narrative tradition. By

setting up (and pulling down) a series of Irish traditions, they illustrate a layered reality: the Gaelic tradition, the pre-Christian world, Anglo-Irishness, the Catholic or Protestant world view. In so doing, they resist a nationalist agenda to strip the Irish landscape of problematic traditions, such as that of the Anglo-Irish, to return to a Celtic Eden with a literature which ignores colonization.

Somerville and Ross set their fiction mainly in the Irish countryside, and their texts can be considered as a series of landscapes. They are landscapes in the aesthetic sense, compositions arrived at through human design, and in the historical sense, sites made up of several strata of events. My method of research is to excavate these landscapes. The text becomes a kind of archeological site that reveals in its excavation the accretion of histories, not a single narrative tradition but the overlapping and infiltration of different lives. On investigation of the traces half hidden in the story's plot or a character's conversation, a network of connections begins to suggest the depth and richness of discourse. A pattern emerges, and in the details of the text a broader picture appears. In a somewhat similar way, John Ruskin maintained that "'a stone, when it is examined, will be found a mountain in miniature.'"[6] This stone, as my methodology shows, may have supported a Gaelic ring fort, a Norman tower, an Anglican Church. The archeologists have taught us an important lesson: nothing disappears; things change or are refashioned but the myths remain.

The excavation of the text reveals the line(s) of inheritance within a fiction, a descension which frequently spans imaginative and actual past realities, or which unearths conflicts between different concepts of time and space. The lines of a fictional inheritance, traced through this process of excavation, reveal the transformation, and ensuing ambiguities, of colliding chronotopes as advanced in myth or history. A brief example from Somerville and Ross's *oeuvre* will illustrate this point.

Somerville and Ross published Naboth's Vineyard in 1891. Bram Stoker published The Snake's Pass the same year. Both novels apply the biblical tale of Naboth and his small vineyard to an Irish context: West Cork in the case of Somerville and Ross and County Mayo in Stoker's work. Study of the Somerville and Ross text reveals the authors' reliance on a range of popular material--newspapers, theatrical productions, magazine reviews and illustrations--dealing with the Irish land wars of the previous decade.

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[6] Qtd in Ruskin, Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites, ed. Robert Hewison (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000) 13.

A connection to Bram Stoker becomes apparent when we discover that both he and Martin Ross were involved with one of the most extravagant adult pantomimes of the 1880s, Henry Irving's Faust, which was first performed in the Royal Lyceum Theatre on December 15, 1885. Martin Ross's cousin, William G. Wills, wrote the stage adaptation, and the elaborate dimensions of his version--a recreation of diabolism with Henry Irving playing a slim and sardonic Mephistopheles--apparently influenced these two Irish novels on Irish land matters five years later.

The Somerville and Ross text, like Stoker's work, draws upon a fictional inheritance. The Irish land wars, demonized or romanticised by various interpretations (The Freeman's Journal, Punch, or various popular Irish novels of the 1880s), are distilled further by the stage-conscious and self-conscious pens of Bram Stoker and the Irish cousins. In both works, the Irish country becomes a place to enact the popularized Faustian material. Yet both works are presented as realistic texts. Revived myths clash with actual events in the fiction. The question with such representations is not how accurate they might be, as how they reformulate their fictional inheritance in the real Irish world.

The excavation process works especially well with the landscape of romantic ironists like Somerville and Ross who parody a variety of concepts representing different ideologies. Just as important as their target is the act of debunking myths or subverting pretensions. In the style of the romantic ironists, calling attention to that act becomes the central activity of the work.[8] The excavation method traces allusions to pinpoint the subversive process. It shows first the tradition or discourse that is being addressed and, second, its upending. It makes us aware of the unreliability of a single point of view, and it calls attention to the significance of perspective.

The modernist thrust of much of Somerville and Ross's writing suggests that more than one perspective of reality is possible. A central scene in The Real Charlotte, for instance, recalls at least two distinct discourses: Pre-Raphaelite symbolic realism of the mid-nineteenth century, and Gaelic satire of the previous century. This is the scene of the picnic on Inishochery Island, when the improbable hero, Christopher

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[8] Frederick Garber, ed., Romantic Irony (Budapest: Coordinating Committee of a Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, 1988) 7. See also D.C. Muecke in The Critical Idiom: Irony and the Ironic (New York: Methuen, 1982) who points out that works in the romantic ironic mode demonstrate a "process of composition [which] is integrated into the aesthetic product which in turn is explicitly presented both as art and as (imitation of) life" (25).

Dysart, wanders off and discovers a charming glade at the centre of the island. A ruined chapel, a still pool, and moss-covered rocks give him ample opportunity for idle daydreaming. He lounges amidst the grasses and smokes cigarettes while thinking about poetry; in particular, "the enchanted country through which King Arthur's knights rode."[9] Lulled by the glade's tranquillity and the gentle buzz of flies and grasshoppers, he is just beginning to fall asleep when the harsh cries and ugly figure of Charlotte Mullen, that *lusus naturae*, break in to disturb his pleasant dreams.

On one hand, the intricate description of the Irish glade and the inclusion of Tennyson's medieval romanticism draw upon a Pre-Raphaelite tradition; on the other, the disruption of bucolic reverie by a freak of nature, the gross alternative of Roisin Dubh, recalls Merryman's parody of the *aisling* in The Midnight Court. Thus, Christopher could recall the dreamer in the Gaelic satire--still unmarried and called to task by a messenger from the underworld, Charlotte Mullen-- or the languishing figure of a Pre-Raphaelite painting. The scene draws together an English and an Irish discourse, a visual and a textual tradition. It displays in a self-conscious, almost theatrical fashion, the complex underpinnings of the Anglo-Irish literary landscape. It thus becomes a rather sly burlesque of Pre-Raphaelite symbolic realism because the seeming fidelity-to-nature which the text expounds is undercut by the traces of the earlier Irish material. At the same time, the Gaelic source is satirized when we discover Christopher to be a colonial dreamer rather than a nationalist visionary. This highly artful material resists a single interpretation.

This digging into the text to uncover the partially concealed artefacts of the literary terrain suits what Mikhail Bakhtin would call the downward movement of parody, caricature, and farce. Grotesque realism, as he tells us in his study of Rabelais, wallows in the bowels of the earth, and the toppling over of various monuments shapes this downward, thrusting force to degrade and unmask the revered object or myth. Somerville and Ross's interest in the darker side of human nature and, in the R.M. stories, the ribald humour of the folk with its grim and often violent attributes, tilts the perspective downwards, towards the earth. The writers' interest in the land thus delves deeper than its surface. They are fascinated by Ireland's

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[9] Somerville and Ross, The Real Charlotte (1894; London: Arrow Books Ltd., 1990) 128. All references come from this edition of The Real Charlotte.

subterranean depths. As Martin Ross explains in an unpublished manuscript called "An Irish Goldmine," going underground reveals as much as it conceals:

> The sun poured into the little creek, between the grey jaws of cliff, & we sat on the warm rocks, & realised for the first time that to appreciate to any fitting extent the careless miracles and cunning commonplaces of the outer earth it is well to go behind the scenes for a while.[10]

Martin Ross's fascination with Ireland's boggy depths, described again in "A Subterranean Cave at Cloonabinnia [sic]," and an essential part of the landscapes of Somerville and Ross's fiction,[11] lies not only in the darkness which such journeys suggest but also in the treasure which the darkness conceals. The centre of the universe lies not in the heavens but in the earth where the quarry of many R.M. stories, sly Reynard the fox, hides his gold and where, as Bakhtin stresses, "the greatest treasures and most wonderful things lie hidden."[12]

Somerville and Ross's work responds especially well to the excavatory method employed in this study. Their landscapes are unsteady, full of dangerous holes like the "shifting bog" in Stoker's The Snake's Pass.[13] The literary terrain of Somerville and Ross's fiction also shifts as the authors stage a tradition and then subvert it. This process demands that we ask, what is the real Ireland? What hidden treasure lies concealed in an Irish goldmine or a subterranean cave in Cloonabinna? The landscape, in both a literal and a literary sense, possesses a 'shifting' or 'shaking' bog. In The Silver Fox, the treacherous bog conceals under its peaty crust vast waterways, so mysterious and unknown that the locals tell unbelievable stories about its magical dimensions:

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[10] Martin Ross, unpublished manuscript, no. 3312-3313, Manuscripts Department, Trinity College Library, Dublin. The library is hereafter referred to as TCD.

[11] Martin Ross, "A Subterranean Cave at Cloonabinnia," 1898, Stray-Aways 81-82. See also Somerville and Ross, An Irish Cousin (1889; London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1903) and The Silver Fox (1898; London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1918).

[12] Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984) 369.

[13] Bram Stoker, The Snake's Pass (1890; Dingle, Co. Kerry: Brandon, 1990) 49. Martin Ross's elder brother, Robert Martin, refers to a "shaking bog and sinking footsteps" in a sketch called "A Connemara Short Cut" in Bits of Blarney (London: Sands, 1899) 196.

> There's holes up in Cahirdreen that's sixty feet deep, and wather runnin' in the bottom o' them. 'Tis out undher Tully that wather goes. Sure there was a man had a grand heifer--God knows ye'd sooner be lookin' at her that atin' yer dinner--she fell down in one o' them holes, and went away undher the ground with the wather. As sure as I'm alive, they heard her screeching up through the bog![14]

Appropriately, the inhabitants of this country, "where all was loose, and limitless, and inexact" (100), display chameleon-like characters, what earlier nineteenth-century writers such as Lady Morgan and Sheridan Le Fanu described as "shifting faces."[15] The title of Somerville and Ross's best-known novel, The Real Charlotte, indicates how evasive such characters might be.

The 'quaking sod' of Irish national consciousness[16] inevitably forces one to question the nature of identity in a search for some essential quality which distinguishes a people. Somerville and Ross's fiction deals with the resulting self-consciousness of national awareness, the process of acting Irish and being aware of the fact that one is doing so. As Major Yeates concludes while relaxing outside a western hotel in one of the later stories of the R.M. series, Irishness can be a highly self-conscious performance.[17] He and Doctor Hickey drink their evening coffee in the summer house of the hotel. They sit under a battered Chinese lantern, which the latter points out to be a ludicrous rival to the ascending rosy moon (recalling Bottom's lantern/moon in the play-within-a-play of A Midsummer Night's Dream). Major Yeates notes a similarity in the Irishman's ability both to perform (to act Irish) and to be critically aware of that fact (to be Irish):

> We sat there, and the moon and the round red Chinese lantern looked at each other across the evening, and had a certain resemblance, and

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[14] Somerville and Ross, The Silver Fox 104.

[15] Lady Morgan (Sidney Owenson), Florence Macarthy Vol. I (1818; New York: Garland Publishing, 1979) 114-15. Sheridan Le Fanu, Uncle Silas: A Tale of Bartram Haugh (1864; New York: Dover Publications, 1966) 170.

[16] Daniel Corkery, Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature (1931; Cork: Mercier P, 1966) 14.

[17] Entitled "At a Western Hotel," early drafts of the story appear in the Mr. Knox's Country notebooks; they are first dated May, 1912 and are finished in 1915. This story, then, is one of the final pieces Somerville and Ross would write in collaboration. Nos. 3302 and 3783, TCD.

> I reflected on the fact that an Irishman is always a critic in the stalls, and is also, in spirit, behind the scenes. (31)[18]

Theatrical scene setting, pictorializing Irish life, and the self-conscious framing of events in Somerville and Ross's fiction become vehicles which demonstrate the process of acting Irish, whether that Irishness is pagan Celticism, Gaelicism, Anglo-Irishness, or national Catholicism. This process, in turn, gives rise to the uncomfortable suspicion that nothing (that is, no essential quality) might exist beneath the 'shifting face.' Nonetheless, the suggestion of a hidden dimension persisting somewhere beneath all this play-acting, the treasure in the landscape, lures us on.

This study investigates the political dimension of the ever-changing terrain, the suspicion that the 'real' Ireland or a 'real' Irish person exists somewhere underneath the display. A hidden Ireland eternally beckons the cultural nationalist, some place out of time suggests an essential Irishness. Both the landscape and the characters of Somerville and Ross's fiction resist full exposure and their half-submerged mysteries suggest a modern ambiguity.

Literary Background

Somerville and Ross's attraction to the shadows of the Irish literary landscape may be ascribed in part to developments in European dark Romanticism, what Mario Praz describes as the Satanic School in The Romantic Agony.[19] Its modern inheritor, Baudelaire, contends that concealment and mystery, as expressed in the Romantics, like the American, Edgar Allan Poe, or the Irishman, Charles Maturin, raise art to a higher (or, possibly, lower) power:

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[18] Andrew Carpenter echoes this observation in his definition of double vision in "Double Vision in Anglo-Irish Literature," Place, Personality and the Irish Writer (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1977). Double vision, however, does not capture the strong sense of theatricality which I ascribe to Somerville and Ross's late nineteenth-century romantic irony. Terry Eagleton interprets such self-consciousness as the late flowering of a nineteenth-century Corkonian renaissance in "Cork and the Carnivalesque," Crazy John and the Bishop (Cork: Cork UP, 1998) 158-211.

[19] Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, trans. Angus Davidson (London: Oxford UP, 1970).

Ce qu'on peut voir au soleil est toujours moins intéressant que ce qui se passe derrière une vitre. Dans ce trou noir ou lumineux vit la vie, rêve la vie, souffre la vie. (138)[20]

The revived interest in the sublime predominated in the popular romance fiction of the late Victorian period. In his study of late nineteenth-century popular fiction, Nicholas Daly argues that although the romance revival as popularized by Robert Louis Stevenson, Bram Stoker, and H. Rider Haggard reflects earlier nineteenth-century romantic writing, its context within the growing publishing industry of the time makes it an entirely different phenomenon. Like Modernism, the popular romance negotiates the changes wrought by modernization: increased consumerism, the expansion of the professional middle-class, or "'new imperialism'" (2-4).[21] I would add to this list the secularization of religious thought.

Somerville and Ross's play with light and dark in The Real Charlotte – what I describe as textual chiaroscuro–manifests secularized evangelicalism; it expresses a Manichaean vision. The echoes of a Calvinistic ambivalence as found in Thomas Carlyle or Robert Louis Stevenson, reverberate in much of Somerville and Ross's writing. Modernism and Protestantism unite in Baudelaire's study of caricature, "L'essence du rire." Baudelaire uses the Irish Mephistopheles of Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer as his main example of the modern ambiguity found in caricature. Thus, what some may perceive to be Maturin's Irish Anglican world view, becomes for Baudelaire the ambivalent expression of modern caricature. This study investigates both the Irish Protestant inheritance and modernist theory as sources of Somerville and Ross's satire.

Somerville and Ross carefully detailed the immediate world in their fiction. They attempted to learn Irish, transcribed oral conversation (what they described as *obiter dicta*) into their fiction, and attended Petty Session Courts to discover authentic material. They also put together a Collection of Irish Anecdotes, four full notebooks compiling phrases, letters, newspaper clippings, songs, jokes, and incidents gathered together from 1886

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[20] Charles Baudelaire, "Les Fenêtres," Le Spleen de Paris: Petits Poèmes en Prose (1864; Paris: Les Presses de la Société Parisienne d'imprimerie, 1925) 138-39.

[21] Nicholas Daly, Introduction, Modernism, Romance and the *Fin De Siècle*: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1999) 1-29.

onwards.[22] At first these sayings and phrases, superstitions and songs, snatches of overheard conversation, letters from farmers and servants, were gathered randomly; later, the writers arranged their growing collection under separate headings. The largest of the notebooks has an index dated Oct. 28, 1901 (when Somerville and Ross were working on Further Experiences of an Irish R.M.). There are nineteen headings, the first of which, "Hunting ... Foxes," indicates where they collected much of their material. Next to various items of writing is an indication (an "x") as to whether the material has been used in Somerville and Ross's works; frequently, the text where the material was used is also noted. The notebooks demonstrate the writers' determination to provide an authentic base for their work, as well as showing their interest in recording the customs, beliefs, and stories as conducted and spoken by the Irish people of the time. In one of the notebooks, Douglas Hyde's name and address is scribbled down, suggesting perhaps that Somerville and Ross's record of the Irish-English language (as opposed to Hyde's or Lady Gregory's Irish material) was as important to them as the Irish-language stories of the 'hidden' Ireland.

Such fidelity to nature indicates, on one hand, the writers' grounding in Romanticism, and, on the other, an attention to detail we discern in Ruskin's favourite painters of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: Holman Hunt and John Millais. For the Irish cultural revivalist--like Lady Gregory--such faithfulness to nature was part of an attempt to plumb an unrecovered cultural mine at the heart of the Irish world.[23] For John Ruskin, such truthfulness to nature as he perceived in the Pre-Raphaelites, might be ascribed to a Protestant sensibility:

> Nothing must come between Nature and the artist's sight; nothing between God and the artist's soul.[24]

Somerville and Ross attest to both traditions and upend them at the same time. They parody the overly serious aspirations of the Irish archivist (see "The Last Day of Shraft" from Further Experiences), and they mock the evangelical mission of Ruskinian aesthetics in Christopher Dysart of The

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[22] Collection of Irish Anecdotes 1886-1945, no. 881, Somerville and Ross Collection, Queen's University Library, Belfast. The library is hereafter referred to as QUB.

[23] Augusta Gregory, "Ireland, Real and Ideal," The Nineteenth Century (Nov. 1898): 769-82.

[24] John Ruskin, Modern Painters II.49, qtd in Robert Hewison, Preface, Ruskin, Turner, 13.

Real Charlotte. Their writing overturns layers of the literary landscape while resettling the ground.

Somerville and Ross frequently criticized their Irish contemporaries for failing to write works true to Irish life. For example, Martin Ross did not much like Yeats and Moore's Diarmid and Grania in 1901 because of its uneasy mix of material (modern French situation and Irish saga) and silly love scenes.[25] Four years later, she criticized Synge's use of dialect in The Well of the Saints, describing it as inauthentic. She directed her comments to her second cousin, Lady Gregory, knowing full well that Augusta took a particular interest in the 'real' Ireland:

> I suppose the dialect is of the nature of a literal translation of Irish, but it seems to me to lack fire and spontaneity--you know, and no one better, what the power of repartee and argument is among such as these. It is inimitable in my opinion, I mean that no one who is not one of them themselves can invent it--and it is so much a part of themselves that to present them without it makes an artifical and unreal picture . . . what I felt throughout was a monotony of idiom . . . suggesting some timorous clinging to an ideal. I know I am touching on the fringe of large questions here--such as the choice of the ideal or the real--and I am not qualified to lay down the law on either, but my instinct is for the real.[26]

This same year, Augusta Gregory suggested that Martin Ross and her cousin write "a Shoneen play" (obviously a piece employing middle-class upstarts like those found in The Real Charlotte). Martin Ross seemed surprised and suspected in such a request a desire "to drop politics and rope in the upper classes" (Letters 274).

Somerville and Ross were not so much interested in taking peasant material and putting it on stage as they were intent on discovering in Irish life a showmanship recalling a broader folk tradition. Martin Ross enjoyed Willie Fay's comic representation of Irishness because of the authenticity of his Dublin accent.[27] Lady Gregory, on the other hand, employed a

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[25] Martin Ross, letters to Somerville, 28 Oct. 1901 and 30 April 1905, The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross, ed. Gifford Lewis (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) 253, 274.

[26] Qtd in Gifford Lewis, Somerville and Ross: The World of the Irish R.M. (London: Penguin, 1987) 104.

[27] Ross, letter to Somerville, 30 April 1905. Letters 274. Gifford Lewis names Martin Ross's "little Fay" as Frank Fay. However, it seems more likely that it was Willie Fay who read Somerville and Ross's "Poisson d'Avril" and A Patrick's Day Hunt in the New Century Club in Dublin. Martin describes the

dialogue in her plays which to Somerville and Ross did not ring true. It "veered on the chant-like and the monotonous with its frequent 'I to be' and 'he to be' which failed to capture the fine sense of metre of the people."[28] The cousins' preference for the theatre of the countryside rather than the countryside in the theatre had more in common with the visual artist, Jack B. Yeats, than his poet brother. Like Jack Yeats, they sought to render faithfully a life which they perceived as theatrical. They distrusted Irish nationalism and were rather suspicious of the new Ireland it portrayed. As Jack Yeats noted:

> The queer thing about this imaginary Ireland is that it is so like the country. It is the anatomical figure in which one or two of the muscles and several of the larger bones are missing.[29]

Critical Reception

The tension between myth and fact in the representation of Ireland preoccupied Anglo-Irish writers throughout the nineteenth century. Somerville and Ross's work came in for its own share of criticism on that score. Lady Gregory, for example, had always shown an interest in her younger cousin's works. On the publication of Somerville and Ross's first novel in 1889, she admired the treatment of "the Irish dialogue, too often revolting in Irish novels from the writer's ignorance, [which] is excellent and racy of the soil." She thought the characterization of Willy Sarsfield to be "admirably drawn" but noted the weakness of their depiction of the Irish country girl, Anstey. Her strongest criticism was directed at Somerville and Ross's picture of an Irish country ball as undignified with its "ramshackle nature."[30] Such criticism indicates Lady Gregory's distaste for a particular kind of humour which she felt pandered to English taste.

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actor as a gas fitter, which seems to be more descriptive of Willie than his brother, who worked as a clerk. Willie played comic and peasant parts which his brother avoided. See Hugh Hunt, The Abbey: Ireland's National Theatre 1904-1979 (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979) 33-4.

[28] Hilary Robinson, Somerville and Ross: A Critical Appreciation (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980) 51.

[29] Jack Yeats, letter to Quinn, 22 Aug. 1917, qtd. in The Literary Works of Jack B. Yeats. John W. Purser (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991) 4.

[30] Augusta Gregory, letter to Mrs. Martin, 21 Oct. 1889, no. 920, QUB. These criticisms are important as they concentrate on Somerville and Ross's representation of the Irish peasantry and show Lady Gregory's early intent to encourage a faithful but also dignified depiction of the Irish peasant, an intent obviously established well before meeting Yeats in 1896.

Like Yeats who believed "the humour of servility has given us Handy Andy,"[31] Augusta Gregory argued that the stage-Irish character resulted from Irish colonization:

> [English audiences] didn't want to hear of the lament for Owen Roe O'Neill or the Fate of the Children of Usnach. They wanted, and got what they wanted, Mickey Free, Handy Andy, the butt, the blunderer, the inferior, who to them symbolise Ireland, whose mistakes would make them feel comfortably superior, over which they would comfortably laugh.[32]

So although Gregory enjoyed the fools of the Irish R.M. stories well enough to read them to W.B. Yeats, she preferred The Real Charlotte.[33] Her invitation to Martin Ross to visit Coole and have her initials carved by Yeats on "a tree already decorated by Douglas Hyde, AE and more of the literary crowd" led to a discussion on their work. W.B. Yeats urged Martin to write "a big novel without delay," as he could not "approve of humour for humour's sake;" Martin Ross disagreed and defended humour as a "high art."[34] We are reminded by this point of disagreement--the point of humour--of Somerville and Ross's eventual positioning of themselves upon the Irish literary landscape as satirists, of their contention that a self-conscious Ireland can take itself too seriously. While recognizing stage-Irish conventions as "over-blown blossoms of English humour," they give the impression of refusing to allow cultural politics to direct their writing; of course, their own colonial politics played a large part in their strategy. Whatever the case, they set about establishing a place in Irish literature for what they saw as faithful record of the language and the humour of their times.

Though The Real Charlotte startled nineteenth-century audiences with its satirical treatment of the sentimental plot, Somerville and Ross's writing caused no real upset until the Irish R.M. stories appeared. Their comic treatment of the Irish landscape and the Irish people provoked amongst the critics in Ireland and England extreme responses which might

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[31] From Lady Gregory's account of an Irish Literary Society meeting in 1897 in her Autobiography (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1974) 335.

[32] From "Laughter in Ireland" (Jan. 1916) in Lady Gregory: Selected Writings, eds. Lucy McDiarmid and Maureen Waters (London: Penguin, 1995) 291.

[33] Lady Gregory, letter to Violet Martin, 1914, no. 920, QUB.

[34] Martin Ross, letter to Somerville, 8 Aug. 1901, Letters 252.

still be felt today. George Bernard Shaw summed up the worst of that response when he wrote to Edith Somerville in 1922, "You write like a lady in the worst sense of the word; that is, it never seems to occur to you that poor people are human beings. They are simply figures of fun to you."[35] Two different approaches to Somerville and Ross's writing emerged in response to the R.M. stories. The most common way of perceiving their work was as social document, a record of social history according to the Anglo-Irish gentry that paid particular attention to the writers' backgrounds. Less frequently, the texts were seen as straight-forward comedy belonging to a tradition of stage-Irish or 'rollicking' Anglo-Irish fiction.

Soon after the publication of Some Experiences in October, 1899, reviewers placed the work and the writers as belonging to a particular camp. The stories sold best in England, especially amongst those who knew Ireland well enough to recognize the ambience and character types of the work but not well enough to identify the political and cultural nuances with which the material worked. For instance, Punch reviewed the collection in 1901 as "mirth-provoking," comparable to the work of Charles Lever and as "thoroughly Irish" as Canon Sheehan's My New Curate (published soon after Some Experiences). "Nearly every story is calculated to 'set the table in a roar,'" claimed the reviewer, "and to only one of them is there anything like a serious and rather sensational finish."[36] This story, a satirical take on the 1798 commemoration, "The Waters of Strife," did not fit into a reading of the series as 'rollicking' stories.

The Freeman's Journal, which reviewed Some Experiences immediately after publication, linked the publication with Robert Martin's popular pantomimes. Perhaps aware of corresponding political sympathies, the Journal stressed the colonial flavour of the stories (as manifested in Major Yeates) and the authors' subsequent distance from (and ignorance of) real Irish life:

> A prolonged version of the Ballyhooley Ballads would be an accurate description of the book. The authors go to the cockney state for their Irishmen and their Irish brogue. The sketches are by a man of a superior race, who looks on astonished, bewildered, and occasionally amused by the duties of an inferior race. The incidents are made up

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[35] G.B. Shaw, letter to Somerville, 18 Jan. 1922, Drishane Archive, L.B.315.a-e.

[36] Punch, 14 August 1901: 116.

in almost equal parts of drinking, fighting, horse-racing, and fox hunting.[37]

The sting for Somerville and Ross upon reading this review was the accusation that the writers employed the stage-Irish brogue.[38] They knew that upon the grounds of language (whatever about religion or class) they could not be accused of ignorance. At this time they were well on their way to establishing a reputation of being the finest practitioners of Irish-English writing. Language had become a significant site of territorial acquisition in the establishment of Irish literature. Thus, however separate the critics viewed (and view) Somerville and Ross from either the Irish public or the literary revivalists, they could not ignore the evident claim these women writers made in developing a place for Irish-English in Irish writing. The R.M. stories became their main means of doing so.

Stephen Gwynn, Somerville and Ross's strongest advocate, reviewed Some Experiences alongside My New Curate for Macmillan's Magazine in 1900. "The Secret of Ireland" draws a sharp distinction between Protestant and Catholic interests by opening with a description of a West of Ireland Sunday. As he sits by a lake waiting to attend his own Church, the reviewer watches boatloads of the Irish folk crossing the water to attend Mass. The distant white cottages, the shining water, and the red petticoats and blue shawls of the women make up a charming community scene. Somerville and Ross's stories give the critic opportunity to comment on the larger question of the isolated position of the Anglican Church ("two or three coast-guards with their families, a policeman from Ulster . . . a score of other people from the great house five miles off") in relation to the Catholic majority.[39] In contrast to the work by Canon Sheehan, what Gwynn sees as demonstrating the power of the priest amongst this latter group, the gentry's short fiction cannot show the secretive peasant heart.

Like the critic in The Freeman's Journal, Stephen Gwynn reads Somerville and Ross's works as "social documents."[40] For him, they are historical records of the perspective of the Anglo-Irish gentry. Some Experiences shows "the manners of the Irish upper class" and their

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[37] The Freeman's Journal, 10 Nov. 1899.

[38] See Martin Ross's diary, 27 Nov. 1899. QUB.

[39] Stephen Gwynn, "The Secret of Ireland," MacMillan's Magazine, LXXXIII (Nov. 1900 - April 1901): 410-19.

[40] Stephen Gwynn, "Lever's Successors," The Edinburgh Review (Oct. 1921): 346-57. Gwynn qualifies this comparison to Lever in a later commentary on Somerville and Ross's work in Irish Literature and Drama (London: Nelson & Sons, 1936) 169-72.

relationship with the mere Irish as that of master and servant or sportsman and gillie. According to Gwynn, the privileged Protestant (Somerville or Ross) cannot see fully into the hearts of the underprivileged Catholic whose secret (which only the priest/leader understands) will forever be hidden. Some Experiences can only show a partial view of Ireland, the view of the colonizer.[41]

Although Stephen Gwynn championed Somerville and Ross's work when others ignored them,[42] he used the R.M. stories as an opportunity for drawing lines regarding the representation of the Irish folk in relation to religious affiliation. He neglected to consider the parodic nature of the stories or the possibility that they might draw upon a European tradition.

This study avoids a polarized response to Somerville and Ross's fiction by exploring the works' various possibilities. The theory that both aesthetic and political impulses might drive the fiction is supported by addressing the different discourses of a text through intertextual means. Unlike previous studies of Somerville and Ross, I consider both social and artistic demands, both post-colonial argument and Bakhtinian aesthetics. In a recent study of the history of the role of the resident magistrate in the British administration of Ireland, Penny Bonsall relies upon Somerville and Ross's portrayal of Major Yeates as an authentic observation of the role and status of the Irish R.M.s.[43] On the other hand, Roz Cowman detects the outlines of "Greek pastoral idyll" in the arcadian activity of Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.[44] I argue that to appreciate the dynamics of romantic irony which Somerville and Ross frequently employ, the reader

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[41] Somerville and Ross's work provoked extreme reactions. Rev. J.J. Murphy uses The Real Charlotte in The Catholic Bulletin in 1923 as an example of the horrors of Protestantism. For Murphy, such writers and their subject matter do not belong in Ireland. The Big House belongs to a vile tradition which has nothing to do with "Irish life and Irish tradition." See his series of four articles: "The Country Houses of Ireland," "The 'Town Houses' of the Colonial Ascendancy in Dublin," "Social Life of the Ascendancy as Described by Themselves," and "The Ascendancy and the Gael," The Catholic Bulletin XIII. 6-10 (June-Oct. 1923): 369-73, 440-44, 625-29, 708-11.

[42] See some of the published correspondence between Violet Martin and Stephen Gwynn in Irish Memories 315-323. Written in 1912, they provide a vigorous argument on the question of Home Rule and the caste system in Ireland. See also Otto Rauchbauer on Gwynn's friendship with Edith Somerville in his evaluative essay for the Drishane Archive 187-89.

[43] Penny Bonsall, The Irish RMs: The Resident Magistrates in the British Administration of Ireland (Dublin: Four Courts P, 1998) 43-61.

[44] Roz Cowman, "Lost Time: The Smell and Taste of Castle T." Sex, Nation and Dissent in Irish Writing, ed. Eibhear Walshe (Cork: Cork UP, 1997) 87-102.

must be willing to consider the interaction of both historical and aesthetic demands.

My concentration on Somerville and Ross's collaborative work from the publication of their first serious novel up until Martin Ross's death differs from previous critical biographies written since Stephen Gwynn's time which span the entire collaboration and continue until Edith Somerville's death in 1949. The biographies of Geraldine Cummins (1952) and Maurice Collis (1968) explore the elusive nature of the collaboration with emphasis on the writers' class awareness, their sexual orientation and Edith Somerville's later involvement in spiritualism. Critical biographies, Violet Powell's The Irish Cousins (1970), John Cronin's Somerville and Ross (1972), and Hilary Robinson's Somerville and Ross: A Critical Appreciation (1980), provide editorial commentary and biographical details on the works and lives of the writers.[45] In the last twenty years, however, significant archival material has completely altered the reception of Somerville and Ross's work. An accessible and greatly enlarged archive, as well as advances in Irish studies, have widened the avenue by which one might approach the fiction. Gifford Lewis provides valuable records with Somerville and Ross: The World of the Irish R.M. (1985) and The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross (1989). In 1995, Otto Rauchbauer established the Drishane Archive, and Declan Kiberd included the writers within the political and cultural framework of post-colonial studies in Inventing Ireland. Kiberd places the Irish cousins alongside Lady Gregory in a section called "Anglo-Ireland: The Woman's Part." He suggests that the writers' gender and belief system gave them opportunity to observe with some objectivity the isolation and failure of their caste, and he stresses Edith Somerville's leadership in women's suffrage. As inheritors of a colonial perspective, Somerville and Ross demonstrated their ambivalence to a changing Ireland in the "decentred narrative" of The Real Charlotte.[46] Kiberd's introduction of Somerville and Ross into his study of the effects the colonial legacy on Irish writing began a serious re-evaluation of their work in contemporary Irish studies.

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[45] Violet Powell, The Irish Cousins (London: William Heinemann, 1970), provides the most useful overview of Somerville and Ross's work while Hilary Robinson's Somerville and Ross considers the writers' role as Anglo-Irish during a period of transition and includes significant detailed study of Somerville and Ross's use of language.

[46] Declan Kiberd, "Tragedies of Manner--Somerville and Ross," Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995) 69-82.

The most recent criticism of Somerville and Ross's fiction has seen the Irish writers as recreators of a Gothic tradition of Irish literature. They are perceived as reinscribing the Anglo-Irish guilt encoded in Charles Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer or Sheridan Le Fanu's Uncle Silas so that it becomes "a gothic landscape of the mind [which] anticipates future reworking of the tradition as a psychological rather than sociological literary form" (122).[47] Charlotte Mullen of The Real Charlotte has been compared to Sheridan Le Fanu's female vampire, "Carmilla," while the first novel, An Irish Cousin, and Somerville's later The Big House of Inver have been seen as psychological reworkings of gothic convention which express suppressed anxieties of the colonial elite in Ireland. However, as Nicholas Daly argues in his recontextualizing of the *fin-de-siècle* popular romance such as Dracula or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the "invention of a Gothic tradition has tended to short-circuit historical inquiry."[48] In the case of Somerville and Ross, research reveals that the echoes of Melmoth or Mephisto in the fiction have been channelled through modernist theory and popular treatment. Thus, I point to the significant influence in Somerville and Ross's work of the contemporary restaging of Faust by William G. Wills, or Baudelaire's treatment of Melmoth as the manifestation of modern caricature in "De l'essence du rire," as conduits by which the earlier romantic material is conveyed. As a result, I argue against the reading of Somerville and Ross's texts as psychological manifestations of the anxiety of empire. Such treatments neglect factual record, ignore the writers' artistic self awareness, and underestimate the impact of the consumer culture of the period.

Despite the growing awareness of the complexity of the writers' interests and the satirical subtexts of their immensely popular stories, The Real Charlotte continues to attract most critical attention and is considered the best work of their collaboration. Irish literature surveys, such as Anthony Cronin's Heritage Now tend to overlook the R.M. stories as "comic

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[47] Vera Kreilkamp, "The Big Houses of Somerville and Ross," The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House (New York: Syracuse UP, 1998) 112-40. See also Clair Hughes, "Late Flowering Gothic: The Anglo-Irish Big House Novel," Australian Victorian Association Journal (February 1992): 142-50, and Claire Denelle Cowart, "Ghost Writers?: Somerville and Ross," That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts, ed. Bruce Stewart, I (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998) 231-42.

[48] Daly 15.

Arcadia."[49] The novel becomes the sole interest of critical review while the R.M. stories and Somerville's art work are often sidelined or ignored. Individual essays such as James Cahalan's "'Humor with a Gender': Somerville and Ross and the Irish R.M." concentrate on the R.M. series but their form and purpose do not allow for a contextual review.[50] Studies of the Irish short story--we immediately think of Frank O'Connor's The Lonely Voice--do not consider Somerville and Ross's work within a tradition but as isolated material. O'Connor describes Somerville and Ross's comic tales as "school-girl high jinks."[51] He concentrates on George Moore's experimental stories, which he sees as the seminal works of the modern Irish short story. O'Connor's approach ignores what this study is intent on showing: the connection of Somerville and Ross's treatment of the Anglo-Irish tradition to modern developments. My work follows upon Heinz Kosok's more recent analysis of nineteenth-century Irish short fiction, which positions Somerville and Ross as writers who anticipate developments in the modern form. The stylistic originality and thematic concentration of the Irish R.M. stories, says Kosok, suggest an awareness of form which alters the authors' use of clichéd tropes of nineteenth-century short prose fiction.[52]

My focus on Somerville and Ross's prime collaborative years gives me opportunity to trace the complexities of the selected texts and some of their illustrations as revealed by recent critical developments in post-colonial studies and discourse analysis. By limiting the selection of material, I am able to address neglected aspects of the collaboration: Martin Ross's involvement with the theatre, Edith Somerville's illustrative work, both writers' love of pantomime. Moreover, during Martin Ross's lifetime, the political bent of the collaboration is Unionist; this study reveals the active contribution and the ensuing complications of the writers' political ideology and religious affiliation in their representation of the Irish countryside. Finally, by introducing a discussion of Edith Somerville's illustrations alongside the writings, this thesis, unlike previous studies on

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[49] Anthony Cronin, Heritage Now: Irish Literature in the English Language (Dingle, Co. Kerry: Brandon Book Publishers, 1982) 82.

[50] James M. Cahalan, "'Humor with a Gender': Somerville and Ross and the Irish R.M.," Atlantic (1992).

[51] Frank O'Connor, The Lonely Voice (London: Macmillan, 1963) 36.

[52] Heinz Kosok, "Vorformen der Modernen Kurzgeschichte in der Anglo-Irischen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts," AAA-Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik 7 (1982): 131–46.

Somerville and Ross, relies on the cousins' interest in the visual arts and refers as frequently to a visual language as it does a textual one.

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My study is divided into three parts. The first part considers the authors' treatment of land and religious issues within the colonial world and begins to set up the background of *fin-de-siècle* discourse and modern aesthetics which determine the writers' development. The second part concentrates on Somerville and Ross's treatment of Irish material within the magazine industry to establish the context of their most enduring and popular work, the Irish R.M. series. The final part studies the layered landscapes of the short fiction. I deal with issues of history and politics which preoccupied the writers and address the nature of the comic as a means of exploring multiple pictures of reality.

Naboth's Vineyard, as its title suggests, devotes its melodramatic plot to the 1880s land war. The Real Charlotte, with its exclusively Protestant cast of Irish and English characters, invites study of Anglican Ireland. My first two chapters argue that the works attack a basic premise of Irish Catholic nationalism: that Anglo-Ireland, like Great Britain, stands apart as a monolithic and unchanging structure from which all Irish evils originate. Naboth's Vineyard shows that the Land League itself might contain elements who exploit their political advantage to gain power. The Real Charlotte shows that Protestant Ireland, a diverse and divided group, can be prone to self-sabotage and internal dissent whether or not Catholics enter the equation. The writers' ideological purpose, however, is complicated by their treatment of the Irish material. Somerville and Ross explore the Irish landscape as a multi-layered tradition which mirrors in its complexity a multivalent reality. Thus, to demonstrate the writers' self-conscious treatment of the Irish landscape, I concentrate on perspective as it is influenced by conflicting models of time and space. I argue that the authors' reworking of romantic material, their ironic use of the German literary fairytale, the *Kunstmärchen*, in their two novels, becomes a means of commenting on the ambiguities of Irish modern life.

My study of The Real Charlotte in Chapter Two establishes the work as a landmark Irish-Protestant text. I argue that Somerville and Ross's survey of late nineteenth century Protestant Ireland expresses an attempt to resolve an Irish Anglican heritage infused with Calvinistic tendencies within a secular language. The Irish cousins parody the inheritance of eighteenth century cultural enlightenment in colonial Ireland. They

transform the Irish Church into a stage just as they turn the Christian mission into a cultural pursuit. This transformation, I suggest, ensures the continuation of a Protestant world view, a sublimation into fiction of the dominant Anglo-Irish belief system and a guarantee that the mythology of this caste will infiltrate the Irish literary landscape as it advances into the 20th century.

Throughout this study of Somerville and Ross's parodic treatment of the Irish landscape, I demonstrate the authors' grotesque realism, their reliance upon the exaggerated comic figures of the town square: the violent altercations of Punch and Judy, the languishing spirit of Pierrot, and the madcap adventures of Harlequin and Columbine. The fiction owes as much to popular pantomime and burlesque as it does to social history. The Irish scene relies heavily on the masks of comedy. Punch and Judy are at war in the vicious battles of middle-class marriage in Naboth's Vineyard. Mephisto's manipulations inspire Charlotte Mullen's deeds; Harlequin's antics energize Flurry Knox's tricks. The Irish country setting becomes a platform whereon the figures of pantomime are restaged. The authors' self-conscious treatment of the Irish landscape--what might be construed as a colonial attitude in their writing--manifests, just as much, a modernist impulse.

To best understand Somerville and Ross's able handling of masks and masking, however, we must consider their significant involvement in the fastest moving medium of the day-- magazines. My third and fourth chapters address directly the demands of the picturesque and modern concepts of caricature in the magazine business by considering Somerville and Ross's treatment of the Irish landscape in the English periodicals. I argue that the Irish writers exploit preconceptions of a picturesque Ireland by directing attention in their magazine publications to the mask-like nature of Irishness, to the business of being Irish. I also note that the authors' work in France, their interest in French caricature, and Edith Somerville's training in the studios of Délécluze and Colarossi in Paris introduce a European dimension in this study of the writers' use of caricature. To dismiss the R.M. characters as concrete expression of Arnoldian notions of Saxon dulness (Major Yeates) opposing Celtic fire (the Irish peasantry),[53] or to read Flurry's boyishness as a manifestation of

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[53] Maureen Waters, The Comic Irishman (Albany: State U of New York P, 1984) 15-16.

"the pleasant peasant" of Irish stage,[54] not only ignores Flurry Knox's class, but also neglects Somerville and Ross's self-conscious treatment of caricature and their background in a French intellectual tradition which gave rise to such works as Baudelaire's theory on caricature, "De l'essence du rire." I argue that Somerville and Ross's use of caricature in their magazine publications derives from the Anglo-Irish discourse on national character as well as modernist developments in caricature.

My final two chapters on the Irish R.M. stories pay particular attention to Somerville and Ross's satire of Irish land politics. Chapter Five looks at the inscription of the past in nineteenth-century popular representation and concentrates on the use of the ballad and the portrait in the first collection, Some Experiences of an Irish R.M. Chapter Six addresses the symbolic significance of the Hunt and considers political allegory in the final work of the collaboration, In Mr. Knox's Country. Somerville and Ross, I argue, display multiple points of view in these stories which question the truth of an objective reality. Despite the apparently traditional material with which they work, and the dominance of a central Anglo-Irish tradition (riding to hounds), these short stories experiment with perspective and in so doing challenge prevailing concepts of Irishness. Chapter Five includes an appraisal of Scottish notions of identity while Chapter Six introduces the beast fable. Throughout these chapters, I stress the writers' romantic irony and modernistic approach, their self-conscious 'staging' of material reminiscent of Jack B. Yeats' representation of the Irish landscape.

Terence Brown has referred to Edith Somerville as Martin Ross's "literary co-adjutor."[55] The description is highly suggestive. Martin Ross appears in my mind to preside as a 'bishopess' of a High Comic Art, assisted by Somerville in the various rites of a cultural mission in Ireland. My image indicates that religion and art, or, to be more precise, a secularized evangelical mission, is the flame igniting Somerville and Ross's collaboration. Gender, politics, and class complicate their service but the altar they attend is Art. If that is the case, then I would argue that the fascination of their artistic treatment lies in the negotiation of myth and reality, between timelessness and progress in their representation of the

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[54] Joep Leerssen, Remembrance and Imagination (Cork: Cork UP, 1996) 171.
[55] Terence Brown, The Life of W.B. Yeats (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999) 147.

Irish landscape during the *fin-de-siècle* and in the first few decades of the twentieth century. This negotiation becomes fully apparent in the study of the history of the text, in an excavation of the literary site itself.

Part One: The Colonial Vision

Chapter One: Naboth's Vineyard: The Colonial Nightmare

'I told him what he should expect–that the fate of Ahab and Jezebel would be his. For Ahab coveted the vineyard of his neighbour Naboth, and as Jezebel wrought evil to aid him to his desire, so this man hath coveted his neighbour's goods and wrought evil to ruin him. And now behold his fate, even as the fate of Ahab and Jezebel! He went without warning and without rites–and no man knows where his body lies. The fishes of the sea have preyed on him, even as the dogs on Jezebel.'

(Bram Stoker, The Snake's Pass)

Mephistopheles: *Why should you scruple here and wince?*
Have you not colonized long since?
Faust: *Go, then, and clear them from my sight!–*
The handsome little farm you know
That I assigned them long ago.

.....

Mephistopheles: [ad spectatores] *What passes here is far from new;*
There once was Naboth's vineyard, too.

(Faust Part II, Act V 11273-89)

In 1891, Somerville and Ross published a political satire on the Irish land wars of the previous decade called Naboth's Vineyard. Like their first novel, An Irish Cousin, published two years earlier, this work concentrated on the underside of Irish culture, what I describe as the colonial nightmare. However, while the first, experimental novel profiled a darkly romantic landscape, Naboth's Vineyard revealed a stark, nearly grotesque world of shady dealings and murderous intent. With this second novel, the authors threw themselves into the midst of Irish cultural politics. Their first work avoided confrontation with the Irish situation and explored with ironic intent early nineteenth-century Romantic concepts: the unplumbed Irish wilderness as it faces the inroads of metropolitan development, or the need to submit to the chaos of the unknown before transcendance might be realized. Somerville and Ross's second novel, however, places in the foreground the specificities of Irish life, turning away from the crumbling decrepitude of the ineffectual ascendancy household to study the 'vulgar' struggles and desperate strategies of shop-folk, labourers, and small farmers. While their interest in the revived romance continued in this second novel, it was directed by a modern impulse and a political intent which this chapter will trace.

Naboth's Vineyard followed a series of fact-driven fictions by Irish writers on the land wars of the 1880s.[1] Unlike Emily Lawless's Hurrish (1886) or Bram Stoker's The Snake's Pass (1890), however, Somerville and Ross's novel exploits Irish material for ironic purposes rather than reinterpreting 'the Irish situation' for English readers.[2] Set in the autumn

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[1] Margaret Kelleher points out that a series of novels published in the 1880s--Letitia McClintock's A Boycotted Household (1881), Elizabeth Owens Blackburne's The Heart of Erin (1882), Fannie Gallaher's Thy Name is Truth (1884), Rosa Mulholland's Marcella Grace (1885), Emily Lawless's Hurrish (1886), Frances Robinson's The Plan of Campaign (1888), Hester Sigerson's A Ruined Race (1889), and Edith Rochfort's The Lloyds of Ballymore (1890)--frequently relied on journalistic depiction of the land wars which the authors fictionalized to present as particular acts of violence. She notes that these "factual fictions" offered themselves as vehicles for a better understanding of the Irish question. "Late Nineteenth-Century Women's Fiction and the Land Agitation: Gender and Dis/Union," Ireland and the Union: Questions of Identity, SSNCI Conference, Bath Spa University College, 9 April 1999.

[2] Gladstone read and was influenced by Lawless's Hurrish which he comments on in Some Aspects of the Irish Question of 1892: "'She has made present to her readers . . . the estrangement of the people of Ireland from the law . . . [as caused by] the sin of the stronger country.'" Qtd in Stephen Brown, Ireland in Fiction (Dublin: Maunsel, 1916) 136. Gladstone also read The Snake's Pass (sent to him by its author). See Nicholas Daly, Modernism, Romance and the Fin De Siècle 69.

of 1883, the novel attacks the basic premise underlying the argument supporting the land agitation of the previous three years (1879-82): the Irish tenantry suffer a common suppression caused by a carrion landlord class. The novel sets about exposing the disunity of the Irish tenantry: it shows land greed masquerading as political strategy; it pits the land grazier against the small tenant farmer; it attacks the myth of Catholic unity in the face of Protestant oppression. Naboth's Vineyard seeks to demolish the foundation supporting the Irish nationalist argument, which assumes the supposed unity of the Irish tenantry as it mobilizes itself as a national Land League. The novel asserts that the proclaimed divisions of race, religion, and tradition between the landlord and his tenantry as emphasized by nationalist discourse mask the real power plays and the real struggles enacted in the towns and villages of Ireland.

At the same time, Naboth's Vineyard begins to demonstrate Somerville and Ross's exploration of Irish reality as a complex and multi-layered tradition that mirrors modern aesthetic interests. Such a claim may seem a contradiciton when we first look at the stage-Irish types who populate the novel: the gombeen man, the innocent colleen, the violent peasant. However, the authors' use of perspective, which allows them to re-stage stage figures upon the Irish landscape, draws attention to the various masks employed to represent Irish reality. Further excavation of the literary terrain thus reveals the authors' reliance upon multiple popular sources--magazines, melodrama and pantomime, the revived romance--to create a kind of pastiche of material reflecting multiple traditions. As a result, as I hope to show, the authors might be seen as struggling to adapt form to express the nature of the Irish landscape. In other words, though initially the novel appears to be a collection of stereotyped scenes and characters culled from popular representations of Irishness, closer study reveals an artful and self-conscious treatment which exploits stage images to present an ever-shifting picture of Ireland, one that illustrates the social-cultural politics of the period as well as reflecting the significant growth of popular culture in the 1890s.

In the light of the above concerns, I will first ask: Why did Somerville and Ross adopt a distanced perspective in their fictionalized study of the Irish land wars? This question might be addressed by considering how the narrative perspective demonstrates a conflict between two different ways of looking at Irish reality, two different models of perception which are based on notions of time and space. To emphasize Somerville and Ross's artful treatment of perspective, as well as to indicate

their response to modern developments, I will contextualize Naboth's Vineyard by considering its response to popular studies of the Irish land wars. I will also address a neglected source of the writers' output, which has its origins in Ireland although it reflects a European tradition: the revival of the romance with emphasis upon German Romanticism. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a consideration of a particular set of circumstances in Martin Ross's early life which provide a context for the ensuing development of Somerville and Ross's work.

According to Edith Somerville, the collaborators wrote Naboth's Vineyard at the request of a clergyman and sold the rights for £30.[3] Since then, the work has been treated as social realism which tells the reader more about the authors' distance from the 'real' Ireland than it does their understanding of grassroots nationalism. Its publishers treated the text as a pastoral romance, with the frontispiece presenting an idyllic illustration of the charmingly impoverished hero and heroine on a picturesque Irish hillside. The novel's use of caricatures and stock situations has led to the criticism that the Protestant ascendancy which Somerville and Ross represent could not comprehend Catholic Ireland. The creation of a complex female character called Harriet Donovan, the forerunner of Charlotte Mullen in The Real Charlotte, did not dispel such views.

The "deplorable over-simplification" of the characters in Naboth's Vineyard is subverted in part by Harriet Donovan's complex and compulsive passions,[4] but Irish critics like B.G. MacCarthy consider that the work is weakened by the authors' inability "to reveal the inner life of the simple people whom they claimed to know so well."[5] MacCarthy believes that Somerville and Ross were quite unable to portray "the peasant *per se*" because "their knowledge was confined to observations from above" (189). "The inner life of the country people was outside their ken" concludes MacCarthy, and John Cronin agrees when he notes that "the people" of this

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[3] Elizabeth Hudson, ed., A Bibliography of the First Editions of the Works of E. OE. Somerville and Martin Ross (New York: The Sporting Gallery, 1942) 5. Violet Powell, The Irish Cousins 30.

[4] John Cronin, Somerville and Ross (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1972). Cronin acknowledges the strength of Harriet Donovan's sexual force (29), as does Hilary Robinson in Somerville and Ross. In a letter to Colonel J. Somerville (13 Aug. 1943), Edith agrees with the critics: "'I have long realized that Martin and I made a very great mistake in writing Naboth's Vineyard. Not a bad plot but quite unreal characters'" (qtd in Robinson 69). This novel never succeeded in Ireland.

[5] B.G. MacCarthy, "E. OE. Somerville and Martin Ross," Studies xxxiv (1945): 186.

work "are observed from outside, without much real sympathy" (29).[6] He can only wonder at the improvement in their next novel (The Real Charlotte), believing that their movement "from an Irish Catholic setting they scarcely understood to a Protestant Ascendancy world which nobody has understood better" accounts for such progress (31). With Naboth's Vineyard, however, one might ask if the writers were attempting, like Zola in Nana, which Martin Ross read in 1889, to "pitch [their] story straight into the lowest possible strata of humanity, and make [one] feel nothing but how foul and terrific it is."[7] One might also ask if the authors' distanced perspective strengthens the work's parody of the Irish land wars, and its conclusion that money, rather than religion or race, is the source of the bitterest conflicts in Ireland throughout the 1880s.

The writers' subversion of popular nationalist perceptions of the Irish land wars becomes apparent in the opening pages of Naboth's Vineyard. The usurpation of land indicated by the title does not arise from Ireland's colonization by England. The novel ignores past conquests and reviews only present-day land appropriation by successful farmers and wealthy shopkeepers. Thus the writers undercut any possible expectations raised by the text's provocative title.

Naboth's Vineyard deals with the basic process of colonization, the usurpation of the land, but concentrates on land-grabbing within the colonized state. The novel's title suggests a series of references which resonate with particular meaning in an Irish context. The original biblical tale from the Book of Kings, where Ahab of Samaria longs for Naboth's land and is assisted in his greedy claim to the property by his wife, Jezebel, had already been given significance in the Irish world by Bram Stoker in The Snake's Pass and, much earlier, by Dean Swift. The central parable in Stoker's melodramatic study of land-grabbing in the West of Ireland is Naboth's story. In the opening of The Snake's Pass, the priest warns the greedy gombeen man, Black Murdock, with the biblical tale. When Murdock's greed is duly punished by drowning in the bog, the Catholic cleric concludes the novel with the observation—in a language with

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[6] Ann Power, in "The Big House of Somerville and Ross," The Dubliner 3.1 (spring 1964), agrees with the general critical belief that in Naboth's Vineyard the authors were unable to enter the minds of their peasant characters because they were "unable altogether to make the intuitive leap that alone could render their characters convincing" (45).

[7] Martin Ross, letter to Edith Somerville, 6 Sept. 1889, Letters 154.

strikingly Protestant overtones--that the gombeen man should have heeded his earlier warning:

> 'I told him what he should expect--that the fate of Ahab and Jezebel would be his. For Ahab coveted the vineyard of his neighbour Naboth, and as Jezebel wrought evil to aid him to his desire, so this man hath coveted his neighbour's goods and wrought evil to ruin him. And now behold his fate, even as the fate of Ahab and Jezebel!'[8]

Though Stoker frames his story with the biblical material, he neglects to include a Jezebel in the plans. His treatment of the land wars is incidental rather than central to a plot which focuses on the visiting Englishman's search for treasure in the Irish countryside. Somerville and Ross's choice of title could indicate their intention to correct Stoker's depiction of the violent Irish landscape of the early 1880s. They engage directly with the struggle for Irish land which the parable suggests, and they forefront an Irish Jezebel, Harriet Donovan. Later in this chapter, I will return to Stoker's novel. For the moment, a further Irish association to Somerville and Ross's choice of title might be noted.

Dean Swift maintained a three-acre garden near St. Kevin's port in Dublin and called it 'Naboth's Vineyard.' The meagre parcel of land contrasted with England's broad, landscaped gardens and well-maintained estates. It provided Swift with an ironic comment on Ireland's "postlapsarian" state, "an arena for the flawed actions of fallen man."[9] The cursed vineyard becomes a metaphor for Ireland, the antithesis of the garden of paradise, England, and the nightmare vision of the colonial world. Naboth's vineyard, then, suggests more than coveted and conquered land; it indicates a nether world, a dimension which operates in opposition to the colonial dream. To step into Naboth's vineyard is to enter the lower realms of the colonial sleep and to gain thereby an ironic perception of the upper echelons.

To usurp is to take someone else's place in the world. Usurpation in Naboth's world is to progress to some point of security in an unstable environment. The premise supporting the logic of the lower realms is the assumption that one can move forward or backward according to possession of the land. This is what John Donovan in Somerville and Ross's novel

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[8] Bram Stoker, The Snake's Pass 243-44.

[9] Carole Fabricant, Swift's Landscapes (London: Johns Hopkins P, 1982) 226; 71. See also Swift's Will in The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift xi, ed. T. Scott (London: George Bell, 1907) Note 1, 415.

realizes: he must advance to some distant point "up to which he felt his financial position quite assured,"[10] and he will finagle the Widow Leonard out of her rightful inheritance to achieve this end. For the gombeen man, progress depends upon property ownership, and failure is its loss. To want too much is to go too far, like Ahab who could not enjoy his vast realms because Naboth's land blighted his panoptic view--or like Faust, whose temptations included imperial dreams provoked by Mephisto's devilish logic.

In the following pages, I will introduce issues which will become increasingly important in Somerville and Ross's work. Because Edith Somerville's art education and work as an illustrator impacts upon the fiction, this study addresses the visual arts, especially caricature and the use of the grotesque. Because Martin Ross followed developments in popular theatre, this work draws upon the traditions of farce and pantomime. I will argue that the writers' self-conscious manipulation of perspective, which we begin to note in Naboth's Vineyard, demonstrates as much a modernist sensibility as it does a colonial attitude towards Ireland. I will show that one of the most pervasive influences on their work is the Romantic irony of the Faust tradition. Thus it may be noted here that in Goethe's version, Mephistopheles reminds his audience that usurpation of the land is an age-old process:

> What passes here is far from new;
> There once was Naboth's vineyard, too.[11]

Mephistopheles' aside embraces both tragic and comic dimensions. On one hand, we can take the devil at face value and agree that Faust has repeated Ahab's error and will accordingly fall. On the other, we must note the incidental humour of the devil's reference to man's vainglorious aspirations in God's holy text. Mephistopheles draws attention to history's repetition; tragedy becomes farcical in its repetition. In any case--and what is important in relation to Somerville and Ross's novel (which includes a chapter entitled "Mephistopheles" and allusions throughout to satanic fires and demonized violence)-- Naboth's world is claimed by hell's darkness and overlooked with playful self-awareness by Mephistopheles. To enter this world is to witness an ironic view of the Irish countryside, a view

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[10] Somerville and Ross, Naboth's Vineyard (London: Spencer Blackett, 1891) 10.

[11] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin (New York: Norton, 1976) II. V, 11286-89.

which not only sets itself up as the opposite of the idyllic, but also thrives on paradox, discontinuities, and ambivalence.

Part One: The "Quaking Sod,"[12] Ireland's Middle Class

From the beginning of Naboth's Vineyard, the reader is placed at a remove from Irish life. The reader hovers on high like Ariel over the isolated island of the fishing village of Rossbrin, circled by water, shaken by storm, a place where rock and sea have battled for preeminence in a landscape which, as a result, has been transformed:

> Anyone who has glanced even cursorily at the map of Ireland, will have noticed how the south-west corner of it has suffered from being the furthest outpost of European resistance to the Atlantic. Winter after winter the fight between sea and rock has raged on, and now, after all these centuries of warfare, the ragged fringe of points and headlands, with long, winding inlets between them, look as though some hungry monster's sharp teeth had torn the soft, green land away, gnawing it out from between the uncompromising lines of rock that stand firm, indigestible and undefeated. (1-2)

The erosion of the land, like its usurpation, is an ongoing process. Rossbrin's surrounding mudflats, Scariff Bay, where the villains of the work meet their melodramatic end and are sucked down into its depths, stress this world's amorphous quality.[13] This place of shifting ground suggests a landscape undergoing transiton over time, what Nadine Gordimer has described as an interregnum period in relation to more

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[12] Daniel Corkery argued that "our national consciousness may be described, in a native phrase, as a quaking sod. It gives no footing. It is not English, nor Irish, nor Anglo-Irish; as will be understood if one thinks a while on the thwarting it undergoes in each individual child of the race as he grows into manhood." Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature 14. In Bardic Nationalism (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1997) Chapter 1, Katie Trumpener applies Corkery's term to the Irish bog as it was used in nineteenth-century travel writing, economic and antiquarian histories, and fiction. I use the term more broadly here and as I understand Corkery's meaning. The "quaking sod" applies to an ever-shifting terrain made up of competing ideologies and suppressing an elusive reality: the hidden Ireland.

[13] The mud flats seem to suck in the murderer, Dan Hurley. This kind of death occurs frequently in Somerville and Ross's writing. In An Irish Cousin, Uncle Dominick is swallowed up in *Poul-na-coppal*; in The Silver Fox, the bog and its unending holes await the English visitors; in "Harrington's" of In Mr. Knox's Country, a deep cave nearly becomes the underground tomb of Major Yeates's son. See Chapter 6 for further discussion.

recent changes in South Africa.[14] In Naboth's Vineyard, we are placed high above the shifting ground; our gaze sweeps the landscape with what seems to be an imperial detachment as slowly, like some swooping gull, we approach the fishing town of Rossbrin, the plain utilitarian stores and the rising main street where two massive sycamore trees dominate as they once did in Castletownshend, Edith Somerville's home. Our gaze moves closer still, and we view Donovan's Hotel with its garish, nationalist colours: a green and gold signboard on pink walls. We espy through its doorway (as if we are looking at a picture) John Donovan himself sitting atop a stool in his bar, counting money with snake-like speed:

> His fat finger travelled rapidly up and down the columns, and every now and then from between his thick lips came a sibilant murmur of multiplication and addition. (7)

The deliberate distancing of the readers from the life of the novel is furthered by the narrator's detachment from the characters whose caste is clearly lower than that of the author or implied readers. The narrative stresses their lowly distant rank just as the perspective stresses their geographically distant position, "the furthest outpost of European resistance," a position not too far from hell itself.[15]

Naboth's Vineyard originates from Somerville and Ross's earlier short story, "Slide Number 42," a three-part story about Irish emigration,

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[14] In "Living in the Interregnum" (The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places, ed. Stephen Clingman (London: Jonathan Cape, 1988), Gordimer quotes Antonio Gramsci in her description of the peculiar vacuum of a period of political and social change, "'The old is dying, and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms'" (263). In "The Congo River" (The Essential Gesture), Gordimer positions herself like a mud-coloured *periophthalmus* inhabiting the Congo River, between two worlds, gasping as she attempts to straddle a white past and a black future. A "pop-eyed, startled little creature," the *periophthalmus* comes from neither land nor water, and its life "spans quietly the gasping transition that evolution made millenia ago, bringing life out of the sea" (158). These life forms attempt to negotiate their way through the ever-changing terrain, never sure where their place might be. A century earlier, Somerville and Ross addressed the post-colonial condition as it intersected with plot or manifested itself as character. In other words, they found political significance in aesthetic form, and the grotesque figures of Naboth's Vineyard are shaped by both modern aesthetics and social political change in Ireland.

[15] Katie Trumpener points out that the Irish bog, like the swamps of the colonial tropics, attracts comparisons to hell. Harriet Martineau, for instance, describes the Bog of Allen as an image of hell in 1852. "When Connaught became the proverbial alternative of hell, the great bog was no doubt the uppermost image in men's minds." (Letters From Ireland 76) Qtd in Bardic Nationalism, Note 35, 306.

murder, and the corruption of the Irish peasant. The curious title refers to the story's plot device, a lantern slide--number 42--which reveals with melodramatic coincidence the image of the dead man to the eye of the murderer who sits in the audience watching the magic lantern show.[16] In the subsequent novel, this self-conscious manipulation of representation becomes a play with perspective. We look downwards at the upheaval caused by Ireland's changing rural population as if we have the balcony seats in a theatre which makes all Ireland a stage. The ensuing fictional farce with its stage-Irish figures (pleasant Paddy, an Irish colleen, the simianized Fenian) focuses upon Parnellite tactics of the Land League, emphasizing agrarian violence which, as the novel appears to suggest, Parnell's policy tacitly condoned.

John Donovan's land greed propels the action of Naboth's Vineyard. As president of his local branch of the Land League, as proprietor of the most successful business in town, and as usurer or gombeen man, he has the power of a Prospero. Already he has disinherited the Irish Caliban of the novel, Dan Hurley, who now works as a farmhand for the Widow Leonard and her pretty daughter, Ellen. Now, Donovan covets the small grazing farm of Drimnahoon.

The tenancy of Drimnahoon belongs by right to the widow. Donovan claims that the previous tenant, James Mahony, was evicted from the farm and thus the property cannot be used by the Widow, who grazes her cattle there. Donovan calls for a boycott on the Leonards. In fact, Mahony, cuckolded by a young wife and her lover and left alone to rear their child, loses the property for personal reasons. His unhappy plight parallels the gombeen man's marital situation. Harriet Donovan married for money and now she longs after an old beau, Rick O'Grady, who has recently returned from the wheeling and dealing Pork-Circles of Chicago. The rustic entrepreneur has started a successful fish business in the town. He has forgotten Harriet and prefers the grey eyes of the Widow's daughter. Mrs. Harriet Donovan, the Jezebel figure, connives to capture Rick while appearing to be a satisfied bourgeoise wife. Her husband, John Donovan,

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[16] Somerville and Ross, "Slide Number 42," The Lady's Pictorial, 1890, no. 903, QUB. We are reminded of Leopold Bloom's words when he passes John Howard Parnell outside Trinity College. Bloom thinks of the dead hero, the brother, lingering like an accusation of murder in the face of John Howard: "the murderer's image in the eye of the murdered" (James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: Random House,1986) 82). Both Somerville and Ross and Joyce use perspective to comment on Irish cultural politics. As modernists, such an interest in perspective as it affects politics deepens the ironic intent.

the Prospero/Ahab figure, exploits the League's political aims under the mask of President. The couple wear other masks as well, as we shall see further on. For the moment, however, we suspect that the possibility of using the League for one's own personal ends, as well as masking onself as a patriot to wreak violence in the land, appears to have been a side effect of what has been considered by some to be the double-faced agenda of Parnellite strategy during the land wars.[17]

Naboth's Vineyard pays close attention to the details of land agitation. The novel includes boycotting, the killing of livestock and the attendant note from Captain Moonlight, arson and attempted murder, the influence of the Freeman's Journal and Parnell, whose oleograph hangs above the mantleshelf of the Donovans' parlour. John and Harriet Donovan are grotesque figures whose hunger for advancement becomes their undoing. They appear to epitomize the worst possibility of the Irish future, one which Somerville and Ross describe in an unpublished essay, "An Irish Landlord of the Future: A Study From Life." In this work, the narrator excoriates the rising middle class and, especially, the poorly educated "land-grabbers" of the Irish countryside. Jeremiah Regan or "Jerry the Gandher" (so called because of his mother's convictions for plucking live geese) will possess the understanding and sympathy of a Yahoo whose greed and cruelty allow him to save money by burying his own mother "with the primitive disregard of ritual" and to beat his horse to death on the roadside. He will be a regularly drunk, superstitious lout who will reduce the land to the value at which it is sold to him under the land acts--"prairie value."[18]

Naboth's Vineyard concentrates on the power of the shopkeeper in small-town Ireland and his prominent position within the Land League as he amasses land for himself, a seeming contradiction which is subsumed by

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[17] Somerville and Ross would have perceived Parnell's agenda as double-faced, and that perception is given modern context in Conor Cruise O'Brien's work on Parnell. According to O'Brien, this agenda is illustrated by Parnell's incarceration in 1881 and his replacement by "Captain Moonlight," a strategy that allowed the politician to maintain his stature in parliament as well as his reputation as a revolutionary. O'Brien describes such tactics as "a system in which the emotional 'residues' of historical tradition and suppressed rebellion could be enlisted in the service of parliamentary 'combinations' of a strictly rational and realistic character." Parnell and His Party: 1880-90 (London: Oxford UP, 1968) 351. In Somerville and Ross's novel, the gombeen man's business flourishes in such an atmosphere.

[18] Somerville and Ross, "An Irish Landlord of the Future: A Study From Life" (no date), no. 899, QUB.

the national intents of the League. As Philip Bull notes, the mobilization of Catholic Ireland not only excluded the landlord class but also "transcended the differences and conflicts of interest between other rural classes." The confrontation between large and small farmers (like the Donovans and the Leonards in Naboth's Vineyard) was overwhelmed by greater national interests:

> While the Land League condemned grazing as a misuse of land rightfully belonging to the tillage farmers, many graziers came to play an active role in its leadership and helped to establish and give credibility to the new 'collectivity' from which the landlords were being excluded. . . . The larger nationalist character which the movement was acquiring diminished the contradiction between their involvement and the declared opposition of the League to large-scale grazing, and the coexistence of groups with rival economic interests further consolidated the League as a national rather than a merely agrarian body.[19]

By removing the main enemy of the people--the landlord-- from their novel and by carefully ignoring the influence of the priest, Somerville and Ross shift focus upon the scramble for position and land amongst 'the folk.' They show a whole variety of people: labourers, housewives, fishermen, shopkeepers, tenants, businessmen. All are driven by ambition and united out of a common fear of losing place in progressive Ireland.

The mobilization of Catholic Ireland would have been especially evident to land-owners and hunting advocates like Somerville and Ross with the anti-hunting protests of 1881 and 1882. Perry Curtis has pointed out that this movement "deepened the divisions in Irish society and strengthened the conviction of landlords, already exposed to boycotting and ambush, that the League militants would stop at nothing--not even the poisoning of hounds--in their campaign to drive the gentry out of the

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[19] Philip Bull, Land, Politics and Nationalism: A Study of the Irish Land Question (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996) 85. See also Cormac O'Grada who notes that "the winners in the social revolution of 1879-1903 were the farmers, not the farm labourers" because "unlike the Continental counterparts, Irish agricultural labourers won no concessions in terms of land in the wake of the Land War" and, "as predicted by Michael Davitt, the outcome of the Land War traded one form of inequality for another, and gave rise to new social tensions." Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780-1939 (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1994) 264.

country and expropriate their land."[20] With Parnell's arrest in October, 1881, and the outlawing of the Land League by Gladstone the same month, the anti-hunting campaign intensified. In November, the Limerick hunt, the Kildare hunt, the United Hunt club, the Muskerry foxhounds in Cork, the Tipperary hunt, and the Queen's County hunt at Aghaboe were confronted by hundreds of demonstrators and stone-throwing protestors. Hounds were poisoned and hunting enthusiasts were dismayed by the vehemence of the popular protest (373). By January 1882, "at least a dozen packs of hounds and harriers" had been suspended indefinitely (376). Throughout this period, says Curtis, the League staged its own "people's hunts" which consisted of masses of people combing the countryside for game which was then given to the families of political prisoners (381). In County Clare, for instance, "the people who had put the Kildysart harriers out of business celebrated their triumph by rounding up some dogs and old hounds, dubbed 'the Parnell Pack', which they then took out hunting" (382).

The staging of 'people's hunts' on the Irish landscape achieves two aims. First, it reverses the order of things in the Irish countryside, and second, it dramatizes the power of the people as they mobilize themselves against a common enemy, the Protestant on a horse. The 'people's hunts' parody the Sport of Kings with a politicized carnivalesque spirit and display localized nationalist mobilization. In Naboth's Vineyard, Somerville and Ross adopt that sense of the land wars as a time of ever-threatening disorder and ferment issuing from inside the land itself. In their writing, Irish nationalism becomes a modernist nightmare which brings the reader to the brink of mayhem and madness. At the same time, this world recalls Dean Swift's political parody of the eighteenth century.

Entering the colonial nightmare of Naboth's Vineyard is like plunging into the world of Marcus Brutus Drapier of Swift's satirical pamphlets. We slide downwards into the unsteady landscape of the merchant's world, where nothing can stop John Donovan's progress. The movement of the novel changes from an upward/downward model to a horizontal one, the model of progress. This change of movement, from the vertical to the horizontal, recalls the conflict in notions of time and space which Bakhtin describes in his study of grotesque realism. In Somerville and Ross's novel, as I will discuss later in this chapter, the tension between

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[20] L.P. Curtis, "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," Nationalism and Popular Protest in Ireland, ed., C.H.E. Philpin (Cambridge: Past and Present Society, 1987) 357.

different concepts of time is important; we might therefore consider at this point the theory of time which Bakhtin outlines in Rabelais and His World:

> In the [official] medieval picture of the world . . . every important movement was seen and interpreted only as upward and downward, along a vertical line. . . . The horizontal line of movement, forward or backward, is absent; it was nonessential, since it brought no change to objects in the scale of values or in their true destiny. . . . The concrete, visible model of the earth on which medieval thought was based was essentially vertical.
>
> This hierarchical movement also determined the idea of time, which was conceived as horizontal. Therefore, the hierarchy was considered outside of time, and time was not essential for hierarchical ascent. There was no conception of progress, of moving forward in time. . . . Medieval eschatology devalued time.[21]

Bakhtin points out that the feudal vision of the world, where rank rather than progress grades a person, is also expressed in terms of time. The tension between the two models might thus be described as a conflict in concepts of time, between timelessness and progress.

In Naboth's Vineyard, the free market rules, and everything is measured and assessed according to the standards of the gombeen man. By removing from the Irish landscape the church and the gentry (who base their structure on a hierarchical model), Somerville and Ross show that the weakest members of the Irish countryside fall prey to their own kind in a community which has adopted a *laissez faire* economic ideology. Modern-day capitalism undermines the links between people while sabotaging their traditional relationship to the land. The gombeen man moves beyond his 'proper' sphere (behind the shop counter) to interfere with traditional rights to the land in the interests of self-improvement. With Swiftian satire, Somerville and Ross show how the land question becomes more a matter of capitalist venture than political play. Politics serves land opportunism. Competition replaces patronage with devastating effects on the Irish poor. The novel raises the question: Who will assist the weak in a world driven by marketplace concerns?[22]

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[21] Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais 401-02.

[22] Martin Ross wrote two essays in 1895, "Quartier Latinities (IV)" in Stray-Aways and "An Outpost of Ireland" in Some Irish Yesterdays (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1906) which use Irish economics as literary metaphor. Her work recalls Dean Swift's satire of the mercantile perspective as presented by his fictional tradesman, Marcus Brutus Drapier, who assesses worth by arithmetic rather than blood in "Letter to the Shopkeepers, Tradesmen,

The swiftly shifting order of things in Naboth's Vineyard causes displacement and disarray. The weak or the vulnerable find themselves misplaced or out of place in the changing scheme of things. Ignorant Dan Hurley loses his home and is reduced to a scavenger's existence. James Mahony, the foolish old man who marries a young wife, finds himself with no footing in this world. Mahony works as a casual labourer and lives like an outcast. He somehow survives "a black rain of misfortune" (150) but never retrieves his lost life:

> He had slipped out of Cloonmore like a ghost, and like a ghost he came back to it, to find, like many another ghost, perhaps, that the place and things in which all his thoughts had centred had entered on another phase of existence in which he had no part. (153-54)

Mahony, cuckolded and rejected, no longer fits. Progressive Ireland, which relies on a forward-moving momentum, doesn't wait for dawdlers. The labourer is dislodged from his previous position. Now, he may as well not exist. The torment in Naboth's world lies in the fact of placelessness in an unstructured society. Dispossessed Dan Hurley becomes a Caliban figure, thwarted and ridiculed. Frustrated Harriet Donovan becomes a Jezebel, manipulating and mocked. James Mahony becomes an Irish Mephistopheles who assists John Donovan in his over-weening ambition. His sunken eyes with their "hot sparkle" (160), his "long, gaunt figure" (229), sanguine temperament, and invoking of the devil, "'Hon o maun dhiaoul!'"(232), deliberately recall Faust's demon. He emerges out of the fractured and violent world created by the 'quaking sod' which Somerville and Ross study at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Grotesque Farce of Mr. Punch the Cuckold[23]: Irish Marriage

Although John Donovan's cocked nose and heavy cheeks invert the exaggerated features of Mr. Punch, both sport a paunch and carry a hefty stick to batter their wives. Their common pleasure in violence, the threat of

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Farmers, and Common-People of Ireland," in Swift's Irish Pamphlets, ed., Joseph McMinn (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991) 59-67. Martin Ross's interest in Irish economics is indicated in a letter to Edith Somerville in 1905 when she speaks with enthusiasm of her attendance at a Financial Relations meeting at the Galway Court House where Martin Morris (the son of Lord Killanin) gives a speech on "The history of Financial Relations since the Union," Letters 275.

[23] See Romon del Valle-Inclan's nineteenth-century pantomime, The Grotesque Farce of Mr. Punch the Cuckold (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1991).

cuckoldry in their marriages, and their courting of the Devil indicate that the Irish gombeen man owes much to the grotesque dimensions of the English clown.[24] Donovan's distinct facial features not only indicate his class; they also suggest the comic's grotesque mask. Donovan's ugliness is matched by his wife's brutal beauty, just as Judy rivals Punch in grotesqueness.[25] The Irish couple's violence, however, is internalized; their wars are psychological rather than physical. Harriet doesn't actually kill her husband, she merely allows his death to occur. John Donovan raises his stick to his wife, but his real torment of her is more insidious:

> Harriet rose to her feet with such a fire burning in her heart as she had never known before. The hidden raw that she scarcely owned to her own thought had been touched by her husband's coarse hand, and the torture was almost unendurable. She felt she could kill him as she looked down on him, stretched out in sodden comfort before the fire, with an egotistical smile on his heavy face, and his fat hand caressing his tumbler of whiskey and water. (103)

The indirect forms of violence waged between John and Harriet Donovan internalize the ludicrous, overt violence of the English pantomime.

The similarity of the pantomime characters to those in Naboth's Vineyard is paralleled by a similarity of content and method. Various elements of the Punch and Judy show are revived in the Irish context: the masks and violence, first of all, but also the elderly husband and his young wife who dallies with young men, marital abuse, the cuckold left holding the baby, allusions to topical issues, and the interweaving of literary and biblical material. Somerville and Ross, however, do not merely appropriate pantomime material, they restage it. So we have the pantomime masks re-displayed on the Irish landscape which, in turn, becomes a stage, a

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[24] Although Punch derives from Pulcinella of the Commedia dell'Arte, the English Punch has characteristics all his own. See George Speaight, The History of the English Puppet Theatre (London: Robert Hale, 1990) 218-31. In "De l'essence du rire," Baudelaire speaks of the marked violence of the English pantomime: "Il m'a semble que le signe distinctif de ce genre comique était la violence" (538). Charles Baudelaire, Œuvres Complètes II, ed., Claude Pichois (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976) 524-43.

[25] The influence of the popular pantomime in Irish writing of this period is indicated by Lady Gregory who writes of a Christmas Punch and Judy show at Coole Park in January, 1899. Douglas Hyde and the Irish teacher, Miss Borthwick, enact an Irish version for a crowd of local children. The policeman speaks in English while the other characters speak in Irish. Later on, Lady Gregory would claim this show to be "'the beginning of modern Irish drama'." Qtd in Lady Gregory's Diaries, 1892-1902, ed., James Pethica (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1996) Note 9, 200.

platform. Ireland imports the English material and transforms it. We are reminded of popular adaptations of the pantomime in Dublin, such as the Christmas pantomime of 1888 at the National Music Hall called Harlequin Bryan O'Lynn or the Sleeping Beauty of Erin. The characters are parodies of stage-Irish figures. There is Thomas Noddy, "King of No Land," and Lord Factotum who is described as "Lord High Everything." The agent of transformation, the harlequin, is Bryan O'Lynn, "A Rale Irish Boy," and the heroine is Lady Bridget Casey, "An Irish Woman to the Backbone." The first of the ten scenes, before the "Grand Transformation" and the Harlequinade, is set in Dublin. Then the entire cast is whisked off to an "Irish and American Meat Market." The pantomime format exploits Irish political-cultural interests, and we can easily imagine the nature of the "Grand Transformation" when, perhaps, the "King of No Land" will take over from "Lord High Everything" in this nationalist material.[26]

Although Naboth's Vineyard presents itself as social documentary, Irish realism marries itself to theatrical farce and a hybrid form emerges. This is neither farce nor is it realistic fiction. We might best describe it as a version of grotesque realism. From this pastiche emerges a powerful portrait in the character of Harriet Donovan. She anticipates the brutal strength of Charlotte Mullen in The Real Charlotte and like this later character functions in two distinct capacities. First, she presents a grotesque and ambivalent mask which disturbs feminine expectations. Second, she manifests the social dynamics of the period and as such parodies the romanticized symbol of Eire. Both functions, however, are subsidiary to her position in the novel. Her central position demands that we ask what her role might be in the colonial world. Let us consider Harriet's significance as a symbol of the new Ireland before concluding with observations on the grotesque in the colonial world.

Neither fish nor fowl, the new Irish power base dips and rises along the social scale with the same volatility we discover in the central female's wilful character. Harriet Kelly married John Donovan to better her own situation, but she remains uneasy in her middle-class parlour with furniture "purchased at a forced sale of one of [Donovan's] numerous creditors" (35), and most of Naboth's Vineyard follows her as she roams restlessly the woods and fields surrounding Rossbrin. In fact, with Harriet

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[26] W.C. Glenroy and Dane Clarke, Harlequin Bryan O'Lynn or The Sleeping Beauty of Erin, 24 Dec. 1888, National Music Hall, Dublin, theatre programme.

Kelly Donovan, the deliberate distancing of the narrative collapses as if it is overwhelmed by her tempestuous nature and the restlessness of her frustrated spirit. Indeed, if the Irish land wars publicly manifest the shifting Catholic classes, then Harriet Donovan's internal tempests--and the violence they wreak--may be considered private manifestations of the same.

In Anomalous States, David Lloyd describes the social context of a character like Harriet. Lloyd reconsiders the causes for the nineteenth-century Irish novel's "crisis of representation." His description of Ireland's unstable middle class during the early nineteenth century, and the difficulty for Irish writers to find "representative figures" for the realistic novel, provides us with a setting for Harriet Donovan. "The 'frequently lamented want of a middle class', conceived as the lack of a locus of stability," says Lloyd,

> has to be rethought in terms of the historical existence of a middle class that was the site of maximum instability, whether in terms of its fluctuating economic situation or in terms of its political or social affiliations. Affiliated at one moment with land-owners, at another with the landless, the middle classes of rural Ireland are not simply difficult to categorize or quantify, but present a particularly contested social terrain. Precisely the social class that for the English novel furnished representative figures through whom progressive reconciliation could be envisaged, in Ireland eludes such a representative function, appearing instead as a locus of unstable transitions, uncertain affiliations and social disequilibrium.[27]

Harriet Donovan's half-way place in Rossbrin, her physical restlessness and emotional tempests, mirror the violent upheaval--the land wars, emigration, poverty--which unsettles the Irish middle class and, as Lloyd points out, prohibits the neat resolutions of "progressive reconciliation" of the English novel.

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[27] David Lloyd, "Violence and the Constitution of the Novel," Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Movement (Dublin: Lilliput P, 1993) 140. It is interesting to note that Martin Ross argues with Stephen Gwynn as to the nature of the middle-class in Ireland in a 1912 correspondence between the two: "I am not quite clear as to what either you or I mean by 'middle classes,'" says Ross, "I think of well-to-do farmers, and small professional people in the towns." Somerville and Ross, Irish Memories 321. Perhaps their disagreement as to the nature of this class might be founded in its unstable make-up.

Harriet's sex complicates her situation. Unable to tolerate the confines of married respectability, she flees her stifling parlour for the open fields. Both class and gender reasons influence her flight. She doesn't know her place, either as a married woman or as an upstart peasant. What is Harriet? When Rick looks at her he remembers the country girl with a red plaid shawl around her dark hair. Now she speaks with disdain of country fashion, of the "old shawl wisped over [the country girls'] heads" (95). Her rarely used parlour is decorated with artificial flowers and books with "gilded devotional exteriors" (35). This brittle facade cannot mask the torrential emotions of her nature. Like the Mephisto figure, James Mahony, she has no place in Naboth's world but dances back and forth between different positions.

Harriet Donovan ushers chaos and disorder into a world already unsteady with change. Her dangerous potential derives from her unrestrained attributes—an aggressive nature and an unmitigated social ambition. Her physical and mental ambivalence, the fine line she treads between good and evil or beauty and ugliness, make her a female demon struggling in the fires of her own making. With her character, Somerville and Ross create a figure who combines the crises of class and gender and who suggests a modern ambiguity, who suffers the violence of transition and wreaks violence herself in order to find peace. Harriet Donovan becomes much more than type; her complex nature includes taboo passions which resist notions of femininity. At the same time, her social ambitions and ability to dominate the text resist the imperial perception of the indigenous woman as Other. A brief consideration of post-colonial and feminist theorizing on the imperial perception of the 'native' woman emphasizes the ambiguity of Somerville and Ross's female characters.

Harriet Donovan, and Charlotte Mullen of Somerville and Ross's later work, Irish madwomen both, escape their attic confines and roam the whole house of the text. However primitive and wild Harriet appears, she dominates the novel. Her half-animal status may, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has pointed out in her criticism of feminist theory, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," give reason for the "project of soul making" of English colonialism,[28] but her central position in the text

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[28] Spivak responds to the bestiality of the Other Woman within the imperial discourse as it relates to feminist theory (discussed by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress," The Madwoman in the Attic (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984) 336-71) in "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," Feminisms: An Anthology of

thrusts into the foreground her concerns. Unlike Bertha Mason who skirts Brontë's narrative like a crazed figure of Jane Eyre's imagination, Somerville and Ross's madwoman has gained centre stage. Unlike Olive Schreiner's contemporaneous colonial novel, African Farm (1883), which does not even conceive of a Hottentot intellect while arguing women's rights, Somerville and Ross's work presents a more complicated issue by uniting feminist concerns and class and race matters in the one powerful character.[29] There is no alternative reality to that of Harriet Donovan. Nothing counters her shifting position, a position which remains central to the text and provides its ambiguous core.

In the colonial nightmare, strange aberrations emerge. Let loose upon the world, an ambitious peasant like Harriet uses John Donovan to advance in the world and then seeks another man. She can be read as a fatal vampire woman who manifests what Clair Hughes describes as "the internal gothic," a character whose psychological features rework the physical traits of a succubus. As such we can see how her character might evolve from the writers' interest in "a gothic landscape of the mind" in their first novel, An Irish Cousin, and anticipate the disturbing dimensions of Charlotte Mullen of their later work, The Real Charlotte.[30] This study, however, argues that such an interpretation evades the historical and aesthetic exigencies of the text. As the next section of this chapter

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Literary Theory and Criticism (New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1985) 798-814. Laura Donaldson argues that Spivak does not see "how the white woman, as well as the 'native' subject, suffers the ravages of colonialism" and she (Donaldson) criticizes the "monotheistic readings" of either an exclusively post-colonial or feminist approach to the Bertha Mason figure in Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire-Building (London: Routledge, 1993) 13-31.

[29] Somerville and Ross refer to Olive Schreiner's African Farm a number of times in their correspondence to each other and to their agent, James Pinker. First mention of the novel is in a letter from Martin to Edith dated early 1890, when they were writing Naboth's Vineyard (Letters 159). A comparison of Schreiner and Somerville and Ross highlights similar ambiguities resulting from a clash of discourse. In the Irish writers' work, however, the clash of discourse (race, gender, and class) occurs in the one character. The resulting ambivalence might be identified as modern ambiguity.

[30] See Introduction, note 47. Significantly, Vera Kreilkamp in The Anglo-Irish Novel and Clair Hughes in "Late Flowering Gothic" cannot reconcile the later comic stories with their reading of the novels. We might ask, perhaps, if the later comic fiction could be described as "the comic side of Irish gothic" in that it "respond[s] to death with frivolous irresponsibility instead of endlessly reiterated excess." So W.J. Mc Cormack describes W.H. Maxwell's works in his survey of Irish Gothic in The Field Day Anthology II (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991) 834.

demonstrates, a character like Harriet is a Mephisto figure emerging from nineteenth-century farce. Somerville and Ross's involvement with a theatrical tradition, the influence of figures such as William G. Wills and Henry Irving, and the explosion of popular periodical literature at the end of the century influence the development of such a character. Harriet comes from the underworld of Naboth's Vineyard. She is like a volcano waiting to erupt, "tense with the strain of repressing some wild speech or other" (41), and her eyes when she looks at Rick have "such intensity that a fire seemed to kindle in them" (43). The evident sexuality manifested in her pursuit of Rick O'Grady demonstrates distortion. Like the other unpleasant characters in the novel whose ugliness is detailed to suggest baseness, ignorance, and enlarged sexual appetites, Harriet is a grotesque.

The grotesque, says Baudelaire in "De l'essence du rire," prompts a wild hilarity in man. The grotesque is a creation rather than an imitation, and man laughs to discover his superiority to nature which the grotesque reveals.[31] The word comes from the Italian, *grotta* (cave), and the Latin of *grotta* is *crupta* (crypt). *Crupta* comes from the Greek for vault, "one of whose cognates is 'to hide,' thus implying that the grotesque reveals the underground, the secret, the 'buried.' "[32] The grotesque is both a fantastic creation and a sinister reflection of the chaotic forces of nature. It suggests a subterranean "world in which the realms of the animate and the inanimate are no longer separate and the 'normal' laws of symmetry and proportion are no longer valid" (163). A grotesque like Harriet, we might conclude, conceals something unknown. Half of her figure lies shrouded in darkness.

Grotesque realism, says Mikhail Bakhtin, thrusts downward in the manner of folk imagery, "down, inside out, vice versa, upside down, such is the direction of all these movements. All of them thrust down, turn over, push headfirst, transfer top to bottom, and bottom to top." This debasement moves towards the earth and transforms that which is exalted into material things; as a result, forms and images "are understood anew and merged in one single movement directed into the depths of the earth, the depths of the body, in which the treasures and wonderful things lie hidden."[33]

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31 "De l'essence du rire" 535.

32 Chris Snodgrass, Aubrey Beardsley, Dandy of the Grotesque (New York: Oxford UP, 1995) 163.

33 Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World 370; 371.

The elusive truth of the grotesque figure lies in the suspicion of a half-understood reality and Harriet Donovan's power lies in her mysterious ambiguity. Thus Harriet's vitality might be demonic and a manifestation of what Spivak has described as the "worldling" of the native (the making as other); nonetheless, it energizes the novel. The deformation of her character manifests a modern ambivalence which is generated by specific Irish conditions of the late-nineteenth century. Such distortion of character mirrors the farcical exaggeration of pantomime but is grounded in the specificities of the Irish countryside. In Harriet Donovan, and, as we will discover in the next chapter, to an even greater degree in Charlotte Mullen, character manifests the multiple tensions of the cultural politics of the period.

Part Two: Literary Contexts

Close attention to realistic detail confers a journal-like quality to Naboth's Vineyard. Like other novels of the period on the Irish land wars, the text relies on periodicals and newspapers for support. The intense violence, such as the killing of the Widow's prized heifer with "a dozen gashes in her sleek skin" who lies surrounded by a pool of congealing blood with the accompanying note from "Captain Moonlight," is authentic. The note's message, "'Take notis, that this is the way I will sarve all Land-grabbers'," is given point by a drawing of a coffin (47-48). The threatening letter could be taken directly from nineteenth-century newspaper records of agrarian outrage.[34]

Such precise journalistic details are accompanied by the use of distinct physiognomic coding of the characters' features. John Donovan has a cocked nose and heavy cheeks. His wife's dark beauty is marred by a heavy jaw and projecting underlip. All the characters are separated from the narrator by class and generalized as types, at a firm distance from what was the novel's initial observational post. When we step closer to some of the more pleasant characters such as Ellen Leonard, the Widow's daughter and "the realization of all pastoral romance" (53), we are reminded that the gap of rank is quite impossible to bridge:

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[34] See Michael Beames, Peasants and Power: The Whiteboy Movement and their Control in Pre-Famine Ireland (Brighton: Harvester P, 1983).

> It cannot, of course, be supposed that [Ellen] explained her own emotions to herself very intelligibly; that luxury, or torment, whichever it is, is reserved for the cultured. (134)

Even handsome Rick O'Grady, who challenges John Donovan's position and will save Ellen Leonard from her Calibanistic admirer, Dan Hurley--even Rick's appearance falls far short of the implied reader's standard. He may have good looks, but "it must be confessed that they were not of a pre-eminently classical or intellectual type" (32). His hair curls too wildly, his brow dips too low, and his nose is "put on at a more salient angle than is common in Greek art" (32).

The physiognomic coding in Naboth's Vineyard not only indicates the writers' intent to subvert the demand for idealized figures within the 'pathetic' Irish landscape in pictorial representations of Ireland, but also shows their use of source material explored below.[35] Both considerations offer possible grounds for an artistic as much as a political argument for authorial distance. In other words, the distanced perspective and use of stage-Irish figures may indicate the authors' aesthetic intent as much as it reveals their alienation from the new Irish state. Their use of various sources, such as Lawless's Hurrish, British periodical literature, and Stoker's The Snake's Pass, demonstrates the authors' response to popular images of Irishness and their incorporation or subversion of mainstream tropes. A brief look at Lawless's novel points up the later writers' perspective, while the study of newspaper and journal accounts of the early 1880s indicates Somerville and Ross's involvement in this milieu. Finally, consideration of Stoker's work highlights the significance of the revived romance in constructions of Irishness by these Anglo-Irish writers.

In Lawless's Hurrish there is no further into the wilds that one can go, apparently, than the Burren in Clare--the furthest, the wildest, and the most remote corner of Europe. "Wilder regions there are few to be found, even in the wildest west of Ireland"[36] than this area of ancient history. This is an antique, foreign place and though the valley of Gortnacoppin

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[35] Catherine Marshall points out that "romantic and idealized genre scenes" of Ireland were "the order of the day" in the English Royal Academy of the 1890s. Human figures were idealized types. Irish Art Masterpieces (Southport, Conn.: Hugh Lauter Levin, 1994) 78-9. Edith Somerville, whose art education was mainly in Paris, always used real-life models, the locals or her own family, for her works.

[36] Emily Lawless, Hurrish (1886; Belfast: Appletree P, 1992) 3.

dips within the desolate landscape, one has the impression of being on a height. "Standing in it," says the narrator, "you may fairly believe yourself in the heart of some alpine region, high above the haunts of men, where only the eagle or marmot make their homes" (4). Lawless's western landscape provides the reader with an opportunity to see Ireland with new eyes.[37] It recalls the fictionalized west in Lady Morgan's Wild Irish Girl. Hurrish presents a hero by the same name as Morgan's protagonist, Horatio [Mortimer], although in the later work the literary descendant has been transformed from Horatio to "Hurrish" [O'Brien], a giant of a man (like Morgan's gigantic characters). He is "a broad-shouldered, loose-limbed, genial-faced giant" (5) whose home of "Brobdingnagian scale" is made of stone "which might have come in usefully [sic] in building the great Pyramid and which looked like a legacy left from the days of King Goll MacMona and his eight hundred giants" (25). Instead of looking down--as we do in Somerville and Ross's work--we look up. The scale of things is exaggerated, and we move through a world of gentle giants and evil monsters bearing stereotyped Irish traits.

Hurrish demonstrates a text-book Celtic temperament : "poetic, excitable, emotionable [sic], unreasoning," and though he cannot read he quotes songs and ballads by the dozen(15). Half farmer and half fisherman, he comes from "that amphibious part of the island," and as a "contented giant" (5), he appears to be only half way up the evolutionary ladder--not wholly human and close indeed to the resident "human orang-outang or Caliban" (9) of Gortnacoppin--Matt O'Brady.

O'Brady manifests the traits of the worst type of Irish peasant as satirized by English cartoonists like John Tenniel in Punch. He pursues Alley Sheehan whose mind "was too simple, too inherently limited, to admit of any large or complicated variety of emotions" (27). Like Somerville and Ross's colleen in Naboth's Vineyard, Lawless's simple lass "was not given to introspection--that, happily, not being one of the vices of the class to which she belonged" (79). Red-headed, drunken Matt O'Brady hates his conquerors with a "grotesque" and "repulsive" brutality. He is "unwieldy, red-faced, heavy-jawed, and brutal," the "most obnoxious of Calibans" who

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[37] Heinz Kosok outlines a familiar pattern employed in nineteenth-century novels as one which sends an Englishman to Ireland to discover a people and a place contradicting all his previously-held notions about Ireland in "Discovering an Alternative Culture: The Travel-Book Pattern in the Nineteenth-Century Novel," Das Natur/Kultur-Paradigma in der Englishsprachigen Erzahlliteratur des 19 und 20. Jahrhunderts (Tübingen, 1994): 79-93.

figures briefly in the text as the brother of the brave Fenian, Maurice O'Brady. His assault of Alley Sheehan illustrates his animalistic nature:

> the great red-headed, half-tipsy Caliban had suddenly darted out. . . and had pursued her over the rocks. How she had run, and how he had followed faster than she could escape, and how he had caught her, and held her fast, swearing at her for her terror, and exhaling a portentous smell of rank whiskey! It is true that he did not actually hurt her. He was not, perhaps, even as brutal at bottom as many an English, certainly as many a French yahoo of the same mental calibre would have been; but he frightened and sickened the fragile girl with the horror of his presence, with the sense of her own powerlessness under the grip of his hand, by his loud voice, and coarse, grinning, baboon-like face so close to her own. (80)

Lawless's romantic landscape and exaggeration of character, a perspective which enlarges the Irish world, relies upon familiar colonial stereotyping. In a realistic novel, such distortions become an aberration of normality. In romance, such distortion is the norm. In satire, such distortion is doubled. As Gulliver discovers on his travels in Brobdingnag where everything is too big, "the reflection from a troubled stream returns the image of an ill-shapen body, not only larger, but more distorted."[38] The "troubled stream" of satirical fiction transforms reality, one might conclude, and if that reality is already "ill-shapen" or abnormal (as Irish reality may have appeared) then the resulting Irish satire becomes even "more distorted."

As with Emily Lawless's work, Naboth's Vineyard situates its characters on various lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder, at the bottom of which lurks a simianized figure: Matt O'Brady in Lawless's Hurrish becomes Dan Hurley in Somerville and Ross's later novel. The descent into Naboth's nightmare world counters the narrator's ascent in Hurrish. Somerville and Ross satirize the violent Irish landscape by thrusting the perspective downwards. They reuse the Irish Caliban and cross him with other kinds of Calibans to create a burlesque "yahoo" with an Irish political dimension.

Dan Hurley, the Widow Leonard's illiterate and deformed farmhand, has a "thatch of pale hair . . . almost white" (21-22) and wears a white flannel coat. His propensity for violence, his epileptic fits, extreme ugliness, and desire for Ellen re-enact Caliban's role in a specifically Irish context--that of the Whiteboys. Somerville and Ross re-charge the

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[38] Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels (London: Pan Books, 1977) 240.

appropriated Tempest material with a political edge. Their Irish Caliban targets the most popular peasant movement of the century. "In a mind like his," the narrator assures us, "thought is scarcely a coherent process, but resolves itself into a succession of more or less crude emotions" (51). Dan Hurley fulfills the Punch reader's most extreme notions of the worst kind of Irish peasant: ignorant and ugly to the point of monstrosity, more animal than man, more vegetable than human:

> His face was that of a sullen, ugly young fellow of two or three and twenty; in colour a brick-dust pink; in shape, a pudding that has defied the restraining influence of the pudding cloth; in general effect, a remarkable confirmation of the theory that those who live on potatoes finally acquire a likeness to that vegetable. (21)

In fact, Dan Hurley--the disinherited tenant reduced to labouring by Prospero[us] John Donovan--is animal-like, wild and unkempt. He bares his teeth at Rick O'Grady "with the grin of a furious caged animal" (126) and possesses a laugh "that might have been taken from Caliban's *repertoire* " (127). Dan Hurley lurks in the island's corners (which he knows better than anyone else), suffers his disinheritance by John Donovan, and accosts his beloved Ellen in a ludicrous parody of Caliban's postures in Shakespeare's Tempest.

* * * *

Naboth's Vineyard opens in autumn of 1883. Its events progress through November and the novel concludes with the advance of Christmas in December of the same year. Unlike Somerville and Ross's other novels, Naboth's Vineyard covers a short and specific time frame. This period followed a particularly violent stage of Irish politics. The Phoenix Park assassinations occurred in May, 1882, and more locally for Martin Ross, desperate acts such as the mysterious massacre of a family of five in Maamtrasna in Mayo took place not far from Ross House. Though the mystery of Maamtrasna has never been fully solved, sheep stealing and serious land agitation in the West of Ireland and especially Mayo, Davitt's home county, might be seen as the cause.[39] After Robert Martin's death in

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[39] Three men eventually hanged for the murders: Pat Casey, Pat Joyce, and Myles Joyce. The latter of these was generally considered innocent though accused of the crime by the two independent witnesses, two brothers: Anthony and Johnny Joyce. See Jarlath Waldron's Maamtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery (Dublin: Edmund Burke, 1992).

1905, Martin Ross writes of her elder brother's involvement in these events in "The Martins of Ross." Robert Martin's passion for pantomime and burlesque coincided with Parnell's leadership of the Irish Parliamentary party. "From 1877," says Martin Ross, "Parnell . . . carried the horn, a grim, disdainful Master, whose pack never dared to get closer to him than the length of his thong; but he laid them on the line and they ran it like wolves."[40] (The image recalls the "Parnell Pack" of the people's hunts in Clare in 1882.) Martin Ross argues that the consecutive poor harvests of this period, increasing tenant discontent and random boycotting caused by Gladstone's Land Act of 1881, and a policy combining coercion and concession, led to the violence and murder epitomised by the terrible deaths of Maamtrasna: "The stately mountains beheld the struggle and the slaughter, and the sweet waters of Lough Mask closed upon the victims" (39). However, though Ross writes of the events of the early 80s, and though the waters and hills of Rossbrin in Naboth's Vineyard witness violence originating from a similar mix of popular political agitation and personal vendetta, she doesn't isolate the autumn of '83--the period does not appear to have any special significance. We must ask why the writers isolated October to December in their fiction--why these months in particular?

John Donovan's reading material, the Freeman's Journal, which he hides behind while refusing to serve pretty Ellen Leonard in his shop, could explain the authors' selection of this time period. There is, undoubtedly, some irony in the newspaper's appearance in the novel. Throughout October in the Freeman's Journal, amidst reports on Nationalist meetings and demonstrations, descriptions of Land Commission court cases, and listings of the amounts accrued through the Parnell National Tribute, ran a lengthy series of editorial comment followed by letters to the editor on the convent education of Irish girls.[41] The subject was immensely popular. So while Donovan pores over articles on the Irish public's concern for the discipline, exercise, and nutrition of Irish girlhood (their spiritual welfare not being in question), an ignorant and under-nourished specimen of the same waits in vain for a pound of sugar. Harriet Donovan's punishment at the end of the novel, banishment to the convent of the Sisters of Mercy, gains significance when considered against the backdrop of the Freeman's Journal.

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[40] Irish Memories 34.

[41] The Freeman's Journal, 5-10 Oct. 1883.

Somerville and Ross read Punch magazine more frequently than the Freeman's Journal, and a better indication of the authors' appropriation of sources might be found in the October to December issues of the satirical British magazine. Again, the writers' interest in pantomime and burlesque might be recalled; the latter months' issues of Punch in 1883 would have been of particular interest to Martin Ross in this regard. Her second cousin, the playwright William G. Wills, receives a number of mentions in November and December for his plays, Charles the First and Claudian.[42] In fact, in the December 22nd issue there is a suggestion that the "Poet Wills" do a version of Faust for Henry Irving and Ellen Terry.[43] As discussed below, Martin Ross would have been familiar with this work. In any case, these issues of Punch undoubtedly interested Martin Ross and thus deserve attention.

On October 20, 1883, Punch reviewed the "triumphant Shakesperian burlesque-fairy-drama," an extravaganza called Ariel, performed in London's Gaiety theatre (Figure 1-1). Punch speaks of the show's "peculiar *repertoire*" of music hall tunes and, in the next line, of Caliban and Miranda's delightful dancing (we cannot fail to recall Somerville and Ross's words when the narrator describes Dan Hurley's laugh as one of "Caliban's *repertoire*"). The two accompanying illustrations of Ariel hovering above the waves and Caliban and Miranda facing each other in harmless dance, the transformation of Shakespeare's play into light-hearted burlesque, may have suggested to Somerville and Ross similar manipulations in their fiction, an Irish version of The Tempest.

On December 22, 1883, Punch printed John Tenniel's notorious caricature of the Irish Fenian as O'Caliban (Figure 1-2) and provided an entirely different version of the innocent dancing native of the earlier review.[44] O'Caliban is a brutal, frankly degenerate ape-man representing the Irish Land League and a combination of the various images of the previous issues. He is what Perry Curtis describes as "the Celtic Caliban" in his study of the simianized Irish man of Victorian caricature.[45]

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[42] "Our Wealthy Dramatists," Punch 85 (17 Nov. 1883): 240.

[43] "Review of W.G. Wills and Herman's Claudian," Punch 85 (22 Dec. 1883): 292.

[44] John Tenniel, "O'Caliban" Punch 85 (22 Dec. 1883): 295.

[45] Perry Curtis, Apes and Angels, rev. ed. (Washington D.C.; London: Smithsonian Institute, 1997) 20. Curtis also notes the use of a Caliban figure in Emily Lawless's Hurrish. Mat Brady is "'a sort of human orang-outang or Caliban'" who lustfully pursues a pure country colleen (4). For a response to Curtis's view which provides a broader look at Punch's caricatures, see R.

The first illustration bears no connection to Ireland's politics and depicts Ariel as poised above the waves, her wings lit up by modern electric lights while a black minstrel-type Caliban is paired with Miranda as "the Backward Boy and the Forward Girl." Tenniel's illustration isolates Caliban as a dangerous monster who stands for violence and anarchy in Irish politics and who might also be viewed as the uneducated Irish peasant, not far from beast or Hottentot in the evolutionary scheme of things. Somerville and Ross appropriate the Punch parodies and restage them on an Irish island--like Prospero's island, tempest-tossed and subject to a patriarchal rule which both a Miranda-like Ellen and a Caliban-like Dan Hurley must endure. With O'Caliban in mind, the writers show a White(boy) version lurking in the background, and the novel's tempests become the boycotts and fires conjured up by Donovan and his superior wizard, the absent Parnell.

Somerville and Ross's novel, then, reflects a series of images of Irishness rather than a particular Irish reality. It restages familiar burlesque material on a natural stage, the island of Ireland. At the same time, it purports to be telling the 'real' Irish story and deliberately subverts idealized versions of 'the Irish situation' as advanced by romance adventure stories like Bram Stoker's The Snake's Pass. In considering Stoker's novel, however, I am more interested in certain similarities between the two works than the obvious differences.

Stoker provides an improving English landlord as the solution to Ireland's difficulties and promotes the idealized peasant girl--his future wife--as a natural lady, one who needs only to travel to Paris to attain "high breeding--every stamp of the highest culture" (247). Somerville and Ross's prognosis on the improvement of the Irish landscape in the hands of the English entrepreneur, or of the Irish peasantry, opposes Stoker's panacea for Ireland's ills. Nonetheless, like Stoker, they are concerned with the conflict generated between different notions of time which late nineteenth-century capitalized venture made critical. Earlier in this chapter, I argued that the tension between a vertical and a horizontal concept of the world reflected Irish cultural change. However, with an examination of Stoker's work, a further source for this conflict (and its use by Somerville and Ross) becomes apparent--German Romantic thought.

F. Foster's Paddy and Mr. Punch (London: Penguin, 1993)171-94. For further discussion, see Chapter Three of this study.

In Stoker's text, the gombeen man, Black Murdock, figures as a monster who appears in the hero's dreams as an enormous snake and who tricks his neighbour, Phelim Joyce, out of his land. Murdock wants to find a treasure supposedly hidden in the useless bog, which makes up most of the land on Knockcalltecrore, "The Hill of the Lost Crown," also called Knocknanaher, "The Hill of the Snake." There is an ancient myth about St. Patrick battling the snake for ascendancy in Ireland and a more recent story about a lost chest of French gold coins buried in the bog at the end of the previous century. These old stories of the snake and the gold direct the action of the plot, for Murdock is determined to find the treasure, and the hero, an Englishman called Arthur Severn visiting Ireland's West for the first time, becomes haunted by the myths.

Stoker's text is more heavily weighted by the revived interest in the dark side--*Nachtseite*--of German Romanticism than is Somerville and Ross's novel a year later. The blackness of The Snake's Pass is matched by the unfathomable power of the shifting bog: swollen and bursting with weeks of rainfall, it eventually breaks its boundaries and sweeps across the land like an avalanche of quicksand. Black Murdock comes to an abrupt finish when the bog sucks him and his entire house down deep into its "filth and wickedness" (235) and the whole lot of fetid water and evil derring-do is swept out to sea. Donovan's sordid death in Naboth's Vineyard might be described as a realistic version of Murdock's incredible end, while Somerville and Ross's actual descriptions of agrarian warfare led by Captain Moonlight counter Stoker's determination to skirt the violent reality of the time. For instance, Stoker's lovelorn hero wanders restlessly at night and is accosted by the local policeman, who suspects some nefarious reason for Severn's nightly expeditions. But, Severn claims, his intent is moonlighting of another sort than that which the law might suspect: he walks at night "'to enjoy the effects of moonlight.'" What he means is "' the view--the purely aesthetic effect--the chiaroscuro--the pretty pictures!'" (116)

Apparently, the romantic quest rather than local politics predominates in Stoker's text.[46] Yet, the larger picture, if I might borrow Severn's phraseology, originates in romance material and encompasses the troubled social terrain of the period. A potent source, Goethe's "The Fairytale" of 1795, might be considered as example of the broader discourse informing the Anglo-Irish material. This highly symbolic tale influences

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[46] See Nicholas Daly, Modernism, Romance and the *Fin De Siècle* 74.

both Stoker and Somerville and Ross's *fin-de-siècle* sensibilities. It introduces into this discussion significant aesthetic material, the German *Kunstmärchen* or literary fairytale, which will have bearing on the development of Somerville and Ross's literary output throughout their career.

In Goethe's "Fairytale," a great river, swollen by rains, separates the East from the West and cannot be crossed by anyone other than an old ferryman and a female snake who turns herself into a bridge to access the beautiful East. This snake, however, lives in the caverns of the West and thrives on gold. She gobbles up gold which two travelling will-o'-the-wisps scatter onto the ground as they laugh and trick their way across the symbolic landscape. Various elements from Goethe's tale are echoed in the Irish writers' material, but I wish to concentrate on the significance of the snake and the will-o'-the-wisps who must assist each other in order that a new kingdom might be realized. I am especially interested in how these figures are presented in Goethe's work:

> Exhausted, she [the snake] at last came upon a damp reedy marsh where our two will-o'-the-wisps were at play. She shot forwards to greet them and was delighted to find herself related to such pleasant gentlemen. The flickering lights sidled up to her, leaping to and fro and laughing in their usual manner. 'Dear Aunt,' they said, 'even though you do indeed belong to the horizontal line, it really means nothing; for we are related only through our shared brilliance, for, as you see' (at this point the two flames drew themselves in, discarding their full breadth and making themselves as long and as pointed as possible) 'a slender figure suits us gentlemen of vertical form quite beautifully; do not be offended, my friend, for what family can boast such a thing? Ever since the first will-o'-the-wisp was created, none of our kin has ever had to sit or lie down.'[47]

The forces which will eventually assist in bringing about an enlightened new order in Goethe's "Fairytale" take two directions: the horizonatal and the vertical. The gold-gobbling snake--like Greedy Black Murdock who appears as a snake in Severns's dreams or the sibilantly murmuring money-counter, Donovan, in Naboth's Vineyard--belongs to the "horizontal line" in the dark caverns of the earth. The progressive advance of the snake, however, becomes a much more ominous force in the Irish

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[47] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "The Fairy Tale," Romantic Fairy Tales, ed. and trans., Carol Tully (London: Penguin, 2000) 5.

landscape of the late nineteenth century. Perhaps Ireland provides a suitable terrain to warn of the dangers of the horizontal line. In any case, in the *Kunstmärchen* as well as the later Irish material, the snake perishes once union between the East and the West is achieved. The necessary progress of a gold-gobbling force, a movement which pushes forward in space and time, is countered by the vertical line, which in Goethe's tale is a timeless trickster who makes gold to feed the greedy snake her delightful meals.

The Irish writers' treatment of the greedy snake of modern progress brings to question its ability to realize a wondrous new order. In Ireland, the reappraisal of the ideals of enlightenment thought and early Romanticism provides ironic commentary on Irish events. In Stoker's work, the legendary snake coiling its length in the caverns of Knocknanaher perishes once and for all when his reincarnation, Black Murdock, is brought down by overweening ambition. In Somerville and Ross's novel, Donovan is laid low when he attempts to move from the horizontal line to the vertical, when he believes he can rise as well as progress. In short, the horizontal movement in the late nineteenth-century Irish novels--the modern Irish snake--believes it can adopt a vertical position, unlike Goethe's snake who soon learns her place:

> The serpent felt most uneasy in the company of these relations, for no matter how high she tried to raise her head, she was still forced to lower it to the ground again in order to move, and whereas before she had felt so wonderfully at ease in the dark grove, here her glow seemed to diminish with every moment she spent in the presence of these cousins, so much so that she feared it would eventually extinguish altogether. (5-6)

Both Bram Stoker and Somerville and Ross, despite their different treatments of the violent Irish landscape of the early 1880s, question the notion of unlimited progress. Ambiguity results in Stoker's text when a benevolent English improver transforms the bleak wastes of Connemara (Martin territory) into "a fairyland" of "exquisite gardens" and elaborate waterworks (246). In Somerville and Ross's revision of the theme, no such fantasy is realized. Instead, Rick O'Grady, who never raises his head above the horizontal position, wins the day.

William G. Wills and the London Theatre

The various strands animating Somerville and Ross's second novel--pantomime material, periodical literature, and popular romance--might be

given context when an earlier period of Martin Ross's life is considered. Before the collaborators met, Martin Ross spent time with another second cousin on her mother's side, William Gorman Wills, the playwright. According to Martin Ross's memoir of Robert, "The Martins of Ross," Willie Wills had been a familiar presence at Ross during her childhood.[48] However, in 1885, when Violet Martin was 23 and Willie Wills 57, she spent an extended visit to London in the playwright's company. That friendship, and what appears to have been a working relationship, continued up until 1890.

Violet Martin's friendship with Wills developed at the peak of the playwright's career. His first dramatic success, Charles I, had come about thirteen years earlier through collaboration with the actor-manager of the Lyceum theatre, Henry Irving. Based on an engraving, "The Happy Days of Charles I" by F. Goodall, Wills' poetic interpretation was given melodramatic plotting through the encouragement of both Irving and the American showman, Hezekiah Bateman.[49] Wills, known as a true Bohemian ("a very silly man," says the cousins' biographer Maurice Collis[50]), wrote poetry, painted, and sported a dramatic cape, like Mangan and Maturin before him,[51] which Martin Ross described as the coat--"an immense coachman's collar and cape,"[52] Not given to historical accuracy, as criticism of Charles I reveals, he nonetheless flattered Irving and pleased the Lyceum theatre-goers by adapting for stage established texts. His Olivia, first performed by Ellen Terry in 1878, dramatized The Vicar of Wakefield. Oscar Wilde and W.B. Yeats both admired his work.[53] Ellen Terry described

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[48] Irish Memories 29-30.

[49] Madeleine Bingham, Henry Irving and the Victorian Theatre (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978) 93-4.

[50] Maurice Collis, Somerville and Ross 24.

[51] See James Clarence Mangan's "The Man in the Cloak," Dublin University Magazine 12 (Nov. 1838) 552-68. I am indebted to Dr. David Lloyd for this reference. Mangan not only wore a cloak and a witch's peaked hat but also a "flax-coloured wig" and "a huge pair of green spectacles." Frances Gerard, Picturesque Dublin, Old and New, illus. Rose Barton (London: Hutchinson, 1898) 79-80. We can trace these green spectacles (and their self-parodying potential) back through Thomas Moore's Captain Rock to Lady Morgan's Molly Magillicuddy in Florence Macarthy. Dr. Primrose's foolish son, Moses, in The Vicar of Wakefield trades the family's horse for a case of apparently useless green spectacles. It seems as though some of them were to put to use in both real life and fiction in the next century.

[52] Martin Ross, letter to Somerville, 17 April 1887, Letters 45.

[53] Yeats compares Wills to Boucicault in his 1889 article, "Mr. William Wills," Letters to the New World (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1934) 69-71. Wilde (whose own name included Wills) was enchanted by Ellen Terry's

the playwright as "Irish all over--the strangest mixture of the aristocrat and the sloven. He could eat a large raw onion every night like any peasant, yet his ideas were magnificent and instinct with refinement."[54] Wills usually collaborated with others on his plays. For instance, in spring of 1892 the Dublin Gaiety put on Claudian, which was the work of Wills and Henry Herman, and then A Royal Divorce, a collaboration of Wills and Grace Hawthorne.

In 1885, when Martin Ross appears to have worked with Willie Wills, she was living in Bray, Co. Wicklow. According to her diary for this year, from January until July, when she left for London, she attended three plays (two pantomimes) with Robert in Dublin. During her first three months in England, she did not see any theatre. Then, on September 14th she met Willie Wills and over the next three months went to nine performances (twice to Wills' Olivia). Descriptions of her visits to Wills' studio (often alone) and their walks through Kew gardens are punctuated in her diary by a list of popular plays, Human Nature and The Iaps at the Novelty, Loose Tiles at the Vaudeville, Hoodman Blind at the Princess, The Colleen Bawn at the Adelphi, and so on.[55]

Willie Wills' letters to his "amanuensis," as he repeatedly calls her, from 1885-1890, suggest that their friendship developed into some kind of working partnership. Certainly, he read his verse to his "pretty Violet." One work in particular, a 6,000-line poem called "Melchior," set in an imaginary town called Ort on the Rhine, and heavily influenced by German Romanticism with its Döppelganger, timelessness, and emphasis upon medieval romance, became especially important to both of them.[56] Wills' admiration for Violet Martin ("I don't think I have ever met any lady half so intellectual as you") led to a certain dependency on the part of "the decrepit grandfather," the "affectionate old cap & bells" on his "dear maternal one," his "Mother Jewel," his "amanuensis."[57] He writes from the Fulham Road:

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performance in Charles I and reviewed Olivia as an imaginatively inspired work. Richard Ellmann, Oscar Wilde (New York: Knopf, 1988) 119;133.

[54] Ellen Terry, Ellen Terry's Memoirs, eds. Edith Craig and Christopher St. John (1932; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood P, 1970) 110.

[55] Diaries, QUB.

[56] William G. Wills, Melchior (London: Macmillan, 1885).

[57] The Wills/Martin correspondence (no. 876, QUB) includes few dates although it evidently spanned the five years, 1885-1890. His letters include hasty sketches and rather fey, curlicue designs. Frequently arch and even suggestive ("You're very nasty not to have come to Kew. I was cocksure you'd be there"), they nonetheless are dominated by discussion of his work.

> Printers are out of mss & there is no one but you can find it--the last they had where proof breaks off is just after Melchior has seen the Döppelganger--now if you could send up the end of the second tavern scene--it will be printed at once.

He sends her a cheque from the Garrick Club and speaks of giving her work and talking over some plots for various directors. "Perhaps you might hereafter have some pride to have been in my boat again," he exults when all is going well.[58]

William Wills grew up in Dublin and Kilkenny. His father, James Wills, wrote for Blackwood's and Dublin's University Magazine and was good friends with his neighbour, Dr. Anster, the translator of Goethe's Faust, and Samuel Ferguson. Willie Wills graduated from Trinity College Dublin and departed for London to write for the stage. His interests were divided between painting and poetry, and from an early age he had become preoccupied with German Romanticism. He was known as an eccentric character about London, and insisted on devising all his poetry and plays in his bed: "One consequence of the practice was that he soon found the convenience of having an amanuensis, to whom he dictated as fast as the pen in longhand could conveniently follow his thoughts."[59] Various dramatic aspirants fulfilled this role, and Martin Ross evidently took on the job at a crucial period in 1885.[60] At this time, Wills would have been finalizing work which had preoccupied him since the beginning of the decade, and up until Martin's departure at the end of November, he must have been working on this venture, which would open a few weeks later on December 19, 1885. This "pantomime for adults," as some critics pejoratively described it, proved to be the grand success of Wills' career. It enjoyed an enormous popularity and it followed immediately after Violet Martin, his "amanuensis," had departed for Dublin. The play, initially to have been called Mephisto,[61] was none other than an expensive, electrifying reworking of Goethe's Faust.

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[58] Rarely does Wills mention Violet Martin's work. He is surprised when he hears of the publication of An Irish Cousin in 1889. One gets the impression that the Wills/Martin correspondence devoted itself entirely to Willie Wills' genius.

[59] Freeman Wills, W.G. Wills: Dramatist and Painter (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1898) 125.

[60] Martin Ross wrote in longhand and, according to Collis, she studied German in her teens. Somerville and Ross 22.

[61] Freeman Wills, 201.

Bram Stoker worked as Acting Manager. An organ provided music. Real electricity gave sparks to the duelling foils, and real steam enveloped Irving's Mephistopheles. His slim and mocking devil, as red and as long as the vertical burning will-o'-the-wisps of Goethe's "Fairy Tale" and the inspiration of Stoker's Dracula (Figure 1-3), thrilled audiences who flocked to the production. One hundred thousand translations of Faust were sold in the first month of the run."[62] The play was described as "mediaevalism incarnate,"[63] a reenactment of diabolism, and, according to Freeman Wills, had been worked from a German version of Goethe's Faust.[64] In Willie Wills' version, Mephistopheles describes himself with chilling ambiguity as "'an exemplary Christian'" and hardly needs tempt Faust to his doom (Freeman Wills 201). According to a contemporary reviewer, one discovers in the watching of this play, "how little temptation besides devilish opportunity is needed to draw men into sin." One of the central scenes is the witches' Walpurgis night revel when "forms weird but squalid begin to congregate and jibber" and "their language . . . is daringly idiomatic and common." The hellish Brocken scene "is created by . . . strange wild creatures, who yet bear traces and give proofs that when not revelling they frequent the haunts of men." The reviewer concludes that it is an "over true tale" because its depiction of evil coincides with the mundanity of everyday modern life.[65]

To what extent Martin Ross actually contributed to Willie Wills' work, whether she merely listened to his verse and sorted his material or whether she advised and suggested change, remains unknown. However, given Wills' delight in his own work as evinced in his correspondence, the discussion of his next production during their various conversations over this three-month period probably occurred. As a result, the reworking of German romance material preoccupied the playwright and his amanuensis, and establishes a link in the Wills/Martin friendship between the Faustian

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[62] Bingham 214-19. According to Simon Trussler in The Cambridge Illustrated History of British Theatre (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), the production cost £15,000 and took in nearly £70,000 its first year and £57,000 its second (251).

[63] As described in an article by Edward R. Russell, editor of the Daily Post, in the theatre programme of W.G. Wills' Faust at the Royal Lyceum Theatre (16 June 1886) 4.

[64] References to Willie Wills' version of Faust are taken from his brother's summary and quotes. Freeman Wills, 201.

[65] Edward R. Russell, 5-7.

material and Somerville and Ross's use of that tradition over the next thirty years.

In October, 1885, while Martin Ross worked as Wills' amanuensis and Bram Stoker became involved in the forthcoming production of Faust, Punch published John Tenniel's provocative illustration on Irish agrarian outrage, "The Open Door!" (Figure 1-4). In the illustration, an Irish peasant hides his face with a paper mask with the word 'boycotting' written across its front. The boycotting mask (like that used by Donovan in Naboth's Vineyard) is clearly meant as a cover for the violent intents of the intruder, well indicated by his rifle and the pistol and knife thrust into a belt proclaiming his title, "Captn. Moonlight." At his feet and just inside the open door lies a plank of wood, what should be the bar holding shut the gaping aperture. "Crimes Act" is written across the plank and the accompanying verse to Tenniel's illustration argues the necessity for legal restraint in Ireland:

> True, stern restraint on Freedom jars;
> We have no fondness, even at need,
> For those stone walls and iron bars
> Which form no part of freemen's creed.
> But that's a creed that's shaped for men,
> Not human-visaged beasts of prey;
> For these the shackle and the den,
> Not mastery in the public way.[66]

For Irish writers in London in 1885--writers like Bram Stoker and Martin Ross--a potent mix of Irish land politics and British policy, Irish appropriation of German Romanticism, and the dynamic effect of popular theatre appears to have created a nexus of discourse which would have far-reaching effect.

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The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Matthew 13:44.

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[66] John Tenniel, "The Open Door!" Punch 85 (10 Oct. 1885) 174-75.

The early Wills/Martin friendship as it coincided with Irish cultural politics provides a context for Somerville and Ross's development of character and experiment with form throughout their writing career. In the early days, with Naboth's Vineyard, they laboriously plotted their story with both Mephistopheles and popular burlesque in mind. The 1891 novel relies in part on Mephistopheles' razing of an old couple's cottage in Faust. "Why should you scruple here and wince?" Mephistopheles asks Faust who longs for the one piece of ground that isn't his: "Have you not colonized long since?. . . What passes here is far from new; / There once was Naboth's vineyard, too."[67] Somerville and Ross concentrate on the underside--a colonial nightmare vision--of Irish life. The search for the kingdom of heaven becomes a descent into hell. One piece of ground, one field in the kingdom, conceals a treasure for which man will sell his soul. The writers' initial exploration of grotesque realism demonstrates their awareness of the importance of perspective and place in the treatment of the Irish landscape.

Three years later with the publication of The Real Charlotte, Somerville and Ross developed a female Irish character who incorporates the extreme dimensions of a Harlequin/Mephistopheles figure. When Charlotte Mullen speaks with "Mephistophelian gaiety" (268) to her enemy Mrs. Lambert, we are given a clue as to the source of her nature. Like Mephisto, Charlotte tempts her victims. She avails of 'devilish opportunity' to 'open doors.' Curiosity, excitement, and fear overwhelm Mrs. Lambert's weak heart. Charlotte doesn't kill Emily Lambert; she merely allows her death to occur. Charlotte doesn't destroy Lambert; she provides him with ample opportunity to destroy himself and then refuses to save him.

The Faustian material of Willie Wills' revived romance and *Kunstmärchen* like Goethe's "Fairy Tale" or, as dealt with in the next chapter, Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's Undine, prevail throughout The Real Charlotte. Roderick Lambert initially meets Francie Fitzpatrick when she is fourteen, Margaret's age when Faust first meets his doomed love. In Willie Wills' adaptation of Faust, Margaret emerges into Faust's view "shrived, pure and white, [to] pass like a sunbeam from the church" in Nurnberg[68] just as Francie leaves Christ Church in Bray, her hair "like a mist of golden threads"[69] to be met by Lambert. The influence of the

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[67] Goethe, Faust II V, 11273 -88, 286.
[68] Qtd. in Freeman Wills, 205.
[69] Somerville and Ross, The Real Charlotte 361.

Anglican Church, as I will show in Chapter Two, as it intersects with the revived romance, has particular significance in Somerville and Ross's third novel.

By the end of the decade, Somerville and Ross had turned their attention to form; with some reluctance they more or less discarded the novel form in favour of comic and unrealistic short fiction. Echoes of Faust linger. In "Oweneen the Sprat" (1907), drunken Christmas clebrations in Skebawn become a scene from the Brocken of Faust[68] while in "When I First Met Dr. Hickey" (1915), Dr. Hickey resembles Mephistopheles (43). More importantly, however, they gave full rein to the darkly comic vision of adult pantomime with this developing and fluid genre, and both Some Experiences of an Irish R.M. (1899) and Further Experiences of an Irish R.M. (1908) find congruence with the serious jesting of Mephisto, the acrobatics of Harlequin and company, the Irish material, and the short story form.

[68] Somerville and Ross, The Irish R.M. (The Irish R.M. Complete 1928; London: Abacus, 1992) 388. All references come from this edition of the collected R.M. stories.

re-name—him "*Make-peace Thacker, eh?*" but for the mariage of associating so revered a name with the personality of a miserable eighty-perhenter.

The Broken Broker is uninteresting. It is not a strong part for a strong man. He is a contemptible creature; worse, on account of the variance between his excellent principles and his treacherous practice, than is *Guyon* himself, or *Thacker*. For acting, the first scene is his best. With the laudable object of avoiding conventionality at the end of each Act, the Author, in consequence of the effort having been half-hearted, and clearly not warmly seconded by the company, has left these final *tableaux* ragged and ineffective,—each is an end without any finish. The French comedy-writers do this as a rule, and their Actors understand it thoroughly. Ours don't, and the question is, which is right? But in any case indecision is dangerous. Instead of that Polytechnic Dissolving-View-Music between the Acts, which the presence of a piano in the orchestra is so liable to suggest, couldn't the space occupied by the "Broadwood's Pianoforte" which is advertised as part of the attraction in capitals in the house-bill of the play, be filled with competent professors of wind and string, the tinkling cymbal, and the drumlet?



The Good Angel Mesmo-Mephistopheles smites the Broken Broker to Maid Marian.

Ariel has produced at the Gaiety last week, and was received with demonstrations of rapturous delight—and electric light—by a house crowded in every part. At the end of the Second Act, after the Curtain had been hauled up three times to shew the strikingly beautiful *tableaux* of *Miranda* (Miss. OTTLEBRIDGE) saving *Ferdinand* (Miss ROSQUEROS) from the waves, while *Ariel* (Miss FARREN), with electric-lighted wings, dances on the top of the "prolific" waters, the enthusiastic audience insisted upon the Author coming before the Curtain to receive their vociferous congratulations, and his appearance was the signal for such cheering as must have sent up the Electric Light shares to an enormous premium. It was, judging from the wings,—*Ariel's* wings are great,—literally a brilliant success. The music is catchy, and for a week afterwards the critics outdid themselves and to those who could read between the lines, there did not seem to have been much to say in laudation of this triumphant Shakspearian burlesque-fairy-drama, or, to put it shortly, extravaganza.



A Matter-past Ariel; or, A Rise in Electric Light.

The eminent hand who does the theatrical reporting for the *Times*, and who is nothing if not courteous, went a little too far in scarcely finding any difference between the *Ariel* of SHAKSPEARE'S creation and that of the burlesque-writer's travesty. In fact, the praise was so lavishly bestowed that we began to ask, How on earth has the author managed to "get at" or "nobble" the incorruptible critics? Has the humorist humoured them? Had he previously taken them, individually and separately, into his confidence, and, as a great favour, let each one after dinner read a few gems of the libretto, and induced the Composer, HERR MEYER LUTZ, to drop in and give them some choice specimens on the piano? Was it a case of Dr. MOWBRAY MORRIS'S "chicken and champagne" treatment for acute criticism? However it was managed, there is no doubt as to the result; and if criticism such as this could alone make

a piece, then nothing further was wanting to ensure the success of *Ariel*. The music of *Ariel*, when not by the Composer above mentioned, is taken from the works of VON SUPPÉ, LEO DELIBES, THOMAS, and WAGNER, and the music-hall element is represented by a couple of tunes, the pick of that peculiar *répertoire*.

Mr. ELTON'S *Caliban* is a most artistic performance, and the dance between him and *Miranda* is worthy of the unanimous treble encore it receives, as every step is full of meaning, is in perfect keeping with the situation, and is as pointed as their own toes.



Caliban and Miranda, as the Backward Boy and the Forward Girl.

We agree with the enthusiastic critic in the *Daily Telegraph*, though we could not venture to express our sentiments with such absolute conviction, as to Miss FARREN'S representation of the character of *Ariel*. "She might," he says, "as well be *Puck*, or, *Will o' the Wisp*,"—of course she might, just as well, for, as this writer hints, she could not be better. Every song of hers tells, and in the last Act her "*La Bonbonnière*," is demanded two and three times. Well might the critics be at a loss for words to express their feelings on the first night, but on the third, when the excitement had fizzled off, and the company had settled down steadily to their work, the representatives of the Press, had they been there, would have had lumps of delight in their throats, wept in each other's arms, and have been carried out in ecstasies. Objecting to "gush" as we do, we could yet wish that, in the interests of true criticism, the critics' night were everywhere postponed until the third performance of any new piece. Vide SHAKSPEARE!

If Mr. IRVING, or any Shakspearian Revivalist, were to produce SHAKSPEARE'S *Tempest* intact, a more charming set of Fairies—of course, essential to the piece, whether SHAKSPEARE'S original, or DRYDEN'S, or MACREADY'S version, be played,—could not be seen, or heard, than those at the Gaiety, of whom the two "Singing Witches," Misses PERDEY and TAYLOR, are the leading sprits. It is an exceptional thing for choruses to be encored, but the rendering of MEYER LUTZ'S clever imitation of the Ratcatcher solo and chorus in *Les Huguenots* thoroughly deserves it. And now we've done with theatricals for some time, as we can't get to see Mr. HARRIS'S Dynamite Plot at Drury Lane for at least another fortnight.

BEFORE THE CURTAIN;

OR, PUBLIC-PRIVATE LIFE—*A LA MODE*.

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How I loathe all this vulgar notoriety! But, there, thank goodness, the tour is over!

Delightful to think I shall have a little quiet and breathing-time before I start! Yes, as I told them at Liverpool, I think there is far too much "fuss" made about us,—that is, about me. Yes, I am almost sure there is. But they will do it. Why, I positively feel quite fagged at times with after-dinner spouting. And I'm always telling them the same thing, too,—that I wish I had been born, or bred, or buried, or something in their own blessed particular town. What humbug! But what *is* one to say? That reminds me. Delightful social little gathering in prospect for to-night—just a few choice intimates, to eat a farewell chop with me at the Club! Something like privacy, that. I'm quite looking forward to it. Welcome honest Sociability, at last!

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About forty, or so, at that little affair last night. Odd! Came off, too, in the "Strangers'" room. However, I know 'em all—and that's something. I see, notwithstanding the precautions, it has got into the papers. Odd that, too! They don't seem to have reported my speech, though. Can't find it anywhere. Still, happy idea that, telling them I felt as if I had been born in the Committee Room!

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Travelling all day. Departure seems to have been well billed. Am told that the booking at the ticket-office was tremendous. Bouquets for Miss T—— at every Station, and a splendid clothes-

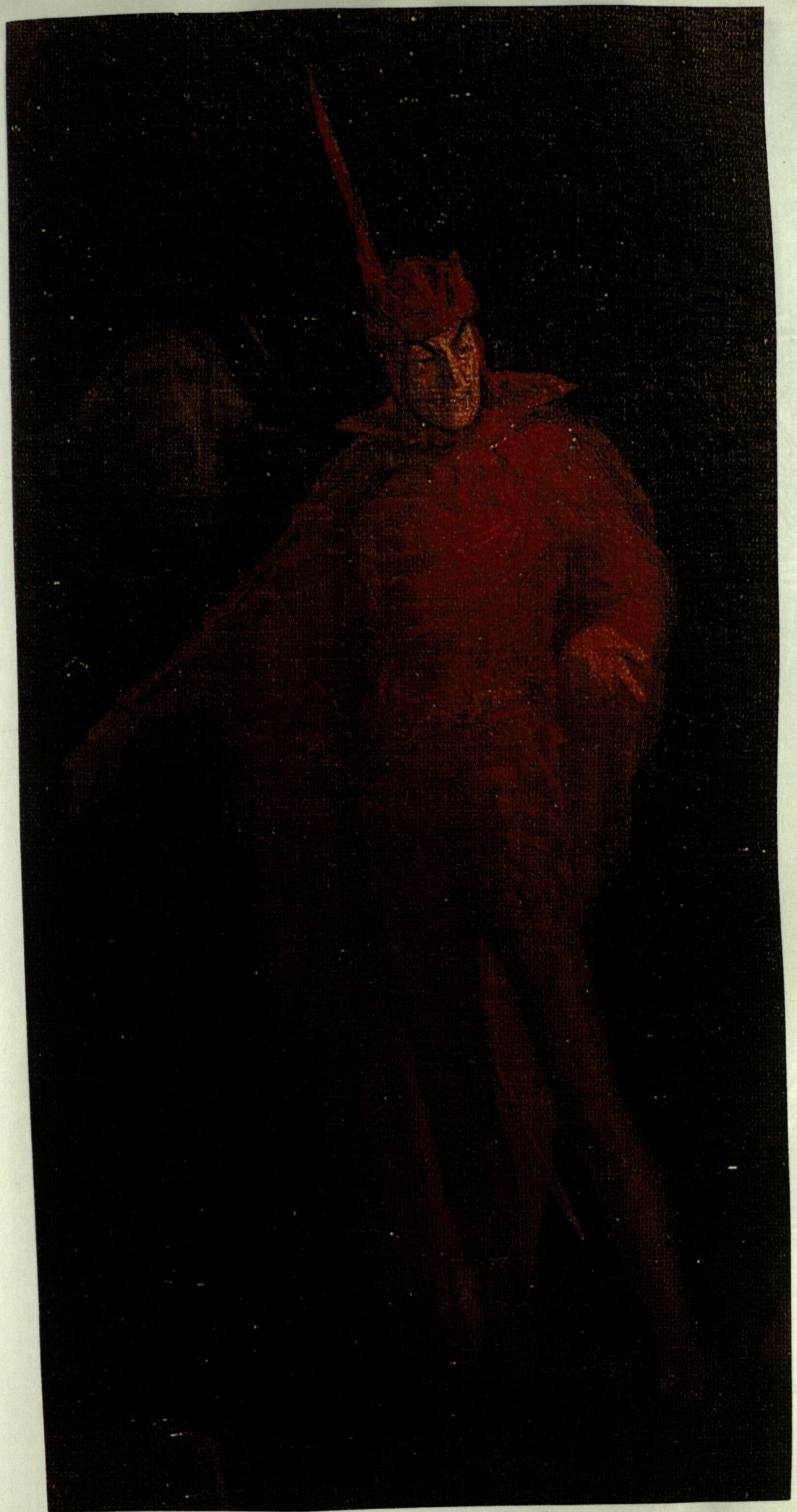
1-1 Review of Ariel, Punch (1883)



CROWNING THE O'CALIBAN.

["Never was there a movement . . . . with such odds against it, in association with which there was so much moderation, and such an utter absence of crime and the strong passions which lead to crime."—*Mr. Parnell's Speech at the Rotunda, Dublin.*]

1-2 John Tenniel, Crowning the O'Caliban , Punch (1883)



1-3 Irving's Mephistopheles , from Simon Trussler, The Cambridge Illustrated History of British Theatre



THE OPEN DOOR!

1-4 John Tenniel, The Open Door!, Punch (1885)

Chapter Two:
The Real Charlotte ...: The Colonial Dream

Christian! dost thou see them
On the holy ground
How the hosts of darkness
Compass thee around?
Christian! up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss;
Smite them by the merit
Of Christ's holy Cross.[1]

'It must be wonderful to have a soul, but at the same time it must be a terrible thing to bear. I ask, in the Lord's name, would it not be better never to have had one at all? . . . The soul must bear a terrible burden . . . most terrible! For even as it approaches, it overshadows me with such fear and sadness. Oh, I was so free, so happy before!'[2]

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[1] John Mason Neale, "Hymn 527," Church of Ireland Hymnal (1862; Dublin, 1941) 708. Edith Somerville refers directly to the hymn of the Christian soldier in Mount Music (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1919), where she names her heroine Christian. Study of the Protestant discourse, however, occurs much earlier in The Real Charlotte.

[2] Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, "Undine," Romantic Fairy Tales, ed. and trans., Carol Tully, 81.

The most prominent feature of Somerville and Ross's landscapes is their Church. Even a cursory scanning of their letters or diaries reveals the constant presence of the rites and celebrations of Anglicanism, and while their politics may be open to question,[3] their religion remains firm. Their landmark novel, The Real Charlotte, written over a two-year period, from 1890 to 1892 and published in 1894, sets itself within this world. A Protestant cast of characters comes together to pursue the largely secularized activities of their Church. Despite the prominence of the 'Irish Church' within the novel, activity remains at a material rather than a spiritual level. Nonetheless, through satire, The Real Charlotte explores the ramifications of the crisis of Anglicanism in late nineteenth-century Ireland, and the text might be viewed as an imaginative construct of the Irish Protestant world view. Not only does the content deal with a secularized Protestant landscape, the form also issues from an Anglican ethos.

The main action of The Real Charlotte takes place during a hot summer in the West of Ireland of the early 1890s. Charlotte Mullen, the 'Welsh Aunt' as Somerville and Ross initially called their work,[4] invites her second cousin, Francie Fitzpatrick, to Tally Ho Lodge to fulfill the last request of her dying aunt.[5] Brief scenes of dubious respectability in

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[3] Otto Rauchbauer, "An Evaluative Essay," Drishane Archive 202-12.

[4] A selection of possible titles for their third novel included "The Welsh Aunt" (the book's working title), "Charlotte Mullen's Responsibility," "A Moral Legacy," "By an Irish Lake," "A Dublin Aboriginee," "Out of the North Side," "The Revealing of Charlotte," "A Romance of Two Vulgar Women," and "Some Romantic Episodes in the Vulgar Life of Charlotte Mullen." J.H. Berrow, "Somerville and Ross: Transitional Novelists," Ph.D. diss., University College Dublin, 1975; Edith Somerville, letter to Cameron Somerville, 13 July 1892, Drishane Archive. The title selections show a divided emphasis upon the two main female characters, Charlotte Mullen and Francie Fitzpatrick, which appears to indicate that neither one might be considered a fully fledged heroine. 'The Welsh Aunt' recalls Uncle Silas and thus stresses Charlotte Mullen's changing and shifting aspect, which is so like Silas Ruthyn's. The title also suggests Charlotte's betrayal of her promise to her aunt: she 'welshes' on her agreement to help Francie.

[5] Edith Somerville and Martin Ross first met in February, 1886. This same month, on the 22nd, Somerville is struck by an occurrence which she notes in her diary. A relation, Emily Herbert, is bequeathed everything in "Aunt Fanny's will": "In effect," writes Edith Somerville, "Emily got everything. Except about 500 to the Somervilles, of wh Papa & I get 50 each--It is a curious instance of the power of the will--Emily's will, in particular." Diaries, QUB. Charlotte Mullen is based on this Emily Herbert and it is the "power of [a woman's] will" which especially interests the writers. For further discussion see Gifford Lewis, introduction, The Real Charlotte, by Somerville and Ross (Dublin: A&A Farmar, 1999) xiii-xiv.

Dublin, Francie's home, give way to lively social scenes in the country town of Lismoyle and the somewhat more secure middle-class homes of the Lamberts and the Beatties which are dominated by Sir Benjamin Dysart's estate of Bruff and enlivened by red-coated English officers stationed nearby. Francie's vivid charm and 'modern' daring coupled with Charlotte's manipulation gain Francie access, not only to the Big House, but also to Christopher Dysart's favour. The choir, the bazaar, the Sunday school picnic give opportunity for the mingling of different classes. The Church brings together different Protestant ranks and provides the central platform on which the events of the novel are enacted.

This chapter explores the relationship of *fin de siècle* discourse--popular theatrics, revived romance, New Woman thought, social Darwinism, and colonial expansion--to the Irish Protestant ethos in Somerville and Ross's third novel.

On one hand, and as various critics have pointed out, The Real Charlotte reflects an exclusively Irish Protestant reality. I explore the implications of that fact. I argue that the novel traces the effects of a sublimated evangelical Anglican discourse in the novel's hero, Christopher Dysart. I also consider the impact of the critical condition of the Church in late nineteenth-century Ireland upon the novel's treatment of Irish reality. My interest is to explore the connection of the Protestant subject matter to the form of the work by considering the manner in which the authors handle the essential argument of the text: the saving of souls in secularized Ireland. On the other hand, a critically neglected dimension of Somerville and Ross's third novel bears significantly upon this discussion. The novel, I argue, is as much immersed in popular theatrics as it is in the Protestant world. The two traditions are inextricably connected, and the very conception of the text--a work of grotesque realism which turns everything upside down or, more appropriately given the influence of the pantomime, topsy-turvy--draws upon popular burlesque. The work both reflects and parodies romantic comedy; it draws attention to the tension generated between romantic concepts (which are connected to evangelical impulses in Christopher Dysart) and realistic concerns (which appear most clearly in the character of Charlotte Mullen) in the Irish landscape of the period.

Though land issues play a part in The Real Charlotte, especially the nineteenth-century argument of land improvement versus land rights as discussed in my previous chapter, the main subject of Somerville and Ross's satire is of a spiritual nature--as befits a Protestant text. The saving or

making of a soul, Francie Fitzpatrick's soul, in an increasingly secular and highly contested landscape propels the action of the plot. A romantic notion, a "formless and unquestioned dream,"[6] energizes the missionary zeal of the Irish Protestant *Weltanschauung* of the novel. Christopher Dysart's determination to reform Francie Fitzpatrick's soul springs in part from his childhood reading of the Sunday-school books of Mrs. Mary Sherwood, but continues to be inspired by Pre-Raphaelite imagery and the romantic comedies in Dublin's Gaiety Theatre or the Theatre Royal. Of colonial stock, the Dysart heir has been shaped by a secularized evangelical fantasy. His position as leader of the imperial quest, however, has been subverted in this topsy-turvy Irish world. Instead of hunter, he becomes the hunted, the prey of Charlotte Mullen, who occupies for the first half of the novel the aptly named Tally Ho Lodge.

On another level, Christopher's blazing white trousers and self-conscious romanticism symbolize the struggle against the hosts of darkness led by a pragmatic troglodyte in black alpaca, Charlotte Mullen. This argument, however, appears not only within a colonial/evangelical framework as demonstrated by Christopher Dysart's attempts to save Francie's soul, but occurs also as a manifestation of the revived romance as popularised by Robert Louis Stevenson in works like The Master of Ballantrae. In Somerville and Ross's text, the dominant romance material derives from traces of the *Kunstmärchen*, "Undine," and its version of soul-making deepens the study of human "improvement" in Ireland. At the same time, the text's burlesque of these various traditions transforms the Church of Ireland into a kind of playhouse. This comic stage set comes charged in the work with a tragic Manichaean vision, a Protestant world view which determines the apocalyptic fears and Faustian warnings of the novel's conclusion.

Protestant Perspectives

In February, 1890, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross read Stevenson's recently published Scottish tale of the two Durisdeer brothers: James, the master of Ballantrae and supporter of Charles Stuart during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, and Henry, who stays at home to run the estate. Martin described the novel as "first rate in parts," and Edith sent off Stevenson's "Studies of Men and Books" to her brother Cameron the following April. The

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[6] Somerville and Ross, The Real Charlotte 311.

same month they finished writing Naboth's Vineyard and by May had written two chapters of a new book they called "The Welsh Aunt," their working title of The Real Charlotte.[7] Both Naboth's Vineyard and The Real Charlotte concentrate on characters similar to Sir Henry of Stevenson's tale, "a skinflint and a sneckdraw, sitting, with his nose in an account book, to persecute poor tenants"[8] but the women writers look to the middle ranks to explore this type--the gombeen man or woman. Moreover, they contemporize their accounts, setting both novels during the 1880s and 1890s, and satirizing the socio-political culture of the time. The Catholic colonial nightmare of the Irish land wars in West Cork of Naboth's Vineyard becomes the colonial dream of a Protestant population in the West of Ireland in The Real Charlotte.

In The Master of Ballantrae, Stevenson shows among other things how position affects perspective, and a central incident of the text demonstrates a kind of self-consciousness which is central to Somerville and Ross's work. A brief consideration of Stevenson's romantic adventure story highlights a modernistic awareness which pervades the Irish writers' grotesque realism and explains a primary impulse of romantic irony.

Stevenson demonstrates how the narrator's view of evil alters depending on where he stands in relation to his objects of study: the two brothers, James, who supports the Catholic Young Pretender, and Henry, who follows the foreign Protestant monarch. In the first half of the novel, the narrator Mr. MacKellar, Sir Henry's steward, can only see his "skinflint and sneckdraw" employer as good and the older brother as some "insidious devil." Yet in the course of the narrative, it becomes apparent that one picture may not be the entire truth. MacKellar witnesses the emergence of an entirely different reality in the course of the story.

Stevenson uses the movement between two locations, Scotland and America, to activate Mr. MacKellar's change of view. In Scotland, the narrator sees Henry as the hard-working and much maligned hero of the piece. In America's wilderness, however, James appears to MacKellar as truly heroic and brave. Both realities exist. The altered landscape changes the picture so that MacKellar perceives a layered reality, different truths instead of one.

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[7] Somerville and Ross's Diaries, QUB. The Real Charlotte was put aside after May, 1890 and worked on inconsistently for the next few years.

[8] Robert Louis Stevenson, The Master of Ballantrae (1889; London: Penguin, 1984) 16.

En route to America, on board the *Nonesuch* and during a tremendous storm, the Master of Ballantrae (wild and courageous James) tells MacKellar an ambivalent tale of evil. The pair sit on "a high, raised poop" with the Master "betwixt [MacKellar] and the side" and in this position in the middle of the storm (and the middle of the novel) with the boat rearing up and down across the monstrous waves, MacKellar comments on the Master's alternating position:

> Now his head would be in the zenith and his shadow fall quite beyond the *Nonesuch* on the further side; and now he would swing down till he was underneath my feet, and the line of the sea leaped high above him like the ceiling of a room. (148)

This topsy-turvy position, where extremes of movement allow for a rapidly successive occupation of polarized locations, may demonstrate, on one hand, modern ambiguity, and, on the other, the situation of the split identity, of a person negotiating the polarized positions of a hybrid culture, what Homi Bhabha calls an "interstitial perspective," one which allows a person to see from the outside as well as the inside, "identities that 'split'—are estranged unto themselves." Such a perspective originates from the "interstitial passage between fixed identifications," says Bhabha, and "opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity." [9]

Topsy-turvydom, however, also allows one to see oneself; it displays the self. Stevenson's boat on a stormy sea creates a swift reversal of perspective which allows McKellar to see through the Master's eyes. The quick-change demonstrates the arbitrary nature of one particular viewpoint. This display of perspective, I would argue, also recalls the extremely popular nineteenth-century pantomime which figures so largely in Somerville and Ross's work. In the manner of a Gilbert and Sullivan burlesque, then, turning things inside out and upside down draws attention to the process of performance itself. This self-consciousness, and its portrayal in a sectarian landscape in Stevenson's tale, introduces an intersection of popular discourse which helps to clarify the Protestant perspective in Somerville and Ross's text.

Stevenson's romantic treatment of the Jacobite rebellion may have been of particular interest to Martin Ross whose own family marked a hybrid course in its conversion from Roman Catholic and Jacobite to Low

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[9] The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994) 2-3.

Church Protestantism in the late eighteenth century.[10] The Martin household remained somewhat mixed in its affiliations, but the young Violet, like Edith Somerville, participated fully in a Victorian Anglican upbringing. For much of their early lives, they attended Church twice on a Sunday. Violet Martin won prizes at Sunday school in Dublin,[11] and her later letters to Edith Somerville frequently include comic descriptions of prayers or church services.[12] Edith Somerville played the organ in St. Barrahane's Church, Castletownshend, for seventy years, and occupied dull stretches of the sermon by drawing sketches and caricatures of the rector and his congregation.[13]

The High Church Somervilles maintained a "strong service tradition,"[14] and nowhere is this fact clearer than in St. Barrahane's, where the admirals, brigadiers, and soldiers of the realm, who frequently died in service to Great Britain, have their names inlaid in brass on the lectern, inscribed in stone on the tombs, and covering the plaques mounted on marble walls. St. Barrahane's is as much a memorial as it is a Church; the names have greater presence than the religious artefacts decorating the altar and nave. In Castletownshend, the Somervilles and Townshends do not merely head the congregation, they <u>are</u> the Church.[15] In St. Barrahane's, the clergy come and go, but the gentry remain. There is a sense in such a place that the names of the pre-eminent families of the area are being served and commemorated by transient Protestant parsons in the same way that local poets eulogized their landowners. For instance, when Edith Somerville's grandfather returned home from the Crimean war in 1856, O'Donovan Rossa composed for him an acrostic poem inscribing the Major's name in flowing Italianate hand on bright blue paper:

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[10] Martin Ross, "The Martins of Ross," <u>Irish Memories</u> 6-7.

[11] <u>Irish Memories</u> 102. See also Edith Somerville's discussion of the arguments in Martin Ross's Dublin household on the Irish Episcopate and the merits of various clergy (104-5).

[12] See, for instance, Martin Ross's letter to Edith Somerville, 11 August 1890, for a description of Robert Martin's theatrical prayer style, "a mixture of Irving and Beerbohm Tree," <u>Letters</u> 162.

[13] Gifford Lewis, <u>Somerville and Ross: The World of the Irish R.M.</u> 187; <u>Drishane Archive</u> 224.

[14] Mark Bence-Jones, <u>Twilight of the Ascendancy</u> (London: Constable, 1987) 154.

[15] Otto Rauchbauer notes that St. Barrahane's stained glass windows (including marvellous work by Harry Clarke) must "be seen as self-representations of the Castletownshend gentry at a time when their social position was already highly precarious," <u>Drishane Archive</u> 177.

M artial child of Erin and brilliant son of Mars
A ll hail and welcome thee to home, from the Crimean Wars.
J oined hands and hearts are creed and class this meed of praise to shower
O n one of Ireland's gallant sons, who braved the Russian Power
R egarding nought but honour bright, no coward thought appalled him
T o make him shrink before the foe when Martial duty called him.
H ow oft you read the fatal lists, with joy our hearts oft bounded
O n finding that one name was not among the killed or wounded.
M uch pleasure beamed from every face (and happy felt the Muse)
A s a respected Father's life depended on the news,
S o fondly did he love that child, a true and only son,
S o fatal would the tidings be to read that he was gone.
O h could you picture his despair, thank God 'tis different far,
M uch joy and peace await him now, as ended is the War.
E xpected shortly is that son, a worthy one of Erin
R eturning to his peaceful home from battling with the Alien.
V alour's representative Skibbereen will proudly greet him
I nclined with feelings of respect she joyfully will meet him,
L oudly to home we'll welcome him, old friends, old scenes--say rather
L ike one arisen from the dead around him we will gather
E njoyed to see that he again has met his honoured Father.[16]

The disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1870, as Edith Somerville notes in her autobiographical sketches, weighed more heavily on the Castletownshend ascendancy than any later political losses. It was a death-blow:

> To my grandfather, and to my father and mother, and my uncles and aunts, strong Churchmen and women all, Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church Act was an almost incredible sacrilege, a felon stab that hit them harder, even than the measures that, thenceforward following, ended by stripping them not only of their property, but also of the

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16 Qtd in Moira Somerville's unpublished "Notes on the Background and Early Life of Edith Oenone Somerville," Drishane Archive, B.2.42pp.

political and civic influence that their consciences could assure them they had exercised only for good.[17]

With disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, a significant source of ascendancy employment within Ireland was eroded. The younger sons who had often found positions within their Church now travelled abroad.[18]

Ascendancy power within the Anglican Church discovered its greatest challenge in the Roman Catholic priest, and Somerville and Ross's suspicion of Irish Catholic priests must be considered in this context. It is significant to note Martin Ross's political bias when finishing The Real Charlotte in 1893. She argued with polemical point that "the priests can do as they like with the Roman Catholic lower classes . . . they direct them how to vote at every election." The power of the priests for the peasantry, said Ross, is a supernatural one; a "Roman Catholic has said in my hearing that his priest would make horns grow out of his head if he disobeyed him, & yet another man wondered why a certain priest did not turn Mr. Balfour into a goat."[19] In the writers' Collected Irish Anecdotes , further instance is provided of the Irish peasantry's dangerous superstition. "What would you do if you hadn't the comforts of the R.C. church," asks a local man, "supposin afther your death ye met the Dog with the seven heads?" In 1893, Martin Ross's intent was to demonstrate the awesome authority of the peasantry's religious leaders. Their power, she suggested, appears to the Catholic masses to be the power of God. In 1899, Edith Somerville asked a fellow Irish artist, "I wonder if the English will ever believe that Irish self-government simply means strengthening the power of the Priests."[20] In The Real Charlotte, the Catholic priest lurks in the background as a preying figure, ready to snap up lost souls. The Anglican clergyman, on the other hand, fulfils a social rather than a religious role. Instead of acting as a spiritual director of the community, he appears as a cypher to those in command. At Lady Dysart's garden party at the opening of the novel, a "representative trio" of the male Protestant population includes a loud-voiced country gentleman, a "dejected-looking clergyman," and a well-

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[17] Somerville and Ross, Wheel-Tracks (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1923) 69.

[18] See Mark Bence-Jones 154.

[19] Martin Ross, letter to an anonymous "sir" in Bristol, asking him to accept some leaflets on the Irish question, 7 Nov 1893, Drishane Archive, L.C.11.a. Somerville and Ross worked for the Irish Unionist Alliance in England in 1895. They instructed the East Anglian elector in Irish politics.

[20] Edith Somerville, letter to Alice Kinkead, 12 March 1899, Drishane Archive, L.A.1365.

dressed land agent. The clergyman ranks lowest of the group, his contribution to a conversation on politics a mere "echo in the cathedral aisle" (31-2).

Terence Brown claims that Irish writing of the modern period tends to present Irish Anglicanism as "a series of clichés and programmatic responses." The Church of Ireland typically represents one of three things, either the privileged Ascendancy, or the good priest, or an "irresistible decay." [21] In his analysis of Yeats's Protestant identity, Roy Foster is interested in this third trope, the decaying face of the Anglican Church, and he refers to Martin Ross's familiar description in 1912 of a decrepit Protestant Church and a crumbling Ascendancy household (Tyrone House) to demonstrate Irish Protestant marginalization.[22] Of course, Martin Ross was particularly interested in the incongruity of a sparsely attended Anglican service in the midst of Irish Catholic mobilization. Witness an earlier letter she writes to Edith in 1896 when she travels to Oughterard to attend an Anglican service of six people (including the parson) but is held up by a barely controlled election meeting in the town. The contrast of the priest-led masses and the subdued Protestant service provides a striking incongruity which Martin Ross appreciated.[23]

The Real Charlotte, published only two years earlier, initially appears to deny any notion of decay, or special privilege, or even good clergymen in its portrayal of Irish Anglicanism. The novel is full to bursting with Protestants of all sorts and, as Jack White points out, does not reflect Irish Protestant reality in the 1890s.[24] Indeed, if Naboth's Vineyard

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[21] Terence Brown, "The Church of Ireland and the Climax of the Ages," Ireland's Literature (Mullingar: Lilliput, 1988) 51-5.

[22] Edith Somerville claimed that this letter to her from Martin Ross was the source of The Big House of Inver. That novel of the decaying Big House, however, is Somerville's book though published under their joint names like most of the fiction after Martin Ross's death. In her writing, Martin Ross was just as much interested in paradox and incongruity as the theme of loss. Roy Foster, in "Protestant Magic," Paddy and Mr. Punch 218-19, rightly selects this description to indicate the decay of the Anglican Church and the Big House, but the context of the letter suggests a different intent on the part of its writer--to emphasize the incongruity of the Protestant situation.

[23] Martin Ross, letter to Edith Somerville, no date 1896, Letters 236-238.

[24] Jack White states that the novel presents "a world untouched by any premonition of change." Minority Report: The Protestant Community in the Irish Republic (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975) 58. My intent is to demonstrate that the writers are not nostalgically harking back to Protestant-dominated Ireland (as White suggests). Instead, they are presenting the different facets of that tradition to inscribe its reality upon the Irish literary landscape.

has been criticized for its disparagement of Catholic Ireland, The Real Charlotte is criticized for its marginalization of the same and the comic treatment of any Catholic characters who appear.[25] It could be argued that such treatment emphasizes Irish Protestant reality: the whole point of a primarily Protestant list of characters and the victimization and violence within its ranks comments on the effects of colonialism in this section of the Irish population.[26] By establishing a mainly Protestant community in The Real Charlotte, the authors show how its different levels (from servant to gentry) suffer and enact violent measures, as though violence were an inherited condition. One might also argue that Somerville and Ross have removed the Catholic element from the Irish equation to demonstrate the dynamics of class relations in Ireland, to show that social position and not religion gives rise to discontent. By concentrating on a Protestant population, Somerville and Ross continue their attack on the basic premise supporting nationalist ideology, that a dominant, monolithic group suppresses the Irish tenantry. The novel demonstrates the disunity and differences of the Protestant population in southern Ireland.

There is a further reason, however, for Somerville and Ross's concentration on an Irish Protestant cast of characters. The novel traces, as I have already indicated, the process whereby Christopher Dysart comes to believe he can save Francie's soul. His particular brand of Protestantism opposes the distanced kindliness of his sister, Pamela, a High Church advocate. Francie Fitzpatrick, then, is accustomed to the scripture reading and rote learning of the Dublin Sunday schools and the visiting evangelicals to her Low Church congregations. The novel shows the

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[25] Comparable criticism has been directed at Olive Schreiner's Story of an African Farm, a novel which includes black Africans as marginal figures. Ruth First and Ann Scott point out, however, that such apparent neglect of the dominant population of the countryside does not diminish the work's political content. Instead, the work shows that "that was the point of the colonial condition: Africans were kept so far outside white society that that in itself was a statement about it. The European frontier society insulated itself from the indigenous society but internalized the violence it used against it. . . .Olive [Schreiner] was writing, in fact, about what colonialism did to whites." Olive Schreiner (London: Andre Deutsch, 1980) 97.

[26] The divisions between religion are not as evident as the differences between race. In Ireland, class often becomes the measuring gauge as faces and accents merge. Hence in The Real Charlotte characters like Julia Duffy originate from mixed marriages of Protestant and Catholic which translate easily into class terms, the Catholic being the peasant or servant class. Nonetheless, such mixes complicate the simple separation we see in comparable colonial texts set in Africa. See Olive Schreiner's Story of an African Farm (1883; London: Penguin, 1993).

characters' religious backgrounds influencing their worldly roles. It addresses what Terence Brown describes as the "surrogate religiosity" of Victorian literature, "a transference of evangelical preoccupation, rendered theologically unsustainable by scepticism, to social and aesthetic dimensions."[27] In The Real Charlotte, religious postures become secular poses. We are reminded of the transformation of religious metaphor in earlier Victorian painting, what John Turpin points out in Daniel Maclise's historical studies such as "Strongbow" or "Wellington." According to Turpin, "religious transposition" in Maclise's work "is a feature of an age when orthodox religious subject matter almost totally disappeared."[28] The lasting significance of The Real Charlotte is its portrayal of an Irish Anglican ethos as it is secularized in the British colonial world.

Somerville and Ross's critics see The Real Charlotte as a portrayal of "the twilight of the Big House."[29] The distance of the landed gentry, the Dysarts, from their tenants and their consequent susceptibility to the shrewd dealings of their underlings has indicated to contemporary critics the writers' intent to provide reasons for the demise of the Irish Gentleman.[30] Typically, the novel is seen to be on the cusp between some period when the landlord system actually worked in Ireland and its fall with gradual decolonization.

The attention devoted to the demise of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in Somerville and Ross's third novel, however, leads readers to neglect the main matter of the text: Protestantism. The Real Charlotte deals with the face of Irish Protestantism within a range of classes on the social ladder. While the alienation of its top rung manifests the disenfranchisement of the tradition within the Irish state, the main focus rests upon the religious crisis of an entire society.

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[27] Brown 58-9.

[28] John Turpin, "Daniel Maclise and his Place in Victorian Art," Anglo-Irish Studies I (1975): 51-2. For further discussion of Daniel Maclise, see Chapter Five of this study.

[29] This is the title of F.S.L. Lyons' essay on Somerville and Ross which voices the general critical opinion on The Real Charlotte as social record of a dying way of life. Ariel 1. 3 (July 1970): 110-22. Most recently, Declan Kiberd in Inventing Ireland argues that the novel is "a tragic tale of the collapse of big house culture" (72).

[30] Somerville and Ross wrote about the loss of the Irish Gentleman in an unpublished essay called "The Superfluous Gentleman," (no date) no. 899, QUB, where they warn that "the new rulers of green Erin" must contend with the "class jealousy & religious intolerance" which has rid the country of its previous governors. In The Real Charlotte, however, the portrait of the Gentleman is more complicated.

A source of Anglican alienation in The Real Charlotte lies within a troubled awareness of the Church's elitism. The underlying fear that the Irish Church has severed its links with the past and has been cast adrift by its own reformative tradition destabilizes its position on the Irish landscape. Unlike Irish Catholicism, which the peasantry embrace, Irish Protestantism appears to some of the novel's characters to have broken away from a continuous tradition. So concludes Eliza Hackett, Mrs. Lambert's Protestant servant, when she explains her reasons for attending Sunday Mass. Charlotte Mullen, an anti-Catholic, is furious when she hears that the apparently solid Protestantism of the cook has succumbed to the blandishments of Father Heffernan. The Church of Ireland, complains Eliza when Mrs. Lambert questions her, hasn't the Apostolic succession which connects the Catholic priest to his spiritual forbears (266).[31] The defecting cook discovers in the Catholic faith a belief system which asserts a continuity and wholeness as complete and rounded as the Catholic host. Mrs Lambert's and Charlotte's horror at the cook's turn indicates two things. First, it demonstrates the determination of a minority religion to maintain its ranks in the face of national Catholicism. Second, it suggests a fear that the peasantry's religion possesses a prior right to the spiritual pool, a greater connectedness to the country's past (and the country's future) which only exacerbates Protestant dislocation.

Something of that fear is indicated much later in George Birmingham's observations on the difference between the Protestant and Catholic positions in Ireland. Birmingham emphasizes the consequent reactionary nature of the Protestant position in the face of a Catholic majority:

> Perhaps the difference between Catholic and Protestant is really one of temper. If so, it is something real and important. In Catholicism there seems to be a certain suavity, the result of a feeling of security. Protestantism is another name for aggression in religion. The Catholic spirit belongs to the man who is comfortably aware of being one of an unassailable majority. The Protestant is forced to assert

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[31] Ann Owen Weekes provides a feminist reading of Charlotte Mullen's reaction to Eliza Hackett's defection in "Somerville and Ross: Ignoble Tragedy" in Irish Women Writers (Kentucky: UP of Kentucky, 1990) 68-9. Weekes argues that Charlotte Mullen recognizes the male prerogative exercised by the Catholic Church in its Apostolic succession. Charlotte resists this "male preserve." Weekes is obviously struck by the deliberate inclusion of theological argument in the text, but she ignores its obvious significance to the Protestant discourse.

himself and his position. His spirit is the vice--or perhaps the virtue--of active minorities. The Catholic is conscious of being a member of that universal, time-transcending Church which is the blessed company of all faithful people. He does not want to say so and is quietly tolerant of people who do not understand. The Protestant is eager to proclaim an evangel of some kind, and therefore must be aggressive.[32]

In the 1890s, as demonstrated in Somerville and Ross's novel, the evangelical Protestant trope of the master/servant relationship, the mistress's reponsibility for the servant's soul as well as her body, has been over-turned. The evangelical spirit of Protestantism has been thwarted.

Intermarriage between Catholic and Protestant, which indicates a union across class divides as well as religious ones, furthers the alienation of the Protestant tradition in The Real Charlotte. Even though Julia Duffy's Protestant father introduced his Catholic wife and their hybrid daughter to his own Church (a circumstance that we assume results from the father's superior social status as a female offspring was generally reared in her mother's religion), the daughter defects. Social rather than spiritual reasons account for Julia Duffy's alienation. No longer able to afford a handsome bonnet for church and despising her mother's chapel, she decides that she "would have nothing of either chapel or church, and stayed sombrely at home" (67). Julia Duffy becomes a kind of witch, an outsider who knows charms and herbal cures but who remains estranged from both parents' religions. For Julia Duffy, to enter the Catholic Church is to admit to social failure: class and religious affiliations are inextricably linked.

In the landscape of Lismoyle, "the rival towers of church and chapel" (218) battle for the souls of Ireland. Of course, ostensible soul saving may be dying out; nonetheless, a secularized form continues to be practised. Evangelists and missionaries scour the Irish terrain, and while one religion boasts continuity of tradition, the other asserts class superiority. Souls are lost on the wayside, such as Julia Duffy, who hoards her Protestant acres like a dog its bone, or Charlotte Mullen's tenants in Ferry Row, the dirtiest and most squalid part of Lismoyle, where "slatternly" washerwomen ply their trade (96) and where Dinny Lydon, the tailor, lurks like a troll in his "disreputable abode" (413). The Lydons have little time for authority of any kind, much less priests. "'If I couldn't knock

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[32] George Birmingham, "Catholic," Spillikins (London: Methuen, 1926) 33.

the stone out of the gap for meself, the priest couldn't do it for me'" (415), claims Dinny, and his wife's drinking and violence, her greasy face and unctuous manner belong to some darker region of the Irish landscape. Their use of Irish (which Charlotte appears to understand), their ready lies and blatant poverty, conceal subterranean and hidden desires which have escaped the broad beam of religious enlightenment in Ireland.

The Real Charlotte reveals the different strains of Irish Protestantism and highlights the social dimension of its church. Perceived as the religion of the land-owning ascendancy, it becomes a means of access to that world. The novel also demonstrates, primarily through Charlotte, anti-Catholic tendencies within that tradition. The fear of defection, caused by intermarriage or isolation (as demonstrated by Eliza Hackett), and sharpened, perhaps, by the suspicion of what Birmingham would describe later as the "universal, time-transcending" assumptions of Irish Catholicism("Catholic" 33), gives rise to a fundamental antagonism. Perceived to be the religion of an inferior class, Catholicism becomes the path to social disgrace. But it also possesses near-demonic attributes. When Norry-the-Boat crosses herself, for instance, the casual Catholic gesture acquires significance because Norry happens to be holding a paper taper to light the fire in her kitchen hearth. When we envisage the gaunt and grizzled housekeeper making the sign of the cross with her fiery torch, inflammatory images of past Protestant martyrs spring to mind.

Saint Christopher Dysart, Soul Saver

The project of saving souls occurs within church and chapel in the Ireland of The Real Charlotte, but nowhere does this project become more susceptible to distortion than when it is driven by the reformative zeal deriving from evangelicalism. In Christopher Dysart, the colonial dream comes interlaced with a "missionary resolve to let the light of culture illuminate [Francie Fitzpatrick's] darkness" (273), so that he not only believes that the Dublin jackeen's soul needs saving but that he is the one to do it. Eventually he sees himself as a kind of imperial savior. He aspires to be Christ-like, his ascension to glory unchecked by the intercession of man or priest. He becomes besotted by a Protestant colonial dream.

Lady Dysart of Bruff, an English Anglican who has married into the Anglo-Irish community, has raised a son and daughter who manifest the two strands of Irish Anglicanism. Pamela Dysart's pleasure in the rites of the Church, her "High Church tendencies" (85), indicates a "Romanising"

bent, while Christopher's fastidiousness and missionary impulses reveal an evangelical frame of mind.[33] His leanings may well have been fashioned by a childhood steeped in the Sunday-school reading of Mrs. Mary Sherwood and her stories of evangelical family life. Although Christopher's family falls short of the Sunday-school ideal, their *modus vivendi* appears to have been inspired by Sherwood's goody-goody tales. Lady Dysart and Pamela work hard at gardening in Bruff, for instance, but Lady Dysart cannot tell chickweed from asters and plants the former where the latter belong, "an imbecility," the narrator tells us, "that Mrs. Sherwood would never have permitted in a parent" (82).

Mary Sherwood's moral tales on appropriate behavior included biblical quotations and religious maxims summarizing the action of the plots. Her best-selling History of Little Henry and his Bearer (1814) tells of "the conversion of a little boy of five or six and of his attempts . . . to convert his Indian servant."[34] Other early stories like The Ayah and Lady and The Indian Pilgrim continue to stress the importance of the Christian mission and the dangers of heathen contact. Mrs. Sherwood's History of the Fairchild Family (1818) represented the ideal Evangelical family which "helped to create the Victorian belief in the family."[35] Mr. and Mrs.

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[33] For discussion of the different strands of the Church of Ireland after its disestablishment, see Jack White, Minority Report 175. David Hempton points out that the Home Rule crisis of 1886 "brought into sharp focus an Irish Protestant *mentalité*" (226). He quotes the argument of the Protestant Defense Association of the Church of Ireland that "'Romanising tendencies' . . . had corrupted the Church of England'." The movement of the Irish High Church Party "'away from an evangelical position, settling upon more sacramentarian thought, was enough to stir a fear of Rome's potential presence in the Church's fold'" (228). "'For God and Ulster': Evangelical Protestantism and the Home Rule Crisis of 1886," Protestant Evangelicalism: Britain, Ireland, Germany and America c. 1750-1950, ed. Keith Robbins (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

[34] M.N. Cutt, Mrs. Sherwood and her Books for Children (London: Oxford UP, 1974) 17. Sherwood's fifty years of writing (1795-1851) produced over four hundred titles. According to Cutt, "Theories diffused by Mrs. Sherwood's writings dominated education for half a century; and governed missionary activity abroad" (ix). The allegorical Indian Pilgrim (1811), written at the behest of the chaplaincy for missionary conversion, "remained approved Sunday reading for the rest of the century" (38). By the end of the 1800s, the principles of Mrs. Sherwood's works "had become part of the very foundation of middle-class family life" (99-100). An indication of Sherwood's significance might be ascertained in a letter from a Scottish reader to Somerville and Ross. The one detail of The Real Charlotte which stirs Mr. J.W. Angus's memories of his childhood in Bagnalstown House, Co. Carlow, is not something 'Irish' but something British, Protestant, and colonial: Mrs. Sherwood's Fairchild family. No. 919, QUB.

[35] Cutt 7.

Fairchild taught their children to face death, resist evil, and recognize the consequence of sin.[36]

Upon closer consideration, Pamela and Lady Dysart's industry in the garden--"a scene worthy in its domestic simplicity of the Fairchild Family" (82)--becomes a parody. Not only is Lady Dysart's labour utterly useless (she plants weeds instead of flowers), but also her husband, the doting Sir Benjamin, fails entirely as a Protestant patriarch. Nonetheless, the allusion to Mrs. Sherwood's Fairchilds recalls the religious missionary zeal that fuels the Dysart engine however poorly they might operate the train. Evangelical purpose will eventually inspire Christopher to attempt to educate Francie and to save her soul; he has inherited (or learned in the nursery) Mrs. Sherwood's notions of patronage and imperial condescension. He will give Francie inspirational texts like Rossetti's mock medieval poetry and John Henry Shorthouse's Anglican novel, John Inglesant.[37] Unfortunately, like his well-meaning mother in her garden, Christopher's seed is the wrong sort for Irish soil. Thus the Dysart heir recalls the "sower [who] went out to sow" of the New Testament, but his secularized sowing is wasted on the Dublin jackeen.[38]

Christopher Dysart's concern for "Miss Fitzpatrick's problematic soul" (218) addresses her cultural rather than her spiritual development. His evangelical models, like those provided by Mrs. Sherwood, inspire his actions in a worldly context. Christopher attempts to reform Francie's taste. The English servants at Bruff who discuss Francie's abysmal table etiquette

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[36] "'Should you like to see the corpse, my dears?' asked Mr. Fairchild. 'You never saw a corpse, I think?' 'No, Papa,' answered Lucy. 'We should like to see one.'" (qtd. in Cutt 69). Martin Ross echoes the Fairchild's sentiments when she writes to Edith in January of 1895 saying, "'I often wish you had seen someone dead--I should like to know how you felt about it, and I think it does one good, though it is excessively painful'." Qtd in Lewis, Somerville and Ross 190. Martin Ross refers to her childhood reading of Mrs. Sherwood in "Quartier Latinities III," Stray-Aways 46, and Edith Somerville makes allusions to Mrs. Sherwood in An Incorruptible Irishman (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1932) 231.

[37] Shorthouse's inspirational sentiments are indicated in The Spectator's review of Blanche, Lady Faloise on Dec. 26, 1891, a month after its review of Naboth's Vineyard. Reading Shorthouse after the modern realists is a sensation likened to "that which Dante must have felt when, issuing from the tortuous cave which led up from the under-world, he came upon the flat, open shore which lay about the foot of the hill of Purgatory; when he stood once more in the upper air, and recognised the far-off quivering of the sea" (931).

[38] See Mark 4: 1-9. Later on in this chapter, I will discuss the possibility of a typological reading of the text which pays particular attention to religious symbolism, such as Lady Dysart's sowing of seedlings.

indicate, quite literally, the need to reform her manners. Francie's bad manners and vulgar tastes, her preference for a poached egg rather than the Bruff Scotch woodcock, or, to put it in romantic terms, Hawkins' kisses rather than Christopher's poetry, and the latter's consequent determination to demonstrate the pleasure of Scotch woodcock, directly recall the comedy of manners.[39] In Ireland, as Francie concludes with some sarcasm in her final meeting with Christopher, "'You couldn't expect any manners from a Dublin Jackeen'" (488). The reformation of manners in eighteenth-century Irish drama becomes a literal exploration of that theme in Somerville and Ross's late nineteenth-century fiction.

Christopher's interest, however, lies not in Francie's manners but in her mind. The event triggering Christopher's missionary impulse is when Roddy Lambert's boat, the *Daphne* , overturns. Like the see-saw motion of Stevenson's *Nonesuch* in The Master of Ballantrae which alters MacKellar's perspective, the upending of the *Daphne* turns the world of The Real Charlotte topsy-turvy; the plot is reversed when Christopher saves Francie from the waves of Lough Moyle. Like St. Christopher, "the great giant Christopher" who according to Tennyson, "stands upon the brink of the tempestuous wave" and carries pilgrims to safer ground, Christopher Dysart is transformed from dabbling amateur to committed reformer, one who has saved Francie's body and is thus inspired to save her soul. His desire to rescue Francie's inner life as much as her outer derives from a colonial dream which seduces him to love an 'Aboriginee' he has refashioned with his inner eye. Like a secular Church Militant with pygmalion tendencies, Christopher sees his beautiful statue as pure and somehow untouched by her environment; she has "some limpid quality that kept her transparent and fresh like a running stream" and gives him reason to believe that "she really must have a soul to be saved" (198).[40] When Francie Fitzpatrick visits Bruff, the colonial view falls victim to its own myopia and we see

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[39] Declan Kiberd also sees The Real Charlotte as "a novel in the comedy-of-manner mode" (Inventing Ireland 77) and argues that the work "records the collapse of Irish Protestantism into social decorum" (81). I am exploring here the manner in which the genre translates religious matters into a social setting.

[40] Ensconced as he is within the imperialist and patriarchal traditions and perceiving the Irish landscape and its female occupants as distanced from himself, as Other, Christopher Dysart's mission repeats the imperialist project of "soul making," the use of Christian evangelicalism in the service of imperial design, which Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak traces in Jane Eyre's St. John Rivers in "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," Feminisms: An Anthology to Literary Theory and Criticism 803. Somerville and Ross satirize that mission.

Christopher falling in love with an idealized version of the Dubliner. Christopher "clothes [Francie] with his own refinement, as with a garment"(31) and thus masks her real self.

Christopher and Pamela Dysart, with their English contacts and their colonial education and lifestyle, see Ireland and its inhabitants with the imperialist's vision. In other words, their perspective--which is one of a number of perspectives in The Real Charlotte--is that given to the narrator and the implied reader in Naboth's Vineyard: the distanced and detached bird's-eye view. In fact, their viewpoint (and we must remember that Christopher is short-sighted) is limited and partial, even dangerously blind, as we discover when Christopher 'sees' Francie Fitzpatrick not for what she is but for what he can make her. Moreover, Christopher's main occupation and only passion is photography, an art which distances him even further from actual life.[41] He is a latter-day Horatio Mortimer, an observer who never participates fully in Irish affairs, an amateur artist who never develops his skills. His Oxford education and initial placement in the West Indies--in Barbados where "all the blacks bow down to him" (78)--his English mother and "old-fashioned, eighteenth century look" (35) make him very much a colonial hybrid. His objectivity, this ability to see things as a "dispassionate onlooker" (125), is marred by a myopia which literally and figuratively distorts his perception. His hybridity has created within him a kind of exaggerated apathy which stifles his ability to act. He also epitomizes modern ambivalence. His lethargy is a "modern malady of exhausted enthusiasm" issuing from self-consciousness. He possesses a "super-sensitive mind" (310), primed by Pre-Raphaelite romanticism and reform literature. Yet he fails as an artist because he cannot truly 'see.' His ideal of perfection has thwarted his creative impulse--photography alone can capture life in perfectly executed (and detached) pieces. He is "intellectually effete" and overly civilized with "a little more culture than [he can] hold" (129).

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[41] Edith Somerville's uncle, Sir Joscelyn Coghill, a prize-winning photographer, photographed his brother-in-law (Edith's father) as a devoutly praying monk clutching rosary beads and a cross. Somerville and Ross, Wheel-Tracks 27. Martin Ross also enjoyed photography, and the Drishane Archive includes an album of her fine western landscapes of water and light. Photography figures largely in The Real Charlotte. Various characters possess photographs of each other and at one stage Charlotte thrusts Lambert's image into the fire. The photograph, like the Victorian portrait, seems to possess a soul of its own. See Chapter Five for further discussion.

Christopher Dysart cannot see either the full picture or behind the picture of Ireland because of his distance from the object of his gaze. Christopher's eye, peering from behind his old-fashioned eyeglass or camera lens, capturing picturesque scenes of "groups of old women and donkeys" (79) is, ultimately, the sight of "the observer whose impressions are only eye-deep" (15), a perspective which the narrator at the beginning of the novel warns us against. Thus when Christopher initially looks at Francie Fitzpatrick and thinks to himself, "how vast was the chasm between her ideal of life and his own" (90), we must remember that his "patronizing criticism" (139) is suspect.

When Francie arrives at Bruff House, Pamela searches out her brother to ask that he entertain their latest visitor. Christopher has hidden himself from family and guests in the attic, and he develops film amongst ancient trunks, broken furniture, and "three old ball skirts [which] hung like ghosts of Bluebeard's wives upon the door" (180). Amongst these theatrical-like props, the daughter of the estate discovers a big case and sits "gingerly down in the darkness on an old imperial, a relic of the period when Sir Benjamin posted to Dublin in his own carriage" (181). Pamela's imperial seat in The Real Charlotte is the imperial of a carriage, a trunk for luggage which was fitted on the roof of a coach or carriage. The imperial of a coach, situated as it is on the roof and next to the conductor, would afford a wonderful panoramic view of the countryside and this ancient prop reminds readers of the Dysarts' colonial status and the viewpoint it affords.[42]

Christopher's imperial view is reinforced by static daydreams which divert his attention from a changing world. He looks backwards rather than forwards and recalls with idle comparisons of Inisochery island to "the enchanted country through which King Arthur's knights rode" (128), some vague feudal age. When Julia Duffy, half dead with fever and in danger of bringing her fine old home and ill-kempt lands down with her, is threatened by Lambert with eviction from Gurthnamuckla, she flees her

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[42] Pamela's imperial seat recalls Maria Edgeworth's carriage seat in Tour of Connemara and the Martins of Ballinahinch, ed. H.E. Butler (1834; London: Constable, 1950). Indeed, Pamela's bemused kindness towards Francie might be compared to Maria Edgeworth's indulgent affection for the barbaric princess of Connemara, Mary Martin. Edith Somerville refers to Edgeworth's travelogue in An Incorruptible Irishman, 233, and Somerville and Ross's close familiarity with Mary Martin's history is evident in their travel writing on Connemara, Through Connemara in a Governess's Cart (London: W.H. Allen, 1892). Martin Ross, of course, was a Martin of Connemara, one of the wild Irish in Edgeworth's eyes.

dirty nest like the rat who earlier in the novel had been routed from its lair and coolly executed by the ex-hedgeschoolmaster, James Canavan. She staggers across the miles to Bruff to remind the landlord's son of a verbal contract, but Christopher is too busy reading Rossetti's poetry to Francie to give sufficient heed to the old woman's reminder of her traditional hold upon the land. He is too besotted with the ideal glories of a feudal age, with a "formless and unquestioned dream" (311), to give consideration to present realities. Christopher's reading emphasizes once more the great chasm existing between himself and Francie, whose only interest in "The Staff and Scrip" from which Christopher reads is the description of the beautiful queen. For Christopher, however, the pilgrim knight's idealized love for his Lady, his devotion, courage, eventual death for her stolen lands, and their reunion in Heaven, is nothing less than a dream. When Christopher stops reading Rossetti's poem he feels as though he has "stepped suddenly to the ground out of a dream of flying" (294). Christopher flies high and sees far within the colonial dream; in doing so, he overlooks both Francie's practical view and the destruction of traditional land rights by modern notions of progress and improvement. He does not see how Julia Duffy's situation echoes with grotesque overtones the plight of Queen Blanchely in the Rossetti poem:

> 'Who rules these lands?' the Pilgrim said.
> 'Stranger, Queen Blanchelys.'
> 'And who has thus harried them?' he said.
> 'It was Duke Luke did this:
> God's ban be his!' [43]

Duke Luke harries the Queen's estate in "The Staff and the Scrip," just as Charlotte Mullen's tool, Roddy Lambert, threatens Julia Duffy with eviction and Garry Dysart's ferret bolts a rat. Here is a marvellous opportunity for Christopher to pick up the staff and scrip. The event poses itself between extreme comparisons and the irony of the land issue is nicely doubled.

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[43] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Staff and Scrip," The Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (London: Ellis, New Bond Street, 1911) 59-63. Edith Somerville's younger brother, Boyle (killed by the IRA in 1936), was a keen photographer and traveller who published dictionaries of the languages of the New Hebrides, New Georgia, and the Solomon Islands and took part in the Chilean-Peruvian war in 1880 and the First Egyptian War in 1882. He was very fond of Rossetti's poems and sonnets. Edith Somerville, letter to Martin Ross, 24 August 1888, Letters 112-13.

Christopher's character demonstrates most clearly the sublimated evangelical Anglican discourse of The Real Charlotte. His particular interest in Pre-Raphaelite poetry indicates the aesthetic dimension of his thought, and I would like to consider more closely the workings of the nineteenth-century movement in the form of Somerville and Ross's Irish text by considering popular Protestant iconography in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. This source is best considered through Francie's character, which unites in its manifestation a complex amalgam of romantic and Protestant imagery.

Francie Fitzpatrick, the Dublin Aboriginee

Somerville and Ross considered a series of titles for their study of land-grabbing and soul-making amongst Ireland's Protestant population of the early 1890s. One of these titles, "A Dublin Aboriginee," emphasized wild and beautiful Francie Fitzpatrick rather than her nasty relative, Charlotte Mullen, who eventually took centre stage when the novel was published as The Real Charlotte in 1894. Nonetheless, early critics preferred Francie to Charlotte. Francie's questionable origins couldn't diminish the spunk and brilliance of the fair-headed Dubliner. She directly recalled popular romantic female images like Daphne or Undine.[44] Her awakening conscience in the course of the novel, however, also reflects and parodies the evangelical discourse of William Holman Hunt's popular paintings, The Light of the World and The Awakening Conscience. A consideration of both the revived romance tradition and the Protestant iconography of the Pre-Raphaelite painter in the treatment of Francie reveals Somerville and

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[44] Francie, in constant flight throughout The Real Charlotte, the object of the male gaze, is Daphne pursued by an intoxicated Apollo. Lambert's pursuit of Francie recalls Thomas Bulfinch's popular nineteenth-century version of the Greek myth in Bulfinch's Complete Mythology (London: Spring Books, 1989). Like Daphne, Francie flees her male captor. The description of the woods and water of Lismoyle framing her beauty might be likened to a picture from Bulfinch's text: "She was leaning back with her hat crushed against a trunk of a tree, so that its brim made a halo round her face, and the golden green light that filtered through the leaves of the lime moved like water over the white dress" (The Real Charlotte 162). For Lambert, Francie is no 'aboriginee' but a goddess he has set "upon a ridiculous pedestal" on their honeymoon in Paris. There the couple walk through the gardens of Versaille and reach the Bosquet d'Apollon where Francie sits by the pool, sucking oranges and tossing the peel at a statue of Apollo (399-403). Thus an essential myth of love relations feeds into Francie and Lambert's relationship, and Francie suffers gazes which make her 'aboriginee' (imperialist perspective) or goddess (patriarchal perspective).

Ross's attempt to come to terms with Protestant thought in a secularized language.

Francie first appears in the opening of the novel in Dublin's north-side. The tedious lessons of Sunday school have not dampened the fourteen-year-old's liveliness. Her tricks and mischief as well as her golden hair and sunny spirits captivate her married admirer, Roderick Lambert. Fortune appears to favour Francie when six years later she becomes the guest of her second cousin, Charlotte Mullen. In the limited society of Ireland's Protestant community, a pretty girl like Francie travels well, and Mr. Lambert finds himself contending with a series of admirers. First, the ne'er-do-well English soldier, Gerald Hawkins, pursues Francie; later, Christopher Dysart becomes a surprising addition to Charlotte's cat-infested lair.

As already noted, Francie prefers the evident affections of the English soldier. She falls in love with Hawkins and, like Undine, gains a 'soul' but loses everything else. Because of misplaced love, she loses Charlotte's favour. Because of love's betrayal--for Hawkins is betrothed to a well-off girl--she loses face and ends up marrying the widowed Lambert. Because of love and an awakened conscience, Francie eventually loses her life when, in a last-bid attempt to be true to herself, she flees on horseback and is thrown to her death.

References to Rossetti, Tennyson, and medieval romance abound in the text, and the detailed descriptions of the Irish landscape recall the heightened naturalism of the Pre-Raphaelite painters. With this in mind, I would like to consider two paintings by William Holman Hunt, which provide a visual counterpart to Francie's fortunes in The Real Charlotte. Painted in the early 1850s, they earned John Ruskin's approval for their religious content and faithful depiction from nature. Both The Light of the World and The Awakening Conscience have frames inscribed by biblical text, and their titles suggest the possibility of spiritual enlightenment. In the first painting (Figure 2-1), the crowned Christ stands and knocks on a closed door. He holds a lamp which lights up the brambles and weeds clustered around the door and highlights His rich gold cloth. There is no handle on the door. It must be opened from within.[45] In the second painting (Figure 2-2), a young woman rises from the lap of her singing lover. Something has stirred her, perhaps the song her lover sings, and she

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[45] William Holman Hunt, The Light of the World, Ruskin, Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites 208.

stares out into the green trees of the garden, reflected in the mirror behind her, as if nature contains the source of her startled understanding.[46] The lover sings on, unaware that some change, some kind of enlightenment, has been wrought in the heart and soul of his pretty mistress. Like The Light of the World, the secular painting suggests the promise of a spiritual awakening. In this case, redemption is promised to the fallen woman in her material world. Beneath a table beside her, a cat stalks a bird, and the question the painting poses is whether or not the bird, like the young woman, will escape the embrace of its pursuer. Thus, a spiritual liberation beckons outside the open window of the richly decorated love nest.

Holman Hunt's religious vision as demonstrated by these two paintings is subverted in the Irish landscape of Somerville and Ross's novel. Christopher sees himself as the man with the lamp, bringing the light of educated taste to the Dublin jackeen, but the awakening of Francie's heart is caused not by the inspirational reading he suggests but by the daring kisses of her charming and heedless lover, Gerald Hawkins, a man not unlike the careless singer in Hunt's second painting. Moreover, Francie's flight to freedom, like the flight of a wild bird (a lapwing in the text), never takes place. Charlotte Mullen, lover of cats, snares her victim before any redemption can occur. The "old cat" Charlotte, as Francie calls her cousin, destroys her prey; in this way, the Irish novel suggests a much darker conclusion for the awakened female conscience than that suggested by the Hunt painting.

The narrative of Francie's history is complicated by the romance discourse which develops further the notion of soulessness in the novel. The absence of 'soul' (transformed into qualities of taste) in the Christian world, the world of Bruff House, is not necessarily an absence of light, for Francie shines with a natural glory of no man's making. As a 'Dublin Aboriginee,' she comes from the landscape itself. She is, as the narrative tells us, Undine (162). The reference to the popular nineteenth-century fairytale deserves further consideration as it suggests a deliberate resuscitation of romance material in The Real Charlotte. This fact becomes more apparent when we look at the story of Undine, a tale of a mermaid who can only possess a soul when she loves and is loved by man. This is also Francie's tale. Her enchanting charm and delight in tricks and mischief are the qualities of Undine. The wild jackeen, like the mermaid, "could not

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[46] William Holman Hunt, The Awakening Conscience, Ruskin, Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites 209.

possibly be weighted with the responsibility of a soul" (162). Unfortunately, Francie, like Undine, loves a fickle human being and in gaining a soul through love is sacrificed to the gods of a materialistic Ireland. In the German material, Undine's soulessness aligns her to nature. She has a knowledge of the powers of the seas and skies which frightens her Christian companions. She challenges the notion of a Christian awakening. Francie, through her connection to the Queen of the Underworld, Charlotte Mullen, also manifests the dark unknown.

In The Real Charlotte, the broad beam of enlightened thought has not quite reached the darkened corners of a struggling landscape. Francie stands poised between two worlds. She sees the immediate world and can dimly envisage a grander prospect beyond. Her perspective contrasts with that of Christopher. When she visits the Dysart home, everything seems too big. Then, when Christopher and she look at his photographs, the pair actually see different things: what Christopher explains to be a Sunday-school feast, Francie sees as a waterfall on the grounds of Bruff (196). Christopher's Christian material becomes to Francie a natural scene, and the waterfall she perceives is like the god of the water who takes the shape of a waterfall in the story of Undine. Francie and Christopher's views--and the narrative portrays both and shows both as limited--oppose each other. When Christopher takes Francie to witness his favorite panoramic view of Lismoyle and its environs, all Francie can see is the English officer's boat on Lough Moyle. Short-sighted Christopher only sees the distant landscape while "keen-sighted" Francie only sees the boat.[47]

While Somerville and Ross's text draws attention to the dangers of Pre-Raphaelite and evangelical thought by dramatizing its inability to

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[47] While Christopher and Francie study photography, Pamela plays Grieg's "Peer Gynt." Christopher is stirred by Pamela's playing, and the music could be "In the Hall of the Mountain King," a passage which refers to Ibsen's description of a wild realm. In Ibsen's folk play, Peer flees to the wilderness with a local girl but then falls for an exotic beauty of the mountains. She leads him to an underground kingdom of trolls. Christopher, too, falls for the natural beauty of an Undine who may indeed entice the heir of Bruff to some subterranean kingdom of mutant beings. He does not heed Ibsen's warning. For the beautiful woman of the mountains whom Peer Gynt loves bears him a hideous troll baby--the offspring of their incongruous union. The irony of the implicit comparison intensifies when we consider aristocratic Christopher identifying with the Norwegian peasant farmer. Nonetheless, the "blood-stirring freshness" of the "half-civilized northern music" clouds his perspective just as "the darting flight of the bats" of Bruff weaves a "phantom net before his eyes" (199).

realize modern Irish realities, it also relies in part upon the kind of symbolic realism employed by Victorian painters like Holman Hunt. In other words, The Real Charlotte exploits a similar typological symbolism to that which scripture readers such as John Ruskin or Holman Hunt advocated in painting. Typological interpretation is the "reading in terms of symbols not only of the Bible, but of God's word made manifest in his creation of the natural world."[48] So in Holman Hunt's paintings, for instance, the various details of the work might be interpreted to tell a story of spiritual change. There is, as a result, the actual narrative of the painting (which is not allegorical because it exists on its own terms) and the spiritual meaning which the various details of the painting reveal. Details, like the absent door handle in The Light of the World, are clues to the overall spiritual meaning of the work. Figures, like the fallen woman of The Awakening Conscience, are types who might be read for spiritual meaning.[49]

Evangelical Anglicans--such as Christopher Dysart--apply typological interpretation to the natural world. In this case, Francie would be seen as a type, as a being who has a soul to be saved or one who possesses another reality beyond the material presence. Christopher himself is described in the text as a type, one which the socially conscious inhabitants of Lismoyle cannot recognize. For Francie as well, he is a "wholly unknown type" (312). Of course, as an aesthete who stands outside of the social and moral dictates of a pragmatic Irish world, Christopher may be unrecognizable. But there is also the possibility that the Protestant congregation cannot recognize Christopher's type, his symbolic significance as a Christ-like figure, because of their materialistic world-view. Francie Fitzpatrick is also a type according to Martin Ross, who soon after completion of the novel wrote to Cameron Somerville:

> I am in hopes that as you have to some extent sounded the depths of Dublin, you will have a feeling for our young woman--not that I indeed sympathise altogether with the demand for extra charm in a heroine. I think she ought to be in some way striking or the most

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[48] Robert Hewison, "'The Beautiful and the True'," Ruskin, Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites 13.

[49] See George P. Landow, William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism (London: Yale UP, 1979).

typical of her type, but not necessarily with leanings towards perfection.[50]

Martin Ross's language here could suggest that Francie is a type in the theological sense and that the authors' method in the writing of their third novel owes more to typological symbolism than has been realized.

The stylized patterning of the details of the text might be considered with the understanding that around this time the writers were enamoured with the "passionate, passion-less sentiment" of Edward Burne-Jones.[51] The form of their novel, its careful design of symbolic details and its dense Biblical imagery, lends itself to typological interpretation. A swift review of such patterning in the novel reveals its stylization and suggests symbolic significance.

The silver ring that Francie's childhood sweetheart thrusts upon her finger, a symbol of future material constraints, parallels the gold bracelet with its pearl horseshoes which Roddy Lambert later clasps around her wrist "like a policeman putting on a handcuff" to lay his claim (165). Francie's dress, her silver horseshoe brooch and horseshoe bracelet, foretell her tragic end. A more insistent pattern of black and white imagery, represented starkly in Charlotte and Christopher's opposition, runs throughout the novel as a Manichaean motif. Christopher Dysart in particular calls up this imagery. His first words set in train a pattern which will be sustained throughout the work. At Lady Dysart's garden party, he apologizes to Charlotte for his social absences by explaining that work on the officers' new steam launch has taken up so much of his time that he "'can't call [his] soul [his] own'." He is too busy "'with a nail-brush trying to get the blacks off'." The link between the evangelical and colonial discourse is achieved by Charlotte's quick response, her punning of 'blacks' when she refers to Christopher's stint in the West Indies and his "'deserting . . . old friends for the blacks a second time'" (36). But the introduction of Christopher's character also sets up a black/white contrast which constantly identifies him in the text: his white trousers underneath the black pall of his camera, his black and white photography, his tall, white figure alongside Charlotte's squat black shape. Such patterning is reinforced by reversals and doublings in the characters and plot. The tom-cat bears a female name, Susan. The cockatoo snares a kitten. These initial

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[50] Martin Ross, letter to Cameron Somerville, 27 May 1894, Drishane Archive, L.C.5 a-c.

[51] Edith Somerville, letter to Cameron Somerville, 1 April 1893, Drishane Archive, L.A. 164 a-b.

reversals anticipate Charlotte's masculine and Christopher's feminine attributes, or the servant James Canavan's role in the Bruff theatrics as Queen Elizabeth. Events also mirror each other back and forth across the text. Francie fleeing with a white horse in the opening scene contrasts with her drastic flight upon a black mare at the novel's dark conclusion. James Canavan's execution of a rat which Garry Dysart's terrier worries from the earth parodies Julia Duffy's eviction by Roddy Lambert and her consequent death later on in the story.

The central event of the novel--Christopher's rescue of Francie from the dangerous waters of Lough Moyle--might thus be construed as a significant Protestant evangelical trope: the fishing for souls. I am reminded here of Adriaen van der Venne's early seventeenth-century painting, Fishing for Souls, which depicts Protestant and Catholic leaders fishing for new followers on the River of Life.[52] In the Dutch painting, the Protestants have won a lively gathering on their side of the river, including some prominent political figures. In Somerville and Ross's self-conscious novel, however, Protestant politics are subverted. Christopher's misguided attempt to cast out his net and to gather up a lost soul mirrors his mother's ineffectual sowing of seeds at Bruff House in the earlier part of the work. The Dysarts, ensnared in a colonial, secularized Protestant dream, mistake the kingdom of heaven for the actual world of Ireland.

The Anglican Church provides the clue to the cluster of carefully patterned details in the text. While such unobtrusive stylization might subtly call attention to the mask-like nature of the representation, it also builds up a picture which offers commentary on the action and the characters of the novel. In other words, the black and white imagery, the series of reversals and inversions, and the parallel events offer an alternative reading to The Real Charlotte. Such details in their entirety can be interpreted typologically, as symbols prefiguring Christian meaning. Thus, in the manner of the Bible, the action of the narrative and the introduction of the characters heralds the 'Good News.' In the Protestant novel, the prefiguration of Christ is indicated in the collection of symbolic details which possess a hermeneutic role. To understand their significance, however, the forces of darkness in the novel must be addressed in the character of Charlotte.

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[52] Adriaen van der Venne, Fishing for Souls, 1614, The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Holland.

Queen of the Underworld: Charlotte Mullen

Charlotte Mullen, the face of modern progress in the Irish landscape, is the Queen of the New Irish World. Her soul, like her ugly face, is truly benighted. Just as beauty has directed Francie's fortunes so has ugliness guided Charlotte's star. Ugliness is the very source, the narrator tells us, of Miss Mullen's pathology; it is the reason for her worst acts, her cruellest deeds:

> There is pathos as well as humiliation in the thought that such a thing as a soul can be stunted by the trivialities of personal appearance, and it is a fact and beyond the reach of sympathy that each time Charlotte stood before her glass her ugliness spoke to her of failure, and goaded her to revenge. (407)

Charlotte's stunted soul, her distorted soul, is the result of features remarkably Caliban-like in appearance. Described by a contemporary reviewer as a sort of *lusus naturae*,[53] Charlotte appears as freakish with her short arms and legs, large jaw and thick lips. Her hands are broad, her feet big, and her long brown hair grows so low on her forehead that she appears to be wearing a wig "pulled too far over the turn of the brow" (43). Charlotte Mullen's squat, troll-like appearance, her black clothing and shabby black horses contrast especially with Christopher Dysart's slim, white elegance, his long hands, long nose, and white flannel trousers. So too do Charlotte's coarse energy, her hot or warm face, her outbursts of passion contrast with Christopher's reflective lethargy, his drooping supine figure in the grasses of Inishochery island. As Captain Cursiter steers his boat across Bruff Bay, he sees in the distance "two incongruous figures on the turf quay, one short, black, and powerful, the other tall, white, and passive" (460). Charlotte Mullen shadows the Anglo-Irish landlord. She acts as a landlord in her own right with a tenantry made up of the bedraggled inmates of Ferry Row--Lismoyle's underworld--where the washerwomen ply their trade and "clouds of steam from the cauldrons of boiling clothes ascend from morning till night" (96). Ferry Row appears to lead to the River Styx rather than Lough Moyle. Charlotte Mullen's

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[53] The Athenaeum 3476 (9 June 1894): 738.

ugliness is a black deformity which roots her character in the soulless domain of the animal world.[54]

Various critics have commented on the inversion of gender in The Real Charlotte[55]; Charlotte's masculine attributes and Christopher's feminine characteristics might be acknowledged as a feature of both the New Woman novel and decadent discourse of the 1890s.[56] For instance, Sarah Grand's immensely popular Heavenly Twins, published the year before Somerville and Ross's novel appeared and the source of much discussion in the Somerville household, inverted masculine and feminine attributes in the aptly named twins, Diavolo and Angelica.[57] So too in Somerville and Ross's novel, Charlotte drinks "a gentlemanly glass of Marsala with Mr. Beattie and other heads of families" (252). She successfully usurps Julia Duffy's country seat of Gurthnamuckla, where a "gentleman's avenue" stretches across the sweet pastures of prime grazing land. Charlotte has both "a general's eye" (324) and "a workman's eye" (495) which enable her to look up or down, to see deep into the cabins of her tenants or right up into the houses of the landed gentry.

In 1890 and 1891, the years Somerville and Ross were writing up their "Welsh Aunt," Punch ran a series called "Modern Types" and included in Dec. 1890 a figure called the Manly Maiden. "She conceives the idea that she can earn the proud title of 'a good fellow' by emulating the fashions and the habits of the robuster sex." This newfangled type, says

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[54] Charlotte's connection with the animal world reminds us of Madame de la Rougierre's peculiar song in Le Fanu's Uncle Silas. The governess sings a Bretagne ballad about a queer kind of woman, "a lady with a pig's head" who has powers which appear to enable her to enter a place where no one goes: the land of the dead. Despite her weird mix of human and animal attributes, however, she is shunned by both pigs and women. She is a new and strange breed with her "mongrel body and demon soul" (32). Such a figure--an offensive malignancy, an unholy corruption--manifests in her bizarre display of supernatural abilities and her evident and complete transformation the larger, frightening process of transculturation, of losing the Self to the Other and finding it again, of merging and mixing in gross distortion, of becoming a new being who is unnamed and unnameable in the new world. Madame de la Rougierre's pig-lady is realized in all her full malevolence in Charlotte Mullen, owner of Gurthnamuckla, 'Field of Pigs.'

[55] See, for instance, Ann Weekes treatment of the ambiguity of gender roles in The Real Charlotte in Irish Women Writers, 71-79.

[56] For a consideration of the links between the New Woman novel and the decadents of the *fin de siècle*, see Sally Ledger, The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the *fin de siècle* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997) 94-121.

[57] Sarah Grand, The Heavenly Twins (1893; Ann Arbor, Michigan: U of Michigan, 1992). Gifford Lewis notes the impact of Grand's controversial novel in Drishane House in Somerville and Ross, 66.

Punch, "consciously apes the manly model"[58] Charlotte fulfills such notions of the New Woman although she manages to break the mould of Punch's stereotype. In other words, she does much more than act the gentleman farmer or "ape" his manly attributes like some female Irish Caliban. Charlotte owns and runs the gentleman's farm; she pays his accounts and out-manoeuvres his competitors; she has not only replaced her male counterparts, such as Lambert, but also runs neck and neck with her social male superior, Christopher Dysart. Thus Charlotte defies the limitations of her prototype and uses a mask to cover much more than tender feminine sentiment.

We could argue that Charlotte Mullen's complex character has its source in the authors' ambiguous position. Somerville and Ross's suffragism in the 1890s expressed itself against Ireland's political situation. In a letter Edith Somerville wrote to her brother in 1892, she questions the right of "priestridden savages" to vote when well-educated women must remain dumb: "It certainly is a maddening thing," she tells her brother, "that these cowardly illiterate priestridden savages are given votes when women like Fanny Curry, Mrs. Sykes, Lottie Townshend, & Mrs. Fleming are not considered fit to exercise such a responsibility."[59] Somerville sees one inequity but wilfully ignores another. Thus, Charlotte Mullen evinces an independent capability Somerville would have admired, but the character's inferior rank compromises such advantages. Her admirable intellect and dominant will are freakish aberrations rather than manifestations of female strength.

Charlotte's character, and in particular her ability to wear masks, has its source in the colonial conditions of Irish life. Charlotte Mullen camouflages her intent, conceals her purpose, and wears a pleasant mask in order that she might not startle or provoke fear and hatred. Her intent is to blend herself within the different ranks of Irish society. However, the distinct difference between the impoverished peasant huts of Ferry Row and the Anglicized comforts of Bruff demands an elasticity of presence, a particular adaptability of character which must be extreme. In fact, much of the humour of Charlotte's camouflaging tactics is the partial revelation of one side or another of her various selves. She slips from grand tones to shrill shrieks as swiftly as she reckons the cost of a pig or a lamb. She thus

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[58] Punch 99 (Dec. 6, 1890): 265.

[59] Edith Somerville, letter to Cameron Somerville, 13 July 1892 Drishane Archive LA 157 a-b.

presents to the reader a strangely incongruous and mobile character, an ugly mottling of mood and face as she mimes imperial postures.

Charlotte Mullen's character parodies the landlord/tenant relationship and calls into question Christopher Dysart's role as landlord in Lismoyle. Her elaborate camouflage, her exaggerated claims to the gentleman's position--his seat and his imperial view--parody Christopher's position as "mimic man" of colonial Britain.

The mimic man, with his English education and English ways, says Homi Bhabha, repeats rather than re-presents the formats and structures of the dominant culture. He is "almost the same but not quite," and his partial presence creates an ambivalence which actually disrupts the authority of the colonial discourse.[60] Christopher Dysart's ambivalence is manifested in his hesitant speech and paralysing apathy. Using Bhabha's post-colonial framework, such ambivalence could be seen to express an "ironic compromise" resulting from a "panoptical vision of domination" and "the counterpressure of the diachrony of history--change, difference" which progressive entrepreneurs like Charlotte suggest. Christopher Dysart's ambivalence undermines his knowledge and power. It brings into question the belief systems of the colonial project as his mimicy is "a discourse uttered between the lines and as such both against the rules and within them" (89).

Charlotte Mullen's gross gestures, then, her peculiar, topsy-turvy position and hybrid appearance work to reinforce Christopher's clownish figure as colonial mimic man. She also represents a threatening and unstoppable force: modernism. Like Sarah Grand's 'heavenly twins,' she manifests the genius of her age, "the ineffectual genius of the nineteenth century . . . which betrays itself by strange incongruities and contrasts of a violent kind" (31). Her taste for French novels, "yellow paper-covered volumes" (298) like those Dorian Gray reads in Oscar Wilde's novel, suggests her degenerate tendencies.[61] Her suspect but progressive tastes counter Christopher's romantic dreams. Their opposition creates a tension between a horizontal, snake-like movement (Charlotte) and a static, vertical posture (Christopher). We are reminded in this opposition of the conflicting impulses derived from German Romanticism and Goethe's "Fairy Tale" discussed in the previous chapter. More important than either feminist or

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[60] Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," The Location of Culture 85-92.
[61] Edith Somerville finished reading "Oscar Wilde's horrid story" while working on The Real Charlotte, Sept. 7, 1890. Diaries, QUB.

colonial concerns in the creation of Charlotte is, I suggest, the authors' artistic treatment which uses for its inspiration theatrical material.

Charlotte Mullen's black force facing Christopher Dysart's white elegance recalls the stylized illustrations of Beardsley, his black cat with Pierrot or other pantomime figures. The black and white imagery of The Real Charlotte culminates in a scene when Captain Cursiter's steamer, the *Serpolette*, approaches two figures across the water on the opposite bank; from this distance the Captain sees in stark relief the white and black which the idealistic Christopher and the nefarious Charlotte present.[62] As already mentioned, Christopher occupies his idle hours dabbling in black and white photography, while Charlotte's black dress, and her kitchen in Tally Ho--a "cavern of darkness" (22)--contrast with the crisp white dress of the English woman, Miss Hope-Drummond and the Dysart's "white stone double staircase" (183).

The chiaroscuro effects of the novel complement the self-transformation of a complex female character to an Irish caricature; Charlotte Mullen becomes a simplified version of herself. Charlotte's powerful ugliness--her simianized appearance, which can only be fully appreciated in contrast with Christopher's lanky and feminine effeteness--is a distortion of her character traits. Circumstances force Charlotte to become an exaggeration of herself. The novel records how she reduces herself to a caricature. Her ability to play two hands at one time, to anticipate the needs of Norry the Boat and Lady Dysart, allows her to transform herself swiftly, effectively, and frequently. One moment she is quaintly clever Miss Mullen, and the next she is a shrieking termagant. Most of the time she is any person's equal, able to slip in and out of male or

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[62] Five years later, Marlow will steer his old steamboat up the Congo to face a similar opposition of terms generated by colonial occupation. The use of black and white contrast, part of a Manichaean or dualistic argument pervading literature from medieval times, becomes weighted with extra significance throughout the nineteenth century. In the colonial context, Christopher Dysart anticipates in his attempts at conversion, and his colonial dreams, the gross transgressions of Kurtz and the "bewitched pilgrims" in "Heart of Darkness." In Conrad's novel the visual impact of white on black, a white thread dangling like a necklace around a dying man's throat (which recalls the thin red knife mark around Margaret's throat in Faust), the steady stream of ivory wending its way from Kurtz's Inner Station through pitch black forests, starkly declares the immutability of each term. There are strong similarities between these writers' works, but Somerville and Ross's literary agent, James B. Pinker, did not become Conrad's agent until the latter had completed Heart of Darkness. The Conrads and the Irish women did have a mutual friend, the artist Alice Kinkead (see Drishane Archive 175).

female circles; occasionally she is weakly feminine when faced by the man she loves, Mr. Lambert. Affability and good humour fall from Charlotte "like a garment" (253). She moves from one extreme position to another, slipping on and off masks with such rapidity that we can no longer discern which is her real face. Charlotte turns somersaults between the various camps she visits: the upper and lower classes, the male and female domains. She is an acrobat, a tumbler, and, because it is the only way she can embrace opposite points, she is also a mimic.

Charlotte Mullen might be conceived of as a kind of harlequin figure. Her grimacing face, half-concealed purposes and shadowed desires anticipate Picasso's 1915 painting, Harlequin (Figure 2-3). Picasso's Harlequin is "the 'her-lequin' of medieval legend--a soul escaped from hell."[63] One arm is white and one arm is black; half the head is black and half white while a toothy grin stretches across both, much as Charlotte's jocular smile spans the gap between hell and heaven in The Real Charlotte. In the case of the Irish character, however, it is living in Ireland which causes her distortion.

The project of soul-saving in the novel, as I have shown, reflects different discourses. First, it is the purpose of the Protestant evangelical movement or the Catholic missions. Second, it is code for the education of taste deriving from the eighteenth-century comedy of manners. The religious project becomes a worldly pursuit. Third, in the context of its time and place, it carries overtones of scientific, feminist, aesthetic, and colonial argument. Social Darwinism of the Victorian period makes soul-saving a means of ranking man along a new kind of Jacob's ladder, where the hierarchy remains but the devil becomes an ape and God appears as a Caucasian male. Moreover, soul-saving becomes a means of refashioning the human being within a world which challenges fixed notions of gender (as propagated by New Woman fiction or decadent thought). Finally, in the colonial world, soul-saving can be a means of instilling a dominant way of thinking upon the colonized mind.

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[63] In A Life of Picasso II (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996), John Richardson shows how Picasso's "Harlequin" derives from his two watercolours of two dancers. In "Harlequin," the two dancers become one motley figure (386-87). Such a development is interesting in the light of the kind of figure Charlotte Mullen represents; she is, in effect, two people, male and female, whirling in some mad dance to become a single mad entity, truly "a soul escaped from hell."

The Real Charlotte satirizes soul-saving in all its dimensions by parodying Christopher Dysart's mission. Because Christopher fails, the novel questions the validity of such an enterprise. Education, money and art cannot tame Francie's headstrong heart. The happy conclusions promised by an Irish Anglican childhood and encouraged by the revived romance of the Pre-Raphaelites have been exposed as artifice. At the same time, the symbolic narrative sets up a pattern of imagery which suggests a meditation on the question of enlightenment in modernized Ireland. The novel attempts to reconcile the tropes of a Protestant heritage with the demands of a secularized world.

The display of the colonial dream as illusion--romantic irony--relies in particular upon stage material as a means of showing the mechanics of the romantic illusion. Central to the novel's study of Irish Protestantism, for instance, is the amateur theatricals at Bruff House. The play within the novel invites comparison to Jane Austen's Mansfield Park which critics such as Hilary Robinson and Declan Kiberd have emphasized.[64] However, Somerville and Ross's treatment of "nightmare snatches of 'Kenilworth'" (204) recalls the comic display of the real and the ideal in A Midsummer Night's Dream more than anything else. As in Shakespeare's comedy, the inner play's parody calls attention to the artifice of the entire work.

Before discussing the treatment of theatrics in The Real Charlotte, perhaps we might look more closely at the significance of the same in Somerville and Ross's lives. I have already suggested that the collaborators owe much of their treatment of the Irish landscape to nineteenth-century popular Irish theatrics. I have noted how Charlotte Mullen reflects the popular harlequin figure of French and Italian farce. Her black dress and malevolent intents, her acrobatic social skills, her masked face and androgynous traits suggest a character who incorporates extremes and who recalls in a literary text the visual dimensions of Harlequin. Later on in this study I consider more closely the significance of the harlequin figure in Somerville and Ross's fiction. At this point, however, we might return once again to consider the writers' involvement with pantomime and burlesque.

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[64] Hilary Robinson, Somerville & Ross 100, 105, and 116. Declan Kiberd, Inventing Ireland 72.

Robert Martin (1846-1905), Martin Ross's elder brother, was better known for his writing of pantomimes and popular songs like "Ballyhooly" (his pen name and the title of his most popular song) than his capacities as landlord of Ross House. He spent his Dublin years in the late 1870s and 80s acting in and writing for pantomime in the old Theatre Royal and the Gaiety. In 1878, he wrote a three-act play for the Gaiety called Midge. He took part in H.M.S. Pinafore at the Castle and he contributed 'songs of the hour' to various pantomimes in the old Theatre Royal (narrowly missing death by fire when the place burned to the ground in 1880). In 1883, Robert Martin wrote various songs including the popular "Ballyborough Bridge Brigade," and he continued to be involved in pantomime throughout the 1880s.[65] He introduced his youngest sister to the Dublin theatre. She frequently attended pantomimes and burlesques at her brother's side.

Dublin's Gaiety Theatre staged popular farcical comedies from London, light opera, pantomimes and burlesques. Theatre programmes of the period tell us that the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company performed a series of Gilbert and Sullivan works in the 1880s and the 1890s. Henry Irving and Ellen Terry appeared frequently in Shakespearian productions. Beerbohm Tree starred on numerous occasions with London's Haymarket Theatre Company. Faust came out in different forms: Gounod's Opera Company staged its version in 1888, as did the Carl Rosa Company in 1888 and 1893. Faust Up to Date was performed as a Gaiety burlesque in 1890. Significantly, Robert Martin wrote the words of Little Doctor Faust probably during this period.[66]

The Christmas pantomime at the Dublin Gaiety in 1886, as the Irish Times announced on December 13th, was Robert Martin's Bluebeard. According to the Times, Robert Martin had already co-authored with Lieutenant Hobday, R.H.A., a series of burlesques: Faust and Margherita, The Forty Thieves, Sinbad, and Jack and the Beanstalk. Bluebeard, however,

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[65] Martin Ross, "Memoir of Robert," no. 10884, TCD. The original manuscript of "The Martins of Ross," edited by Edith Somerville for Irish Memories, is more about Dublin theatre and Robert Martin's interest in burlesque and pantomime than the final version suggests. See also mention of Robert's involvement in pantomime in Letters 17, 23.

[66] "Memorial to Martin Ross," The Belfast News-Letter 24 Dec 1915. In this article, it is not clear if "Little Doctor Faust" is a pantomime or a song although it seems to be the former.

was Robert Martin's work alone and included a series of novelties: a Turkish bazaar, a Parisian black and white ballet, the acrobatics of the brothers Griffiths, and the harlequinade.

On December 28th, amidst notices of land agitation, eviction, and tenant collective bargaining of the Plan of Campaign, the Irish Times reviewed BlueBeard Repaired, or the old Hare in a new form. The descriptions of Robert Martin's sumptuous costumes and scenery, the elaborate stage machinery and variety of acts give startling contrast to the reports on tenant rights; the contrast is as stark as the black type of the Times on its white newsprint.

Robert Martin's burlesque comments flippantly on Irish affairs. As the reviewer notes: "The Widow Musphata proceed[ing] to repel the bailiffs with boiling water recalls a recent circumstance in Ireland." BlueBeard deliberately refers to Othello in relation to Irish matters when he states that "he who steals his purse steals trash, for he is an Irish landlord." But the comic ditties ("Tim M'Carthy of Tralee") and charming turns are the stuff of fun and nonsense rather than satire. The pantomime ends with the familiar harlequinade, the antics of clown, pantaloon, and policeman. The reviewer reports finally that, "A winter farmyard scene is made to suddenly transform into a flowery summer landscape, where the Harlequin, Columbine and their attendant mischief-makers have merry undertakings."[67] With his description, we can anticipate the world of the Irish R.M. short stories explored later on in this study: Harlequin (Flurry Knox), Columbine (Sally Knox), the policeman (Major Yeates), the clown (Slipper), and Pantaloon (Bernard Shute).

In 1886, Robert Martin amused his family and Dublin theatre-goers with pantomime and its harlequinade. He retells Bluebeard's story and includes glancing reference to the Irish context. He prefers using the stock characters of the harlequinade for the immediacy of the form. He prefers, as his younger sister tells us in "Memoir of Robert," burlesque "set in gorgeous absurdity" to the real bite of parody. Realism does not appeal to him, and Martin Ross concludes that "writing a play was a task too heavy for Robert's light hand . . . nor was his sunshiny nature drawn to the problems of life's shady side" (19-20). The 'shady side' and all its chiaroscuro effects, however, attracted Martin Ross so that a decade later, when she and her writing partner had begun to realize their potential with The Real Charlotte but had not yet started writing farcical short fiction, she

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[67] The Irish Times 13, 27, and 28 Dec. 1886.

meditates on how to unite the extreme realities of life. She is in Paris and watches absurd *Monsieur Guignol* and his screeching baby in a Punch and Judy show in the Luxembourg Gardens. She reflects on the paradox of the scene. This same place the previous May saw the shooting of men and women, all Communists, in front of the Palace. "It is incredible," states the narrator, "many of the ears now strained to catch the witticisms of *Guignol* must have heard the fusillade, and worse things than it." [68] How can such an immense contrast between past horrors and present gaieties be realized?

Edith Somerville's interest in pantomime rivalled that of her cousin. In 1885, while Robert Martin wrote songs and pantomimes for Dublin's Gaiety, she played the widow, Mrs. Partlet, in an amateur Castletownshend production of Gilbert and Sullivan's Sorcerer. She also revised and added music to a farce called Poor Pillicoddy and she played Miss Maria Noodle Poodle in a sketch adapted from the German by her uncle, Sir Joscelyn Coghill. In 1891, while writing The Real Charlotte, she and her Martin cousins presented Ballyhooly's Troupe of Wax-Works.[69] Like Robert Martin, Somerville performed and wrote pantomime;[70] both acted in Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore. In 1888, Somerville played Buttercup in an amateur production by the Bedale Musical Society in Yorkshire,[71] and according to her letter to Martin Ross, great fun ensued throughout the performances with "Dick Deadeye," who sported an eyeglass, and a stuttering "Captain Corcoran."[72] The eyeglass and the stutter reappear in the character of Christopher Dysart in The Real Charlotte. The emphasis upon class division and the possibility of love across class divides in the novel also recalls the musical's romantic plot, but the indebtedness of the novel to Pinafore is suggested primarily by Francie Fitzpatrick's mention

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[68] Martin Ross, "Quartier Latinities III" (1895) Stray-Aways 49-50.

[69] The printed programs of these performances are available in the Drishane Archive, M.15.a-b, M.43.a, as well as the scripts of Sorcerer and Poor Pillicoddy, M.16.a-c and M.17.a-b.

[70] Edith Somerville's first work after Martin Ross's death in December, 1915, was a pantomime called Chloral or the Sleeping Beauty performed in Castletownshend on September 7th and 9th, 1916. Somerville and Ross Collection no. 887, QUB. The work revised and modernized an early piece Somerville had written with her childhood friend, Ethel Coghill, in 1874. Otto Rauchbauer lists a manuscript of the early version in the Drishane Archive, C.8. a-c..

[71] Lewis, Somerville and Ross 200.

[72] Edith Somerville, letters to Martin Ross, 29 April and 3 May 1888, Letters 71-5.

of watching the musical comedy in the Gaiety with the Lamberts on one of their visits to Dublin a few years previously.

On April 9, 1888, while Edith Somerville was performing as Buttercup in Yorkshire, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company amused Dublin audiences in the Gaiety with the nautical opera, H.M.S. Pinafore or The Lass that Loved a Sailor. Most likely this is the performance which Francie mentions in The Real Charlotte, for on the back of the theatre programme is a brief notice of a forthcoming engagement, and it is one which becomes the central parody of the novel. "The celebrated burlesque" by Moncrieff, Little Amy Robsart, is advertised in the Gaiety programme,[73] and in the Somerville and Ross novel, the Dysart's amateur production retells Amy Robsart's story. Both burlesques--the real one and the fictional one--are based on Walter Scott's Kenilworth. The theatrical material, then, is more than a backdrop to the fiction; rather, there is good indication that the fiction includes the theatrical sources for parodic purposes. After all, the mayhem resulting from the Dysart theatricals, "nightmare snatches" as they are described, turns romantic farce into a kind of mad harlequinade. Poor Amy Robsart is nearly smashed to pieces in her ottoman/coffin by a bewhiskered Queen Elizabeth. In the nature of the harlequinade, the illusion of reality is ridiculed, with young Garry Dysart making such comments to his co-star as, "'Talk about Queen Elizabeth, you ass!'" (205). As in Midsummer Night's Dream, the crazy antics of the clowns make fun of (and display) the process of play-making, and we know that in The Real Charlotte there were two Gaiety productions which the authors had in mind, Amy Robsart and Pinafore.

The central theatrical piece of The Real Charlotte is a home-brewed performance of Amy Robsart's tragic death which brings together the dominant concerns of the novel while questioning the 'truth' of the main action. Garry Dysart's production concentrates on the jealousy of Queen Elizabeth (played by the talented James Canavan) and Amy Robsart's death. Beautiful Amy Robsart marries Queen Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester, who conceals the marriage to keep the Queen's love. Elizabeth becomes suspicious when Amy Robsart seeks out her husband (who has been persuaded by Richard Varney of her infidelity) and begs him to reveal their connection. The Queen discovers Leicester's marriage (betrayal) and Leicester sends away his supposedly unfaithful wife to be

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[73] W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, H.M.S. Pinafore or The Lass that Loved a Sailor, D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, 9 April 1888, Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, theatre programme.

murdered by treacherous Varney. The plot of Kenilworth provides immediate comment on Francie's position in Bruff as she hides from Lady Dysart's queenly eye in the carriage with Hawkins. More broadly, however, the historical material summarizes the main impetus of the action of the novel: Queen Charlotte's jealousy of pretty Francie Fitzpatrick who steals the favourite's heart and who is eventually destroyed because of the Queen's sexual jealousy.

Garry's production of the imperial majesty of the English court and the political machinations of its royal subjects parodies the regalia and pomp of the English monarchy in pantomime fashion while drawing connections between the English Queen's authority and Charlotte's dangerous powers. It is in the figure of James Canavan as Queen Elizabeth, however, with his ridiculous "mincing amble" as he takes the stage that the spirit of farce becomes most felt. James Canavan's whiskery face and stooping Irish physique half-masked by the bedraggled left-over military clothing of Sir Benjamin calls up in his ludicrous display as Queen Elizabeth the central concerns of The Real Charlotte. Crossing discourse of colonial and feminine tropes becomes most apparent in the cross dressing of the theatricals at the centre of the novel:

> James Canavan had from time immemorial been the leading lady in Garry's theatricals, and his appearance as Queen Elizabeth was such as to satisfy his old admirers. He wore a skirt which was instantly recognized by the household as belonging to Mrs. Brady the cook, a crown made of gold paper inadequately restrained his iron-grey locks, a ham-frill ruff concealed his whiskers, and the deputy-lieutenant's red coat, with the old-fashioned long tails and silver epaulettes, completed his equipment. (206)

James Canavan's startling appearance makes sly comment on Charlotte Mullen's gender reversal in the main action of the novel while displaying with ludicrous fun her ultimate intent--to be a new kind of Protestant Queen in Ireland. His transformation, however, from the masculine to the feminine role, from servitude to rulership, demonstrates the primary impulse of pantomime: to subvert normality. The appearance of a transformation scene in the amateur theatrics of the novel, moreover, calls attention to such masking and role-playing throughout the text.

The ludicrous play-acting in Bruff House indicates a central preoccupation of this Protestant text--burlesque. The characters of The Real Charlotte, like the farcical historical figures of the Dysart theatrics, owe their origins as much to the playhouse as they do to real life. Roddy

Lambert, for instance, is named after Dr. Cantwell's dupe in The Hypocrite. In Bickerstaff's play, the doctor tries to make his daughter, Charlotte, marry Lambert, a situation which Somerville and Ross's novel turns round when their Charlotte tries to marry Lambert. The English soldiers in The Real Charlotte act more like stage sailors than British authority; compare, for example, Captain Cursiter to Captain Corcoran of H.M.S. Pinafore, or Gerald Hawkins to the boatswain Hawkins of Scott's The Pirate. Even minor characters, like Francie's childhood beau, Tom Whitty, or Charlotte's housekeeper, Norry the Boat, appear to be upside-down versions of English stage figures: the silly old lover, Thomas Whittle, in Garrick's The Irish Widow, or Buttercup, the "Portsmouth Bumboat Woman," of Pinafore. What is important about Somerville and Ross's re-use of these popular stage figures is the deliberate upending of those roles upon the Irish stage. They turn topsy-turvydom upside down and, as a result, a queer version of reality might be said to exist.

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And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key of the shaft of the bottomless pit; he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

Revelation 9:1-3.

When Andrew Lang met Martin Ross in Scotland in 1895, he delighted the Irish writer with his praise. On January 23rd of this year Martin Ross wrote to her cousin: "He told me that Charlotte treated of quite a new phase--and seemed to think that that was its chiefest merit. He would prefer our writing in future more of the sort of people one is likely to meet in everyday life."[74] Andrew Lang shared with Martin Ross a love of "ruins, old churches and the like" and while showing her the sights of St. Andrews, he cursed John Knox's influence on the city's architecture.[75] Lang may have recognized in the Irish novel the attempt to address an

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[74] Letters 215.

[75] See Martin Ross's fine photographs of churches and architectual detail in the Drishane Archive Q.12.a.

Irish Anglican heritage infused with Calvinistic undertones within a secular language. He would also have appreciated the confrontation in the novel between the romantic impulse and the realist tradition. Charlotte Mullen, Christopher Dysart, and Francie Fitzpatrick, characters from everyday Irish life, according to Andrew Lang, demonstrate the complex discourse of the day, and, as I have suggested, might be read as symbolic types which propose a meditation on the nature of enlightenment in the colonial world. In Ireland during the late nineteenth century, critical conditions regarding land and religion intensify the dramas of everyday life. Moreover, Francie's ruin at the end of the novel, the collapse of the light into the darkness, into a kind of abyss or whirlpool generated by the horizontal force in confrontation with the vertical line,[76] progress in the face of traditional rights, reveals the ambiguity at the heart of the novel. Francie Fitzpatrick is the sacrifice in this study of agricultural improvement and cultural enlightenment in colonial Ireland.

The Real Charlotte is embedded in two inseparable traditions which determine its black humour: the workings of the Anglican faith in a secular world and popular farce in the Dublin and London theatres. Although significant issues of contemporary discourse interact with these two traditions--colonialism and feminism in particular--the novel's mainspring originates in the writers' backgrounds. One might question, then, to what extent the novel demonstrates the failure of Protestantism in southern Ireland. Though the concrete manifestation of the Church fails Francie in her attempts to find help, Anglican tradition determines her outcome. The novel records a Protestant ethos, and certain unexplainable things, like Francie's death at the end of the novel, are understood within the 'light' of the Protestant world view. Thus, I would add to Declan Kiberd's contention that Francie's tragic end results from "the psychological dynamic of Anglo-Ireland in the nineteenth century, of a people who swung between disintegration and intermittent comedy" (73). I would say further that the text's Manichaean perspective infused by romantic irony drives Francie to her doom and the novel to a conclusion haunted by apocalyptic tremors and Faustian warnings.

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[76] George Gissing, The Whirlpool (1897; London: Everyman, 1997). Gissing also addresses similar confrontations between tradition and modernity which recall early nineteenth-century notions of the sublime. As in The Real Charlotte, the abyss is placed in a modern context. For Gissing, it is a whirlpool, the fast-moving force of metropolitan life, is "a ghastly whirlpool which roars over the bottomless pit," recalling the bottomless pit of Revelation (47).

We recall that in the latter half of the novel Lady Dysart is on the Irish mailboat heading into Dun Laoghaire, and she cannot complete her acrostic puzzle. There is one final word missing for which she has two letters, a C and an H. She asks Pamela for assistance: "'I shall go mad, Pamela, perfectly mad, if you cannot think of any word for that tenth light. C and H--can't you think of anything with C and H?'" (376). We immediately think of Christopher and Charlotte until Lady Dysart says that the word ends in H. "Church" may be the missing link of Lady Dysart's and the novel's puzzle. When Lady Dysart asks Pamela the word for the tenth light of her acrostic, she ironically provides her own answer, for the Church is the light to the soul in darkness. Ironically, the Dysarts remain unenlightened and unable to recognize the light provided by an uneducated Dublin jackeen, the light-hearted and light-headed Francie Fitzpatrick. This is the Dysarts' failure, however--not the embracing Anglican tradition. When Roddy Lambert first sees Francie at fourteen (as already mentioned, Margaret's age when Faust first meets her), her high spirits and golden hair brighten Dublin's north side while her gay exploits, running off on a milk-cart with its white horse, delight her Sunday-school pals. Such glorious light is utterly doused by the end of the novel when the black mare, frightened by Julia Duffy's funeral procession, throws her to her death. Anglican thought could explain Francie's undeserved end, a doomsday scenario manifesting the "eschatological note" which is "intensely familiar from the evangelical homiletic tradition."[77] The description of the passing funeral procession with its keening women and Norry's sepulcral posture as she flings her arms wide under a billowing black cloak so that she appears as "a great vulture" (494) conjures up a scene which suggests an Irish Protestant perspective of an Irish Catholic event. Throughout the novel, the Manichaean conflict posed by Francie's fate or Christopher and Charlotte's opposition indicates the essential tension of man's worldly position.

Mephistopheles, like Somerville and Ross who were accused by some critics of heartlessly destroying Francie, faces questions of blame when grief-stricken Faust witnesses Margaret's tragic end. Faust cries out to the demon to save his beloved, and Mephisto coolly replies, "'Save her!' Who was it that plunged her to her ruin? I or you?"[78] We might receive a similar response from Somerville and Ross. Francie's ruin, her ultimate

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[77] Terence Brown 59.
[78] Goethe, Faust I, 111.

fall to her death, the light into the darkness, reveals the ambiguity of modern Irish reality at the heart of the novel.

One of the questions dogging Somerville and Ross scholarship is why the Irish writers did not write another novel to match the quality of The Real Charlotte. Their study of the colonial dream in the Irish landscape, a dream which reveals a heart of darkness anticipated in their earlier novel, Naboth's Vineyard, disturbs readers to this day. Since its publication in 1894, the novel has gradually come to be recognized as an Irish *tour de force*. Andrew Lang's admiration was soon followed by the sympathetic support of Lady Gregory and Yeats. Stephen Gwynn described it as "the best novel ever written about Ireland,"[79] and more recent criticism tends to concur with James Cahalan's observation in The Irish Novel that The Real Charlotte is "the greatest Irish novel of the nineteenth century."[80] For Elizabeth Bowen, it was a "masterpiece" which determined the writers' artistry; in this novel "they made their own a terrain of outrageousness, obliquity, unsavoury tragedy, sexual no less than ambitious passion."[81]

My research, however, indicates the writers' interest in developing form by showing their involvement in the issues of their day--artistic or otherwise--during this period. Their ironic sensibilities peaked during a period of vigorous change in the publishing industry, and they found themselves in the mid-1890s in the advantageous position of being at the forefront of popular taste. At the same time, their extended trips to England and France, their involvement in the visual arts, and their on-going struggle as representative Anglo-Irish landowners brought together a unique combination of interests which would determine the increasingly political and ambivalent nature of their writing. In short, as my next chapters reveal, Somerville and Ross could now turn their attention to form

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[79] Stephen Gwynn, "Lever's Successors," 351.

[80] James M. Cahalan, The Irish Novel: A Critical History (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988) 94. Not everyone, of course, adopted this position with regard to The Real Charlotte. In 1946, V.S. Pritchett's back-handed compliments on the novel tended to detract from its good reputation. Though he believed the novel to be the first nineteenth-century artistic portrayal of the Anglo-Irish, he argued that its main flaw, killing off Francie, was due to the writers' "profound snobbery" (267). Nonetheless, in an article which purported to be about the Irish R.M. stories, Pritchett spent all his time discussing "the disquieting people of this one serious novel." "The Irish R.M.," The Complete Essays (London: Chatto & Windus, 1991) 263-67.

[81] Elizabeth Bowen, rev. of The Irish Cousins by Violet Powell, The Mulberry Tree, ed. Hermione Lee (London: Vintage, 1999) 187.

as it expressed the Anglo-Irish landscape, its places and people, in fiction and illustration.



2-1 William Holman Hunt, The Light of the World (first exhibited in 1854)



2-2 William Holman Hunt, The Awakening Conscience (first exhibited in 1854)



2-3 Pablo Picasso, Harlequin (1915)

Part Two: Contexts of the Irish R.M. Stories

Chapter Three:

The Business of Being Irish and the Periodical Press

Somerville and Ross's involvement in London's flourishing magazine business, their treatment of the Irish landscape and its people in a wide range of British periodicals, largely determined the formation of the Irish R.M. stories. It is necessary to address that context by considering the Irish writers' treatment of conventions established by the periodical press. I shall pay particular attention to a nineteenth-century pictorial tradition, relying upon both high and low art, which traded in a visual language to convey concepts of gender, identity and nation.

In this chapter, I shall concentrate on the English dimension of influence and the difficulty for Irish writers like Somerville and Ross in depicting a complex reality within a volatile marketplace. In the next, I shall address the impact of Europe and especially French intellectual thought upon the writers' treatment of Irish character. Somerville and Ross negotiated a line between traditional concepts of representing a landscape and modernist treatments of reality. Therefore in these two chapters, I shall explore the ambiguities and tensions, the multi-layered landscape of their fiction, which result.

Previous studies on Somerville and Ross have neglected the authors' immersion in a visual arts tradition. Edith Somerville's illustrations have never been analysed. Yet a consideration of Somerville and Ross's magazine work must pay attention to the illustrations as they interact with the text. The first section of this chapter thus concentrates on Somerville's pictures and takes particular interest in a frequent Irish trope, the old Irish widow woman, in the hands of the comic Irish artist as she publishes in the popular ladies' magazines. This figure frequently appears in Somerville's illustrations, and (with her worn appearance) introduces into my

discussion the political problems of the picturesque. The second section of this chapter turns to a consideration of Somerville and Ross's position within the larger discourse of the picturesque. I address the implications of picturing Ireland on questions of land, economics and language in the early twentieth century. This latter section introduces my one foray into Somerville and Ross's nonfiction. However, "An Irish Problem" uses storytelling to comment on poverty and the picturesque, a fact which merits its inclusion.

The widely used notion of the 'picturesque,' a concept originating in the eighteenth century and an established shorthand by the end of the nineteenth century, admits to various meanings. A stretch of land or a group of people can appear in their artful arrangement to be like a picture. This is the picturesque. However, one might also consider the relationship of the picturesque to the sublime and the beautiful, or the use of the picturesque as a style of landscaping, of improving the estate along the lines of art. For Irish writers and artists, the picturesque is charged with additional political significance. To be Irish and to represent poverty and ignorance as picturesque for an English reader in his English periodical becomes a politically fraught exercise. This chapter deals with various aspects of the picturesque as they relate to the Irish land and its people and as the discourse is inherited by late nineteenth century Irish writers. I argue that Somerville and Ross exploit preconceptions of a picturesque Ireland by directing attention in their magazine publications to the mask-like nature of Irishness, to the business of being Irish. In so doing, they achieve two ends: they parody the picturesque and they question notions of national identity.

* * *

Somerville and Ross enjoyed an easy familiarity with the periodical press in Britain. Martin Ross knew Mr. Watson, editor of Sporting and Dramatic through her brother, Robert Martin, and became friends with Edmund Yates, editor of The World and Charles Graves of The Spectator and Punch.[1] Edith Somerville's childhood pastimes included reading and copying material from her grandfather's collection of Punch.[2] Hunting pictures, like those by John Leech, were her preferred models.[3]

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[1] Letters 39; 137-38.
[2] Somerville and Ross, Wheel-Tracks 15-6.
[3] Somerville and Ross, Irish Memories 107.

Because of her background in illustration, she naturally gravitated towards illustrated magazines. Most of the Irish R.M. stories were first published in illustrated newspapers and magazines.

The thriving magazine business at the end of the nineteenth century had established a readership who understood the shorthand of the form. Not only did the British audience recognize immediately the features of a suitable landscape, for instance, it also identified the character traits indicated by physiognomic coding and enjoyed the satirical ends caused by the exaggeration of features. Somerville and Ross's treatment of the Irish landscape and its occupants in the periodicals demonstrates an awareness of the British audience's expectations regarding the picturesque. They anticipated the visual language with which the reader or viewer confronts the descriptions or illustrations in popular magazines.

Edith Somerville's artistic education as well as her own and Martin Ross's background in the theatre as outlined in my previous chapters would have provided the collaborators with what Robert Louis Stevenson describes as "a gallery of scenes and characters" to inscribe upon Irish reality. Stevenson is speaking of the miniature theatre figures and scenery that excited his imagination as a child. From these cut-out plays, called Skelt's Juvenile drama, Stevenson constructed a range of mental pictures which he carried on into adulthood. His first visit to England, for instance, merely confirmed his childhood games, verified the imagined landscape and national iconography of the miniature theatre:

> England, the hedgerow elms, the thin brick houses, windmills, glimpses of the navigable Thames--England when at last I came to visit, was only Skelt made evident: to cross the border was, for the Scotsman, to come home to Skelt; there was the inn-sign and there the horse trough, all foreshadowed in the faithful Skelt.[4]

Stevenson applies a ready set of images to the English landscape. In Ireland, visual artists like Jack B. Yeats, who read the Scotsman's essay and shared his enthusiasm for miniature theatres, applied similar imagined scenes of childhood to the Irish landscape of adulthood.[5] Pirates, black-mustachioed adventurers and dare-devil acrobats populate his pictures of

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[4] Robert Louis Stevenson,"A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured," The Magazine of Art (1884), Memories and Portraits: Memories of Himself, Selections from his Notebook (London: Tusitala Edition, 1924) 108.

[5] Hilary Pyle, "Jack Yeats: His Miniature Plays," National Gallery Lecture Series, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, 23 Nov. 1999.

the Irish countryside. As with Stevenson, theatrical images vivify the landscape that the artist imaginatively reconstructs.

The application of a series of visual images to the natural scene recalls the touring artist of the previous century who looked for appropriate details in the topography which repeated the classical idealized landscapes of Poussin, Claude, or Veronese. The eighteenth-century discourse on the picturesque argued that an appreciation of landscape as a picture depends upon the viewer's knowledge of Arcadian myth and classical landscape. Just as Stevenson sees once again those intense mental dramas from his childhood play when he finally views the English scenery, so did the touring aesthete in Ireland search for the arranged variety of the picturesque in the "black bricks" and "black swamps" of the Irish landscape.[6] When James Clarence Mangan describes a landscape painting of the Irish countryside by Daniel Maclise[7] in "The Lovely Land," for example, he finally perceives the aesthetic possibilities of his "sire-land":

> But--what spy I?. . . Oh, by noonlight!
> 'Tis the same!--the pillar tower
> I have oft passed thrice an hour,
> Twilight, sunlight, moonlight!
>
> Shame to me, my own, my sire-land,
> Not to know thy soil and skies!
> Shame, that through Maclise's eyes
> I first see thee, Ireland![8]

The speaker rediscovers Ireland when Maclise clothes the countryside in the visual language of Veronese and Poussin. If it were not for the unique pillar tower, the speaker could believe this idyllic place to be sixteenth-century Italy or seventeenth-century France, hardly nineteenth-century Ireland. The speaker realizes the beauty of the Irish scene through Maclise's rendition. It is not just that he sees something new but that he sees the countryside's suitability to artistic arrangement.

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[6] The words of Maria Edgeworth's English visitor, Sir Kit's new wife, in Castle Rackrent 27.

[7] Maclise's Irish landscape drawings are "full of references to the picturesque" (24) and he had a special interest in Irish antiquities. See John Turpin and Richard Ormond, Daniel Maclise (1806-1870), exhibition catalogue (London, 1972).

[8] James Clarence Mangan, "The Lovely Land," (1849) in Songs and Ballads of Young Ireland, ed. Martin MacDermott (London: Downey, 1896).

There is a difference, however, between early nineteenth-century romantic nationalist treatment of the picturesque and later nineteenth- and twentieth-century use of familiar visual language. Writers like Somerville and Ross worked within a flourishing industry which constantly reassessed and traded on popular images and types. Their currency, fast-moving and mobile, embraced with equal enthusiasm classical set pieces and more popular sentimental scenes.

Somerville and Ross depicted the Irish landscape in illustration or text for a readership accustomed to visual arrangements like "Renaissance Holy Families," "Counter-Reformation altarpieces," or "idealised classical landscapes." Fintan Cullen defines this visual language as "the variety of stylistic traditions at the disposal of the artist" and employed in the representation of the nation.[9] Equally significant in the depiction of a nation, as Robert Louis Stevenson and Jack B. Yeats indicate, are the stylistic traditions of popular material. For example, in 1902, two years before Somerville and Ross published in the immensely popular Strand Magazine, the periodical included in a running feature on "Pictures and Parodies" Lady Butler's painting Scotland For Ever!.The stridently nationalist vision of the Scottish subject matter--a charging brigade of horses and soldiers--is parodied by Tom Merry who alters the Scottish nationalist scene in a comic Irish version (Figure 3-1). In Merry's parody the thundering line of horses becomes a disorderly stampede of pigs who carry no evenly paced soldiers but a chaotic rush of the Irish Separatist Party with shillelaghs and hurleys poised overhead.[10] The easy switch from Scottish to Irish politics, from character to caricature, from fine art to popular parody, and from nationalist idealization to its demonization will become an important aspect later on in this study. For the moment, I merely stressthe fascination of Strand with the possibilities of the visual image as shown in the pairing of high art and low farce in this particular article. Somerville and Ross naturally gravitated towards such a journal, though they eventually became disquieted by its 'vulgar' tone.

There are two points raised by these examples of visual language which will be significant in the following pages. First, to refer once again

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[9] Fintan Cullen, Visual Politics: The Representation of Ireland 1750 - 1930. (Cork: Cork UP, 1997) 6.

[10] Strand Magazine 24 (1902): 138. The front row of the Irish brigade includes Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Healy, Mr. John Morley, Sir William Vernon Harcourt, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. T.P. O'Connor, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Biggar, and Mr. O'Brien.

to Robert Louis Stevenson's description of national iconography, both he and Jack Yeats rely upon the miniature theatre as a kind of shaping-house of the artist's imagination. As a result, the remembered scenes possess a degree of theatricality, of display. It is not just the collection of features that Skelt collected to identify England which Stevenson carries with him on journeys across the border, it is also the performative quality of such scenes or characters. They are not only framed, they are staged in the playhouse of the imagination. There is a difference here between the visual language of the picturesque, which relies upon established visual tropes of high art, and the visual language which the late nineteenth-century writers/artists suggest. Somerville and Ross, I will argue, also portray self-consciously picturesque material which is just as intent on displaying its masks as representing a nation.

Second, the examples show the self-awareness of late nineteenth-century writers and artists of the pool of images and types at their disposal as well as the potential for parody which romantic nationalist iconography afforded. The importance of the theatre, self-awareness, and the blurred boundaries between high and low art might be explained by the expansion of the publishing industry at this time. What is interesting about these facts is their impact upon Somerville and Ross's treatment of the troubled Irish landscape and its potentially picturesque people. In this chapter, I will show how the Irish writers were as much interested in the art of appearing Irish, of a theatrical self display, as they were in presenting a picturesque Ireland.

Somerville and Ross and the Periodical Press

As the launching pad and site of publication for their short fiction, the British periodical press allowed Somerville and Ross opportunity to address Irish socio-political topics and to develop a comic formula for the Irish R.M. stories. Edith Somerville's illustrative work, Martin Ross's essays, and the pair's travelogues and stories appeared in a range of magazines from sporting journals (Badminton Magazine) and ladies' magazines (The Lady's Pictorial) to illustrated newspapers (Graphic, Strand Magazine) and the established political periodicals (Blackwood's Magazine, The National Review). The most prestigious magazines, Blackwood's, National Review, Cornhill, were the authors' preference--The Spectator and Punch held less appeal because of their cheaper rates. The immediacy and swift economic returns of magazine publication--the demands by editors for ready

material, the commercial potential for the 'racy' type of story, the necessity of continuing regularly to publish popular material--provide a crucial site for on-going concerns of the day. The magazine, increasingly ephemeral and of the moment with the technical improvements of the 1890s, was especially adept at relating popular interests in the different sectors of society.

Initially, Martin Ross used her contacts with editors and publishers of various English magazines to promote and publish material. Then, in 1897, Somerville and Ross appointed as their literary agent James Pinker, a Scotsman with little formal education but much business savvy. Pinker worked as a clerk at Tilbury Docks and as a journalist in Constantinople. After marrying a wealthy Englishwoman, he returned to England in 1891. There, he worked as assistant editor of the ladies' magazine, Black and White, and briefly edited the popular Pearson's Magazine. In 1896, he became a literary agent, and his early clients included Oscar Wilde, H.G. Wells, Joseph Conrad, Henry James, and Stephen Crane. When Somerville and Ross took up with Pinker, he was a powerful figure in the publishing industry who "'knew the monetary secrets of authors and the weaknesses of publishers'."[11]

James Pinker also liked hunting, and he favoured the Irish writers' comic stories--what he described as a "comic Irish business"--which appealed to a range of magazines. These stories had hunting and shooting for the sporting magazines, light-hearted romance for the ladies' journals, Somerville's vivid Irish character drawings for the illustrated newspapers, and ironic Anglo-Irish commentary on British foreign policy for the political periodicals. Somerville and Ross understood the shorthand of magazine writing. Their experience with popular theatre probably helped. Pantomime's light-hearted incorporation of numerous topicalities of the day, a method which led Goethe to describe the theatre of Pulcinella as "'a sort of living newspaper'",[12] would have sharpened the writers' appreciation for abbreviated form and innuendo.

Somerville saw her art work as an essential addition to the written text, not merely a repetition of the same. Although she illustrated the

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[11] Frank Swinnerton, qtd. in Jeffrey Meyers, A Biography of Joseph Conrad (New York: Charles Scribner, 1991) 204.

[12] From Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gesprache (Zurich, 1949) 719. Qtd in Allardyce Nicoll, The World of Harlequin: A Critical Study of the Commedia dell'Arte (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963) 184.

writing with some typical action scenes--especially of the hunt--she preferred her character illustrations because they enhanced the narrative:

> I have the greatest dislike--as I think I have told you before--for little line drawings repeating facts sufficiently expounded in the text. My cousin agrees with me in thinking that character studies of the more important or interesting people in the stories . . . are both more interesting and more suited to my capabilities. I detest, with but few exceptions, my drawings in the 'Irish R.M.,' but I fear my cousin and I would both detest any other artist's attempts to realise our people even more! [13]

Keeping in mind the increasing popularity of the illustrated magazine, we might note that Somerville's illustrations--which represent her best art work[14]--form an essential aspect of Somerville and Ross's magazine publications.

Although caricature appears in Somerville's unpublished drawings, she tended to avoid overt satire in her illustrations.[15] She preferred to exploit the effects of black and white art,[16] which led her to study in 1899 with the American illustrator and head student of Whistler, Cyrus Cuneo. Early on in her art career, she enjoyed creating illustrated narratives like A Mule Ride in Trinidad which The Graphic published in 1888. The comic-

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[13] Edith Somerville, letter to Pinker, 19 July 1904, the Pinker Correspondence 3330-1, TCD. Somerville repeats frequently in her letters to Pinker her belief that an illustration must do more than repeat a story's contents.

[14] Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Watercolours of Ireland 1600-1914 (London: Barrie & Jenkins 1994). The authors admire Somerville's work more for her "highly witty illustrations" than her oils.

[15] Two typical unpublished caricatures are a sketch of Martin Ross naked on a horse (plus her pince-nez and riding hat), Somerville and Ross Collection, TCD, and a comic scene of a fat Catholic bishop struggling to remove some piano music from a skinny-legged pianist, Drishane Archive I.34.a. However, in a letter to Alice Kinkead, Somerville speaks of avoiding caricature in a poster she is working on, a "Cyclopia" poster: "I found it tremendously hard to get a good idea, as the Cyclops was very hard to work in without being grotesque & caricaturey." 6 March, 1896, Drishane Archive L.A.1365.

[16] In Visualization in Popular Fiction 1860-1960 (London: Routledge, 1995), Stuart Sillars describes the new illustrative technique of the late nineteenth century as black and white art: "The 'sixties style' stressed dark, close textures caused by infinite variation of engraved lines, often alternating with free and imaginative use of white paper to give the characteristic lighting effect referred to in the name of 'black and white art' by which it was also known. Add to this the intense emotional narrative effects of the second generation pre-Raphaelites, and it is clear that the 'sixties style' is a complex medium well suited to the presentation of dramatic incident and feeling" (31-32).

strip style indicated not only an ease within the imperial masculine discourse but also a tendency to use illustration as a form of story-telling.

The Somerville family background in the British military, their pride in the "undaunted pluck" and fighting spirit of numerous male relatives, like Edith's uncle, Colonel Kendall Coghill, commander of the XIXth Hussars in the 1880s, provided the young artist with a comprehensive understanding (and implicit approval) of the hero-making project of a masculinist imperialism. The venerable aspect and white mustachioed face of the wealthy Planter in A Mule Ride in Trinidad (Figure 3-2) may have been modelled on that of Uncle Kendall Coghill, an old soldier type.[17] Moreover, the ludicrous dismountings of Lieutenant F. in the illustrated narrative, like Robert Louis Stevenson's struggles with Modestine in Travels With a Donkey, poke fun at male valour and demonstrate the artist/writer's consummate ease within this world.

No wonder, then, that the first story which sparked most enthusiasm in Somerville and Ross's agent and publishers appeared in the British periodical, The Badminton Magazine of Sports & Pastimes in April 1897, alongside articles such as "A Day's Duck-Shooting in Kashmir" and "Pig-Shooting in Albania." Somerville and Ross's short story, "A Grand Filly," suited the colonial sporting world of the British soldier. Its narrator announces his identity and occupation right away--an English touring sportsman--and the tale's deliberate recalling of Rudyard Kipling's stories provides a tongue-in-cheek commentary on British colonial discourse:

> I am an Englishman. I say this without either truculence or vainglorying, rather with humility--a mere Englishman, who submits his Plain Tale from the Western Hills with the conviction that the Kelt [sic] who may read it will think him more mere than ever. (379)[18]

The English touring sportsman, a familiar figure of the travel-book pattern, arrives in Ireland to be confounded and amused by a "'Half-sir'" called Robert Trinder, the forerunner of Flurry Knox. He lives in Lisangle House with an aunt who resembles "a badly preserved Egyptian mummy with a brogue" (381)--none other than Mrs. Knox-to-be. The dubious

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[17] See, for instance, Edith Somerville's admiration for Colonel Coghill's physical prowess and vaunted masculinity as evinced in extracts from his letters recording the bloody conquest of Delhi in 1857 in Wheel-Tracks 187; 192-93.

[18] Edith Somerville, "A Grand Filly," Badminton Magazine 21. 4 (April 1897): 379-93.

respectability of Lisangle House and its wild servants reaches outrageous proportions in this highly farcical tale of the Irish hunt. The Englishman is met at the front of Lisangle House[19] by a frantic dog with a plucked turkey in its mouth. The dog is being chased by screaming servants. The turkey turns out to be dinner. Disorder prevails throughout the story, which culminates in the Englishman--on the grand filly--jumping a bank to descend onto the thatched roof of a barn: The roof "gave way with a crash of rafters, the mare's forelegs went in, and I was shot over her head, rolled over the edge of the roof, and fell on my face into a manure heap" (390).

The tumbling and toppling of the self-satisfied Englishman or the dapper lieutenant in Somerville and Ross's comic material occur during holiday time (leave from normal soldiering duty and on a sporting tour of Ireland)--what Mikhail Bakhtin describes as carnival time. The rogue, the fool, and the clown who "live life in the chronotope of the *entr'acte*, the chronotope of theatrical space" are granted "the right to rip off masks."[20] Robust humiliations test the mettle of the tumbler and prove his nerve and good sportsmanship. They are the somewhat cruel profanations of hardy and vigorous types. They are like the initiation rites of a boys' boarding school and recall the rough justice of the battlefield. If nothing else, the "mere Englishman" is a good sport. Badminton Magazine depicted Ireland as the site of such testing ground, England's holiday camp and playing field. Its cover during this period displayed a shamrock with three horseshoes outlining the trefoil and a hunting crop replacing the stem. Tiny figures engaged in fox-hunting, grouse-shooting, and cricket sported inside the three leaflets of the shamrock (Figure 3-3).

The editor of Badminton's, Hedley Peek, loved Somerville and Ross's comic turn on hunting. On the 25th of April 1897, Edith writes to Martin about Hedley Peek and "the little Pinker's" enthusiasm for "the Bad Mag stories" and "especially the 'Grand Filly.'" Somerville tells her cousin that Pinker believes that the "serio-comic hunting business" is their "'own stuff' & no one else does anything like it," though Peek advises the addition to such stories of "plenty of love making." What Peek wants, says

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[19] Somerville and Ross's Lisangle house, a "square yellow box of a house, that had been made a fool of by being promiscuously trimmed with battlements"(380) is reminiscent of Edgeworth's description of Ballinahinch, "a whitewashed delapidated mansion with nothing of a castle about it excepting four pepperbox-looking towers stuck on at each corner." Maria Edgeworth, Tour of Connemara and the Martins of Ballinahinch 44.

[20] M.H. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination 163.

Somerville, is "plenty of love & plenty of comic Irish business" and he asks for a series of stories like "A Grand Filly" divided up into twelve parts--each with its own curtain--and plenty of illustrations. Somerville urges her partner to consider the proposition and its potential, claiming that "some other Irish Devil who can hunt and write will rise up & knock the wind out of our sails, & we can't afford to be jockeyed like that."[21] It had become apparent that they, unlike their Englishman, had landed onto a good thing. Their new male voice with its wondering tone and underlying sense of humour would eventually become their English Irish Resident Magistrate.

At this time, the latter half of 1897, Somerville and Ross were working on a novel they would never finish called A Man of the People. The novel includes characters, scenes, plot lines, and entire episodes which would reappear in Some Experiences of an Irish R.M. which Badminton first published.[22] Though Somerville claims that the invention of the R.M. characters occurred while she and Martin Ross were in Étaples, France, in the summer of 1898,[23] "A Grand Filly" had already introduced the essential figures of the R.M. stories. Clearly, the enthusiastic response of the English publishers to this story directed the writers to develop the embryonic formula.

Somerville and Ross were equally at ease with the intensely feminine world of ladies' magazines such as The Lady's Pictorial or Black and White. Their negotiation of the demands of these publications, however, becomes apparent in a consideration of the illustrations of the women in these texts. Two examples of Edith Somerville's style of illustrating the Irish folk--in both instances, elderly Irish peasant women--demonstrate her parody of both female and Irish stereotypes. The first example is a story by Edith Somerville which appeared in Black and White, while the second is one of the Irish R.M. stories published in Strand Magazine. A brief description of the nature of these popular illustrated magazines shows the writers' self-awareness in their treatment of shawled old Irish women.

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[21] Letters 243-44.

[22] Badminton Magazine 7 (July-Dec. 1898). In Oct. 1898 "Great Uncle McCarthy" appeared, in Nov. "Trinket's Colt," and in Dec. "In the Curranhilty Country." The remaining stories of Experiences of an Irish R.M. appeared in Badminton from January to December of 1899.

[23] Irish Memories 258. See also Somerville, Happy Days! (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1946) 65.

In 1900, Somerville published "High Tea at McKeowns" in Black and White, a ladies' magazine in the successful style introduced by the Queen in 1861. That magazine was followed by The Lady's Pictorial (1881-1921) and the Gentlewoman (1890-1926). All used the image-based format of the Illustrated London News and featured pictures of fashionable and frequently titled women as central material.[24]

Edith Somerville's impatience with the narrow interests of the ladies' magazines, and the consequent demeaning of female concerns, is apparent in a speech she addressed to the Munster Women's Franchise League in 1911. Her argument for the reform of such magazines was based on past experience as a magazine writer and illustrator who had to tailor the crude realities of Irish life to the limiting demands of these popular magazines:

> The Editors of the Ladies' Papers seem to have agreed that though Lookers-on may see most of the game, they cannot be expected to regard it with any enthusiasm. And so they narrow down their topics to the arbitrary estimate of women's intelligence, & narrow down women's intelligence to the contemptible level of their topics. There are columns in many papers, generally near the end and imbedded in advertisements, headed "things interesting to Ladies." We know the class of fact that we shall probably find under that heading.[25]

When publishing for the ladies' magazines, Somerville and Ross were well aware of a reading public made up of "young unmarried women who are supposed to know but one side of life." Literature, as George Moore had already claimed in 1885, "[was being] sacrificed on the altar of Hymen."[26]

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[24] In A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Women's Magazine, 1800-1914 (London: Routledge 1996), Margaret Beetham points out that the English woman's magazine provides a site for frequently conflicting discourse, where the appeal to a woman's class (her ladylike behavior, her moral and physical perfection, her social position) might clash with the magazine's commercial demands or where the popularity of women's fashions might conflict with the need for more serious material for the woman of the 1890s.

[25] Edith Somerville, address, "The Educational Aspect of Women's Suffrage," Munster Women's Franchise League, 15 Dec. 1911, in "Essays on Irish and Suffragette Affairs" by E. OE. Somerville, 1910-1925, no. 898, QUB.

[26] In 1885 George Moore published a pamphlet called Literature at Nurse or Circulating Morals (London: Harvester P, 1976) attacking the censorship of the Mudie circulating library and the requirement of an expensive 3-volume novel form (which would die out with printing developments in the 1890s). Moore's 1883 novel, A Modern Lover, was refused circulation by Mr. Mudie because "two ladies in the country had written to him to say that they disapproved of the book" (3-4).

In the early twentieth century, Edith Somerville was not so much concerned with moral censorship as she was impatient with depictions of "the Eternal Feminine in crinoline and silk."[27] Nonetheless, Somerville--more than Ross--published in these magazines because of their copious illustrations and appeal to women of the leisured class. Black and White in 1900 typified this sort of magazine in which illustrations and photographs of pastoral views, Christian subject matter, or romantic scenes dominated over the written text.

Also popular in Black and White were sketches and photographs of the British colonies and their populace: Chinese types, Kaffir boys in Africa, famine victims in India. The light-hearted romantic stories, like Somerville's story in the Christmas edition, occasionally provided humour and love interest in a colonial setting. "High Tea at McKeown's" is a high-spirited version of the romance plot and anticipates Somerville's later novels, Mount Music and French Leave. A strong-minded young girl, Muriel Purcell, one of an "Amazon brood" of Anglo-Irish, gets into various scrapes such as falling off horses into muck or running from rats, rustic adventures which gently stretch the boundaries of ladylike behavior.[28]

Max Cowper illustrated the Black and White publication of "High Tea at McKeown's" with conventional drawings carefully repeating the action of the story. The largest drawing presents the usual charming forms and faces of romantic lovers. A less important sketch, "Rattle of a Falling Coal Box" (Figure 3-4), re-enacts the moment when a large rat surprises both Lady Purcell and the "grey-haired kitchen-maid," Julia Connolly. Emphasis in Cowper's illustration is on action rather than character: Julia Connolly is merely a rougher version of Lady Purcell and both figures contrast with the bland prettiness of the Purcell daughters. Three years later, Somerville and Ross included the story in All On An Irish Shore and changed the name Julia Connolly to Mary Ann Whooly, "a grey-haired kitchen maid who milked cows and made the beds, and at a distance in the backyard was scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding heaps of manure."[29]

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[27] Somerville is referring to the use of the feminine stereotype in the visual arts. "Paris Notes," International Art Notes (March 1900): 10. Reference to the "eternal feminine" as idealized womanhood recalls the final lines of Goethe's Faust Part II, Act V: "Human discernment / Here is passed by; / Woman Eternal / Draw us on high."

[28] Edith Somerville, "High Tea at McKeown's," Black and White (1900): 16-19.

[29] Somerville and Ross, "High Tea at McKeown's," All on the Irish Shore (London: Longman's, Green, & Co., 1903) 164.

Somerville illustrated the 1903 collection with a series of character sketches, and "The Grey-Haired Kitchen-Maid" (Figure 3-5), unlike the magazine illustration, enhances rather than repeats the narrative of "High Tea at McKeown's." The drawing focuses on the incongruity of the character--the kitchen-maid's antiquity is unexpected in itself. Then, her thick scarf and woollen shawl, her trayful of steaming hot whiskeys--unlike the ordinary details of Cowper's picture--elaborate upon character. Moreover, the servant grins conspiratorially at the reader. Somerville's illustration focuses upon the paradox of the type. It also emphasizes the disorderly dress, the wrinkled features and scant grey hair of the elderly woman; it provides a picturesque and self-aware version of the shawled Irish woman.

The difference Somerville's illustration effects in the second publication stresses the impact of illustration on the written text. The Black and White version focuses upon the conventional action of the story and the "glib faces" of late Victorian depiction of woman.[30] The romantic plot dominates. In the later version, the illustration draws attention to the paradox of character, and a hitherto minor character dominates. The romantic plot recedes. Somerville's picturesque rendition of the peasant woman, the emphasis upon her ragged appearance, is not necessarily any more 'true' than Cowper's version of "the grey-haired kitchen-maid." However, Somerville's work--the conjunction of illustration and text--subverts romantic convention of the feminine discourse. More specifically, the intent of the picturesque (which the illustration fulfills) clashes with the demands of a commercial feminine sentimentality which magazines like Black and White developed and propagated.

A second example of Somerville and Ross's treatment of shawled peasant women is taken from a 1905 story published in Strand Magazine, "The Boat's Share," one of a series of stories illustrated by Edith Somerville called Further Experiences of an Irish R.M.

Strand appealed to a wider audience than Badminton or Black and White. Launched in 1891,"its editor's insistence on a picture on every page

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[30] Maurice Sendak, interviewed in the introduction to Victorian Color Picture Books , ed. Jonathan Cott (New York: Allen Lane, 1984), points out that most of the illustrator's work of the Victorian period used a conventional female face, "a typical look of the time," rather than personalized portraiture: "It's hard to see *through* the Victorian veneer," says Sendak, "these are faces that are just *put on.*" He calls them "glib faces" (xii).

earn[ed] it a circulation of 300,000 for the first number."[31] Its use of new journalistic techniques and its populist appeal is evident in the monthly feature, "Curiosities" with accompanying photographs, or the light-weight articles on science ("Things that Get in Our Eyes") and art ("Which is the Best Painting of a Child?"). The visual image as both subject and medium dominates. For instance, a legend on the 1904 cover boasts "120 Literary Pages. 150 Illustrations," and George Newnes, editor of Strand and Tit-Bits claimed at the end of the tenth year of publication (December, 1900) that "a new era in magazines was created by [Strand's] appearance" with its 17,000 illustrations (including photographs) which employed no less than twenty leading artists in black and white.[32]

Writers for Strand included Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Bret Harte, and George Gissing. Most prominent of the writers, however, was Arthur Conan Doyle with his Sherlock Holmes stories. Mysteries, visual curiosities, developments in popular science as it related to perception, and anything to do with art shaped the features of the magazine in the early 1900s and it was naturally drawn to film by the second decade. Throughout the period of Somerville and Ross's involvement, Strand paid particular attention to advancements in art and published articles on "Finest Views" and "Beauties in Painting." The magazine's interest veered towards popular art, especially caricature and parody.

Strand Magazine, then, showed a special interest in the making of pictures: the question of beauty, the significance of scale, the importance of perspective, and so on. It published "The Boat's Share" from Further Experiences of an Irish R.M. in 1905. The story demonstrates the manner in which the authors negotiate the claims of the picturesque and the feminine. Its publication in Strand is apt because it deals with the visual image, with "a face and its fortunes"--the face of the peasant woman, Mrs. Honora Brickley, whose appearance, "a sacred picture" (see Figure 3-6) belies a savage greed that wins her a small fortune.

Honora Brickley fulfills our expectations of the picturesque. Her wrinkled skin and hunched figure in its long blue cloak have a charm that age and hardship have bestowed. Edith Somerville's illustrations emphasize her venerable dignity, what Ruskin describes as "unconscious suffering" (see below), as in both sketches (Figure 3-6) she disdains the reader's eye while the careless folds of her cloak and the rough texture of her worn

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[31] Sillars 73.

[32] Strand Magazine, 20. 120 (Dec. 1900): 604.

hands and face give interest and appeal to her depiction. The illustrator's understanding of Honora Brickley's character type, however, becomes apparent in the third illustration, a comic sketch rather than a life drawing, of Mrs. Brickley's foe Kate Keohane. The third sketch clearly presents a different picture of Irish peasant womanhood: fierce, strong, and crude (Figure 3-6).

The written text of "The Boat's Share" works in a different way to subvert stereotype. Mrs. Brickley carries herself with a "nunlike severity" in her "stately blue cloth cloak"; she is "an example of the rarely blended qualities of picturesqueness and respectability" (79) with her "rippling grey hair," and her "straight-browed and pale face" (73). Yet it is she, she who "might have been Deborah the prophetess, or the mother of the Gracchi," who can fight like a man. She tells Major Yeates of women brawling on Hare Island strand (including herself), where "the faymales is as manly as the men! Sure the polis theirselves does be in dhread o' thim women! The day-and-night screeching porpoises!" (73). The text not only responds to the picturesque discourse--reacting to the stereotyped Irish peasant and offering a more truly picturesque version--but also to that of venerable femininity, exploding the surface appearance with a supposedly more authentic reality. At the same time, text and illustration draw attention to the object's self-conscious pose. Mrs. Brickley's posture and appearance are false, deliberately manufactured for the public's benefit. She is as intent on being as picturesque and old-womanish as her English observer or her Irish enemy might make her. It suits her purpose.[33]

It is the willingness and the ability to slip in and out of being 'a sacred picture' which characterizes the nature of Somerville's illustrations and identifies her treatment of Irish character and landscape. Edith Somerville did not hesitate to rely upon stereotype to emphasize the immense suitability of the Irish countryside and its 'charming peasantry' in the making of pictures. As a commercial artist, her awareness of the

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[33] The opposition of appearance and reality which the Irish peasant manifests in the face of English law (and which occurs over and over again in the R.M. stories) dominates one of Somerville and Ross's possible sources for the R.M. stories, Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate and Other Reminiscences of the South of Ireland by Henry Robert Addison (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1862). In the first story, "The Bird's Nest," for instance, an apparently respectable Irish peasant family conceal in their cottage the bloodied instruments the daughter and two sons of the family used to batter some drunken men to death. These stories are supposedly based on the real-life exploits of the chief magistrate of police in Limerick in the 1820s, Thomas Philip Vokes. I consider this source in greater detail in my next chapter.

possibilities of the picturesque becomes clear in a 1900 article, "West Carbery as Sketching Ground." She depicts the topography of West Cork as "sea and sky and distant headlands which make pictures whichever way you turn." She describes Castletownshend with its "irregular horde of grey, slated cottages" and the market crowds of Skibbereen who are "the most picturesque peasants in the Three Kingdoms":

> Do not believe the common fable of the Irish cocked nose, the illimitable Irish upper lip. You find both, of course–and very amusing to draw they generally are–but oftener, . . . the Spanish type recurs . . . [or] women with heavy blue-hooded cloaks and kerchiefs of many colours.[34]

Somerville emphasizes the variety of form and colour, the ever-changing scene and the "rough and fierce" coastline (84). These qualities of the picturesque, qualities that are also indicative of poverty and neglect, enable the artist to provide "variety within a controlled design."[35]

Somerville's detached perspective of her neighbours when writing for the readers of International Art Notes affords an advantageous viewpoint. From a distance, the artist not only sees the play of light on the land or the seductive veiling of mist around the trees, she also does not see certain things, such as the limitations of border and hedgerow or the poverty inside the crumbling cottages. The cultivation and enclosure of the land (economic improvement) might be ignored by the English artist in England if he looks at things from a distance. Of course, further afield, in Somerville's Castletownshend, fewer developments provide better possibilities for picturesque scenery.

At the same time she exploited Ireland's picturesqueness, Edith Somerville ostensibly rejected stereotype and stage-Irish buffoonery. She agreed with her cousin in Some Irish Yesterdays in 1906, for instance, that the Irish experience in England suffered because of its typecasting.[36] The captive "Children of Erin" have sold their songs in the London drawing-rooms and now must listen to the English strumming the Irish harp: "They

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[34] Edith Somerville, "West Carbery as Sketching Ground," International Art Notes (May 1900) 83-84.

[35] Malcolm Andrews, ed., introduction, The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents, I (Robertsbridge: Helm Information Ltd., 1994) 10-11.

[36] "Children of the Captivity," Some Irish Yesterdays (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1906). Violet Powell claims that the writing of the collection can be attributed solely to Martin in The Irish Cousins 84. See also Edith Somerville's later discussion of Carleton's "humiliatingly exaggerated buffooneries" in "Stage Irishmen and Others," Stray-Aways 242.

must smile, however galvanically, when friends, otherwise irreproachable, regale them with the Irish story in all its stale exuberance of Pat and the Pig."[37] The captive race is doubly bound, first by its domination and second by its humiliation, the mirroring of its image in the feeble jokes of the "tormentors."

This same year, Edith Somerville was writing to James Pinker about her illustrations of Irish types as "a class of drawing not easily come by as they are all from real Irish country people, & are typical of their class" (April 30, 1906). From 1904 until 1907, Somerville and Ross published six stories of Further Experiences of an Irish R.M. in Strand Magazine, and Somerville wrote frequently to Pinker about her illustrations of these stories, arguing that her work was unique, "not illustrations in the ordinary sense of the word, but supplements [to] the text" (April 21, 1906). Like the stories themselves, Somerville's pictures presented "sketches of the more salient of the peasant & lower class people" although her work would add to the writing, not merely repeat "facts already recorded in the text" (Nov. 13, 1902). Somerville had no interest in drawing pictures of "struggling gentlemen in evening clothes" (Sept. 25, 1904) but saw herself as one who could best depict the Irish: "Our Irish characters require to be done by someone who knows them intimately," Somerville wrote to Pinker Oct. 8, 1904.[38] Obviously, the issue for Somerville and Ross was not so much whether or not the stage Irishman existed but who had the right (and the knowledge) to depict this type.

A brief look at Martin Ross's treatment of Irish womanhood in her magazine publications shows a deliberate subversion of romantic notions of feminine behavior and idealistic attitudes towards love and marriage. Blackwood's published "In Sickness and in Health" in 1890 (which appeared as "For Better, For Worse" in Cornhill Magazine in 1906), and the suffragette magazine, The Englishwoman, published "At the River's Edge" in 1914. Unlike Somerville in "High Tea at McKeown's," Ross concentrates on the harsh realities of life amongst the hard-working women of the West of Ireland and makes it quite clear in the first story that this practical life,

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[37] Some Irish Yesterdays 275. Martin Ross's essay may owe its argument to Evan Evans' eighteenth-century poem, "A Paraphrase of the 137th Psalm, Alluding to the Captivity and Treatment of the Welsh Bards by King Edward I" ("What!—shall the Saxons hear us sing, / Or their dull vales with Cambrian music ring?") Qtd in Katie Trumpener's Bardic Nationalism 2.

[38] Pinker Correspondence, no. 3330-1, TCD.

a life of poverty, small land holdings, and frequent childhood mortality, leaves little room for sentimental notions of romantic love:

> Writers of novels, and readers of novels, had better shut their eyes to the fact, the inexorable fact, that such marriages are rushed into every day; loveless, sordid marriages, such as we are taught to hold in abhorrence, and that from them springs, like a flower from a dust heap, the unsullied, uneventful home life of Western Ireland. (363)[39]

Economics and not love-making lie at the heart of a marriage transaction in the small cottages in the West. Despite the charming countryside, marriage is a commercial business that thrives on common sense and tends to ignore love if it glances by. In short, it is everything opposite to the "material of the accepted sort for a playwright"; unlike popular romance, the Irish countryside yields no "unsatisfied yearnings and shattered ideals" (364-65). The Irish scene allows Martin Ross an opportunity to overturn the popular romantic beliefs upon which the ladies' magazines structured their readership.[40]

Somerville and Ross's success was assured by their appearance in the most popular British illustrated journals of the time. I have noted the publication of the first half dozen of Further Experiences of an Irish R.M. in Strand Magazine from December 1904 to December 1907. They published the second six in The Graphic from July 4, 1908 to August 15, 1908. Both publications emphasized visual representations, and Strand in particular provided a forum for popular developments in visual techniques. Inevitably, and as Martin Ross highlights in her studies of Irish peasant women, the writers faced the political problem of the picturesque: its relationship to development and improvement in the Irish countryside.

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[39] Martin Ross, "For Better, For Worse," Cornhill Magazine (Sept. 1906): 356-65.

[40] "In Sickness or in Health" provoked a strong response in Martin Ross's Catholic friend, Maud Wynne, who argued, "I acknowledge the Irish are rather sexless, but I will not allow unromantic!" For the Catholic, romantic love arose from a greater love for God, said Wynne. "Don't you think . . . materialism . . . has led to the world being over sexed. In our hardy forefather's time it was not the same. There it was a case of first come first taken, no picking & choosing." 26 Dec.1906, no. 919, QUB.

As Irish writers, Somerville and Ross inherited a complex notion of the picturesque and the sublime within the Irish landscape. Early national tales by Lady Morgan and Charles Maturin, such as Florence Macarthy (1818) and Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), discovered in the Irish wilds the extreme and varied conditions of a picturesque sublime. Lady Morgan emphasized the ambiguous pleasures of "aesthetiquarianism" for the touring artist.[41] Writers, like Morgan, intent on creating a national novel, knew that visiting painters to Ireland, such as the Scottish artist, David Wilkie, in 1835, delighted in the country's backwardness as it provided material especially suited to a popular sense of picturesqueness. "The whole economy of the [Connaught] people," claimed the artist, "furnishes the elements of the picturesque."[42] Ruskin's mid-century re-evaluation of the concept, however, "Of the Turnerian Picturesque" from Modern Painters, investigated what he described as "the modern feeling of the picturesque."[43] Ruskin's approach to the tradition half way through the nineteenth century not only illustrates its continued popularity but also reveals the need to expand the eighteenth-century cult of the picturesque to embrace Victorian moral attitudes towards social responsibility.

"The essence of the picturesque," says Ruskin, is "a sublimity not inherent in the nature of the thing, but caused by something external to it; as the ruggedness of a cottage roof possesses something of a mountain aspect, not belonging to the cottage as such" (427). There is a detached carelessness in the picturesque ruin, says Ruskin, a disregard "of what any

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[41] Lady Morgan's third Irish novel, Florence Macarthy, challenges the exclusively aesthetic perspective of the Irish scene. With his Spenser in hand, the touring aesthete, Mr. de Vere, admires the "poetical misery" of the destitute Dublin streets, where "rags well draped, misery well chiselled" gives opportunity for "the painter's pencil" and a model for "the poet's eye" (I: 44). He searches Ireland for the images which books and painting have erected in his mind's eye and for which he scans the Irish landscape. He is only satisfied with what he sees when it reflects the picture he believes it should shape. His crime against Ireland, his neglect and the relishing of the poverty his neglect has caused, is intensified by his inability to see things as they really are. The term "aesthetiquarian" is used to describe such perusals of the Irish countryside by Katie Trumpener in "National Character, Nationalist Plots: National Tale and Historical Novel in the Age of Waverley, 1806 - 1830," English Literary History 60 (1993)

[42] David Wilkie, letter to Sir William Knighton, 30 August, 1835. Qtd in Fintan Cullen's Visual Politics 124.

[43] John Ruskin, "Of the Turnerian Picturesque," (1856) Modern Painters, IV, ed. David Barrie (London: Andre Deutsch, 1987) 427.

one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim" on the viewer (428). Its contribution to a scene is the manner in which it links the present to the past. It shows in its aspect and its continued usefulness the living past, the continuity of tradition, and it does so in an England where history is "names in school-books" (429). The decrepit ruins found abroad are not museum pieces but remain part of people's lives. England's affluence has deadened the past for its people. The "border and order," the "spikiness and spruceness" of an English people who "neglect nothing" (430) opposes the rugged variety of colour and form, the complexity of light and shade seen in "suffering, poverty, or decay, nobly endured by unpretending strength of heart" (430) in what Ruskin describes as the noble picturesque. There are two kinds of picturesque, he claims: the surface picturesque, which is an "outward sublimity," and the noble picturesque, which reveals the inner as much as the outer character of the object. The viewer's "tender sympathy" and understanding will enable him or her to render the object with a dignity and care the mere surface picturesque cannot achieve (431): "One painter has communion of heart with his subject . . . the other only casts his eye upon it feelinglessly" (433). Nonetheless, both views, and especially that of the noble picturesque, must be distanced from the object being viewed in order to give it dignity conferred by remoteness.

According to Malcolm Andrews, Ruskin's re-evaluation of the picturesque and his definition of a noble picturesque provides "an ethical response to scenes of poverty and decay," a means of apprehending destitution--feeling it--with an understanding which, in itself, invests greater depths in the object being viewed.[44] In his study of Turner's use of the picturesque, Ruskin argues that restoration effectively erases the natural record of the past and replaces it "with the present age's versions of the past," a kind of rewritten history (428). This aspect of Ruskin's argument directs the picturesque discourse, as Malcolm Andrews points out, into areas of conservation and heritage, areas particularly dear to Irish nationalists. Ruskin claims that if the traces of the past are reconstructed (renovated), or isolated like rarefied objects in museums, they are effectively changed. He believes that the picturesque provides a means of animating the past, of linking today's developments with yesterday's

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[44] In "The Metropolitan Picturesque," The Politics of the Picturesque, ed. Copley and Garside (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) 282-98, Malcolm Andrews notes that nineteenth-century civic awareness and an increasing presence of the poor within the metropolis demanded such a response. He also argues that Ruskin "refashioned" the picturesque to "equip it for a new role on the stage of cultural politics" (297).

ventures in one unbroken strand. His argument resonates within Irish national cultural discourse of the nineteenth century. What Enlightenment reclamation programmes of the previous century saw as boundless wastes signified to cultural nationalists hidden treasure troves of the past.[45] By the end of the century, what appeared as decay and destitution to the middle-class expansionist signified the traces of the past which had merged in the landscape like outgrowths of the ages and had become increasingly vulnerable to the compulsive tidiness of English industrial housewives.

Ruskin's mid-century defence of the picturesque complicates a tradition which retained vital connections to eighteenth-century arguments on improvement and which in Ireland continued to loom large in the depiction of the national terrain. Enlightenment reclamation programmes of improving the landscape vied with cultural longings to discover the past in its ruins. A range of contradictory significances emerge in the landscape, and a brief reconsideration of how the picturesque relates to the previous century's conception of improvement indicates the interaction of some of those meanings.

As a painter and an illustrator, Somerville was aware of Ireland's picturesque potential. Her writing with Martin Ross, however, admits to the inevitable ambiguity of depicting poverty as picturesque. The Irish cousins may have understood that "progress and picturesqueness," as Thomas Hardy comments, "do not harmonise,"[46] but they still relied upon the ironic possibilities of their conjunction. In 1901, they question easy stereotyping by urban tourists from Dublin and abroad of Irish rural conditions in an essay entitled, "An Irish Problem," which was published in the political journal, The National Review. They present the piece as a journalistic report on the working of the law in an Irish-speaking district in the West of Ireland, a particularly problematic area which was being addressed at this time by the Congested Districts Board. The writers base their narrative on their visit to the Carna Petty Sessions in August of that year.[47] Three months later, the essay appeared amidst articles on the

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[45] Katie Trumpener, "The Bog Itself: Enlightenment Prospects and National Elegies," Bardic Nationalism 37-66.

[46] Thomas Hardy laments the changes wrought in the English countryside in "The Dorsetshire Labourer" of 1883. In Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, ed. Harold Orel (London: Macmillan , 1967) 168-91.

[47] On August 15, 1901, Martin Ross writes in her diary that "there was only one case, of the drowning of a sheep, but J. O'Loghlen & W. McDermot worked it for an hour and a half for all it was worth." In September, the

English parliament and the South African War, and it reflected the journal's interests by addressing language and identity as they might be influenced by colonial policy and economic conditions. On one hand, the essay attacks the largely Laputan theory (the long-sighted view) of English newspapers and magazines on the "Irish Problem" by studying a specific case of two Irish farmers involved in a dispute over a drowned sheep. This approach shifts the discussion from theoretical argument as employed by most essayists on Irish land issues in the National Review to concrete example in Ireland, so that the colonial conundrum might be addressed amongst "anaemic patches of oats and barley, pale and thin, like the hair of a starving baby" (407).[48] On the other hand, the essay dramatizes the comic self-parody and rough-hewn humour of an impoverished community. Martin Ross thought "An Irish Problem" one of the best pieces of writing in their 1903 collection, All On an Irish Shore .[49] An evaluation of this factually based essay with its ambivalent examination of Irish local dealings and British colonial policy introduces into this discussion on the picturesque a further commentary on the writers' self-conscious treatment of the Irish landscape.

The narrators of "An Irish Problem," like many of the 'actors' in the court case on which the essay concentrates, wear masks. They travel with a mixed group of tourists and Irish people into the West. As silent listeners to a knowing conversation on game laws, they appear to be English. But the narrators really are "Irish wolves in the clothing of English tourists"(407): visitors to a world they already know well. Their destination is the small village of Letterbeg, an Irish-speaking community, where they will discover that wearing a mask is important. The essay revolves around the

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cousins began to write their article about the Carna Petty Sessions; on October 9, Martin sent the article to Maxse, editor of the National Review, who accepted it for £20. Diaries, QUB.

[48] Somerville and Ross, "An Irish Problem," The National Review 38 (Sept. 1901-Feb. 1902): 407. In 1903, Edith Somerville published in The National Review a political commentary, "The Desired of the People," with the byline, "A Looker-On," which deplored the Catholic priest's influence in politics as well as the rising power of the "strong farmer" who is motivated by personal interest to garner as much power as possible in a changing country. This piece lacks the vibrant humour of the earlier dramatization of such issues in "An Irish Problem" but is more consistent with the commentary in The National Review on Ireland. Discussion articles from the unionist and nationalist viewpoints, such as "A Final Land Measure" by "A Landlord," "Ireland and the Tariff," and "Ireland--Retrospect and Forecast," appeared the same year.

[49] Martin Ross, letter to Pinker, 22 Feb. 1903, Pinker Correspondence, no. 3330-1, TCD.

donning and discarding of *rôles* in an Irish-speaking community that conducts procedures under an English law.

Finding themselves with a few hours to spare between journeys, the narrators linger outside the premises of the central meeting-house of the village, Heraty's shop *cum* public house. Like the drinkers inside, they welcome a timely distraction when it arrives. A court case is about to commence. The two visitors quickly join the fun in a performance involving both the actors in the case and its appreciative audience. Indeed, the whole point of the petty sessions court case, which all the villagers attend, is to demonstrate the art by which the various characters manipulate the system. This Irish court room scene provides more entertainment for its audience than Heraty's pub which is speedily vacated when Sweeny's case starts.

Sweeny's case is a simple one and everyone, except for the visitors, already knows the truth of the situation (and its history), just as everyone understands the Irish of the plaintiff which the government official attempts to interpret. The fun of the situation arises from the mock court which ensues: the interpreter's Irish-English can be as incomprehensible as the Irish he interprets and the schoolmaster is called up from the audience to interpret words like *gorsoon* or *ullán.* Not only is the English interpreter ridiculed in this all-Irish court, but also the chairman--the publican, Mr. Heraty--constantly disrupts court procedures by calling up various members of the audience to offer their contributions. Meanwhile, the other magistrate, clever Dr. Lyden whose appreciation for getting the most out of the incongruity of a situation anticipates George Birmingham's playful Dr. Whitty, offers a running commentary. Most importantly, as the narrators point out at the end of their report, everyone knows, and expects, that a series of lies will uphold Sweeny's case. To lie and to get away with it, however much one promises to tell the truth in an English court, is the art of the situation. As Birmingham observes in his later comic stories: "In Ireland the guardians of law and order have to be suspicious."[50] Indeed they do. The litigious nature of the Irish peasant, carefully documented at the beginning of the century in Maria Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent,[51]

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[50] George Birmingham, "Law and Order, and the Camera," The Adventures of Dr. Whitty (London: Methuen, 1913) 174. In this series of comic stories detailing the art of manipulating the system and having plenty of fun while at it, "The Interpreters" also satirizes the use of the Irish language in the West of Ireland.

[51] Castle Rackrent, 109.

becomes an artful display of one-upmanship and playing the fool in Somerville and Ross's or George Birmingham's early twentieth-century writing.

The "hungry hillsides" (418) of "An Irish Problem," with their "brown solitudes and windy silences" (408), admit the charm of incongruity and the unexpected, which is revealed, for instance, by the contents of Mr. Heraty, the publican's, front window:

> It was very small, about two feet square, but made its appeal to all the needs of humanity from the cradle to the grave. A feeding-bottle, a rosary, a picture of Mr. Kruger, a peg-top, a case of salmon-flies, an artistic letter-weight, consisting of a pigeon's egg carved in Connemara marble, two seductively small bottles of castor oil--these, mounted on an embankment of packets of cornflour and rat poison, crowded the four little panes. Inside the shop the assortment ranged from bundles of reaping-hooks on the earthen floor to bottles of champagne in the murk of the top shelf. A few men leaned against the tin-covered counter, gravely drinking porter. As we stood dubiously at the door there was a padding of bare feet in the roadway, and a very small boy with a red head, dressed in a long flannel frock of a rich madder shade, fluttered past us into the shop. (409)

Mr. Heraty's window recalls Thackeray's window in the Shelbourne Hotel in the Irish Sketchbook. The visiting tourist looks through an aperture propped open with a broomstick and offering a complete miniaturised view of Irish society: "A person with an allegorical turn," claims the narrator, "might examine the whole country through this window."[52] In Mr. Heraty's window, a peculiar mix of material tells the countryside's story while also demonstrating the picturesque. The framed depiction of incongruous things continues when the viewers hesitate at the threshold of the shop and see from this outline further absorbing instances of difference and variety which inform the picturesque. The shop's contents charm and provide a rich effect, but the listing of its objects also reinforces

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[52] William Makepeace Thackeray, The Irish Sketchbook, The Works of William Makepeace Thackeray, XXIII (London: 1911) 21. In his study, "The Travel-Book Pattern in the Nineteenth-Century Irish Novel," Heinz Kosok opens his survey of works intent upon changing the English image of Ireland by travelling with the reader through the country with Thackeray's description in The Irish Sketchbook. See Das Natur/Kultur-Paradigma in der englischsprachigen Erzahlliteratur des 19 und 20. Jahrhunderts, 79-93.

an unavoidable fact: the limited pool of goods to be sold or bartered within the community. One of these items--one that would be most familiar to readers of The National Review , a point of contact in alien terrain, a "picture of Mr. Kruger"--suggests that "An Irish Problem" hints at an underlying Irish nationalist sympathy for the Boers. The petty sessions court case in Letterbeg may thus provide commentary on British foreign policy.[53]

The mention of Kruger suggests an added dimension to the Irish situation. The community of Letterbeg, arguing half in Irish and half in English, the official language, debate for half a day the value of a drowned sheep: a half-sovereign. The feuding of the community is contained within a tiny in-bred populace and concerns an even tinier amount of money. While one admires the abilities of a people who can stretch a half-sovereign so far, one must also wonder at the waste of such talent within a system of this nature. A xenophobic society, comparable to that of the Boers perhaps, reshuffles the few cards remaining in the pack rather than adding to the deck.

The Irish problem is as much the self-absorption of an impoverished nationalist community, one that folds in on itself, as it is the ignorance of a distant English authority. In the framework of The National Review the text addresses not just Irish affairs but--indirectly--British colonial discourse.

Further consideration of the context of Somerville and Ross's article reveals that the Irish writers are responding to a specific aspect of colonial discourse--language. The previous June, The National Review published "Our Next Blunder in South Africa" by Sydney Brooks, a Canadian who argued that Britain's decision to allow both the Dutch and English languages to be used in the Transvaal schools and courts invited the continuation of divided politics and resulted from a dangerous leniency which would continue the establishment of South Africa as "a museum of Imperial blunders." Brooks argued that the "reckless liberalism in fostering a plurality of tongues" in colonies such as Canada or Ireland encouraged separate and distinctive cultures; for the French-speaking Canadian "the permission to speak French is an invitation to preserve his

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[53] Sympathy for the Boers in the West of Ireland thrived, to the extent that Lady Gregory included in her collection of folk songs and stories, Poets and Dreamers, (1903; New York: Kennikat P, 1967), a chapter on "Boer Ballads in Ireland." According to Gregory, and as Somerville and Ross indicate in "An Irish Problem," it was the small farmers of Ireland who looked "with special sympathy on their fellows in the Transvaal" (42).

French individuality." How much wiser, claimed Brooks, were the Americans who "take hold of the immigrant's children and flatten out whatever may be too un-American in their mental make-up beneath the steam-roller of the English language." In Ireland, he argued, the most divisive force might well be none other than the popular Gaelic League. The power of the Empire, stressed Brooks, "will not be assured till English is the only language permitted in the schools, law courts, legislature and government offices of the Transvaal, Orange River, and Cape Colonies."[54]

The following November, Somerville and Ross published "An Irish Problem," a piece which describes a people who move easily from their native tongue--Irish--to an English invigorated by the mother tongue. As part of a larger discourse on language in the British colonies, "An Irish Problem" demonstrates the process of creating an alternative way of communicating, one that marries two languages to create a vigorous, hybrid tongue.[55] At the same time, the essay shows the artful evasion of the law through the confusion wrought by using an interpreter. Language becomes a means of evasion, a way of playing the system. Nonetheless, Somerville and Ross show that it is not the difference of identity as expressed through different languages which incites the people. It is lack of money. It is insularity. Brooks' argument for the suppression of separate languages as the most effective means of colonial control posits only two positions: a people united by speaking one language or a people rebellious and divided by speaking many tongues. Somerville and Ross proffer an alternative option.[56] They also provide the reader with a language that

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[54] Sydney Brooks, "Our Next Blunder in South Africa," The National Review 37 (June 1901): 524-32.

[55] The best example of Martin Ross's celebration of Irish-English is her story, A Patrick's Day Hunt, illustrated by Edith Somerville (London: Constable, 1902).

[56] Somerville and Ross's argument that English might be renewed and work with other languages to create a vibrant means of expression continues to be offered as an alternative response in twentieth-century post-colonial discourse. African writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, for instance, reconsider the dominance of English within a mixed African culture. In "The African Writer and the English Language"(1975), Achebe states that African writers might adopt the language of colonialism to suit their own ends, while Ngugi in "The Language of African Literature" (1986) argues that the use of the native tongue is part of the "anti-imperialist struggle"(451). See Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory , ed. Williams and Chrisman (Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall, 1994) 428-34; 435-55. Martin J. Croghan introduces Anglo-Irish writers such as Edgeworth and Somerville and Ross into this post-colonial debate in "Maria Edgeworth and the Tradition of Irish Semiotics" in International Aspects of Irish Literature , ed. Toshi

demonstrates with its variations the charm of the picturesque. Language as much as landscape contains a mixture of things, in this case tongues, that confuses straightforward interpretation and allows play amongst those--the Irish-speaking villagers--who must conduct Irish affairs in a British court.

Let us return once more to the description of the small shop window which introduces Somerville and Ross's observations on depicting poverty in Ireland. The paradox of the picturesque becomes clear, as clear as glass, in Mr. Heraty's window in "An Irish Problem." Its appearance, we recall, is as remarkable for the variety of the goods on offer as for the scarcity of their numbers. As the visitors look at the odd mix of things--rat poison, rosary beads, and champagne--they are drawn by the vitality in the scene, an appeal absent in the monotony of order (and order, of course, is most required when there is plenty). On one hand, the appeal of the scene, its charm and humour, relies upon the economic stranglehold of local politics and a history of impoverished conditions, a fact which the authors acknowledge throughout the essay. The symbolic contents of the window--the rosary, Paul Kruger's portrait (the forces of religion and nationalism within this impoverished state)--contradict the charm of their representation. The window illustrates the ambiguity of the picturesque. On the other hand, Heraty's shop window, as we swiftly learn when we hear Sweeny's case which tells us so much more, is merely a picture or a mask which conceals as much as it reveals. In the same way, the villagers (acting as the audience), the publican (acting as the judge), the doctor, and even the narrators wear masks. The essay calls attention to the art of being a picture.

A visual alternative to Somerville and Ross's shop window in "An Irish Problem" is found in Jack Yeats's "The Country Shop" (ca 1912), (Figure 3-7). Yeats's water colour is based on his 1905 trip to the West of Ireland with Synge, who was commissioned by the Manchester Guardian to write a series of articles on the Congested Districts. In Yeats's picture, the viewer is placed inside the shop (instead of at its threshold as in Somerville and Ross's work) and faces a medley of goods hanging from the ceiling. Smack dab in the middle of the wellington boots and fishing tackle is a mirror which reflects the scene outside the shop. The window frame and the chimney and roof of a cottage behind the viewer are reflected in the

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Furomoto et al. (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1996) 340-48, and in Demythologizing Hiberno-English, Working Papers in Irish Studies (1990).

mirror. This, perhaps, hints at the actual life beyond the pictured composition of the shop's contents. And yet that 'real life' is also part of the picture. The mirror not only emphasizes the viewer's position and perspective but also draws attention to the framing of Irish reality. Like a *mise en abyme*, it ironically displays the artifice of picture making. As in Somerville and Ross's shop-window 'picture,' Irish life, with its picturesque arrangement and symbolic accoutrements (the rosary beads and harp), is self-consciously framed.[57]

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Irish writers/artists appropriate the visual language of the picturesque to explore its artifice. The paradox of the picturesque, as outlined in Somerville and Ross's study of 'the Irish problem,' admits to the significance of economic conditions in the portrayal of the Irish landscape. Thus we might ask to what extent such writers actually facilitate the economic program they appear to resist. In a study of early nineteenth-century treatments of the Scottish Highlands, Peter Womack points out that ambiguity within romantic discourse arises from the tension created when a "code of Improvement" is not able to embrace aesthetic demands. [58] Womack believes that "dysfunctional ideological traces"--those which do not fit within the economic discourse of improvement--shape a "coherent counter-image." Thus what appears to be a "counter-ideological formation"--the romance--is in reality the twin or the other half of improvement. Womack claims that "the ideological function of the romance [is] that it removes the contradictory elements from the scope of material life altogether; that it marks out a kind of reservation in which the values which Improvement provokes and suppresses can be contained--that is preserved, but also imprisoned" (3). Such confinement recalls the significant role of framing within the picturesque, the containing of the wilderness.

Womack believes that "socialised scenic taste" (62)--the picturesque--has a "latent context" of political economy. The accommodation of extreme variations of mountains and forests "in a unity of contrasting but interdependent parts" within the picturesque shows that "nature has the

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[57] For further discussion of Yeats's painting, see Adele M. Dalsimer, "'The Irish Peasant Had All His Heart': J.M. Synge in *The Country Shop*," Visualizing Ireland: National Identity and the Pictorial Tradition, ed. Adele Dalsimer (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1993) 201-30.

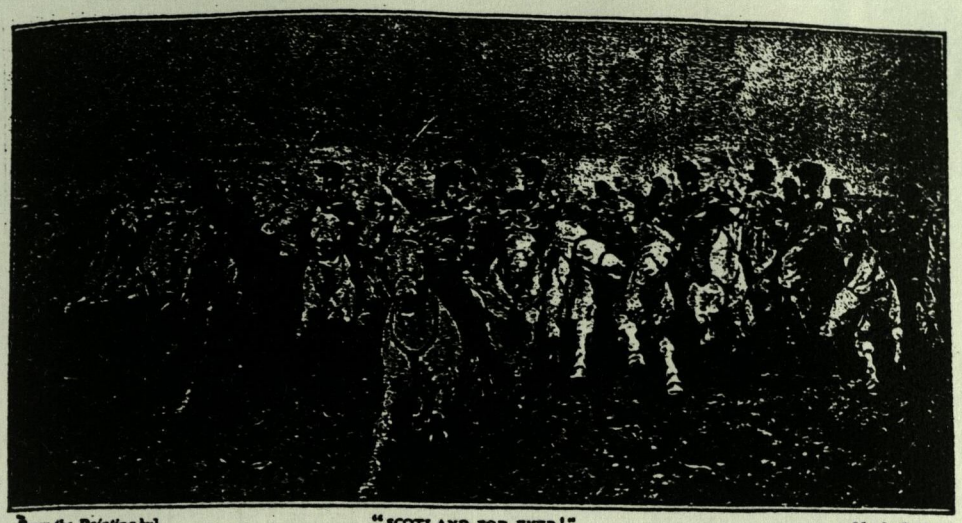
[58] Peter Womack, Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands (London: MacMillan, 1989). See also Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory (London: Fontana P, 1995) 466-69.

intelligible diversity of commercial society, and by the same token society exhibits the harmony of nature" (65). So the disparities of class, for instance, might be conceived as an inevitable part of the larger whole. Moreover, the eighteenth-century landowner realized that improving the land was as much an aesthetic as an economic demand. Thus, "a truly pleasing landscape," says Womack, was "one which reflect[ed] in a single prospect the success of the land's productive use and the extra-social integrity of its being." The picturesque is "the aesthetics of Improvement" (62).

Womack's argument emphasizes the economic ramifications of the picturesque, its compliance with rather than resistance to the policies of *laissez faire*, and--implicitly--its furthering of Britain's industrialization. To what extent do nineteenth-century Irish writers such as Somerville and Ross--one of them a committed Unionist and both writing for a British audience while living in Ireland--utilize the picturesque as a politicized discourse? While a close consideration of the satirical treatment of picturesque Ireland in "An Irish Problem" reveals the writers' ambivalent self-awareness of picturing economic destitution, other instances of framing an impoverished state, however "noble" or empathetic they might be, suggest a compliance in the use of the picturesque as a means of including and preserving the "dysfunctional ideological traces" of a conservative programme. Yet, what dominates Somerville and Ross's treatment of what many British readers expect to be picturesque Ireland, is an artful display of the same. The illustrations of the shawled old Irish women draw attention to the act of being picturesque. Such amusing depictions demand that we question the truth of their reality. If the old women are not as they appear, or if the characters in the Irish court-room of "An Irish Problem" are not what they say they are, then what might they be? What is Irishness? Ultimately, Somerville and Ross call attention to the art of masking on the part of those who have been handled in the British magazines as picturesque. In other words, the Irish writers parody the picturesque while questioning notions of national identity.

The picturesque, as Ruskin argued, attempts to contain the past in the present, to draw a line between what was and what is. The picture of the ancient cottage, where crumbling stone merges with outgrowths of ivy, shows the effects of time while existing in the present moment. The tension within this discourse as it affects Irish writers like Somerville and Ross lies in the possible discrepancy between appearance and reality in a layered

landscape. Moreover, masking is a *sine qua non* condition of the colonial state. Somerville and Ross show the Irish peasant embracing notions of the picturesque with suspect enthusiasm. In so doing, they demonstrate the essential artifice of the convention in the fashion of the romantic ironist. At the same time, they demonstrate instances of the picturesque, which allows them to incorporate the past in the present time as one particular vision of the Irish landscape. In the Irish R.M. stories, Somerville and Ross explore the way in which what you see is not always what you get in Ireland. Things may appear to be one thing, but the appearance is not necessarily the truth. Seeming connections to the past can be fabrications in what is really a more complex reality. Both Edith Somerville's illustrations and Somerville and Ross's written text reveal a common interest in picture making in Ireland. The following chapter will consider their exploration of Irish character, the face on the Irish landscape, which relies just as much on the writers' fascination with the framing and staging of reality.



From the Painting by] "SCOTLAND FOR EVER!" [Lady Butler.

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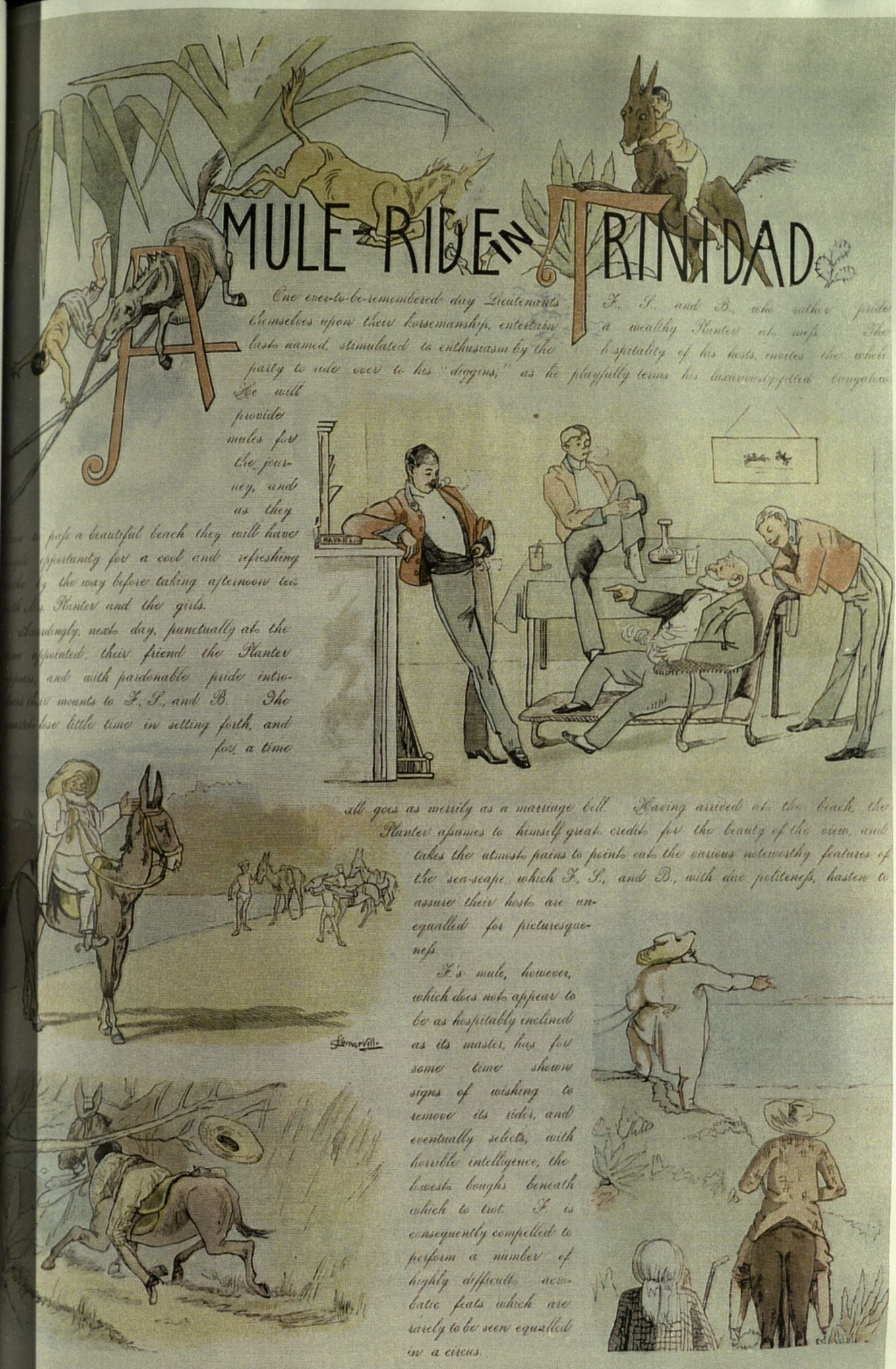
"IRELAND FOR EVER."—PARODY BY TOM MERRY.

3-1 Lady Butler, Scotland For Ever! and Tom Merry, Ireland For Ever, Strand Magazine (1902)



3-2 Edith Somerville, A Mule Ride in Trinidad, The Graphic (1888)

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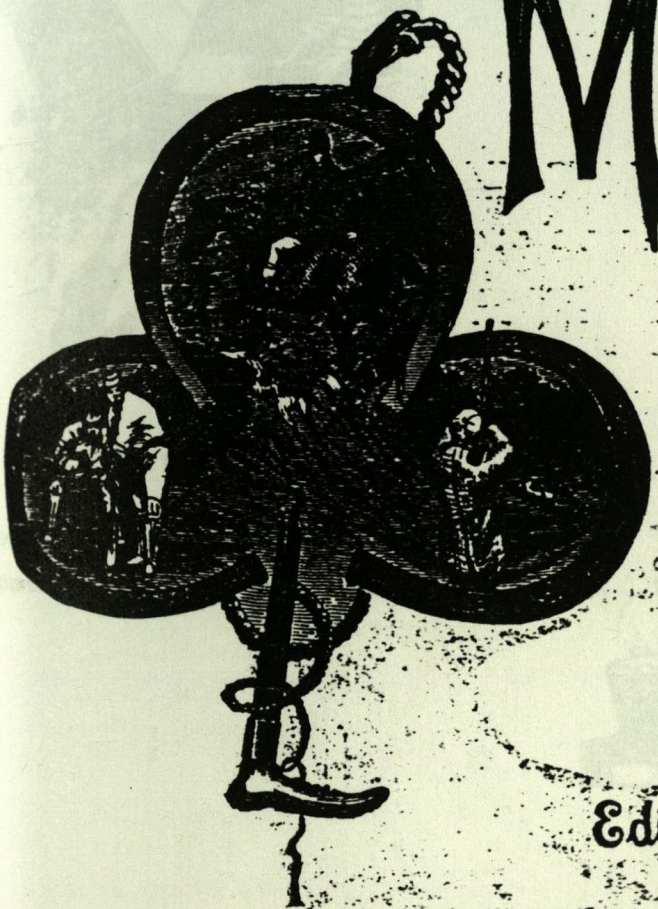

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3-3 Cover of Badminton Magazine (1898)



"RATTLE OF A FALLING COAL-BOX"

Max Cowper, illustration from "High Tea at McKeown's"
Edith Somerville, Black and White (1900)



"THE GREY-HAIRED KITCHEN-MAID."

3-5 Edith Somerville, illustration from "High Tea at McKeown's," All on the Irish Shore b
Somerville and Ross (1903)



"DOES YOUR HONOUR WANT ANY FISH THIS MORNING?"



"'TWAS ALL I DONE,' SHE CONCLUDED, LOOKING LIKE A SACRED PICTURE; 'I GAVE A SHTROKE OF A POLLACK ON THEM.'"



3-6 Edith Somerville, illustration from "The Boat's Share," Strand Magazine (1905)



3-7 Jack B. Yeats, The Country Shop (ca. 1912)

Chapter Four: Harlequin in Ireland: National Character, Stage-Irishness, and Pantomime Form.

It has been remarked by more than one artist of eminence, as a comment on the Irish landscape, that the forms of the trees are more graceful and capricious than in England. 'Your trees,' said a gentleman to me, 'partake of your national character, wild and irregular they both assume extraordinary ramifications, that treated with justice by a master hand appear noble features but of which an unskilful delineator produces only clumsy caricature.

Thomas Crofton Croker, 1824.

Somerville and Ross's use of a pictorial tradition, their self-conscious framing of conventions regarding nationality, derives from a broader European context as well as from the demands of the English periodical press. While the expectations of the British audience, as Somerville and Ross critics have suggested, influenced the writers' production, also important but neglected by those critics is the European dimension.[1] This chapter considers the writers' involvement in a French intellectual tradition as it bears upon the picturesque and caricature, and as both relate to the romantic production of national character. Indirectly, then, this chapter addresses Somerville and Ross's treatment of stage-Irish figures in their comic short fiction by considering the connection of their use of caricature to a European tradition. Critics like Maureen Waters in The Comic Irishman or, more recently, Joep Leerssen in Remembrance and Imagination, claim that Somerville and Ross's colonial background determines their superficial treatment of Irish character in the R.M. stories. Waters states that the ascendancy writers' racism gave rise to their creation of characters who are "a comic exposition of Arnold's thesis as outlined in his Study of Celtic Literature ," a treatment of Irish character

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[1] Frank O'Connor claims that Somerville and Ross's "intellectual centre is rather London than Paris," and that unlike other modern Irish writers who explored naturalism and symbolism, Somerville and Ross remained within the English realistic tradition. "Somerville and Ross," Irish Times (15 Dec. 1945) 4.

which sees Major Yeates as the manifestation of Saxon dulness opposing the "unpredictable countrymen" and rustic clowns of Celtic Ireland.[2] Leerssen describes the main Irish figure of the R.M. stories--Florence or Flurry Knox--as a positive stage-Irish male type, what he describes as "the pleasant peasant" of nineteenth-century fiction whose boyish traits counter English stereotyping of itself as adult male.[3] Cultural-political readings of the R.M. stories, however, ignore the writers' inheritance of a tradition complicating colonial concerns. Popular theatre--burlesque and pantomime--and caricature (based on the French model as it intersects with the creation of the nineteenth-century Irish national character) helps to shape the kinds of figures developed in Somerville and Ross's short fiction. In other words, popular form and modern aesthetic, as much as a colonial perspective, determine the creation of certain characters in the Anglo-Irish fiction of the period.

Despite Somerville and Ross's self-consciousness about their treatment of the picturesque Irish peasantry noted in the previous chapter, the R.M. stories present a range of figures with stereotyped Irish qualities. They appear to come close to that stage buffoonery which the writers despised. There is, first of all, the trickster and charming ne'er-do-well, Flurry Knox, who introduces the Resident Magistrate (symbol of British law and order) to the Irish countryside. Flurry, an Anglo-Irish squireen who knows horses and dogs better than he knows his own family, loves his second cousin, Sally Knox. The first collection of stories deals in part with the various obstacles Flurry must overcome in his pursuit of Sally. Second, we have an Irish clown, the tipsy storyteller, Slipper. Finally, there is a peasantry who fight, make mischief, and love to drink, sing, and tell stories.

Common to all these characters is a picturesque vivacity considered to be a defining quality of Irishness throughout the century, and as much an aspect of the landscape as it is of the people. In *Researches in the South of Ireland* of 1824, Thomas Crofton Croker discovers an over-riding characteristic in the Irish peasantry in particular. The peasantry possess, says Croker, quoting Giraldus Cambrensis to support his point, "extremes of temperament": "'When they . . . be bad, you shall no where meet with

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[2] Maureen Waters, The Comic Irishman (United States: State U of New York P, 1984) 15-16.

[3] Joep Leerssen, Remembrance and Imagination (Cork: Cork UP, 1996) 171.

worse, if they be good, you can hardly find better'."[4] Though Flurry Knox is no peasant, he too demonstrates such extremes of temperament in his chameleon-like nature; one moment he appears to be in the highest of spirits and the next he sinks into dark irritation and despair. Unlike placid and unchanging Major Yeates, Flurry tends to adapt his mood to suit his environment, and the extraordinary dimensions of his character match his ability to mix with the highest and lowest of the land. Flurry Knox mingles as easily with stable-boys as he does with gentlemen; like an acrobat, he turns somersaults across the Irish social terrain and like a magician, he manages to effect transformations within his domain of the Irish hunt.

As Master of the Hounds, Flurry Knox can convert a sedate pastoral scene into a site of chaos with a flick of his whip: Lady Knox turns fool and Slipper becomes king. The orderly way of the world reverses when Flurry leads his followers after the fox and carnival ensues. Thus, Flurry not only manifests extremes of temperament, he also introduces Major Yeates and his English wife, Philippa, to a different kind of world discoverable in the Irish countryside, the Bakhtinian chronotope of festival time.[5] Flurry belongs to this in-between time; he demonstrates the attributes of a stock theatrical figure--harlequin--and his quicksilver qualities issue as much from popular pantomime as they do from colonial stereotyping of the Other.

To analyse Somerville and Ross's use of stage types like Flurry in the text and illustrations of the stories, I will address both the Anglo-Irish discourse on national character and modernist developments in caricature. My discussion of national character emphasizes nineteenth-century colonial rhetoric as it defines Irishness to support and argue methods of policing in the 'sister colony.' I consider how perceptions of Irishness originate in a larger political agenda: the management of the Irish countryside. Major Yeates's position as British authority is an inescapable fact of the R.M. stories. His presence, however ineffectual, is an immutable one upon the Irish landscape and thus important in this study. Major Yeates recalls earlier authority figures, such as the hero of a collection of sketches which anticipate Somerville and Ross's short fiction, Henry Robert Addison's Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate of 1862.[6] Even

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[4] Qtd in Thomas Crofton Croker, Researches in the South of Ireland (1824; First ed. rpt., Shannon: Irish UP, 1969) 13.

[5] Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination 163.

[6] Henry Robert Addison, Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate and Other Reminiscences of the South of Ireland (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1862). Virginia Crossman points out various similarities between the R.M. stories and Addison's text in "The Resident Magistrate as Colonial

more significantly, Major Yeates reminds us of the officious bumpkins of farce. Robert Martin of Ross House, as noted below, played the role of the foolish authority type on stage more than a decade before his sister and her collaborator had devised their version. However, Somerville and Ross would also have been influenced by developments on the Continent in their creation of the R.M. characters. An examination of these developments opens up the possibility of considering Irish caricature as modern form. Charles Baudelaire's theory of caricature gives opportunity to consider the extreme dimensions of the Irish national character in another light. The Anglo-Irish Mephistopheles, Melmoth, of Charles Maturin's 1820 novel, Melmoth the Wanderer, provided Baudelaire with his main example to explain modern caricature in "De l'essence du rire." As a result, a connection between the discourse on Irish national character and French modernist theory on caricature might be drawn.

Throughout this chapter, I explore how the Irish characters of the R.M. stories demonstrate multiple traditions related to colonial discourse, modern French theory on the nature of the comic, genre development, and the short story form. Ultimately, I argue that Flurry, Slipper, Major Yeates, and Mrs. Cadogan are masks of masks. Somerville and Ross's short fiction does not merely represent Ireland of the nineteenth century, it stages the characters of the Irish landscape in the romantic ironist fashion. These characters' origin may indeed be the stage, but to say that they are merely stage-Irish (and to dismiss them as such) is to ignore the vitality of the world theatre which gives them shape.

Caricature: the art of the century

Edith Somerville's art education, pursued mainly in Paris, emphasized illustration during a period when the effects of the law on the liberty of expression (1881) were being enjoyed by a dynamic and increasingly liberal French press. While the young Martin Ross gravitated towards the theatre in London in the 1880s, her cousin preferred the art studios of Paris. After a term in South Kensington School of Art and two terms with private masters in Düsseldorf, Edith Somerville persuaded her reluctant parents to let her go to France. She first started working in Colarossi's studio for young ladies in 1884. She returned to Colarossi and

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Officer: Addison, Somerville and Ross," Irish Studies Review 8. no.1 (2000) 28-33.

Délécluse's art studios for three more stints in the 1880s.[7] During this time she probably came across a recently launched periodical called *Chat Noir* (1883). The paper revived popular interest in carnivals, and Adolphe Willette's illustrations of a malevolent Harlequin (who could transform himself into a black cat) and an effete, white-garbed Pierrot ("the needy bohemian")[8] may have caught Somerville's eye and influenced the contrasting figures of Charlotte and Christopher in The Real Charlotte. Her later appreciation for Aubrey Beardsley, which will be discussed later, and Harry Clarke's stylized carnival grotesques, may have originated in the *cafés* and *crêmeries* of Paris. She and Martin Ross, who joined her in the French capital at different times in the 1890s, enjoyed the flourishing French satire of an increasingly liberal press.

Caricature as a means of social satire--what Baudelaire described as "*la satire générale des citoyens*"--was the art of the century.[9] In Paris, where six thousand papers flourished by 1900, it provided vigorous commentary.[10] Obviously, an appreciative and knowing audience supported such growth. This audience, as Baudelaire pointed out in 1855 with "De l'essence du rire," derives from *une civilisation perspicace et ennuyée.*" In his three essays on caricature of which the first, "De

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[7] Somerville's artistic education was mainly shaped by her extended visits to France. She spent various stints in Paris throughout the 1880s (84, 85, 86, 87). In 1894, Martin joined Somerville as she worked in Délécluse's studio, and, in 1898, they went to an artists' colony in Étaples near Bologne. In 1899, Somerville returned to Paris for four months and worked in Délécluse's studio in the morning and with the illustrator, Cyrus Cuneo, in the afternoon. Irish Memories 263-5; Francis Gillespie, introduction, Dr. Edith OEnone Somerville 1858-1949, exhibition catalogue, Drishane, 5-9 Sept. 1984.

[8] Enid Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (London: Faber and Faber, 1935) 307-8.

[9] Qtd in Michele Hannoosh, Baudelaire and Caricature (Pennsylvania: Penn. State UP, 1992) 115. Early French censorship laws changed the nature of caricature from political to social satire. This development moved caricature into a more general realm so that it became a means of mirroring the crowd. We can, perhaps, agree with Hannoosh who argues that as a result, "caricature, like the realist novel, is nothing less than the art of the nineteenth century" (115-17).

[10] Le Charivari, founded by Charles Philipon, took over from La Silhouette (1829) and La Caricature (1830) in 1832. La Caricature had collapsed because of libel suits. Though initially a left-wing paper, Le Charivari lost its political edge under the Second Empire (1852-1870). However, throughout the nineteenth-century French illustrated papers voiced anarchist and royalist views and "the flood was unleashed with the law on the liberty of expression (29 July 1881) ... by the end of the century there were six thousand papers in Paris alone." Michel Melot, The Art of Illustration (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1984) 155-56.

l'essence du rire," posits theory, Baudelaire considers the significance of the images of French and foreign caricaturists of the nineteenth century.[11] To explain the nature of modern caricature, he refers to Melmoth's essential ambiguity. The devil's ambivalent laughter, so clearly demonstrated in the Irish novel, expresses the contradictory nature of caricature: "*Le rire est satanique, il est donc profondément humain*" (532).

Somerville and Ross were well positioned to appreciate the social and political satire of the French press. In 1899, for instance, Martin Ross stayed with Somerville in Paris and wrote home about the French papers' attitudes to English involvement in the Boer War. The 'better' papers admitted their error in initially attacking the Queen of England while Patrie and Libre Parole, the halfpenny papers, continued to use the opportunity to attack the French government, which supported England. A satirical newspaper called Rire deserved special mention for its "horrible" and "disgusting" caricatures from English history. Martin Ross read them all, despite her distaste, and obviously studied the subversive material before "consigning the whole thing to the stove." [12]

To understand caricature, Baudelaire suggests that one must comprehend the darker side of human nature, have an ability to see the vice which caricature unmasks. When Martin Ross studies the French parody of an English tradition and describes it as 'horrible,' her elaborate disgust could indicate more than British loyalty or ladylike distaste. She may also appreciate--as someone living amongst artists in Paris in 1899--the troubling duality of caricature itself which discovers beauty in ugliness and acknowledges the grotesque and sinister in the crowded modern city. Looking at the caricatures of the British, she sees herself as the object of parody, but she also sees the demonic distortion. With some self-consciousness, then, she assigns the latter to its infernal source--the fire.

Somerville and Ross's appreciation for the ambiguous nature of modern caricature becomes apparent in their treatment of Irishness in the social satire, A Patrick's Day Hunt. A comparison of two of Edith Somerville's illustrations from Martin Ross's text and John Leech's 1859 watercolour of the Claddagh in Galway points up the uneasy perspective of Somerville's pictures. Though Leech's work in this instance reflects the

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[11] Charles Baudelaire, "De l'essence du rire," "Quelques caricaturistes français," and "Quelques caricaturistes étrangers" Œuvres Complètes 529.
[12] Irish Memories 270.

rather archly comic intent of its context, A Little Tour in Ireland,[13] and while Somerville's pictures are also comic in intent, we might note nonetheless significant differences in point of view. Leech's picturesque scene of the Spanish faces and red skirts of the Claddagh (Figure 4-1) does contain subdued comic elements recalling his political satires for Punch Magazine (a grotesque old woman being fed from a tea kettle; a wild-eyed boy chasing a pig). The comic additions, however, remain on the edges of the depiction of an exclusively peasant gathering. This group, self-absorbed and distanced by obvious signs of poverty and exoticism, never disturbs the viewer.

As already mentioned, John Leech provided the young Edith with various Irish-Hunt models. However, Somerville's modern scenes of the mad Irish Hunt strike a different note than that of the work of the Victorian illustrator. In Somerville's work (Figure 4-2), a range of rather ordinary figures make up the crowded scenes--farmers, huntsmen, and peasants--while the children at the centre of "When The Hunt's In It On A Holyday" stare directly at the viewer as if he/she is included in the picture, a part of this madcap world. Then, in "The Villyan Wheeled Into The Yard As Nate As A Bicycle," the brutally comic farmyard scene prominently displays the crazed, demonic behavior of its human and animal figures.[14] This is the antithesis of Leech's peaceful, dirty, and distant vision of Irish humanity. We are thrust into the middle of the mayhem of the Irish farmyard. The picture is disturbing as the woman is not grotesque enough to be the object of the viewer's gaze. She mirrors the viewer. Of course, a question remains when regarding the illustration (and it is a question which many Irish might ask): does the demonic Irish farmwoman of the second illustration demean Irish womanhood? To address that question more comprehensively, however, we must consider in greater depth the Irish national character of nineteenth-century Ireland.

The Picturesque and the Irish National Character

Thomas Crofton Croker's "observations on the manners and superstitions of the Irish peasantry" in 1824 seeks to trace the "national distinctions" of a people. The peasantry, says Croker, manifest observable

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[13] John Leech, illus., "The Claddagh--Galway," A Little Tour in Ireland, by "An Oxonian" (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1859).
[14] Somerville, illus., A Patrick's Day Hunt by Martin Ross.

characteristics which distinguish the Irish from other races. His list of the manners and customs of the Irish lower classes (their hospitality, hyperbole, fondness for drink and faction fighting, their means of courtship and marriage, and so on) as he guides his reader through the picturesque spots of the south of the island finds its basis in one over-riding feature already noted: "extremes of temperament" (13). The extraordinary dimensions of the Irish national character might be discerned in the landscape itself, where Irish trees take one of two forms dependent upon the landscape artist's treatment: nobility or "clumsy caricature" (21). Not only does character apparently manifest itself in the land but also such character is distinguished by similar qualities: malleability, duality, and extremeness.

Croker's reference to a landscape artist's perception of Ireland, that the "extraordinary ramifications" of the trees manifest the Irish character (21), deliberately connects his discussion of national character with the land while aestheticizing both. The artist's comment emphasizes the process of turning nature into culture and applies this process to both the Irish world and its occupants: both are framed in the manner of the picturesque.

John Brewer describes the cult of the picturesque, the transformation of nature into culture, as a means of reclaiming a disappearing way of life in eighteenth-century Britain. Aestheticizing the traditional, rural, and local--presenting natural scenes of varied detail--determined a specifically British way of perceiving nature from that of the French or the Dutch with their formally arranged landscapes and gardens.[15] In his discussion of the unique qualities of Ireland, Croker applies the aesthetic discourse of the British picturesque. The Corkman's casual reference in his second chapter, "Scenery and Travelling," to Dr. Syntax (a spoof of picturesque tourism called "The Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque" by William Combe in 1809) suggests that Researches in the South of Ireland might be read as part of a more general trend of assuring national identity through objective means. Croker's 'observations,' his list of the characteristics of the Irish peasantry and his categorizing of their behavior, follow scientific methods of sorting and arranging the natural world, in this case Ireland. Brewer's description of the conflation of nature and nation during the eighteenth and early

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[15] John Brewer, "Culture, Nature and Nation," Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997) 615-61.

nineteenth centuries emphasizes the detachment of man from nature. For the scientific observer, nature became a stage or picture whence patterns and laws emerged. Collecting, distinguishing, and arranging types allowed one to perceive pattern in a nature clearly set apart from the gazer. Similarity rather than difference became significant: "uniformity, not oddity, became the important feature of nature" (622).

By the time Croker was publishing his folk material, the picturesque had acquired a political charge. After the French Revolution in 1789, recovering the past (sometimes a fabricated one) or recuperating the loyal peasant retainer became a means of distinguishing the "antique values–feudal fealty rather than commercial contract" of Jacobin ideology (Brewer 658). Though Croker assures his reader that "politics have been carefully avoided" in his researches and that the establishment of national identity stands separate from political ideology, he still emphasizes a fierce patriotism and innate love of freedom in the Irish peasant. His emphasis suggests the Irishman's rebellious potential as much as it marks a trait of his character. In fact, the main reason for the malleability of the Irish character, suggests Croker, might be accounted for by considering the weight of his unjust subjugation in the past. Perhaps most revealing, however, is Croker's appendix of a frightening account by Jane Adams of Summerseat, Wexford, of piked Protestants and murderous Catholic mobs of 1798. This startling, concluding narrative of peasant rebellion seems to contradict Croker's benign observations of peasant fairy belief and Irish hospitality. Yet, what the final narrative reveals is both extreme cruelty and extraordinary kindness on the part of the Irish rebels, thus exemplifying Croker's fundamental thesis on the Irish national character. Croker does not merely distinguish racial differences in his Researches; he directs attention to traits of the Irish Catholic national character which reflect a deep-seated fear in Protestant consciousness arising from the 1798 rebellion.[16] His evaluation of the extreme dimensions of the Irish national character depends upon a politically charged notion of the picturesque.

The dates 1789 and 1798, indicators of French and Irish foment, also signify periods of change of another sort. Champfleury (Jules Fleury) in Histoire de la Caricature (1865-1885) dates modern caricature from the

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[16] See Neil Buttimer's analysis of Croker's treatment of the Irish national character as dependent upon his response to accounts of the 1798 rebellion (especially Sir Richard Musgrave's anti-Catholic account) in "Remembering 1798," Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society 103 (1998): 1-26.

French Revolution.[17] Lithography, the art of printing form with ink and thus providing an immediate effect, was invented in 1798. During the same period, Balzac was working on his studies of physiognomic coding and character types in La Comédie humaine, in which the detached observer applies a bird's-eye view to survey human nature:

> Newton, and also the great painter and the great musician, all are observers . . . those sublime birds of prey who, while rising to high regions, have the gift of seeing clearly in matters here below, who can at the same time abstract and specify, make exact analysis and just synthesis.[18]

The 'sublime bird of prey' achieves a panoramic view but with eagle-eyed vision can still distinguish difference. He is the social scientist and he is the artist: someone who sorts through all varieties of life and creates categories and divisions in nature. His perspective, as Balzac points out, is vital.

For Baudelaire, the French Revolution introduced the conscious spectator, the *flâneur*, who sees his own reflection in the city scene. In his prose poem, "Le Miroir," for instance, "*un homme épouvantable*" looks at himself in the mirror, and when questioned how he can endure to perceive his own ugliness answers that the Revolution of 1789 has given the right to all men to observe their own reflection, horrifying or otherwise:

> *L'homme épouvantable me répond: '-Monsiur, d'après les immortels principes de 89, tous les hommes sont égaux en droits; donc je possède le droit de me mirer; avec plaisir ou déplaisir, cela ne regarde que ma conscience.*

Balzac's sublime bird of prey had become Baudelaire's private eye.[19]

In Ireland, the observation of the peasant folk and the collection of their stories goes further than social commentary. The peasant acted as "a reservoir of raw material to be mined and cultivated: to be retrieved from its illiterate repository."[20] The peasant provided national character and, as

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[17] As noted in Ainslie Armstrong McLees, Baudelaire's 'Argot Plastique': Poetic Caricature and Modernism (Athens, Georgia: U of Georgia P, 1989).

[18] Honoré de Balzac, Théorie de la démarche, qtd in Judith Wechsler, A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982) 22.

[19] Charles Baudelaire, "Le Miroir," Le Spleen De Paris 150-51.

[20] Joep Leerssen, Remembrance and Imagination 160. See also Seamus Deane. "Irish National Character 1790 - 1900," The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical Evidence, ed. Tom Dunne (Cork: Cork UP, 1987) 90 - 113. In his discussion of the traditional or Celtic virtues ascribed to the Irish national character by the works of Sylvester O'Halloran, Charles

Joep Leerssen points out, was one of two cherished founts of Irish nationalist identity, the second being the myths of a pre-Norman past. The "past and the peasant" were identified throughout the nineteenth century as aspects of Irish culture "most distinctively un-English" and therefore privileged (160). From the Irish peasant masses, whose traits are figured repeatedly throughout the nineteenth century, negative and positive stereotypes emerge.

Different impulses shape the construction of the Irish national character at the beginning of the nineteenth century. First is a distanced perspective which originates in both the scientific view and a picturesque discourse. Second is the discrimination of pattern and similarity allowed by this perspective. Third is the privileging of the peasant, and fourth is his or her construction in reaction to English stereotypes. My interest in this process and that which I wish to stress because of its connection to caricature is the insistence throughout such studies of the Irish national character as one that incorporates extremes. Such extraordinary dimensions, as Croker suggests in his Researches, require an artist's touch, a 'master hand' which will bring out the best of the landscape. Extreme realities require expert control.

While Croker conducted his researches in various parts of Ireland, an Irish police magistrate called Thomas Philips Vokes exercised harsh measures of control in Limerick and Clare. The extremity of his measures against crime, he claimed, were based on the nature of those crimes. Vokes, as we shall see, would become the hero of a later fictionalized account of crime control in the Irish countryside. But in 1824, when Researches first appeared, he was a real live figure writing to Dublin Castle about the state of the country and how best to manage its character. His letters attest to swift reckonings of justice. In January, he writes to the under-secretary, William Gregory (Sir William Gregory's grandfather and an opponent of Catholic emancipation) that "as the crime of taking arms has been so often committed at and near this place I think any person charged with it ought to be held over for the assizes and if convicted, executed on the spot." The

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Vallancey, Charles O'Conor, and so on, Deane notes the use of the sublime which brings about a new primitivism to counter the revolutionary culture of novelty, simplicity, and respect for mechanical regularity. Amateur antiquarianism, he notes, provided exotic origins while Irish poetry and music furthered the notions of Ireland's unique character. Deane stresses the Anglo-Irish writer's reaction to British caricature of the Irish and the consequent redemption of the peasant as a preoccupation during the first half of the century.

next month, he claims his measures to be effective: "It will therefore appear to His Excellency that the Spirit of Insurrection is checked in this County and that in almost every instance the immediate apprehension of the offenders follows the Commission of Crime." In June, Vokes speaks of the murder of a man by Patrick Croneen, "who struck him with a stone and with a spade handle" over "a dispute they had some time ago at a hurling match." Then, in August, Vokes writes in some detail to a Castle official about the execution of the murderers of Major Hare, members of the Whiteboys. He speaks of their remorse at the gallows, when surrounded by "seven or eight priests," one of the Whiteboy leaders, Patrick Minnane, told the attendant audience that "those ropes and scaffolds and gallows would be all idle if the people attended to the advice of their Priests and . . . it was not evidence nor information nor Laws that restored the Country to quiet but the influence of the Priests."[21]

According to Virginia Crossman, Thomas Vokes operated as "a maverick figure within police circles . . . at the very edges of the law," and was feared by the people and disliked by fellow magistrates.[22] Nonetheless, forty years later, the Irish dragoon and playwright, Henry Addison, enthusiastically recorded his hero's strong-arm strategies. Most likely, Addison's Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate of 1862 appeared as a response to increasing Fenian agitation of the 1860s. These stories, insists the author in his preface, are true. They bear witness to the early 1820s when Thomas Vokes successfully managed crime and thus provide examples of crime management. Addison published his work to provide incentive for the present-day police force in 'the sister country.'

Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate is part of a more general discussion throughout the 1860s about the need to reform the police force in Ireland. The position of the resident magistrate, frequently occupied by country gentlemen who acted as head of that force, was under particular scrutiny during this time of Fenian unrest.[23] Addison argues for a vigorous and military-trained leader to occupy such a position. He believes that the successful handling of agrarian outrage depends upon the knowledge of

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[21] Thomas Philips Vokes, letters, State of the Country Papers, National Records Office, Dublin, 29 Jan., 26 Feb. 23 June, and 10 Aug., 1824, SOC/2618/19, SOC/2618/36, SOC/2618/85, and SOC/2619/13.

[22] Virginia Crossman, "The Resident Magistrate as Colonial Officer," endnote 10, 31.

[23] See Penny Bonsall, The Irish RMs 17-19. Bonsall provides a summary of the resident magistrate's position during the 1860s but does not mention Addison's influential text.

Ireland possessed by the magistrates and landowners of that country. Vokes, whose hard-headedness and understanding of Irish terrain and the "bloodthirsty nature of the Irish peasantry"[24] enable him to capture 'Captain Rock' single-handedly after pursuing him three days and nights in 1822, demonstrates the significance of extraordinary ability in stamping out crime in Ireland. Vokes is a fearsome figure who provokes hatred in the people:

> I must needs admit I would have willingly dissuaded Vokes from entering the crowd, who, as he approached, gave three *groans* for him--a welcome they poured forth with all the venom of their souls, for many among them had reason to dread his power. The major took off his hat with a smile, and laughingly thanked them, then plunged into the midst of them. (14)

The violent undercurrent and the magistrate's demonic attributes suggest a gothic dimension to the stories in Addison's text. However, violence is contained and controlled in the stories. The 'blood-thirsty' peasantry is matched by a hard-hearted administration. In any case, as the author stresses, these sketches are not fiction; the reader is asked to peruse them as a kind of manual of effective rule in the Irish countryside. The soldier/writer wages a fictional war which will have implications for both social policy and Irish fiction.

In a story called "The Terry Alts," an instance of the government's mismanagement of outrage demonstrates the need for local administration in the handling of such affairs. The sketch records how the Terry Alts, a secret society, protest the diminishment of conacre by digging up thousands of acres of land in County Clare in 1830. The Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis of Anglesey, arrives to address the people and reprimand the landowners in a bid for popular support. However, although the marquis is lauded by the peasantry, he is shown to be ignorant of the situation. That night the Terry Alts arrive and dig up the four hundred acres surrounding the estate where the Viceroy has lodged for the night. Vokes, who knew all along that 'blarney' would do little to effect change, urges the local magistrates to double their efforts. The story thus demonstrates the ineffectuality of Dublin Castle in appealing to the folk and the

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[24] Henry Robert Addison, "The Bird's Nest," Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate 11.

effectiveness of "a proper degree of severity, mingled with strict justice" (102) by the local magistrates in suppressing agrarian outrage.

While Addison's sketches may be true to the spirit and intent of Vokes' administration in Limerick, the dramatist's inclinations may have influenced their form. According to Dublin University Magazine in 1841, Henry Addison was "as much adjutant as author: equally ready to improvise punch or poetry, to devise a devil or a drama."[25] Does Major Vokes fulfil the devil's role? The combination of agrarian outrage, dastardly deeds such as clocking a comrade with a spade handle or murdering a landowner over arms, and high farce, of actual historical fact and melodramatic device, demonstrates an interplay of generic form.

Addison and his prolific farces have nearly vanished from literary view while the Draconian measures of Major Vokes are forgotten. Yet the fictionalization of social record in nineteenth-century Ireland attests to that heritage. Addison's sketches might be seen as part of British administrative reform of the mid-nineteenth century advocating a strong military presence while utilizing Vokes' violent measures for dramatic effect. They are as much historical records as they are fiction.

Various types of incidents referred to in Vokes' letters reappear regularly in nineteenth-century writing. One good example is the internecine violence between sporting factions noted in Vokes' 1824 letter, Addison's 1862 sketch, and Somerville and Ross's "The Waters of Strife" of 1898. The similarity of the conception of peasant behavior in both public record and fiction may lead one to conclude a similarity of intent on the part of the writers. For instance, one might conclude, as Virginia Crossman does in "The Resident Magistrate as Colonial Officer," that Somerville and Ross adopt Addison's role in their R.M. stories. The Resident Magistrate attempts to maintain order amongst the unruly Irish (though, unlike Vokes, Major Yeates never succeeds). Like Addison, Crossman claims, Somerville and Ross advocate British involvement and argue the necessity of Anglo-Irish mediation, their reason made even more acute by the Local Government Act of 1898 which significantly decreased Unionist powers.[26] Such an argument stresses the colonial intent of the Anglo-Irish writers. However, while Somerville and Ross relied upon colonial discourse in their

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[25] "Our Portrait Gallery--no. xxiii: Henry R. Addison, Esquire," Dublin University Magazine xviii (July-Dec. 1841): 505-6.

[26] See Virginia Crossman, "The Resident Magistrate as Colonial Officer" 24, and Local Government in Nineteenth-Century Ireland. (Queen's U of Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1994) 96-7.

fiction, they also utilized it within a modern literary context. Other possibilities, including developments in genre and concepts of character in the modern world, might be taken into account.

* * *

From the extreme manifestations of the Irish national character arises a figure, like Addison's Vokes, who mirrors the peasantry's nature. This demonic figure is best realized in the character of Melmoth of Maturin's novel. Katie Trumpener provides an explanation for the evolution of extreme dimensions in this type of character. She argues that the interaction of different genres, the national tale and the historical novel, during the first decades of the nineteenth century provoked the development of this complicated character.

The early national tale as written by Lady Morgan or Charles Maturin (Trumpener distinguishes early or later works as before or after Sir Walter Scott's publication of Waverley in 1814) "maps developmental stages topographically, so that they simply exist as adjacent worlds [in] which the characters move and then choose between." The historical novel, on the other hand, finds "its real focus in the way in which one developmental stage collapses to make room for the next, and cultures are transformed under the pressures of historical events."[27] Similarly, nationalism in the early national tale is a birth-right, "a self-evident legacy, the result of unbroken continuity, of a populist community which unites aristocracy and folk," while in the historical novel a national sense of identity is created "through dislocation and collective suffering." Frequently, the national character in the historical novel emerges from violent change. As these two genres influenced each other, says Trumpener, the national tale moved from the chronotope of adventure time "towards the dislocations of the historical novel," becoming "the birthplace of a new kind of literary schizophrenia" (698). Thus the national character is transformed, as in Maturin's Melmoth, from allegorical type into a complex "bifurcated character who wages a perennial civil war within himself." As part of history, these characters suffer "rapid changes and have a part of their psyche permanently numbed by shock, remaining behind in a state of arrested development" (704-05). Trumpener argues that

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[27] Katie Trumpener, "National Character, Nationalist Plots: National Tale and Historical Novel in the Age of Waverley, 1806 - 1830" English Literary History 60(1993)697.

"generic tension between the national tale and the historical novel will remain foundational to 'realism'" up until the twentieth century with the national character continuing to manifest a schizophrenic reaction to historical violence, what she describes as "a buried legacy" which reappears to freeze or impede a character's development through time: "Part of the personality continues to move forward in historical time, while the rest remains frozen in place" (endnote 34, 728-29).

The national character, as Trumpener argues, does not fix itself as either an allegorical type or as historical character but illustrates in its extraordinary dimensions the intermingling of different genres and their treatment of space and time. Trumpener's work suggests that the diversity and fluidity of material in Irish and Scottish writing during the early decades of the nineteenth century brought about the type of national character observable in social documentation and fiction over the next hundred years.

The tension between stasis and change as it manifests itself in character becomes a critical issue in Ireland at the end of the century. An interesting example of self-parody, a self-conscious representation of the self as caricature, might be drawn from the Martin household. This late nineteenth-century example of a police figure portrayed in burlesque provides an added dimension to the resident magistrate figure already discussed. Martin Ross's elder brother performed on stage a resident magistrate type in 1886. It seems likely that Robert Martin's self-parody of colonial authority, as much as Addison's violent Vokes, would have inspired Flurry Knox or Major Yeates of Somerville and Ross's fiction.

Robert Martin collaborated with E.A.P. Hobday on a pantomime called The Forty Thieves and performed the work in the Queen's Royal Theatre, Dublin on August 23, 1886. Robert Martin played Cassim, an authority figure of multiple roles:

> Mayor and Chief of the Police, Lord of the Manor,
> Justice of the Peace . . .
> I fill a lot of offices, and what is more, I can,
> Though it's needless perhaps to be told ye;
> I'm chief of the home service, I'm a grand militiaman,
> Though I'm not very much of a soldier.
> I'm the chief Robert here--head policeman I am made--
> .....

A soldier and a peeler and civilian all in one.[28]

Robert Martin as Cassim plays the fool. He is chopped into two pieces, sewn back together again, and miraculously revives. The head policeman manifests the clownish possibilities of the harlequinade. The humour of Chief Robert's address is doubled for his Anglo-Irish audience by the basis of his claims in reality. Robert Martin really was lord of the manor, a Justice of the Peace, "a soldier and a peeler and civilian all in one." However, as his youngest sister realized, he performed his role more successfully on stage in Dublin than he did at Ross House in Galway. Times had changed, and the only place left for such posturing, it would appear, was the comic stage. Reality had become fiction. The Anglo-Irish landlord had become a parody of himself. Such a re-enactment suggests that Robert Martin did not fade from the Irish landscape; rather, he reduced the postures of his inheritance to caricature.

The real Thomas Vokes of the early nineteenth century, Addison's half-fictional portrayal of the police magistrate, the real Robert Martin of Ross House, and his own self parody provide a constellation of sources which suggests a dynamic of historical record as it works with artistic development. This network indicates that the kind of short fiction Somerville and Ross wrote in Ireland at the beginning of the new century reflects a complex tradition indebted to social conditions, political erosion, and generic transformation. The Irish R.M. stories can thus be seen as texts which reflect both an aesthetic and a historical reality.

Caricature

> *Charge, (Peinture & Belles-Lettr.) c'est la représentation sur la toile ou le papier, par le moyen des couleurs, d'une personne, d'une action, ou plus généralement d'un sujet, dans laquelle la vérité & la ressemblance exactes ne sont altérées que par l'excès du ridicule. L'art consiste à démêler* [unmasking] *le vice réel ou d'opinion qui était déjà dans quelque partie, et à le porter par l'expression jusqu'à ce point d'exagération où l'on reconnait encore la chose, & au-delà duquel on ne la reconnaîtrait plus: alors la charge est la plus forte qu'il soit possible . . .*

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[28] Robert J. Martin and E.A.P. Hobday, The Forty Thieves; or Ali Baba and the Black Sheep of Bagdad (Dublin: W.J. Alley, 1886) 10.

Diderot Encyclopédie, 3:202 (1751)[29]

Caricature is related to the concept of unmasking. *Charge*, a synonym of 'caricature' in eighteenth-century France, depends upon the revelation of real or reputed vice for its effect. *Charge* or "caricature differs from the grotesque in that the grotesque does not distort something already inherent but instead creates deformities. Caricature merely lifts the veil masking a distortion, real or imagined. *Démêler*, 'unmasking,' is the essential component of The Real Charlotte and becomes increasingly important in Somerville and Ross's short fiction, where the plots frequently revolve around the unveiling of a character's mask (the Widow's deception in the court rooom in "Waters of Strife," James Canty's elaborate pretence in "Holy Island," or the various costumes employed by characters in "A Royal Command" or "The Comte De Pralines"). A consideration of Somerville and Ross's use of caricature is best appreciated by examining both the Anglo-Irish depiction of national character and modernist thought on caricature.

Freud notes that unmasking occurs "where someone has attached to himself dignity and authority which in reality should be taken from him."[30] In Somerville and Ross's magazine stories, the rustics of the Irish countryside swiftly unmask pompous English visitors like the "mere Englishman" of "The Grand Filly." In an early R.M. story, "Lisheen Races, Second-Hand," for instance, Slipper the clown and Driscoll his fool show everyone--Major Yeates, Flurry Knox, the pub audience and the reader--the utter vacuity and vanity of Honourable Basil Leigh Kelway. Freud sees such unmasking as the "practical counterpart" of caricature, which he describes as exaggerated imitation; both unmasking and caricature "range themselves against persons and objects who command authority and respect and who are exalted in some sense--these are procedures tending towards degradation" (322). Unmasking brings us down to earth; it reminds us, says Freud, that "this or that one who is admired like a demigod is only a human being like you and me after all" (326). So Basil Kelway ends up as 'scuttered' as Slipper, as vulnerable as any other man to the effects of the Irish weather and Irish drink.

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[29] Qtd. in McLees, Baudelaire's 'Argot Plastique', endnote 5, 158. I have relied on McLees' translation of *démêler* as unmasking.

[30] Sigmund Freud, Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious, trans. A.A. Brill (1905; New York: Dover Publications, 1993) 325.

Turning briefly from caricature to consider the national character, we might note that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Charles Robert Maturin, like his contemporary Lady Morgan, noted that the extreme conditions of Irish life determined his method of "painting life" and that necessary exaggeration of depiction resulted from living in Ireland. In his opening dedication in The Milesian Chief (1812), Maturin claimed that his chiaroscuro techniques suited the sublime Irish landscape:

> If I possess any talent, it is that of darkening the gloomy, and of deepening the sad; of painting life in the extremes, and representing those struggles of passion when the soul *trembles on the verge* of the unlawful and the unhallowed.
>
> In the following pages I have tried to apply these powers to the scenes of actual life: and I have chosen my own country for the scene, because I believe it 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. (my italics)[31]

A key word for Maturin, one that becomes especially important in Melmoth the Wanderer (and one which Baudelaire takes up fifty years later in his study on caricature), is the word 'trembles.' It is this wavering between extremes, the position of existing in two places at one time, which fascinates Maturin. In the same way, Lady Morgan in Florence Macarthy and Sheridan Le Fanu in Uncle Silas are enthralled by their characters' 'shifting faces,' a face that slips in and out of different masks. The Anglo-Irish writers ascribe their depictions to Irish conditions. As Florence Macarthy points out,

> I sometimes almost lose my own identity for I am absolutely beyond my own control, and the mere creature of circumstances, giving out properties of certain plants, according to the region in which I am placed; and resembling in blossom that of the Chinese shrub, which is red in the sunshine and white in the shade, and fades and revives under the influence of the peculiar atmosphere in which it is accidentally placed. The strong extremes and wild vicissitudes of my

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[31] Charles Robert Maturin, The Milesian Chief (1812; New York: Garland Publishing, 1979) iv-v.

life, have perhaps given a variegated tone to my character, and a versatility to my mind, not its natural endowments.[32]

What I wish to emphasize here is, first, the interest in the extreme conditions of Irish life as they affect characterization and, second, this emphasis on a "trembling" or wavering position which can manifest itself as a masking/unmasking process.

Maturin most successfully depicts a character trembling on the edge of an abyss, forever posed between extreme conditions, with Melmoth. This extraordinary character, reminiscent of Goethe's Mephistopheles and anticipating James Clarence Mangan's Wandering Jew is "prohibited repose from life." The Wandering Jew, as Mangan tells us, remains outside of the dictates of time:

> Ha! not to be vouchsafed the boon of Death!
> To be prohibited repose from Life!
> To bear about this clay-frame, with its grave-hues,
> Its maladies, its charnel-odours;
> To be compelled to see, through uncounted years,
> The yawning monster, Sameness,
> And the insatiable monster, Time,
> Still bearing children, still devouring children!
> Ha! not to be vouchsafed the boon of death!—[33]

In the same way, Melmoth, having sold his soul to the devil, leaves Ireland to range the world in search of some desperate man or woman who will take his place. Neither time nor space impede his journey; he wanders across Europe, recognized by all men, and he wanders across time, never changing or growing old. His manifestation, as Maturin points out, results from the extreme conditions of Irish life which brings forth a "trembling" or wavering position best demonstrated by ambivalence.

In "De l'essence du rire," Baudelaire uses as main example of his aesthetic theory on caricature this strange, anguished figure of early nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish fiction. Maturin's novel appeared two years after Lady Morgan's national tale, Florence Macarthy. Both works

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[32] Florence Macarthy, a national hero in a national tale, is reduced and altered by the extreme conditions of life in Ireland. She possesses a chameleon-like character, ever-changing and ever-shifting, which survives in the Irish world by slipping on one mask after another. Florence Macarthy III (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979) 273-74.

[33] James Clarence Mangan, "The Wandering Jew," The Collected Works of James Clarence Mangan, ed. Jacques Chuto (1837; Dublin: Academic P, 1996) 377-80.

employ Enlightenment philosophy on the Nature of the Sublime and the Beautiful as it relates to character or race;[34] they superimpose the sublime scenery of the Italian painter, Salvator Rosa, upon Irish scenery. The writers translate visual language--groups of banditti half-hidden under dark masses of looming rock, for example--into the elaborate descriptions of their novels. Both rely upon the heightened dramatic effects of chiaroscuro in their descriptions of moonlit crumbling abbeys or night-time storms at sea. In Maturin's Melmoth, chiaroscuro as a writerly technique emphasizes the Manichaean vision of the text. In the same way, national character becomes a site of extraordinary dimensions which the sublime manifests.[35] For Maturin, the extremities of Melmoth's nature recalled the Irish national character; for Baudelaire, Melmoth manifested the paradoxical nature of caricature.

In "De l'essence du rire," a wavering or trembling position identifies caricature: "*Le Sage ne rit qu'en tremblant.*"[36] If the Sage only laughs while trembling, it is in the full knowledge of the evil his humour courts. It is as though he stands on the edge of a cliff, contemplating his inevitable fall and forever wavering. It is knowledge, like the demon's shuddering knowledge of God, that produces his wild laughter. Caricature is the result of knowledge. Caricature is a knowing art; self-conscious and self-reflective, it reveals a progression from innocent realism to experienced exaggeration.

Baudelaire's description of the 'essence of laughter' identifies the primary ingredient of caricature as an anxious or trembling knowledge of the ways of the world. The child or the pure innocent--the whole person--cannot laugh. Only those like Melmoth, the "*célèbre voyageur . . . la grande création satanique du révérend Maturin*" (531), possess this "mask which hides the convulsed and distorted features of agony," and a laugh "which

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[34] At the end of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant addressed "National Characteristics, so far as They Depend upon the Distinct Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime" in order that he might categorize nationality according to the different kinds of taste (the French taste in poetry, for instance, runs to the Beautiful while the English aesthetic preference leans towards the Sublime). Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, 1764, trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley; London: U of California P, 1960) 97.

[35] For further discussion on the relationship of Burkean notions on the sublime and the Irish national character see Richard Haslam, "Representation and the Sublime in Six Irish Writers: A Study of Edmund Burke, Lady Morgan, Charles Maturin, James Clarence Mangan, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, and William Carleton," Ph.D. 1991, Trinity College Dublin.

[36] Charles Baudelaire, "De l'essence du rire," 526.

never yet was the expression of rapture . . . [being] the only intelligible language of madness and misery."[37] Laughter, says Baudelaire, can be, on one hand, a sure sign of man's inherent evil. On the other hand, it merely indicates one's supposed superiority. It demonstrates an unconscious, arrogant pride at the heart of him who laughs which causes mirth, a belief that "*ce n'est pas moi qui commetrais la sottise de ne pas voir un trottoir interrompu ou un pavé qui barre le chemin*" (531).

The best exemplar of the contradictory nature of laughter and its source in pride is Melmoth, an Irish Mephisto, who laughs because of "his double contradictory nature, which is infinitely great relative to man, infinitely vile and base relative to truth and absolute Justice" (Baudelaire, 531). Melmoth's anguished laughter does not spring from gaiety or joy. Its ambivalence represents a knowing apprehension of the world in its entirety, both innocence and experience; it conceals underlying pain.

Stereotype, like caricature, originates in knowledge. Homi Bhabha identifies stereotype, the repeated "articulation of difference" (67), as deriving from a fear produced by the awareness of difference in the Other which threatens a sense of purity or wholeness. Anxiety determines the repetition of the stereotype. The colonizer, says Bhabha, fixates upon a trait of difference such as skin or nose and repeatedly visualizes that difference to establish his own purity. This "anxiety associated with lack or difference"[38] is based on "the desire for an originality which is . . . threatened by the differences of race, colour and culture" (75). The ambivalence of the stereotype lies in its constancy of something known and its need for repetition.

Both Baudelaire's nineteenth-century analysis of caricature and Bhabha's recent study of stereotype describe such forms of the comic as based on the lack of wholeness or purity. We laugh anxiously at caricature because we have sinned (Baudelaire), or we use and re-use stereotypes because we fear sinning and the consequent loss of wholeness (Bhabha). Both conditions are predicated on an understanding of loss. With the second condition, however, Homi Bhabha stresses race difference and the threatened colonial identity as energizing the stereotyping process. My argument must admit that racial, economic and religious stereotyping determines Irish caricature, what Martin Croghan describes as "symbolic

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[37] Charles Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (1820; London: Oxford UP, 1968) 352.

[38] Bhabha applies Freud's use of fetishism ("the disavowal of difference") to his study of stereotyping in The Location of Culture 74.

violence: the negative portrayal of another sub-group or group for the purpose of defining the self group in a positive way."[39] Nonetheless, my emphasis upon the aesthetics of caricature (via Baudelaire's work) and the development of genre shows that other considerations inform this method of depicting character. A brief look at the significance of race and, in particular, the simianization of the Irish character in the British periodicals, adds to our understanding of Somerville and Ross's treatment of caricature.

* * *

To consider race as it relates to the aesthetics of caricature reveals more than what Perry Curtis has described as "Hibernophobia" in Victorian caricature of the Irish.[40] In Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature, Curtis demonstrates how English caricature of the Irish in Punch, Judy, and Fun depicts the Irish in an idealized or demonized way. He argues that the simianization of the Irish, indicated through physiognomic coding and influenced by social Darwinism, works as a form of cultural imperialism. Criticism has been levelled against Curtis for his binary model of English and Irish connections; his scheme does not allow for the ambiguity of England's response to Irishness (the significance of class or religion), nor does it consider the question of including Irish racism in England with attitudes towards non-white British subjects.[41] Also

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[39] Martin J Croghan, Demythologizing Hiberno-English 1. See also Croghan's later work on Edgeworth and her use of stereotyping, or "symbolic violence," in stage-Irish portrayals. "Maria Edgeworth and the Tradition of Irish Semiotics," International Aspects of Irish Literature 340-48.

[40] Perry Curtis, Apes and Angels 147. Curtis refers to Somerville's use of a "simian simile" as used by the Prendevilles in Big House of Inver to describe insurgent Irish: "The Gorillas." The implication is that Somerville (as "gentry of Ireland") may have shared the Prendevilles' view (xxxiii).

[41] Roy Foster emphasizes in his survey of representations of the Irish in Punch from the 1840s up until the end of the century the ambiguity of their depiction. He concludes that they are "a threatening underclass rather than a colonized subrace." Paddy and Mr. Punch 192. More recently, in a review of Curtis's revised edition, Catherine Eagan points out that the "revisionists' primary reason for stressing ambivalence instead of racism [in English caricature of the Irish] is their conviction that Curtis's exclusion of the factors of class and religion in his binary model of civilized and savage comes dangerously close to simplistically equating anti-Irish racism with racism directed against non-Europeans" (27). English caricature of Africans, argues Eagan, may not have needed the visual signals ascribed to the Irish (simianized characteristics) because blackness already denotes the status of the African. Eagan thus suggests the significance of the 'fact of blackness' in English caricature. The white skin of the Irishman, like the ambiguous politics of his state, complicates the

important, as shown in this discussion of the theory of caricature, is to consider caricature of the Irish within a broader tradition reliant upon the extremes of black and white effect. Curtis has shown how Victorian caricaturists co-opted race and politics as a means of deploying such extremes. But what worked better in the late nineteenth century as a figuration of binary extremes of black and white than Irish politics and colonial policy?[42] Moreover, the transformation of the Irishman into what Curtis has described as the "white negro" suggests a paradox we also find in chiaroscuro.[43] Race, and especially the drastic visual difference of the black and white races--the "fact of blackness" in the face of whiteness[44]--suggests that the play of black and white in visual terms found appropriate subject matter in the extreme situations posed by Irish conditions.

As already noted, the contrast of black and white works like a Manichaean paradox; it is its visual equivalent. The darkness of the sublime and the light of beauty stand in eternal opposition. Chiaroscuro (bright-dark) utilizes this visual paradox. Chiaroscuro is the distribution of light and shade in a composition: light emphasizes the dark just as the deep tones of the latter highlight the former. In black and white caricature, chiaroscuro is utilized for dramatic effect and the extremes deliberately play one upon the other. The term, like an elaborate conceit, yokes polarities as one. Blackness renders light.

The chiaroscuro style might be described as an abbreviated and nuanced technique of rendering reality, and it can be compared to a form that the periodical press preferred at the end of the century: the short

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binary model which black and white, ape and angel, suggests. "Simianization Meets Postcolonial Theory," The Irish Literary Supplement (Fall 1997): 27-28.

[42] See, for instance, Richard Lebow, White Britain and Black Ireland: The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy , (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976). Further discussion on the use of binary extremes of black and white, such as Leslie Fiedler's work in the United States, demonstrates the utilization of chiaroscuro for multiple purposes. Fiedler analyses the moral significance of black and white in the nineteenth-century novel in "The Power of Blackness: Faustian Man and the Cult of Violence," Love and Death in the American Novel (1960; New York: Stein and Day, 1975).

[43] Edward Said also aligns Irish and black races. For Said, Ireland is not part of his construction of the West. Instead, he uses Ireland to point out the connection between "black" and "white" colonies (such as Ireland and Jamaica) by referring to the French caricaturist, Honoré Daumier, whose drawing of a black Jamaican and a white Irishman "explicitly connects Irish whites and Jamaican Blacks." Culture and Imperialism (London: Vintage, 1994) 162.

[44] Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, (London: Pluto P, 1986) 110.

story. The highly suggestive nature of chiaroscuro, a technique that relies upon the viewer's ability to discern in the darkness everything which is not depicted, anticipates the use of implication in modern short fiction, which relies upon the reader to imagine in the spaces of the text all else that has happened in the story. Depictions of Irishness, with its black and white national traits--"extremes of refinement and barbarism"[45] -- translate well into this particular shorthand. In the same way, and as Baudelaire stresses, caricature requires a knowing or sophisticated viewer/reader who can recognize the shorthand of the technique. The vast outpouring of nineteenth-century periodical literature, its illustrations and text, educated readers in such shorthand.

Somerville and Ross's treatment of Irish caricature displays the art of being Irish. Their self-consciousness does not recall Baudelaire or Balzac[46] (with whom they have so frequently been compared although they apparently never read him) so much as it does developments in visual art of the *fin-de-siècle*. For instance, both Somerville and Ross enjoyed Beardsley's stylized illustrations of clowns and harlequins. In a letter to Somerville in 1896, Martin Ross refers to "two awfully good pictures of Aubrey B." in the last issue of The Savoy.[47] These pictures, like most of Beardsley's illustrations for the magazine, are pictures of theatrical productions. The black and white illustrations, like Yeats's "poems concerning peasant visionaries,"[48] retrieve a popular, non-literary tradition. The viewer/reader, however, is twice removed from that tradition by the artists' distancing devices. Beardsley's design cover for the first

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[45] Fintan Cullen identifies the influence of notions of Irishness in formal portraiture by Reynolds and Wilkie. He points out that while portraits of the "Third Earl of Bellamont, 1773-4" and "Daniel O'Connell, 1836-8" are influenced by stage-Irish types and Punch caricatures, they indicate a more general belief in the Irishman's ability to be utterly charming or utterly diabolical, which results in ambiguous portrayal. Visual Politics 104.

[46] Geraldine Cummins suggests that Somerville and Ross "are creators of an Irish 'Comédie Humaine'" in Dr. E. OE. Somerville, (London: Andrew Dakers, 1952) 44. Comparisons have been made between The Real Charlotte and Cousin Bette, but Guy Fehlmann is especially struck by similarities between Eugénie Grandet and Charlotte. So convinced is he of Balzac's influence and the physiognomic likeness of the two characters, that Fehlmann quizzes relations and friends of the writers (Mr. J.J. Horgan, Mrs. Moira Somerville, Sir Patrick Coghill, and Prof. Nevill Coghill). There is no evidence to support his conviction. Somerville and Ross: Témoins de l'Irlande d'hier, (France: Association des Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de L'Université de Caen, 1970) 309-11.

[47] Martin Ross, letter to Edith Somerville, 1896, Letters 240.

[48] The Savoy, ed. Arthur Symons, 1-8 (January -December 1896). From No.2 (April 1896). Yeats's poetry dominated the magazine.

issue shows Pierrot on stage (in the published version, Pierrot is changed into a simpering John Bull), the curtain lowered behind him in wait for the opening "scenes" of the periodical: Yeats's highly stylized "Rosa Alchemica," Arthur Symons' "In Carnival," his essays on Millais and Verlaine, George Moore's translation of Stéphane Mallarmé--a series of artful displays of art. Beardsley's illustrations are pictures of figures framed by the draping sweep of a plush theatre curtain. Pierrot and Harlequin are masque characters masked.

The caricaturist, Max Beerbohm, describes conversation at the dinner launching the Savoy as a display of seemingly self-contradictory interests. Yeats monopolizes Beardsley in conversation on French diabolism. Symons, interrupting his enjoyment of *Bombe glacée à la Vénitienne*, comments to the woman on his right on the importance of travel and change in the artist's life. Yeats, "in a pause in his own music," swiftly rebuts Symons, saying that the artist works best "'among his own folk and in the land of his fathers'."[49] Beerbohm here pinpoints the main interests (other than the French menu) at the Savoy dining table: French diabolism and Irish folk material--hell and hearth. The year's publication of the short-lived Savoy continued such interests, so that the final number Martin Ross mentions includes Symons' translation of Mallarmé's "Hérodiade" and his travel essay, "The Isles of Aran." Beardsley's black and white caricatures and stage figures, his grotesques and clowns, also incorporate popular folk material and "French diabolism" of symbolic decadence. His illustrations manage to span two worlds, the earthy comedy of carnival and the aesthetic vision of symbolism. The flat black line delineating white space demonstrates the extreme limits which the material straddles.

Beardsley's harlequin, clown, and pierrot depicted on a theatre platform as stylized groups of black and white effect appear to be the stage figures of the popular pantomime (Figure 4-3). They are that, of course, but they are something more as a closer look reveals. Concealed in Columbine's skirt is an over-sized penis, while Pierrot's imminent death foreshadows a grim end to the ensuing farce. While these figures appear to be those we readily identify with pantomime, they actually manifest something new. In

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[49] Roy Foster, W.B. Yeats I (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997) 157-59. Max Beerbohm sends up the notion of diabolism in his satire of a fictional decadent 90s poet, "Enoch Soames." Soames, a Catholic Diabolist, who writes a book called Negations and a collection of poems called Fungoids, sells his soul to a Devil who looks like Salvador Dali. The Bodley Head Max Beerbohm, ed. David Cecil (London: The Bodley Head, 1970) 55-86.

the same way, Somerville and Ross's comic figures may appear to continue a tradition of stage-Irish figures. Here too, a closer look reveals something more.

Harlequin

This chapter has noted that the extraordinary dimensions of the Irish national character and the extreme traits of caricature meet in the early nineteenth-century figure of Melmoth. In a previous chapter I showed how the black and white effects, or the chiaroscuro, of later nineteenth-century works, such as The Real Charlotte, recall the harlequin figure of pantomime. Now, looking more closely at the predominant figure of pantomime so popular in Beardsley's work, we discover a link between these issues: caricature as a black and white illustration, the Irish Mephistopheles, and the figure of harlequin. We begin to see a network of connections which provide sense and context for the main figures of the Irish R.M. stories and which suggest the position of the series in genre development of the period.

Harlequin is a hybrid figure whose background mixes malevolent forces and comic fun. He appeared first in popular legend as a devil "leading that ghostly nocturnal cortege known as the Wild Hunt."[50] His original devilish aspect never quite faded when he later appeared in the *commedia dell'arte* in the guise of a comic acrobat dressed in motley with a black mask, carrying a bat and wearing a hat with a fox's tail. He was of uncertain nationality and possessed a chameleon-like nature (290-91). Bakhtin speaks of a late sixteenth-century work performed in Paris called The Gay Story of the Feats and Adventures of the Italian Comedian, Harlequin. Harlequin's descent into hell is mirrored by his acrobatic postures down below:

> In hell Harlequin turns somersaults, leaps and skips, sticks out his tongue and makes Charon and Pluto laugh. All these gay leaps and bounds are as ambivalent as the underworld itself. Harlequin's somersaults are topographical; their points of orientation are heaven, earth, the underworld, the top and the bottom. They present an interplay, a substitution of the face by the buttocks; in other

[50] Welsford 288.

words, the theme of the descent into hell is implicit in this simple acrobatic feat.[51]

In later French works of the eighteenth century, the servant Arlequin is transformed in Arcadia into the natural man (one who can teach his master many lessons based on his natural experience). In England during this period, the comic John Rich developed a form of pantomime which became its basic structure: the first part of the pantomime contained a serious theme from mythology or legend while the second part dealt with Harlequin and Columbine's love affair. Obstacles, such as attentions from the rival suitor, Pantaloon, obstruct the successful course of love. Harlequin must use his magic bat to effect transformations and enchantments to secure his Columbine.[52] The harlequinade involves the antics, tricks and acrobatics of familiar figures, who reappear essentially unchanged in different pantomimes.[53]

What is the difference between comedy and pantomime? According to David Mayer in his study of the English pantomime in the early nineteenth century, it is a difference of intent which he illustrates with a comparison especially relevant to Somerville and Ross: "A comedy is . . . similar to a hunting expedition organized and equipped to bring down or capture a particular quarry; every time it is sent out, it hunts the same game." The pantomime, however, pursues multiple topics--"pantomime resembled a different kind of hunting expedition, one always organized in the same fashion but equipped to hunt any sort of game. The quarry was always mixed, often illogical, and frequently barely worth the shot that brought it down" (5). The hunt always used the same characters: Harlequin (Flurry), Columbine (Sally Knox), Clown (Slipper), and Pantaloon (Bernard Shute). In pantomime after pantomime (just as in story after story of the

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[51] Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World 396-97.

[52] David Mayer, Harlequin in his Element: The English Pantomime, 1806-1836 (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1969) 4-5.

[53] The English pantomime used the stage Irishman, and with Catholic emancipation in 1829, he began to show greater possibilities. His improved profile is reflected in a number of pantomimes of this period. Initially, in Charles Farley's "Harlequin and Friar Bacon" in 1820, the drunken Irish characters of Donnybrook Fair appear solely in the harlequinade. In "Harlequin and the Eagle" of 1826, the Irish characters, the peasant lovers, Cormac and Mary, feature throughout the pantomime, changing into Harlequin and Columbine later on. In "Harlequin Pat and Harlequin Bat" of 1830, "the Ireland of musical comedy and tourist brochures is complete." Brian Boru and his bride, Norma, are changed to Harlequin and Columbine by St. Patrick and the harlequin bat becomes the inevitable shillelagh. David Mayer 254-56.

R.M. series) these figures appear, and their familiar antics introduce unfamiliar game or quarry. The pantomime is a particularly useful means of bringing together a rattlebag of material.

Harlequin's pervasive presence in the early nineteenth century attests to his ability to adapt to all sorts of material; his versatility and mixed background make him both a stock comic character and a strangely fluid cypher who spans in his nature extreme differences. Like Melmoth in Maturin's novel, Harlequin wanders Europe, a figure in every play, the culprit on every stage. He is the devil and he is our comic savior. He wavers between extremes and his motley costume never admits allegiance to any dimension. He trembles forever in between.

Harlequin is a stage figure, and like the festival fool is part of carnival time, when normality collapses and the *Prince des Sots* reigns supreme. Everything is topsy-turvy so that the hierarchy reverses itself and all is in disarray. The Lord of Misrule or the festival fool is another kind of middleman, one who combines the foolishness of the buffoon with the wit of the satirist.[54] But Harlequin "is wholly a creature of make-believe." He does not possess "religious significance or subversive tendencies" because he emerges from nowhere and has no allegiance to any domain (299). Harlequin is a figure of the stage, the product of the theatre rather than the popular imagination. He is the stuff of pure artifice.

In many of the R.M. stories, Flurry Knox plays Harlequin. He dances, fools, and falls in love. He introduces a madcap world not unlike that which Baudelaire describes in "De l'essence du rire" as "*la frontière du merveilleux*" which is the delirium of the harlequinade (541). More insidiously, he rides like a madman across the precarious Irish land of The Irish R.M., where "boggy holes of any depth, ranging between two feet and half-way to Australia" (174) await his foolish followers. Leading the wild Irish hunt, Flurry effects a kind of madness with his whirling whip and unpredictable temper. Like an acrobat, he leaps stone walls and grassy banks, and like a chameleon, he waits attendance on the highest and lowest of the land. He is the natural man in Arcadia who teaches his master/tenant a thing or two about the real world. He is eminently adaptable and cannot be described as a stage Irishman--he is much less, a masque reflecting

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[54] Welsford 217.

distorted versions of Anglo-Irish life. He is the product of pantomime and the result of caricature.[55]

Story after story of the R.M. series employs pantomime material. There is "A Royal Command" in Further Experiences, for instance, where Slipper appears to the half-blind Yeates as "a coloured potentate, the Sultan of X–," and a funeral group in black and with weepered hats end up chasing an escaped filly in harliquinade fashion. Or there is "Sharper than a Ferret's Tooth" in the same collection where the boat carrying a picnic party capsizes and Major Yeates, Phillippa, and Sally Knox are transformed by the McRory's fabulous clothes. Sally Knox is made foolish in a heavily brocaded purple gown, and the dismayed picnickers dine on trifle swimming in whiskey and a "soup tureen full of custard" (383).

The characters and caricatures of the R.M. stories, like the clowns of carnival, distort rather than reflect reality:

> The rogue, the clown and the fool create around themselves their own special little world, their own chronotope. . . These characters carry with them into literature first a vital connection with the theatrical trappings of the public square, with the mask of the public spectacle; they are connected with that highly specific, extremely important area of the square where the common people congregate; second . . . the very being of these figures does not have a direct, but rather a metaphorical, significance. Their very appearance, everything they do and say, cannot be understood in a direct and unmediated way but must be grasped metaphorically. Sometimes their significance can be reversed--but one cannot take them literally, because they are not what they seem. Third . . . their existence is a reflection of some other's mode of being--and even then, not a direct reflection. They are life's maskers; their being

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[55] Roz Cowman reads Experiences of an Irish R.M. as "a manifesto of erotic joy," a "Greek pastoral idyll" with Flurry Knox, "the Lord of the Animals" as the incarnation of Dionysus. The name Florence is androgynous and great-uncle Denis of the first Irish R.M. stories refers directly to the Latinate Dionysius (100-01). "Lost Time: The Smell and Taste of Castle T," Sex, Nation and Dissent in Irish Writing 87-102. I would argue that Somerville and Ross's use of mythology in the R.M. stories can be better appreciated when perceived as issuing from a pantomime tradition. Mythological allusions come mixed with political references and topical material. The "erotic joy" which Roz Cowman notes is well-concealed for this reader.

coincides with their role, and outside this role they simply do not exist.[56]

The members of the harlequinade are masks which act as distorted reflections of the world. They are warped mirrors (like Beardsley's grotesques or like Jack Yeats's circus figures). They issue from the people and cannot be understood as simple characters. Moreover, Harlequin, the leader of the harlequinade, brings with his mask a modern ambiguity.

If Flurry Knox is Harlequin, both a mask of carnival and a modern theatrical figure, he heralds both popular farce and the idea itself of modern caricature. His courtship of Sally Knox in Some Experiences repeats the familiar pattern of the harlequinade. Their reign as a married couple in Further Experiences establishes their position. The Knoxes introduce a suspended time zone where clowns and fools ring the changes. By using exaggerated movements and masked appearances, they transform character to caricature. Their high jinks and humour are accompanied by Somerville's black and white illustrations. These pictures of clowns and carnival (Figures 4-4 and 4-5) not only assist in the storytelling of The Irish R.M., but also indicate with their use of graphic caricature the nature of Harlequin (or Flurry Knox). In other words, if the textual descriptions of the carnival-type characters evoke a special time-space zone, then the graphic illustrations with their similar reductions assist in the process. The illustrations manifest in-between time with their clowns and fools as subject and their visual delineation of line as method. This suspended time-zone displays with graphic simplicity Irish peasantry wearing the masks of fool and clown to underscore the folk humour whence the tales derive.

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[56] M.H. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," The Dialogic Imagination 84-85; 159.

You believe that God is one; you do well.
Even the demons believe – and shudder.
James 2: 19[57]

The Manichaean struggle between light and dark results in an eternally wavering position which produces a dualistic, ironic vision. The Devil's belief in God admits this shuddering, trembling condition. Melmoth's terrifying laugh acknowledges the Christian dilemma. Harlequin's comic antics and shifting position demonstrate in visual language the in-between or hybrid status of this perpetual struggle.

Edith Somerville's seventy black and white illustrations of figures from the R.M. series of short stories, then, do not merely add to these stories in the sense that they give extra information on plot and character. Black and white illustration, as I have shown with Baudelaire's theory and Beardsley's pictures, demonstrates the development of a self-reflexive and ironic use of shape and space and line which expresses visually the suggestive nature of the short story form. The illustrations exploit the British periodical readers' expectations by displaying the masks established by the popular press. They parody notions of Irishness which partially conceal the skulduggery and shenanigans of a people who know the system and eagerly exploit it.

Baudelaire describes pantomime as the essence of the comic in "De l'essence du rire," its "*l'épuration*" or 'distillation': "*La pantomime est l'épuration de la comédie; c'en est la quintessence; c'est l'élément comique pur, dégagé et concentré*" (540). If pantomime is the distillation of comedy, then Harlequin, as the leader of that form might be described as a distillation of Melmoth, the manifestation of the comic sense. In Ireland, his features come charged with political significance. In Cork, he calls himself Flurry Knox.

* * *

Somerville and Ross's short fiction, the texts and illustrations, have been considered within the context of the magazine business, an

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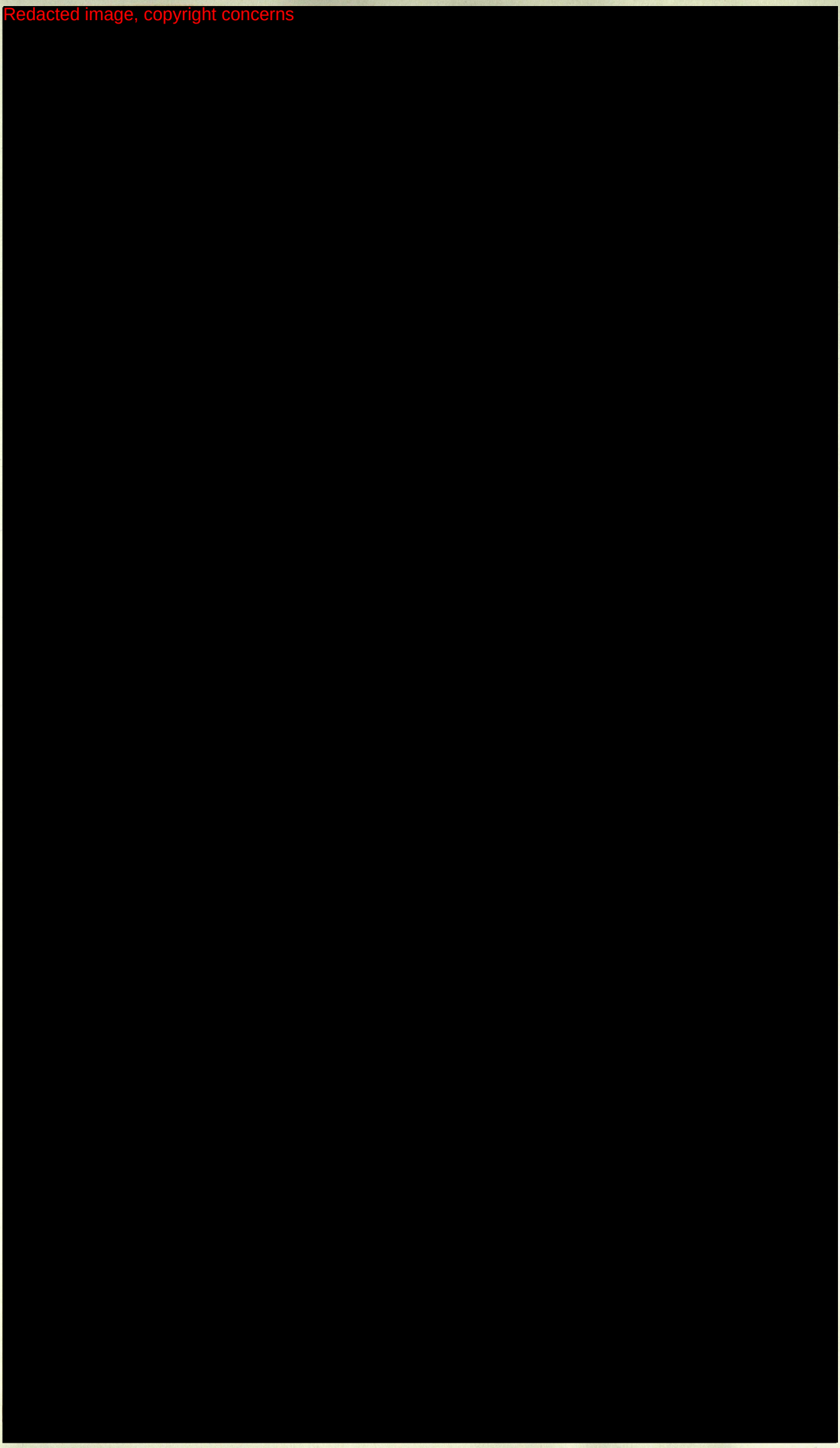
[57] Edith Somerville rephrases the biblical quotation in a letter to Elizabeth Hudson (July 3, 1938) as, "Like the devils I believe & tremble." Frontispiece, A Bibliography of the First Editions of the Works of E OE. Somerville and Martin Ross. She could be mocking Melmoth in Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer: "'I believe in a God . . . you have heard of those who believe and tremble,--such is he who speaks to you!'" (389).

abbreviated and fast-moving phenomenon of the 1890s. The difficulties posed by the picturesque and by caricature in representing Ireland in the magazine forum of the nineties were complicated by the increasing reliance upon textual and visual shorthand, implication and suggestion, to entertain readers. This section on Somerville and Ross's magazine work has followed a two-fold purpose. First, it has provided a context for the development of the Irish R.M. stories as well as considering more fully the pictorial influences upon these writers. Second, it has considered the resulting ambiguity of creating a 'comic Irish business' while addressing the politics of the Irish situation in the most popular of the British periodicals and as influenced by modern notions of the represention of reality.

Through a consideration of earlier studies of the Irish national character, during a period when the form in which to cast these figures was mutable (the national tale, the historical novel, and the travel book), the evolution of Irish caricature has been indicated. Self-conscious Irishness, as scrutinized by writers like Morgan and Maturin, or social historians and folklore collectors like Thomas Crofton Croker, emerged as a concept while the separate genres were adapting and changing. At the same time, colonial policy constantly influenced the scrutiny of the Irish character and those who would direct Irish affairs. The people of Somerville and Ross's landscapes, both those in authority and those intent on subverting the same, reveal multiple traditions. Somerville and Ross's treatment of the picturesque and of caricature is determined by the restrictions of the magazine format, the realities of Irish life, the discourse of the Irish national character and modern aesthetics.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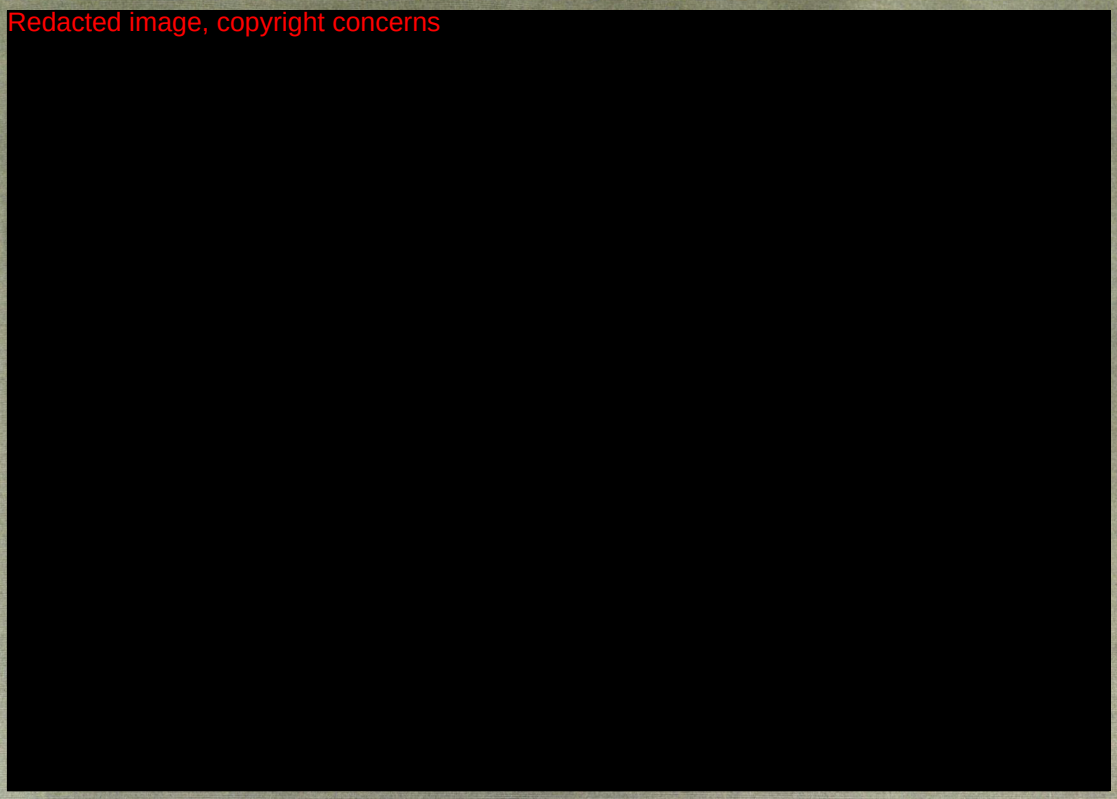
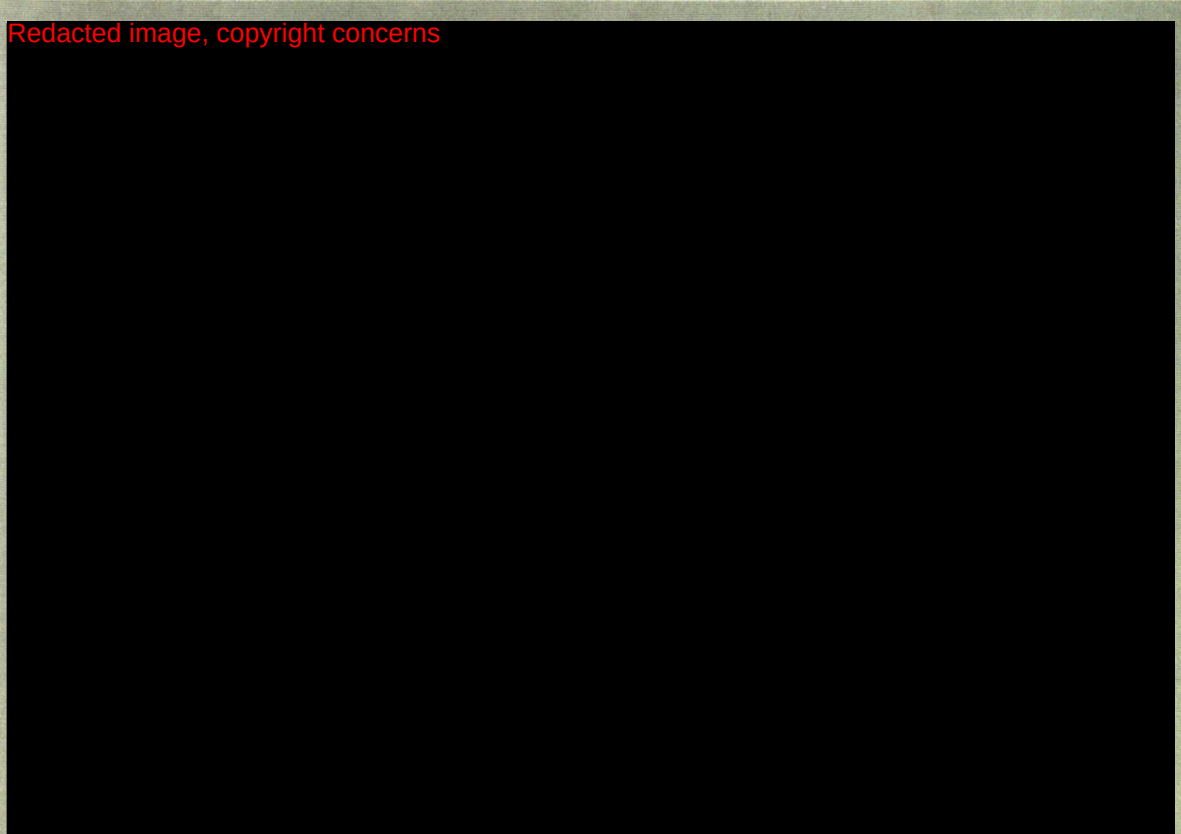


"THE VILLVAN WHEELED INTO THE YARD AS NATE AS A BICYCLE."



"WHEN THE HUNTS IN IT ON A HOLYDAY."

4-2 Edith Somerville, illustrations from A Patrick's Day Hunt by Martin Ross (1902)

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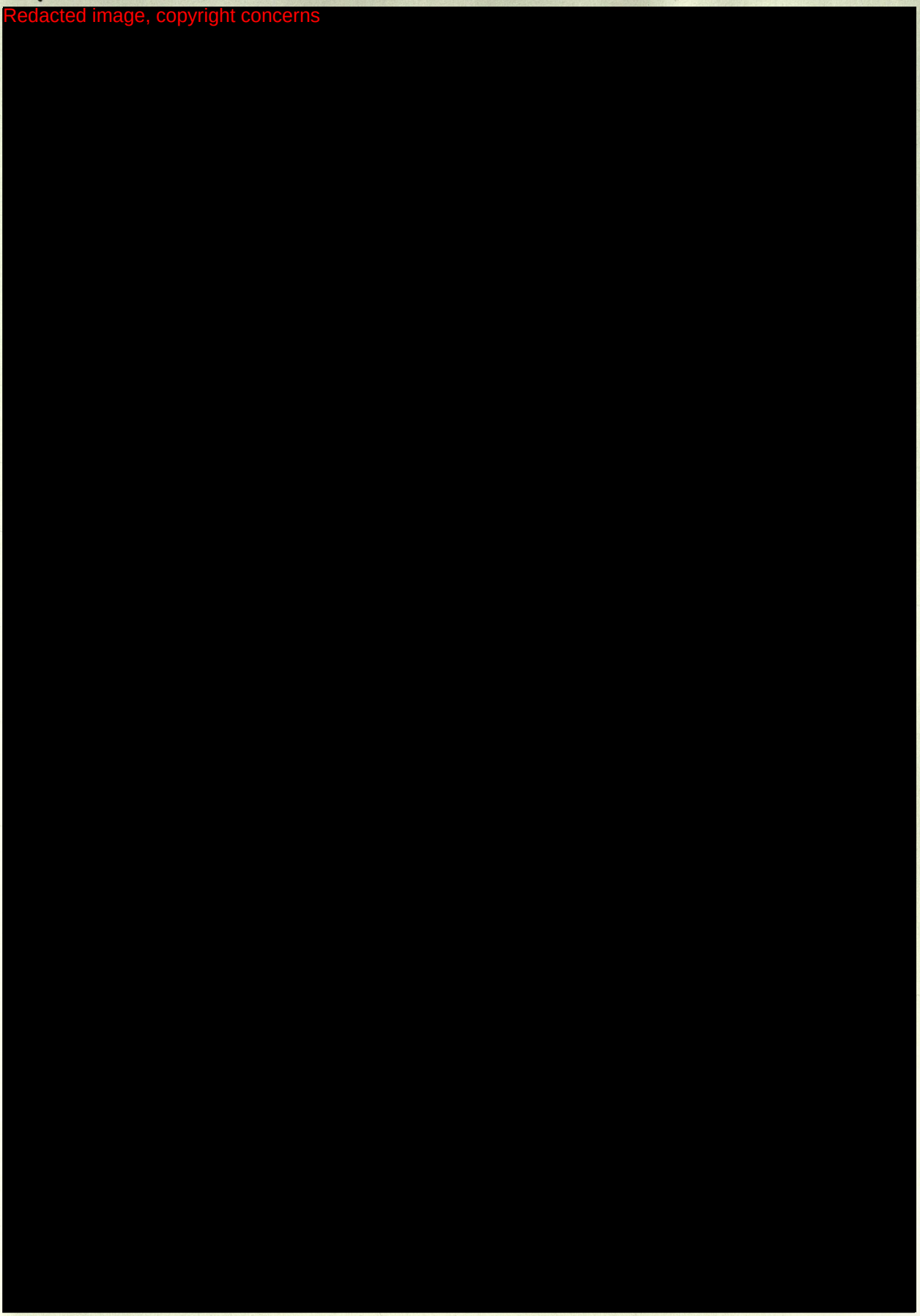
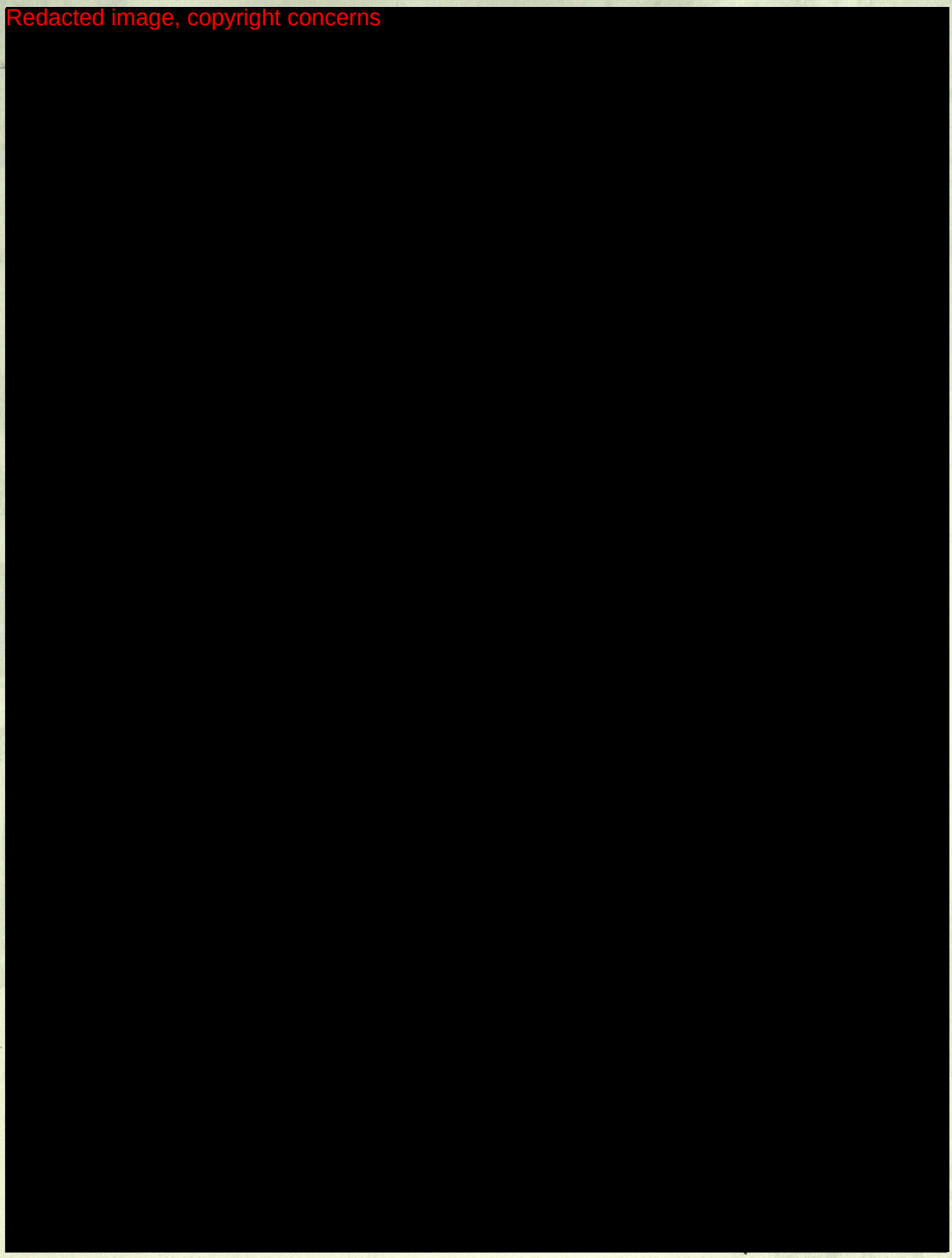
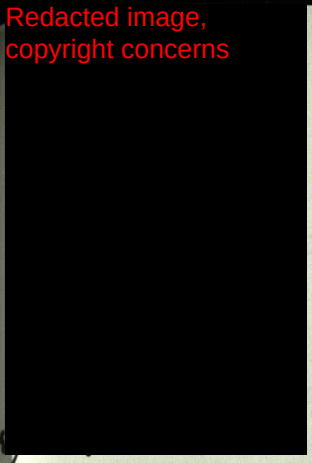


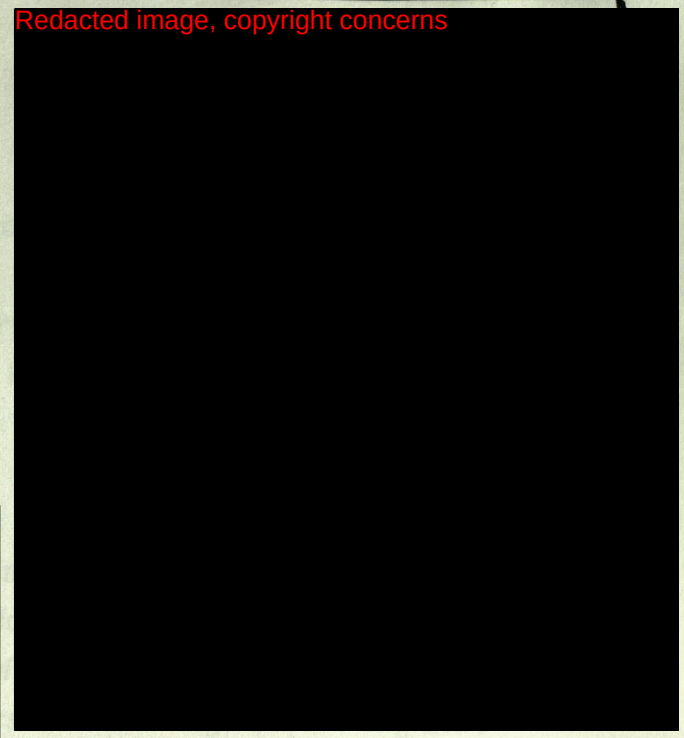
4-3 Aubrey Beardsley, The Death of Pierrot, The Savoy (1896)

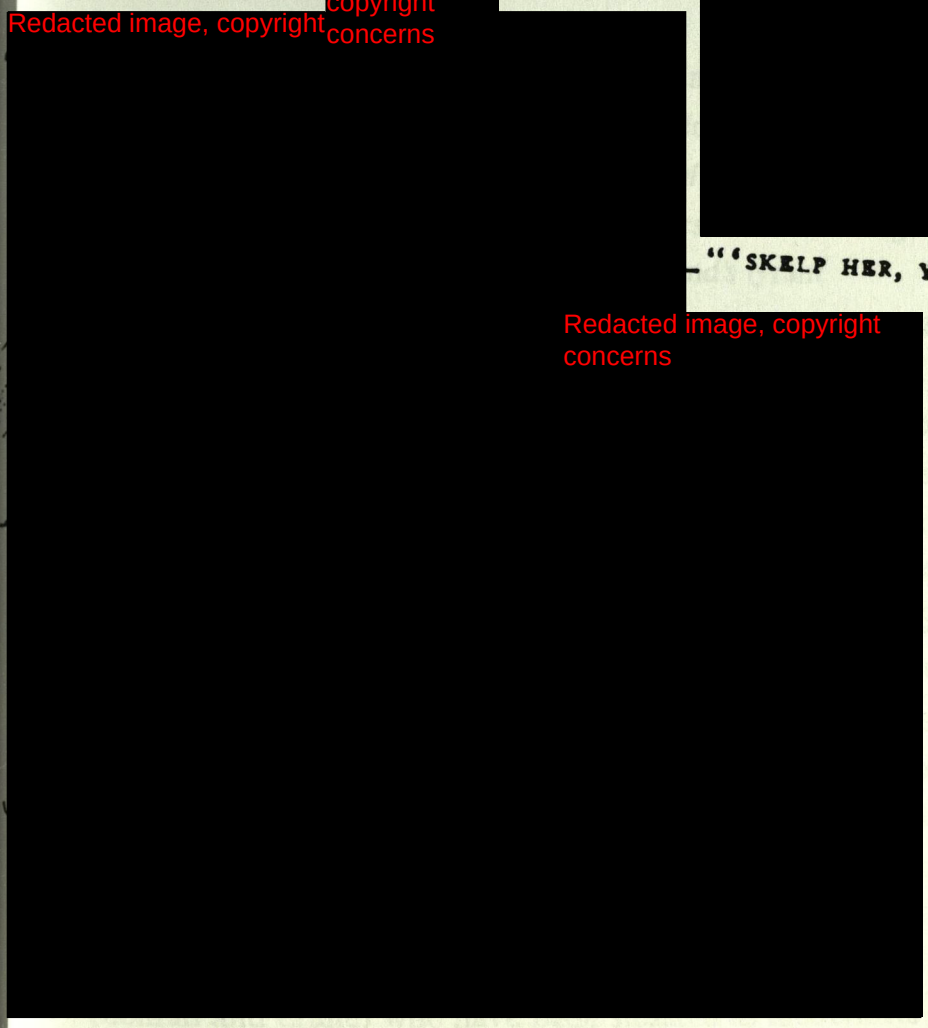


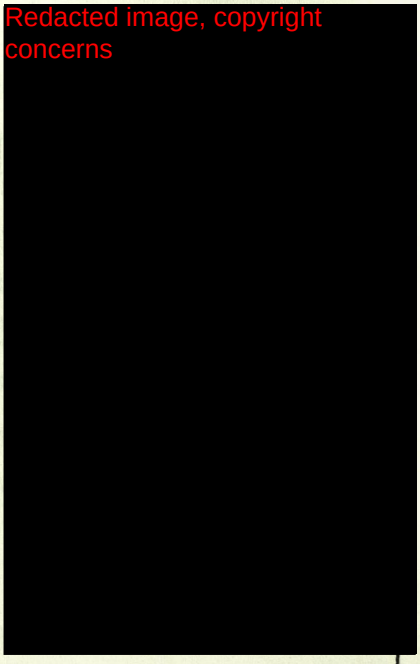
"IS THAT MY DARLIN' MAJOR YEATES?" SHOUTED THE COOK

4-4 Edith Somerville, illustration from "A Horse! A Horse!" (1908)









45 Edith Somerville, various versions of Slipper from The Irish R.M.

Part Three: Landscaping in the Irish R.M.

Chapter Five: Picturing the Past: Reaction to Popular Representation of the Nation in Somerville and Ross's Irish R.M. Stories

When something like a decade has been expended in explaining Ireland by skilful newspaper writing, by writing less skilful but more direct, by speeches diplomatic & fine, & by coarser declamatory bellowings, that she is oppressed of the oppressor, who can wonder, or very much blame, if the hearers of such things believe England's only role in history to be that of Ireland's tyrant.

(Martin Ross, 1889)[1]

In 1889, Martin Ross lamented the absence of History in Ireland's national schools. She argued that popular polemics had replaced factual record and consequently reduced the Irish-English relationship to only one kind of interaction, that of oppressor and oppressed. A decade later, she and her cousin satirized in a series of short stories called Some Experiences of an Irish R.M. romanticized versions of the past which stood in the place of historical record. Somerville and Ross directed their satire at the notion that only one point of view or one image/myth might represent the Irish landscape. Their suggestion that more than one perspective might exist in the representation of Irish reality coincided with modern experimentation with perspective in the visual arts.

Somerville and Ross's agent, Pinker, represented at least two writers (Conrad and Crane) who have been situated as modernists working to develop the art form of the modern short story. Somerville and Ross, however, tend to be seen as Victorians whose venture into short fiction was motivated by commercial interests alone. Yet the Irish cousins published at the same time as Conrad and in similar periodicals like Blackwood's Magazine, and their interests included experimental treatment of short fiction. These writers not only developed the magazine story but also took special interest in a pictorial tradition, self-consciously incorporating into short fiction techniques of the visual arts. They published in prominent

[1] Martin Ross, Draft of "Cheops in Connemara" (June 13, 1889) no. 884, QUB.

English periodicals and wrote stories that satisfied their readers in one sitting, to achieve a "single effect," which Edgar Allan Poe described as "immensely important."[2] Their work drew attention to picture making by exploring impressionistic techniques (as employed in Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat," a work Martin Ross especially enjoyed[3]), or using both text and illustration to tell a story (as in Somerville and Ross's R.M. stories), or demanding that "fiction--if it at all aspires to be art . . . must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music." They took special interest in using visual techniques in literary form.[4]

I have already investigated how the Irish collaborators utilize a pictorial aesthetic in the text as well as in the illustrations of the Irish R.M. stories. Flurry Knox, I argued, often represents the harlequin figure and the simple lines of his character, like black and white illustration, suggest modern notions of caricature as propagated in French literary theory. I would like to turn now from the nature of Flurry's character to the world he introduces in various R.M. stories but especially in the first series from Badminton Magazine. I am interested in the authors' play with perspective in Flurry's world, and I look not just to Ireland but across the water to Scotland so that I may explore the authors' attack on single-faceted versions of the past as conveyed by the monument, the ballad, or the portrait. I hope to demonstrate the authors' resistance to a particular sense of history, a sense demonstrated, for instance, in Ulysses, when Michelangelo's Moses is described as a "stone effigy in frozen music." The man describing Michelangelo's marble statue as "horned and terrible, of the human form divine, that eternal symbol of wisdom and prophecy" is Seymour Bushe, grandson of Charles Kendal Bushe who presided as Lord Chief Justice of Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century. Somerville and Ross were also descended from the Lord Chief Justice; Seymour was

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[2] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," The American Tradition in Literature I, eds Sculley Bradley *et al.* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1977) 881.

[3] Somerville and Ross's Diaries, 1898. QUB.

[4] Stephen Crane was hailed by Edward Garnett as "the chief impressionist of the age" and by Conrad as "the impressionist *par excellence.*" Qtd. in Sergio Perosa, "Naturalism and Impressionism in Stephen Crane's Fiction," Stephen Crane: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Maurice Bassan (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967) 91. Perosa's study demonstrates the impact of the techniques of Impressionism upon writers of the era of Somerville and Ross and how Expressionism, so recognizable in Crane's later fiction, grew out of it. Joseph Conrad, "Preface," The Nigger of Narcissus (1897; London: Gresham Publishing, 1925) ix.

their cousin. The latter was renowned for his magnificent rhetorical flourishes. In Aeolus of Ulysses, the failed solicitor and occasional contributor to the newspapers, J.J. O'Molloy, quotes the lawyer's description of the statue. It is, he tells Stephen Dedalus, a "most polished period," and his rendition of silver-tongued Bushe's oratory arouses to admiration the young Dedalus:

> The stone effigy in frozen music, horned and terrible, of the human form divine, that eternal symbol of wisdom and of prophecy which, if aught that the imagination or the hand of sculptor has wrought in marble of soultransfigured and of soultransfiguring deserves to live, deserves to live.[5]

The idea that the artistic representation--the statue, the portrait, the ballad--somehow freezes the soul in flight and isolates in one, epiphanic moment the essential spirit of the time and place is an idea which the grandchildren of Ninety-eight inherited.

The months leading up to the centennial year of the 1798 rebellion were marked for Somerville and Ross by an increasing awareness of Irish revivalism fostered by Douglas Hyde and Lady Gregory. Douglas Hyde encouraged the writers to collect folk material from Irish-speaking storytellers of the Cork region. On January 24, 1897, Hyde wrote to Edith Somerville to draw her attention to a local Cork storyteller named Curly Minihane. He urged her to collect such material and also suggested Irish grammar booklets by his friend, Father O'Growney, for learning Irish.[6] From February until June, Somerville and Ross studied Irish at home in Castletownshend, and during this time Hyde sent them his folk stories and a lecture on Irish folklore.[7] This same year, Lady Gregory also started learning Irish, and in the summer Douglas Hyde visited her at Coole where she assisted him in collecting folk material.[8]

Business in London interrupted Somerville and Ross's Irish lessons in spring, 1897. Edith Somerville met with Pinker, the editors of Badminton Magazine, and publishers Lawrence and Bullen to discuss their forthcoming novel, The Silver Fox, and some recent magazine stories. As

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[5] James Joyce, Ulysses 115.

[6] Otto Rauchbauer, Drishane Archive 184.

[7] Diaries, QUB.

[8] Augusta Gregory had tried to learn Irish before but only persevered after being inspired by the general enthusiasm generated by the visits of Standish O'Grady, Horace Plunkett, and Douglas Hyde during summer, 1897. See James Pethica, ed., Lady Gregory's Diaries, 1892-1902 151-52.

already noted, the Englishmen "raved" about a piece called "The Grand Filly"; they loved this "comic Irish business."[9] That summer, Somerville and Ross gave up Irish and left for France where Edith Somerville painted and they both devised the characters and situations of Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.

Somerville and Ross would return to their study of Irish in later years, but in 1897 they chose to pursue their own interests. While Lady Gregory and Yeats, inspired in part by Douglas Hyde's enthusiasm, conspired to create a Celtic Mecca in Dublin with the Irish Literary Theatre that summer,[10] Somerville and Ross channelled their energies into short fiction. Their concentration on satire may have been encouraged in part by the Local Government Act of 1898, which altered significantly the balance of power in southern Ireland. Control shifted from the grand juries to local government through county councils, rural district councils, and boards of guardians. Nationalists began to replace unionists as the elections of March 1899 indicated: nationalists won about 75% of county council seats and southern landlords lost out.[11] By the 1900s, Martin Ross associated the Gaelic League with divisive nationalist factions although she and Edith Somerville kept up correspondence with Douglas Hyde and maintained contact with those involved with the developing Irish Literary Theatre. Instead of learning Irish, they continued to record and catalogue their Collected Irish Anecdotes. Although they had started this collection in 1886, the extensive use of Irish-English in their fiction did not become fully apparent until the R.M. stories appeared.[12] Their representation of a language they describe as "a fabric built by Irish architects with English bricks,"[13] in other words, a hybrid tongue resulting from transculturation in Ireland, might be seen as a reaction to the politicization of the language question. Their increased concentration on the Irish folk and the subversion of their idealization in the R.M. stories might also be seen as a reaction to the politicization of the Irish landscape.

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[9] Edith Somerville, letter to Martin Ross, 25 April, 1897, Letters 242-43.

[10] Pethica, ed., Lady Gregory's Diaries 152-53.

[11] Virginia Crossman, Local Government in Nineteenth-Century Ireland 96-97.

[12] Hilary Robinson notes how closely Somerville and Ross's fiction follows the material in "Stock Pot Memories" (Collection of Irish Anecdotes). She thus sets about proving the authenticity of the Irish-English used in Somerville and Ross's work. Somerville and Ross 51-55.

[13] Somerville and Ross, "The Anglo-Irish Language," (1910) Stray-Aways 184.

The year the R.M. stories appeared in Badminton Magazine, Lady Gregory published "Ireland, Real and Ideal" in the periodical, The Nineteenth Century. The article defends the Irish peasant who for too long has worn the mask of "boastful adventurer" or "rollicking buffoon" conferred by stage and literary tradition. Lady Gregory reveals to her English readers the real Irish peasant by showing that his involvement in the co-operatives demonstrated a practical sense while the growth of the Gaelic League indicated an ideological purpose. Indeed, says Lady Gregory, in place of the absent Parnell, these two growths--the Society of Agricultural Co-operation and the Gaelic League--have become powerful grass-root forces in Ireland. (Augusta Gregory thus identifies the political significance of the Gaelic League, a significance which repulsed the unionist, Martin Ross.)

Lady Gregory focuses her argument on language and argues that colonization has suppressed an unrecovered cultural mine at the heart of the Irish peasant. The loss of language, caused by English penal laws, the Famine, and National schools in Irish-speaking areas, is a loss of culture. With the righteous vigour of a decolonizing missionary, Lady Gregory argues that language "expresses the spirit of the race," and without his Gaelic past the Irish peasant finds himself stranded in a linguistic and cultural limbo. Douglas Hyde's translations of Irish songs reveal this hidden tradition. In fact, she claims, such carefully collected songs show more than anything else the Irish peasant's imagination, dignity, and spirituality. One of Augusta Gregory's numerous examples in "Ireland, Real and Ideal," a "merry" song, as she describes it, might be considered with the sacrilegious R.M. parodies in mind:

> The Irish songs I have heard sung in the cottages are for the most part sad, but I have heard a girl last year sing a merry one, in a jubilant mocking tone, about a boy on the mountain, who neglected the girls of his village to run after a strange girl from Galway that came here. And the girls of the village were vexed, and they made a song about him. And he went to Galway after her, and there she laughed at him, and said he had never gone to school or to the priest, and she would have nothing to do with him. So then he went back to the village and asked the smith's daughter to marry him, but she said she would not, and that he might go back to the strange girl from Galway. (779)[14]

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[14] Augusta Gregory, "Ireland, Real and Ideal," 769-82

Lady Gregory's description falls short of capturing the merry carnival spirit so evident in Somerville and Ross's short fiction. Such serious treatment of light-hearted material invites the kind of parody Somerville and Ross would later employ in a satire on the recuperation of the past in "The Last Day of Shraft," discussed below.

In quite a different way and relying upon the use of Irish-English, Somerville and Ross also addressed questions concerning the real and the ideal in the Irish countryside with their Badminton stories. Despite suggestions that the R.M. stories reintroduce the 'rollicking buffoon' which Lady Gregory and Yeats deplored, Somerville and Ross used comic fools and rogues "to rip off masks" concealing the private interests of public patriotism.[15] They employed parody to reveal what might lurk behind the picture frames enclosing the romantic scenery or venerable portraiture of nineteenth-century Ireland. They subverted a romantic vision which is as much Protestant as it is Catholic, as much Scottish as it is Irish, by considering both sides' propensity for making monuments out of mole-hills.

This chapter has three sections. The first section introduces Somerville and Ross's sly send-up of romanticized notions of Irishness in two stories dealing with story-telling and language, "Lisheen Races, Second Hand" and the "Last Day of Shraft." The second section qualifies the writers' parody by addressing it in two parts, the subversion of Catholic and Protestant romantic imagery. The vehicle for investigating the stories' treatment of memory will be through a study of the background of the main Irish character, Florence McCarthy Knox. Initially, I consider response to Catholic-nationalist versions of the past in ballads from The Nation with emphasis on the Cork name, McCarthy. Then, I look at the subversion of a Protestant discourse made manifest by portrait painting and indicated by the Cork painter, Daniel Maclise. The Protestant discourse extends this discussion to Scotland; it necessitates the inclusion of a wider range of material to appreciate the comprehensive nature of the Somerville and Ross parody. The paper's final section, then, will demonstrate the authors' parody in "Waters of Strife," a story which focuses on popular commemoration of 1798, and "Holy Island," which attacks Catholic Ireland.

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[15] Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination 163.

This study of Somerville and Ross's involvement with the Irish political discourse in their short fiction emphasizes the wide range of the writers' Irish interests. Because the main section of this chapter pays particular attention to Somerville and Ross's subversion of a 19th century antiquarian discourse, we might keep in mind that Edith Somerville's brother, Boyle Somerville, "was the first archaeologist mathematically to measure and survey stone circles."[16] Vice-Admiral Boyle Somerville's assassination by political extremists in 1936 demonstrates the harsh political reality confronting the Anglo-Irish population. I argue that Somerville and Ross's comic fiction, developed and produced over a period of seventeen years, the final years of their collaboration, addresses most fully the ideologies of race and nation to provide a series of modern short stories attacking grand ideologies of nation and providing alternative visions of a picturesque Ireland.

Section I: "Lisheen Races, Second Hand" and "The Last Day of Shraft"

The first three stories of Some Experiences, "Great-Uncle McCarthy" (Oct. 1898), "Trinket's Colt" (Nov. 1898), and "In the Curranhilty County" (Dec. 1898) ("When I First Met Dr. Hickey" was first published in the final series of R.M. stories, In Mr. Knox's Country) set the picturesque backdrop of Shreelane and Aussolas and establish its hybrid mix of characters: Anglo-Irish Mrs. Knox and her Irish servant,"Robinson Crusoe," her grandson, Flurry Knox, whom she nicknames Tony Lumpkin after the spoilt practical joker of Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, the English Major Yeates with his Irish background and English wife, Philippa, the Irish peasantry including Mrs. Cadogan and Slipper.

The next nine stories continue to provide a series of madcap harlequinesque adventures while taking potshots at a mix of material relating to topics as diverse as New Woman attitudes and Irish nationalist ideology. "The Waters of Strife" and "Lisheen Races, Second-Hand," for instance, parody the exaggerated tropes of current perceptions of Irish rebellion, especially the mythologized Wexford Rising of 1798. "Philippa's Fox-Hunt" and "A Misdeal," on the other hand, develop the feminine discourse (women in sport, women in love) and the romantic plot between the Irish cousins, Flurry and Sally Knox. "Holy Island" satirizes the role of

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[16] Gifford Lewis, Somerville and Ross 226.

Catholicism in Ireland, while "The Policy of the Closed Door" returns to love and subversive female behavior in the Irish countryside.

Two strands run through the twelve Badminton stories which unite in the aptly named finale, "Oh Love! Oh Fire!" (Dec. 1899). The love in the title indicates the harlequinesque union of Flurry and Sally. They emerge as the king and queen of misrule, bringing mayhem to its successful end--marriage. The fire suggests the nationalist flame in the tower of Aussolas which is successfully doused by the combined efforts of the Anglo-Irish and the folk. Throughout this first series of R.M. stories, the nationalist flame is fed by idealized pictures of the past and fanned by a love of storytelling and a playing to the audience which pervades Irish rhetoric and is especially apparent in the fifth Badminton story, "Lisheen Races, Second-Hand."

Major Yeates' first discovery in "Lisheen Races" is that things are not as they appear, especially the "enshrined portraits of the friends of [his] youth" captured in the photographs of Oxford days in England. His old pal, Leigh Kelway, has become the Honourable Basil Leigh Kelway whose political ascent is matched by an insufferable rise in self-esteem. As the private secretary to Lord Waterbury, he has come to Ireland to collect information on "the Liquor Question in Ireland." Gone is the youthful curl of hair and an insipid romanticism which drew the young Sinclair to his side. Now all has changed, muses Major Yeates as he studies his younger self and Leigh in a "David and Jonathan memorial portrait,"[17] side by side in the photograph's picture frame, like some newly married couple. By the end of the story, the Oxford portrait will be cruelly ridiculed when Leigh Kelway is discovered clasped in the arms of the drunkest and most disreputable Irishman one might possibly meet at the country races--the loser.

A later story from Further Experiences, "The Last Day of Shraft," repeats the successful satirical formula of "Lisheen Races" but strikes closer to the bone. The English visitor to Ireland this time knows quite a bit about Celtic studies and his earnest collecting of Irish folklore recalls the contemporary seriousness of revivalists throughout Great Britain (including Lady Augusta Gregory). Ironically, this story is one of a pair of stories drafted in August and September of 1903, and the first of these drafts, "The Boat's Share," uses as its principal matter "a verbatim report of a court-room scene, a dispute about fishing heard before J.P.s, attended and

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[17] The Irish R.M. 93.

reported by E. OE. S."[18] "Lisheen Races" also relies upon the authors' transcripts of Irish raw material. Slipper's anecdote at the centre of the story, his narration of the Lisheen races which the Oxford graduates never manage to attend, is included in Somerville and Ross's Collection of Irish Anecdotes. Martin Ross transcribed the material as early as May, 1893 as "The Story of Owld Bocock's Mare." Thus, the question for Somerville and Ross is not if one can successfully collect and transcribe Irish material but who is best qualified to do so.

The retelling of events that occurs in "Lisheen Races" is by the best and least reliable storyteller of the R.M. series--Slipper. His enthusiasm for his story is encouraged by a good few drinks and a gullible listener, the visiting English parliamentarian. Slipper's second-hand version of the races, however, follows the general breakdown into mayhem which Flurry Knox introduces. "Like a clown at a pantomime" who climbs out of windows rather than exits out of doors (96), Flurry also manages to employ three horses and two articles of conveyance not to arrive at the Lisheen races. Kelway, "a writer of thoughtful articles" who intends "to popularize the subject [of Irish drinking] in a novel" (94) soon finds himself in the middle of the action of a harlequinade, no longer the observer but the observed, no longer the statesman but the ridiculous fool. Kelway's only thirst is for statistics, and so he is swiftly and surely chastised for imagining he might retell the Irish story by the greatest drinker of the R.M. series, Slipper, whose "brogue" flummoxes the Englishman and whose story, a blatant exaggeration of reality, seduces him into belief. The drunkard, Leigh Kelway's object of study, outdoes the politician on all fronts. The sot reigns supreme.

Yet Slipper's story, a performance as much as a narration and full of exaggeration and downright lies (and enjoyed by its Irish pub audience for that very fact), also parodies a certain type of Irish historicizing which relies on general effect rather than truthful record. The story of Driscoll, his horse--Owld Bocock's mare--and the race, an Irish skirmish performed with the aid of much "porther and whiskey" and "the Sons of Liberty's piffler and dhrum band from Skebawn" (103), climaxes with the frightful death of Driscoll. With the ready assistance of Slipper's stick, Driscoll's mount bolts, throws his rider, and rolls on him "as cosy as if he was meadow grass." With relish Slipper describes "the blood [that] was dhruv out

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[18] Nevill Coghill's description of mss XII, which was used for "The Boat's Share" is in his Catalogue, no. 3783, TCD. Early drafts of the two stories are found in no. 3290, TCD.

through his nose and ears, ... his bones crackin' on the ground!" (107). The story (or what he understands of it) horrifies Leigh Kelway. He believes Slipper.

Slipper's story is a great lie, as Kelway must realize when a well-bandaged Driscoll breaks through Slipper's pub audience to find and destroy his tormenter. Yet Leigh Kelway's humiliation continues further as indignity follows indignity and he is finally discovered by his superior, the Right Honourable the Earl of Waterbury, in the embrace of the very same (and now very drunk) Driscoll singing the 1798 rebellion ballad, "The Wearing of the Green."

The satire in "Lisheen Races" has a double barb. It ridicules the pomposity of the colonial who makes a study of Irish culture and believes he can summarize the story of Ireland by taking notes and earnestly observing its habits. It also parodies the folk story so popular in its retelling in national balladry like "The Wearing of the Green," its deliberate heroizing and fudging of events. The retelling of the Lisheen Races displays the art of the story-teller rather than the truth of his telling. The final insertion of an instance of this kind of myth-making, the popular Irish ballad, as well as the Englishman's ultimate humiliation, manages to unveil two different kinds of pictures of Irish reality: the colonial dream and the nationalist nightmare.

"The Last Day of Shraft," published in Strand Magazine seven years later, isn't so much interested in mocking the centennial celebration of 1798, as found in stories from Some Experiences, as it is intent on burlesquing the idealization of the Irish peasantry and their native tongue. Thus we find that Major Yeates' wife, Philippa, has become an Irish language enthusiast and after five Irish lessons can say good morning to her teacher. She invites her stepbrother, Maxwell Bruce, who is seriously involved in collecting ancient Irish stories and practising the tongue on native Irish speakers, to visit Hare Island, "an unworked mine" of Irish folklore (337) where Major Yeates is going to shoot ducks. Ironically, though Maxwell Bruce might speak Irish, he does not understand the language of commerce which is the real means of communication on the island. His visit to Mrs. Brickley's illicit drinking house to collect authentic folklore from the local poet Shemus Ruadth becomes opportunity for shebeen shenanigans of the liquid kind. Meanwhile, Major Yeates' shooting expedition becomes a laborious struggle through mud which renders nothing--except for Mrs. Brickley's fine drake.

Like most of the R.M. stories, "Last Day of Shraft" includes comical changes of dress reminiscent of the transformation to the harlequinade of nineteenth-century pantomime. In this story, Peter Cadogan dresses himself in the fine left-over clothing of his employer, a striped blue suit and yellow boots. Major Yeates, drenched during his shooting expedition, must change into one-legged Con Brickley's one-legged trousers. The costume changes transform love-sick Peter into a figure closely resembling the bagged drake while Yeates' new clothes reduce him to the fool.

It soon becomes apparent that Mrs. Brickley's picturesque appearance masks a hustler's heart. In the same way, the Brickley's white-washed thatched cottage conceals an illicit business, selling poitin, and the arrival of 'neighbours' (the clients) to listen to the Irish singer entertaining Maxwell Bruce is an opportunity to fool the police and to drink the day away--the day before Lent which is, of course, carnival time. Sharpening both the performers' and the audience's pleasure is the performative nature of the event--everyone wears a mask and everyone tricks the serious folk-lore collector and the representative of English law in Ireland, Major Yeates. Everyone is on stage.

The show reaches its hilarious apex (the masks begin to become apparent) when the audience pushes forward a young singer named Paddy, the picture of timid ineptitude: "an incredibly freckled youth . . . with eyes fixed on the ground and arms hanging limply at his sides, like a prisoner awaiting sentence" (347). Again, appearances deceive for Paddy delivers a bold commentary on the day's adventures in the shape of a ballad which satirizes the solemn songs of Shemus Ruadth. It is a ballad on the murder of a drake, a "poor little fella' / His legs were yella' / His bosom was blue, he could swim like a hake" (348). With an air of gloom, young Paddy breaks out into a brief stomping jig before continuing his song. Maxwell Bruce is disgusted, Major Yeates is suspicious, and the audience--who all know the joke and are thinking of blue-chested, yellow-legged Peter Cadogan fleeing across the water this moment with the Brickley daughter--the audience are delighted. Paddy's comic song satirizes Shemus Ruadth's dignified ballads, Major Yeates' inexpert marksmanship, and earnest Peter's elopement with Bridget Brickley in one fell swoop. Best of all, when the 'polis' arrive to search for illicit drink (tipped off by Flurry Knox), they find in the centre of the action the Resident Magistrate in his one-legged costume and with a full glass of whiskey at hand.

Like the parody in "Lisheen Races," "The Last Day of Shraft" shows that a romanticized version of reality (the remnants of ancient Ireland lurking in the Irish oral tradition) does not convey the whole truth. Paddy's parody of Irish tradition exploits the tools of the past to comment on the present; he provides a subversive picture of Ireland. This is another 'truth.' In "Lisheen Races," the formal memorial portrait and Slipper's exaggerated anecdote give versions of reality which possess as much 'truth' as alternative versions, like the one provided by Somerville and Ross's story.

Section II: Subversion of Romantic Imagery, McCarthy and The Nationalist Discourse

The resounding spell-words of mid-19th century Irish balladry from The Nation--""Watch and Wait," "Bide Your Time," "Stand Together," "Step Together," "Brothers Arise," "The Sword," "Advance"--find a mocking echo in Somerville and Ross's short stories.[19] These stories resist the striking poses, the inflated imagery, the martial overtones[20] of Irish nationalist thought. They subvert the grand vision by introducing the monocular perspective of Major Yeates, the new Resident Magistrate to West Cork, who peers at Irish life through his monocle, and is frequently thrust right down into its messy dealings by Flurry Knox.

Florence McCarthy Knox, the Irish R.M.'s landlord and grandson of old Mrs. Knox of Aussolas, suggests with his name two cultural strands: the mainly Catholic McCarthy family and the strictly Protestant Knoxes. As a squireen, a half-gentleman and hybrid, Flurry "occupies a shifting position" (11) in between these two camps. Despite his land ownership, he does not quite merit the hand of Sally Knox. He stands as "a man of the

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[19] The Spirit of the Nation becomes an important source of Irish nationalist sentiment in Edith Somerville's later novel, Mount Music (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1919). The hero, Larry Coppinger, finds his "young soul burning with hatred for England, borrowed from the Bards of 'The Nation' office"(34).

[20] Joep Leerssen speaks of the foregrounding of martial topics in the national iconography of The Spirit of the Nation ; "such a martial tendency marks a change from the mellower tones of Moore and foreshadows the machismo of Standish O'Grady." Leerssen notes the appearance of two Irish military histories by Matthew O'Conor (1845) and John O'Callaghan (1854) during this period. Remembrance and Imagination 148-49. The mock battles of the Irish R.M. stories parody this discourse.

people," [21] more at home with the farmers and horses than the visiting English or the local gentry. Nonetheless, his connection to the better families dignifies his character and allows him access to their homes. Flurry's name reveals a network of influences which this chapter will briefly trace.

The first part of this name, Florence McCarthy, recalls Lady Morgan's aforementioned national tale, Florence Macarthy, a novel revolving around the lost birthright of the ancient Irish-Catholic Macarthy family, once kings of Munster but now a fallen race.[22] However, a more specific connection to Flurry's maternal half becomes immediately apparent in the first R.M. story. Flurry's great-uncle Denis or "Great-Uncle McCarthy" suggests that one part of Flurry's family descends from a more recent strain: that of the mid nineteenth-century poet, Denis Florence McCarthy, collector of Irish ballads and regular contributor to The Nation.

Of course, McCarthy is a common Cork name, but Denis Florence McCarthy--the conspicuous signature of "Great-Uncle McCarthy"--features less frequently. The first story of the Irish R.M. series is set in Great-Uncle McCarthy's decrepit house of Shreelane. In fact, Shreelane, which Major Yeates rents as Irish Resident Magistrate, is the site of Denis McCarthy's death. Shreelane, "a tall, ugly house of three stories high, its wall faced with weather-beaten slates, its windows staring, narrow, and vacant"(8) rears itself high up in ruined destitution like one of the monuments of the Irish past, a tower house or, more significantly, a romantic pillar tower of popular Irish poetry. Its supposed ghostly hauntings by Uncle Denis McCarthy are assisted by a sense in this house that one has slipped back in history to a "prehistoric age" (10) where, according to Mrs. Cadogan, a Turk couldn't endure the filth of the squatting McCarthys whose nightly perambulations and banging of doors sound to Major Yeates like "the priests of Baal call[ing] upon their god" (18); in short, it is a place where

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[21] In December 1897, Somerville and Ross sent six chapters of a "hunting story" to James Pinker. Much of this unfinished work,"A Man of the People," they used in the R.M. stories. Most of "A Closed Door" and "A Misdeal" comes from the earlier work. See "A Man of the People," no. 880, QUB. The 'man of the people' in the earlier unpublished work, Michael Kavanagh, anticipates Flurry Knox although the former character's folk wisdom and closeness to the land becomes less obvious in Flurry, the landowner. Nonetheless, Flurry's idyllic background as a 'man of the people' (corrupted through past family marriages into the Knox family) indicates the influence of the pastoral idyll in the R.M. stories. For discussion of the role of 'a man of the people' in the idyll, see Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination 235.

[22] Lady Morgan (Sidney Owenson), Florence Macarthy.

Oriental overtones evoke a vaguely ancient world that recalls the ruined Round Towers of the nineteenth-century poet and regular Nation contributor, Denis Florence McCarthy.[23]

The ghost of great-uncle McCarthy and the Catholic-Irish nationalist tradition he represents suggest Denis Florence McCarthy's vision of Ireland, his contribution to the construction of a half-fabricated 'towering' family lineage, and provide part of the background to the R.M. stories. Particularly important within this background is McCarthy's involvement with the Irish ballad, material which Somerville and Ross's short stories parody. The first dozen R.M. stories respond to nationalist discourse and work to expose its shibboleths as vainglorious posturing while attempting to establish a truer and yet ultimately saleable picture of the land and its people.

In Charles Gavan Duffy's Ballad Poetry of Ireland, first published in 1845 and "one of the greatest best-sellers of the entire century,"[24] Denis Florence McCarthy presents his elegy on the McCarthy clan. "The Clan of the MacCaura" recalls Timothy Sullivan's earlier work, "Elegy on the Death of Denis McCarthy" in Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy,[25] but the later poet parallels his family's illustrious past with the romantic history of the Irish Round Towers. The first and fourth verses of the ballad combine the history of the family with the poet's interest in Irish antiquities:

> Oh! bright are the names of the chieftains and sages,
> That shine like the stars through the darkness of ages,
> Whose deeds are inscribed on the pages of story,
> There for ever to live in the sunshine of glory--
> Heroes of history, phantoms of fable,
> Charlemagne's champions, and Arthur's Round Table,

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[23] McCarthy has nine poems in the 1864 edition of Spirit of the Nation. His popularity is indicated by the presence of his collected poems in Leopold Bloom's bookshelf in Ulysses. The marker in Bloom's text rests on page five which according to the 1881 edition is the table of contents. Perhaps Bloom never got round to reading the actual poems.

[24] Leerssen, Remembrance and Imagination 14.

[25] According to Hardiman, Timothy Sullivan (Thaddeus Hibernicus) composed this lament for "the last of Munster's genuine stock, MacCarthy's royal line" in the eighteenth century. As titular king of Munster, Denis MacCarthy "retained much of the dignity appertaining to the ancient Irish chief." His clan dominated the south but were eventually "'broken down by [their] own divisions rather than the power of [their] enemies.'" The remains of this Irish family, says Hardiman, were "sons bred to low trades, uneducated paupers, some of whom are still living--*Sic transit gloria Mundi.*" Irish Minstrelsy or Bardic Remains of Ireland, II (London: Joseph Robins, 1831) 272-79; 418-20.

Oh! but they all a new lustre could borrow
From the glory that hangs round the name of MacCaura.

.....

Proud should thy heart beat, descendant of Heber [eldest son of Milesius, king of Spain]
Lofty thy head as the shrines of the Guebre [the Round Towers],
Like *them* are the halls of thy forefathers shattered,
Like *theirs* is the wealth of thy palaces scattered.
Their fire is extinguished--*your* flag long unfurled--
But how proud were ye both in the dawn of the world!
And should they both fade away, oh! what heart would not sorrow
O'er the towers of the Guebre--the name of McCaura![26]

The Irish Round Towers, which McCarthy invests with eastern connotations (the Guebre fled Persia for India in the seventh and eighth centuries to escape Muslim persecution) represent the McCarthy family with its equally ancient (and equally vague) background. The poet sees both hailing from "the dawn of the world," possessing the status of myth and a timelessness French and English histories might envy. The McCarthys are a hidden--an unknown--Irish royalty, and their grandeur is all the more wondrous for its tenuous and shadowy connections. Both family and edifice prop up each other's aspiring reputations, and just as the pagan flame no longer burns in the Pillar Towers of Ireland so too does the McCarthy flag no longer fly.

The real Denis McCarthy--the poet--died in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, in 1882. Thus Shreelane might be considered Somerville and Ross's response to McCarthy's creative (and crumbling) house of fiction which the popular poet constructed in his ballads and criticism. In his introduction to The Poets and Dramatists of Ireland, for instance, Denis Florence McCarthy sets about establishing a questionable foundation of Irish literature. "Early Religion and Literature of the Irish People" attempts to persuade readers of Ireland's glorious and ancient past, a noble Phoenician heritage introduced

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[26] Denis Florence McCarthy, "The Clan of MacCaura," The Ballad Poetry of Ireland, ed. Charles Gavan Duffy (1845) Fortieth edition. (Dublin: James Duffy, 1869). The extensive notes to this ballad set about establishing the connections of the McCarthy family to ancient nobility. In Florence Macarthy, Lady Morgan had already suggested (through the hedge-schoolmaster, Terence O'Leary, who also describes himself as "an old Senachy, or genealogist" (I: 268)) a similar line of descent for the Macarthies. The name Florence, says the storyteller *cum* antiquarian (the two professions overlap), "comes from the Spanish name Florianus, which the Macarthies brought with them on their way from Scythia" (261).

in pre-Christian times whence Irish culture, language, and religion derive.[27] McCarthy argues that Ireland's first colonizers were "princely merchants" from Phoenicia (15), but more important than any facts for McCarthy is how past truths might be established. He believes that present-day Irish spectators prefer to view the past--indeed, prefer the past to the present--as a series of pictures:

> It is not to be wondered at, that Irishmen are fond of recalling the ancient glories of their country, and that they live more in the past than in the present; for the past, such as it was in fact, and such as it is presented to us in the traditions of the people and the songs of the bards, is indeed a pleasing picture to behold.[28]

As Joep Leerssen demonstrates in Remembrance and Imagination, the 'pleasing pictures' of the past constructed by writers and poets such as Denis McCarthy counter the scientific view of George Petrie in the 1830s who claimed the Round Towers were of Christian date, had a monastic origin, and were used for defensive purposes.[29] The popular view prevailed in this public debate.

To read McCarthy's poetry under the shadow cast by Somerville and Ross's Shreelane is to acknowledge the heavily ironic underscoring of the later writers' work. Somerville and Ross's first story in the Irish R.M. series recalls the Round Tower debate--the eastern, pre-Christian hauntings of the ruined house/tower, the picturesque scene, the overwhelming sense of a lost grandeur--and introduces the format from which these subversively picturesque tales originate. The humour of the first story and those that follow relies in part on the overturning of popular view so that the ghostly haunting of Shreelane by Denis McCarthy and his priests of Baal turns out to be nothing more than the mundane squatting of a degenerate great-niece, Mrs. McCarthy Gannon.

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[27] McCarthy sees the past as a series of events which, however their record may be distorted, distil an essential truth: "The cherished traditions of a people, however extravagant they may appear, are in every instance valuable sources of information. No matter what amount of error may have been heaped upon them in their downward course through the ages--no matter what incrustations may have formed around them--still like the statue in the block of marble the original form of truth is there, and requires only the discriminating hands of the historian to reveal" (18).

[28] Denis Florence McCarthy, ed., "Introduction on the Early Religion and Literature of the Irish People," The Poets and Dramatists of Ireland and The Book of Irish Ballads. One Volume (Dublin: James Duffy, 1846).

[29] Leerssen 109-12.

Some Experiences of an Irish R.M. re-invents nineteenth-century discourse by deliberately recalling Denis Florence McCarthy in their first story and returning to his thesis in their last. The collection both begins and ends with the historical symbol of the Irish Round Tower. The pagan fire of these mysterious edifices becomes a reality when in the final story, "Oh Love! Oh Fire!," the tower of Aussolas erupts into real and dangerous flame. In a dramatic finale to the Badminton series, on "the hottest day of a hot August," Major Yeates attends the tenants' dance held by old Mrs. Knox of Aussolas. The "unknown age" of the castle, with its rusty suit of armour, "mouldering pictures," (226) and "prehistoric mirrors" (235) recalls the anachronic decrepitude of Shreelane. Here, at the height of the festivities, "a heavy stack of chimneys in a tower that stood up against the grey and pink of the morning sky" (232) ignites for no particular reason other than to recall the McCarthy heritage (and the romantic nationalist subtext) of these stories. The clouds of red smoke and the sparks of fire are eventually doused by the tenants themselves, but the significance of the occurrence appears to be symbolic for it bears little relevance to the plot. Thus the frame of the Badminton R.M. series includes the McCarthy/Irish nationalist discourse, an underlying argument which enriches a seemingly superficial yarn in the British sporting magazine.

The Denis Florence McCarthy name, then, works like a signature tune accompanying the various movements of the R.M. stories and especially the Badminton series. The name introduces an Irish symphony of argument and counter argument revolving around questions of identity and place in nineteenth-century debate. The text subverts patriotic pretensions of an ancient grandeur by placing the McCarthy's present-day antics against the romantic nationalist discourse. The other part of Flurry's name, the Protestant Knox part, complicates the nationalist discourse by introducing external influences.

Subversion of Romantic Imagery: Knox and Protestantism

The only indication we have of the origins of the paternal side of Flurry's family is a portrait of grandfather Knox hanging in the dining room of the Butler-Knoxes' family home, Garden Mount House. This venerable picture appears briefly in a later R.M. story, "A Horse! A Horse!" (published in two parts in The Graphic in 1908 and eventually collected in Further Experiences). Grandfather Knox's likeness--this frozen record of

character--gains significance when considered within contemporary discussion on portraiture.

As descendents of Cromwell and a soldiering breed, the "dingily respectable" black coats and hats (169) and the dour dullness (355) of the Knoxes seem far indeed from the green blaze of Irish nationalism which the McCarthy family colourfully evokes. The Butler-Knoxes represent a more prosperous and respectable branch of the Protestant clan. They are more interested in singing church hymns than Irish ballads; they are "rich, godly, low church, and consistently and contentedly dull" (355)--and their serious religiosity gives opportunity for much clowning by the disrespectful cousins, Flurry and Sally Knox. Because the Butler-Knoxes enjoy their comforts just as much, if not more, than their prayers, they become easy targets for the hard-living Anglo-Irish.[30] The settled side of Flurry's family becomes material for Somerville and Ross's attack on religious hypocrisy. Just as the nationalist McCarthy clan erects a towering family lineage out of the past, the Knox family maintains a belief system which calls attention to its religiosity. Thus, these stories suggest that if late nineteenth-century Catholic nationalism requires an appropriate past to bolster its claim to the land, Protestant unionism needs a stronger faith to maintain its hold. In any case, playful Sally Knox gives us some clue to the source of the Protestant discourse. Unable to consume the bounties of the Knox table, she distracts attention from her disposal of a brimming glass of claret by pointing to a portrait of their collective great-grandfather and asking if it is the work of Daniel Maclise.

The Knox family add a curious note in stories which tend to focus on the Catholic-McCarthy side of the equation, but their inclusion and its significance within the nationalist discourse is vital. They upset the notion that patriotic sentiment and ethnic pride might be exclusively Catholic or, indeed, exclusively Irish. They make complex Somerville and Ross's

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30 Lady Carbery's description of her visiting Protestant missionary friends, the Sholto-Douglases, to Castle Freke at the end of the nineteenth century provides a likely source for Somerville and Ross's "A Horse! A Horse!". These pompous and comfort-loving evangelicals request their hostess to produce suitable sinners for their missionary work; unfortunately, Mary Carbery knows none (!) but asks a few friends to help out. Included in this group is Edith Somerville's cousin, Hewitt Poole. Lady Carbery reports in her journal that the missionaries are disgusted with their audience "who ask them inconvenient questions about miracles, etc." We might conclude that a follow-up report on missionaries who are not "too good to have a first-rate cook and comforts" made its way back to the Somerville home in Castletownshend. Jeremy Sandford, ed., Mary Carbery's West Cork Journal, 1898 - 1901 or "From the Back of Beyond" (Dublin: Lilliput, 1998) 96 -100.

subversion of the nationalist discourse, and they open up the stories to the possibility of external influences. The portrait of Knox, which reminds the R.M. readers of the Scottish Presbyterian line of inheritance trickling its 'black blood' through these stories, suggests two possible origins. The first possibility rests with Daniel Maclise, a Cork painter of Scottish-Presbyterian background, renowned for historical paintings and illustrator of Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies. Maclise painted numerous portraits: while living in Cork as a young man, he sketched Walter Scott in 1825 and Colonel John Townshend of Castletownshend the following year.[31] The portrait which Sally Knox singles out for notice in "A Horse! A Horse!" may refer to Maclise's portrait of Edith Somerville's relation, Colonel John Townshend.

A second possible origin also relates to Maclise and the subject of portrait painting. A rather circuitous route--from the Cork painter to Thomas Carlyle in Scotland (and his ideas on portrait painting)--provides further commentary not only on the Knox family but also their tradition and its idealized portrayal.

In the 1830s Maclise published a series of portrait drawings for Fraser's Magazine, including in 1832 a picture of Thomas Carlyle. Maclise's sketch of a young and dapper Carlyle as one of the Fraserians contrasts with later images of the influential Scotsman by Millais, Sargent, and others. Carlyle figures in numerous guises in different paintings, including Ford Madox Brown's painting, Work, which positions Carlyle alongside destitute Irish immigrants. The variability of Carlyle's image, the fact that he appears as quite different in each painting, intrigues us when we consider Carlyle's strong interest in portraiture as historical record. How ironic that the man who believed the portrait acted like a "lighted candle" by which one read the biography of a historical figure appears himself in history as a multi-faced figure whose portrait presents a series of guises of which no two are alike.[32] Carlyle possessed the Victorian sense of portraiture as a means of "translat[ing] history into character." This form of representation, Nina Auerbach claims, had become "art's sole link

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[31] John Turpin and Richard Ormond, Daniel Maclise (1860 - 1870). John Turpin, "Daniel Maclise and his Place in Victorian Art," 51-69.

[32] In a letter to David Laing published in Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1855), Thomas Carlyle argues that the portrait, like a "lighted candle" by which one might read the biography of a historical figure, becomes an essential part of historical record (174).

with eternity."[33] Thomas Carlyle professed a strong interest in portrait painting as valid historical record up until the end of his life.

One portrait, the portrait which connects him to the Irish R.M. stories, dominated Carlyle's imagination in the 1870s. He became obsessed by a work he called the "Somerville Picture," and in attempting to prove its subject he published an extensive and inevitably fruitless account in Fraser's Magazine in April, 1875. This was Carlyle's last work: he called the essay, "The Portrait of John Knox."

Sally Knox's reference to her ancestor's picture--a portrait of Knox--the dubious nature of its authority and authenticity, the possibility that it is the work of Daniel Maclise, gives us some idea of the Scottish-Presbyterian connection of the Knox family name as well as, perhaps, further indication of the background of myth-making which the R.M. stories resist. The portrait of a Knox and the possible involvement of Maclise resonate within nineteenth-century argument on historical portraiture emanating from Scotland and, more specifically, from the ideas of Thomas Carlyle. A consideration of Carlyle's views on the "Somerville Picture" demonstrates the conflation of myth and historical fact in the Scotsman's vision.

In "The Portrait of John Knox" Carlyle argues that the accepted version of the Presbyterian Scottish reformer, John Knox, by Theodore Beza is not genuine. Carlyle finds unbelievable that Beza's portrait honestly depicts this heroic figure, this "most Scottish of Scots," a "national specimen" whose face must surely reveal the characteristics inherent to the place and its people. "No feature of a Scottish man" appears in Beza's icon. The portrait seems "entirely insipid. . . . more like the wooden Figure-head of a ship than a living and working man" In short, it is "highly unacceptable to every physiognomic reader." There is, however, an engraving of Knox, claims Carlyle, which does resemble the heroic figure of Scottish Protestantism. That picture--the Knox Portrait--belongs to none other than the Irish branch of the Somerville family and is owned by a Mrs. Ralph Smyth of Gaybrook near Mullingar. The "Somerville Picture," as Carlyle terms this work, he believes erroneously to be a copy of a painting by the sixteenth-century artist Francis Probus.[34]

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[33] Nina Auerbach, Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U P, 1982) 192.

[34] Thomas Carlyle, "The Portrait of John Knox," Fraser's Magazine, XI. LXIV (April 1875): 407-39.

Carlyle's attempt "to prove the authenticity of the Somerville portrait" demonstrates his effort to make "the fact . . . support the vision."[35] We know already how the Irish poet Denis McCarthy sought to create eternal myths from half truths. Evidently such a tendency can be traced in a Scottish Protestant discourse on portraiture as witnessed by Thomas Carlyle. John Knox represented a priest-hero for Carlyle and his god-like stature and Scottish background prove a potent combination perhaps equal in its chauvinism to Irish romantic nationalism. In his 1840 lecture, "The Hero as Priest," Carlyle claims that John Knox resurrected the Scottish nation. Before Knox, "the bravest of all Scotchmen" (195), Scotland was "a poor barren country, full of continual broils, dissensions, massacrings; a people in the last state of rudeness and destitution, little better than Ireland at this day" (192). After Knox, says Carlyle, "the people began to live . . . Scotch Literature and Thought, Scotch Industry; James Watt, David Hume, Walter Scott, Robert Burns: I find Knox and the Reformation acting in the heart's core of every one of these persons and phenomena; I find that without the Reformation they would not have been" (194).[36] His determination to establish the Somerville-owned portrait as the suitable version of his priest-hero (and the evident failure of this determination) flies in the face of the conclusions of art experts, contradicts the reality of facts.

Thomas Carlyle visited Ireland twice (1846 and 1849). His friendship with the editor of the Nation, Charles Gavan Duffy, and their dialogue concerning the Irish situation in the 40s and 50s replicate in history the fictional dialogue of Knox and McCarthy in the R.M. stories.[37] Duffy sought to persuade his friend to support the Irish nationalist cause. Of course, Carlyle could not be persuaded despite his admiration for Duffy and his reading of The Nation (courtesy of the editor who placed the Scotsman on its mailing list). According to James Froude, who possessed firm Anglocentric views himself, Carlyle saw England and Ireland as inseparable, and only asked that England admit its responsibilities to its

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[35] Fred Kaplan, Thomas Carlyle: A Biography (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1983) 515.

[36] Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History (London: Routledge, 1841).

[37] See, for instance, Carlyle's letter to Duffy written a year after his visit to Ireland, 15 Sept. 1850. Conversations With Carlyle (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1892) 158-62. Duffy also records that their one serious argument was a disagreement about Ireland and what Carlyle saw to be Ireland's resistance to the Reformation (223-28).

poorer sister-nation.[38] According to Froude, Carlyle believed that "English stupidity and selfishness on the one hand and Irish superstition and sloth on the other" had sabotaged the Irish economy and caused the nation's problems.[39]

Despite the polarized opinions of the Irish nationalists of The Nation and the Scottish historian regarding 'the Irish situation,' a concordance of ideology and sentiment becomes discernible in their world view as demonstrated in either Irish romantic balladry as dealt with by Denis Florence McCarthy or in the portrait of Knox as perceived by Carlyle. Somerville and Ross's stories satirize this world view .

Somerville and Ross's Irish R.M. stories and in particular their hybrid McCarthy-Knox hero join in fiction the seemingly polarized perspectives of Catholic and Protestant factions. By tracing these two lines of descent and dissent, we discover a similar conjunction of interests in history. Thomas Carlyle, Scottish Presbyterian and staunch unionist, and Charles Gavan Duffy, Irish nationalist and editor of The Nation, meet in fact and implicitly in Somerville and Ross's fiction. Thus our investigation of Flurry's two halves brings us full circle. The McCarthy interests and the network of connections which the name Denis Florence McCarthy unveils leads in the same direction as that of Knox.

The comic form of the R.M. stories enables the writers to make sly digs at various romantic notions of both Irish nationalist ideology and Scottish ethnic pride. The stories attack grand ideologies and self-consciously reveal a series of fabrications while, in their own way, creating yet another version of the 'real' Ireland. Some Experiences of an Irish R.M., however, does pay special attention to what I have described as the McCarthy version of Irish history. A number of tales, such as "The Waters of Strife" or "Holy Island," satirize romantic nationalistic pieties. The first of these two stories, a biting parody of the 1798 commemoration of the Wexford rebellion, concerns itself with the memory of the Irish past by restaging key myths in R.M. country. The final part of this chapter will look more closely at Somerville and Ross's manner of exposing various idealized pictures of Ireland, pictures that often mask a dangerous reality.

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[38] James Anthony Froude, Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, 1834-1881, II (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1884) 336-38.
[39] Ibid., 340.

Section III: "The Waters of Strife" and "Holy Island"

The third story of the Badminton series of R.M. stories introduces the darker undercurrents of Somerville and Ross's humour. "The Waters of Strife," published in January of 1899 and thus offering a commentary on the previous year, quickly establishes itself as a work which addresses Irish politics and their dangerous mix of personal vendetta and national sentiment against a sublime backdrop of Irish scenery. This scenery is important. With self-conscious irony, the narrator claims that "the president of the Royal Academy could scarcely have chosen more picturesque surroundings:" a towering mountain, dark woods and lake, purple heather (76-77). Close up, the hectic variety of scene, the disorganisation and roughness, the chaos and eventual violence contradict the picture-like setting. We see behind the picture frame. The Irish sublime is subverted just as nationalist propaganda will be debunked.

The story focuses on the fortunes of a fighter called Bat Callaghan, a local lad who murders a member of the green-clad football club, "The Sons of Liberty," and with the help of his widowed mother flees to England to enlist in the British army. Callaghan becomes the element of self-destruction within Irish nationalism. His purposeless act of murder flies in the face of popular accounts of patriotic assassination and heroic sacrifice.

As patron of "The Sons of Liberty's" regatta, Major Yeates attends the rowdy festivities held on the picturesque banks of Lough Lonen. The brass band plays "The Boys of Wexford" while boats race across the lake. The Major recognises Bat Callaghan amongst the shouting supporters, and it isn't long before the charming scene becomes a rough and ready battleground with Bat Callaghan at its centre. When the shirt-sleeved crew (whom Callaghan supports) beats the "Sons of Liberty" crew--both teams making up the rules as they advance to the finishing line--fighting amongst the supporters breaks out: a green-jerseyed figure called James Foley attacks white-faced Bat Callaghan who will later murder his challenger in vicious revenge.

The comic festivities soon turn sour when the next day Foley is discovered murdered and Bat Callaghan disappears. His mother, a grey-haired widow who looks the picture of restrained grief when she appears at the Resident Magistrate's door, attempts to bribe Yeates with a fat goose while swearing her son's innocence. Despite protestations, the Widow

Callaghan appears on the stand as a witness, maintaining under oath a series of scurrilous lies.

The waters of strife turn even darker at the end of the story when Major Yeates comes across the absconded Irishman in England. Yeates is dining with his old regiment at Whincastle when a sentry on guard shoots into the night and then collapses into a fit. The sentry, Yeates discovers, thought he saw a ghost, and when he dies the next day the Major realizes that the guard was Callaghan and the letter in his pocket from his mother provides clear evidence as to his guilt, a guilt that obviously provoked his fears in the English night.

The mayhem and vivacity of the so-called regatta (far indeed from Major Yeates' Oxford memories) reflect the political violence energizing local nationalist movements. The significantly named " Sons of Liberty," their band's chosen tune, "The Boys of Wexford," the mob violence, and the resulting murder suggest that the story parodies romantic nationalist memory of Ninety-eight. In a historical study of the position of Resident Magistrate in Ireland, Penny Bonsall briefly considers the political significance of "Waters of Strife," suggesting the green-jerseyed crew recall the United Irish League, founded by William O'Brien in Co. Mayo in January, 1898.[40] Its slogan, 'the land for the people,' challenged ascendancy land owners, and its popularity helped to bring about Wyndham's Land Act of 1903.[41] Somerville and Ross's black humour in "Waters of Spite," however, parodies a tradition, a way of looking backwards to determine present-day politics and the future of Ireland, rather than any particular organization.

It is significant, for instance, that when Major Yeates eventually escapes the dubious pleasures of the regatta, his last view of the scene is the sight of Bat Callaghan climbing the greased pole to capture the pig hanging in a sack at its end: "Callaghan's lithe figure, sleek and dripping, against the yellow sky, as he poised on the swaying pole with the broken gold of the water beneath him" (80). This miniaturized view of a human standard could suggest different things. Through his monocle and from a distance, Yeates sees in Callaghan's figure an alternative banner to the "immortal green" of Irish nationalism, the green flag of the Sons of

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[40] Penny Bonsall, The Irish RMs: The Resident Magistrates in the British Administration in Ireland 46.

[41] F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (London: Fontana, 1971) 216-18.

Liberty and of The Nation's songs.[42] At the same time, Callaghan's swaying body parodies the gibbeted martyr of popular nationalist balladry.

As we have noted, Bat Callaghan's co-conspirator, his means of escape and his chief character witness, is his lying widowed mother. On the stand the Widow Callaghan is "deaf, imbecile, garrulously candid, and furiously abusive of [the] principal witness, a frightened lad of seventeen." The result of the trial is "complete moral certainty in the minds of all concerned as to the guilt of the accused, and entire impotence on the part of the law to prove it" (86). Mrs. Callaghan demonstrates an utter disregard for the law and a craven cleverness revealed in her letter to her son in England: "God help one that's alone with himself I had not a days luck since ye went away. I am thinkin' them that wants ye is tired of lookin' for ye" (91). She is, in short, all that opposes popular nationalist notions of Irish motherhood because her defense of her son's deed has little to do with Irish patriotism. Her depiction contests the idealized versions of Irish mother/widowhood praised by the poetry of The Nation.

In Irish Penny Readings, a compilation of extracts by the editor of The Nation and published in 1879, there are two variations on a Ninety-eight story, the sentiment of which Somerville and Ross's work appears to parody. Both pieces focus on the love and sacrifice of a widow who has already lost her husband to the English forces and now faces the death of her son. The prose extract tells of the vicious flogging of the mother by the English soldiers when she dares to challenge their verdict. The second piece, a poem called "Ninety-Eight" by J.T. Campion, also shows the wicked means of subjugation by the English when a mother attempts to defend her "white-faced son" and is hung alongside him as a result:

> They were hanging a young lad--a rebel--
> On a gibbet before the old jail,
> And they marked his weak spirit to falter,
> And his *white face* to quiver and quail;
> And he spoke of his mother, whose dwelling

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[42] See, for instance, "'Up for the Green!' A Song of the United Irishmen" (1796): "'Tis the green--oh! the green is the colour of the true/ And we'll back it 'gainst the orange, and we'll raise it o'er the blue!/ For the colour of our fatherland alone should here be seen--/ The colour of the martyred dead--our own immortal green.'" The Spirit of the Nation, (rev. ed. 1845; Dublin: James Duffy, 1866) 118.

Was but a short distance away--
A poor, lorn, heart-broken widow--
And he her sole solace and stay. (my italics)[43]

The dignified old woman kisses her son's "pallid and wan" face (and this white-faced son recalls white-faced Bat Callaghan) and speaking "with the air of a queen" tells the "vile yeoman" that her son will not inform against his country. The widow's courageous defense and her son's tragic end become in the R.M. parody a cowardly woman's cunning trickery and a fighter's vicious revenge.

J.C. Beckett argues that though "'the boys of Wexford' often figure as the champions of national freedom" in Irish nationalist discourse (as propagated in popular ballad form), the actual cause of their rebellion might be summed up as "local grievances." Their connection to the United Irishmen, Beckett claims, was accidental rather than indicative of any common belief.[44] In Somerville and Ross's version of the events of Ninety-eight, Callaghan's actions parallel this view of the rebellion. Ironically, Callaghan finds succour with an English regiment. The next time Yeates meets him he is dead, mysteriously collapsing while on sentry duty and probably overwhelmed by his own fear of the ghosts he shoots at in the night. Callaghan's deathly white face posed against the green of popular Irish nationalism throughout "Waters of Strife" is a means of resisting the heroising of Irish balladry, such as The Nation's "The Memory of the Dead":

Then here's their memory--may it be
For us a guiding light,
To cheer our strife for liberty,
And teach us to unite.
Through good and ill, be Ireland's still,
Though sad as theirs your fate;
And true men be you, men,
Like those of Ninety-Eight. [45]

Unlike the memory of those of Ninety-eight, the rebels in Somerville and Ross's story are divided by internal feuding which has little to do with patriotic intents. The story provides an ironic alternative to the concept of

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[43] Penny Readings For the Irish People,II (Dublin, 1879) 120-23.

[44] J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland 1603 - 1923 (London: Faber and Faber, 1981) 264. Beckett's viewpoint assists our understanding of Somerville and Ross's subversive intent.

[45] The Spirit of the Nation (1843; Dublin: James Duffy, 1864) 40.

the 'united Irishmen.' More specifically, "Waters of Strife" contests popular nationalist propaganda published in the Irish Penny Journal and subverts the notion of the heroic folk, the idealized Irish widow and her courageous son.

"Waters of Strife" satirizes official records of the nation. The mad fooling of the regatta carnival becomes demonic murder which lays bare the mask or the front of the romantic nationalist cause. David Lloyd has noted that the writers of The Nation countered actual dislocation and disintegration of their numbers by discovering a "transcendental unity" through an "obscured but common origin" of the Irish people. A ballad history of Ireland "produces a unity that transcends actual division" while the martyr incarnates the essential spirit of the nation.[46] We see in Somerville and Ross's "Waters of Strife" the actual disunity of the fighting Irish and the sham status of the martyr; thus they parody both the national historical record and its symbolic manifestation.

I have considered Somerville and Ross's reaction to popular representations of the past. In this final section, I will look at the authors' satire of the Catholic nationalist destiny. In a later novel by Edith Somerville, An Enthusiast, a Catholic priest describes his dream of Ireland's future as "the Sanctuary of Religion": "'to be the one country in the world that cherishes our Holy Church!'".[47] "Holy Island," first published in May 1899, attempts to turn that dream on its head. It attacks the power base of the rising middle class, the Catholic Church. It shows influential farmers using the chapel as a front concealing their various conspiracies against a weakened British authority. It moves from the the troubled waters of Lough Lonen in "Waters of Strife" in September to the savage and wild waves of the Atlantic in November. At the beginning of the story a storm rages, and we enter a dark and troubled Catholic landscape where "foul and ugly mists" (like the "base contagious clouds" of Falstaff's dominion in Henry IV, Part One) shroud the outlaw activities of the tricky Irish and where

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[46] David Lloyd, "The Spirit of the Nation" in Nationalism and Minor Literature (Berkeley; London: U of California P, 1987) 63; 71.

[47] Edith Somerville, An Enthusiast (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1921) 147. This is the one novel after Martin Ross's death which bears Somerville's name alone. The work is loosely based on Horace Plunkett's life.

"gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon," overwhelm entirely the proper order of things.[48]

When an American ship carrying barrels of rum and butter capsizes on the rocks of Cork's rugged coastline, all hell breaks loose. Major Yeates, the local police, and the British coastguard try to salvage the booty from the waiting hordes of Irish. The shipwreck, the storm, and the evident loss of life become in this dark night a feverishly festive occasion, a Catholic drink-fest:

> The long strand was crowded with black groups of people, from the bank of heavy shingle that had been hurled over on to the road, down to the slope where the waves pitched themselves and climbed and fought and tore the gravel back with them, as though they had dug their fingers in. The people were nearly all men dressed solemnly and hideously in their Sunday clothes; most of them had come straight from Mass without any dinner, true to the Irish instinct that places its fun before its food. That the wreck was regarded as a spree of the largest kind was sufficiently obvious. (151)

The attempts of the authority to salvage the barrels of contraband goods are as ineffectual as the sailors' efforts to save their yacht from the rocks at Yokahn Point. Rum flows in bounteous founts across Tralagough strand as a piper plays a light-hearted jig, "The Irish Washerwoman," in celebration:

> The people, shouting with laughter, stove in the casks, and drank rum at 34 degrees above proof, out of their hands, out of their hats, out of their boots. Women came fluttering over the hillsides through the twilight, carrying jugs, milk-pails, anything that would hold liquor; I saw one of them, roaring with laughter, tilt a filthy zinc bucket to an old man's lips. (152-53)

By nightfall, bodies of drunken Irish lie strewn across the sand while a suspiciously large number of unopened barrels have disappeared. James Canty, a well-established farmer and "noted member of the Skebawn Board of Guardians" (possibly elected the previous March when the 1898 Local Government Act took effect), distracts attention from his smuggling of rum by treating the police and Yeates to his considerate and fulsome attentions. James Canty's "Falstaffian figure" (153) indicates the kind of authority he represents in Catholic Ireland.

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[48] Henry IV, Part One, I.ii, William Shakespeare, The Complete Works, ed., Alfred Harbage (New York: Viking, 1975) 673.

"Holy Island" shows the empty pieties and, indeed, the veil over action such pieties cast, of the Irish middle-class. The story responds to idyllic pictures of Catholic Ireland found in works like Denis Florence McCarthy's "A Dream of the Future" in The Spirit of the Nation. Somerville and Ross's nightmare version provides three raucous ballads,"The Irish Washerwoman," "One night to the rocks of Yokahn," and "Lanigan's Ball," as alternative songs which situate this world far indeed from McCarthy's national hopes in "Dream of the Future":

> I dreamt a dream, a dazzling dream, of a green isle far away,
> Where the glowing west to the ocean's breast calleth the dying day;
> And the island green was as fair a scene as ever man's eye did see,
> With its chieftains bold, and its temples old, and its homes and its altars free!
> No foreign foe did that green isle know--no stranger band it bore,
> Save the merchant train from sunny Spain, and from Afric's golden shore!
> And the young man's heart would fondly start, and the old man's eye would smile,
> As their thoughts would roam o'er the ocean foam to that lone and "holy isle!"[49]

The ocean foam in Somerville and Ross's "Holy Island" wreaks havoc. The 'green isle' is a bleak place indeed where an impoverished peasantry, and its mischievous leaders, would rather do a thing crooked than straight, would rather con their neighbour than earn an honest shilling. If we look again at McCarthy's Catholic nationalist predictions in "A Dream of the Future," we discover a wonderfully independent Ireland emerging from the bloodshed of war endured by a people "in abject prayer":

> At length arose o'er that isle of woes a dawn with a steadier smile,
> And in happy hour a voice of power awoke the slumbering Isle!
> And the people all obeyed the call of their chief's unsceptred hand,
> Vowing to raise, as in ancient days, the name of their own

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[49] The Spirit of the Nation (1864) 112-14.

dear land!
My dream grew bright as the sunbeam's light, as I watched
that Isle's career
Through the varied scene and the joys serene of many a future
year--
And, oh! what thrill did my bosom fill, as I gazed on a pil-
lared pile,
Where a senate once more in power watched o'er the rights
of that lone green Isle!

McCarthy's dream of the future houses a new Irish government in the ancient Round Tower so that the picturesque artefact becomes heavily weighted with a nationalist significance. Somerville and Ross's nightmare version of McCarthy's dream attacks such picturesque piety. The "fair hills of holy Ireland" which beckon passing ships to a "fresh and fragrant strand"[50] become dark and storm-tossed with a beach hardly fresh or fragrant after the Irish have vomited up their booty on Tralalough strand. Unlike the tyrannized Catholics of nationalist balladry who are invigorated by "the living wells--the cool the fresh, the pure," Somerville and Ross's cabin folk do not drink holy water to refresh their flagging spirits. Their "flowing founts" are contraband liquor.[51]

James Canty leads the law and Major Yeates a merry chase for the missing contraband rum. He stashes the goods on Holy Island, a picturesque isle on Corran Lake with its "jungle" of rhododendrons, a "ruined fragment of a chapel smothered in ivy and briars," and, naturally, a holy well (162). This ideal picturesque material is shown to be just that--a pretty picture that conceals all sorts of devious plots and illegal goods. Its renowned holiness (supported by vague fairy stories) provides the greatest protection of all for those hiding things from the law, and James Canty shrewdly dons the religious mask more than once to circumvent the strait-laced rules of British officialdom. At the funeral of the Roman Catholic Bishop of the

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[50] Samuel Ferguson, "The Fair Hills of Ireland," Irish Verse, ed. Brendan Kennelly (London: Penguin, 1981) 196. According to Sean Ryder, Ferguson's 1834 poem idealizes the Irish landscape to argue a Protestant, liberal viewpoint. "The Politics of Landscape and Region in Nineteenth-Century Poetry," Ireland in the Nineteenth Century: Regional Identity, eds. Leon Litvak and Glenn Hooper (Dublin: Four Courts P, 2000) 171-74.

[51] J.D. Fraser, "The Holy Wells," Ballad Poetry of Ireland, ed. Charles Gavan Duffy (1845), reproduction of the fortieth edition (1869: New York: Scholars' Fascimiles & Reprints, 1973) 216-17. "Holy Island" responds to a tradition of Irish ballads which sacralize Ireland, poems like Fraser's anti-Imperialist ballad or Ferguson's romantic translation of an old Irish song.

diocese, Canty secretes the stolen rum on the train which carries the cortege to Cork. His deception works, aided no doubt by the numerous surplices veiling his deeds. Catholicism--the rosary muttered by Mrs. Cadogan, the mass attended by the local pillagers, the shrine used as cover for stolen goods--is no more than a front in "Holy Island."

The Northern Newspaper Syndicate, who commissioned Somerville and Ross to write six articles this year, requested the writers avoid politics except for "the picturesque Irish species."[52] Irish politics, it seemed, had a picturesque appeal and perhaps James Canty's evasions, his playfully subversive behavior, might be of this kind. The story, however, advances more serious claims in its attack on Irish Catholicism, and just as the picture-like island is shown to conceal ordinary theft, so too does this picture-like story with its bagpiper and priests, its drunken Irish and clever crooks, reveal the collusion of the Catholic Church and the rising middle class. In the manner of the carnivalesque, Holy Ireland becomes a holy show. Catholic dreams give way to a disorderly, stormy underworld which operates according to its own dictates. "Holy Island" offers a kind of picturesqueness that disdains idyllic scenery, fairies, and holy wells but still employs the tradition whence the cliché and stereotype derive.

"Holy Island" and "Waters of Strife," like most of the R.M. stories, do not poke fun at merely one kind of myth. We recall that "The Waters of Strife" opened with a panoramic view of Ireland, a distanced perspective of sublime scenery which the English Royal Academy could admire. "Holy Island" also suggests the terrifying sublime with its opening stormy scenes and madly drunken Irish. These views complicate Major Yeates' monocular perspective which finds in Bat Callaghan a striking symbol of Irish faction fighting or which sees James Canty as a benevolent guardian of the people. The text does not necessarily exonerate the ideology shaping either view; rather, it self-consciously reveals how each view remains a picture. Thus we discover in the Irish R.M. series that different kinds of 'pictures'--the landscape, or the portrait, or the monument--conflate history and myth. McCarthy's pillar tower, Carlyle's portrait of Knox, Yeates' miniature of Bat Callaghan: such visions become alternative versions of reality in the R.M. stories.

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52 Letter to James Pinker, 14 Dec. 1899, Pinker Correspondence, no. 3330-1, TCD.

Chapter Six: The Art of Politics in Somerville and Ross's Later Fiction, 1908-1915

Reynard, it seems, that lawless Reprobate,
Like Satan, envying our happy state,
Around our Eden often lay in wait.
Stealthily round the walls by night he'd creep,
And through the crannies of the gates would peep.
The trusty Guardians of myself and Wife
Oft made the Ruffian scamper for dear life;
Once they did catch him, and well tanned his hide,
He got away, though sorely scarified;
And for a good while after let us bide. [1]

What the Irish landscape lacks in terms of horizontal scope, wide skies or stretches of forest and grazing field, it makes up for in depth. In Ireland, the limitation of the island's upper reaches, where more often than not the eye is oppressed by lowered clouds or stayed from wandering beyond the immediate by a broken terrain, seems to compel the gaze downwards into the earth where the force of gravity allows it to range unchecked and wondering at the possibilities of the unknown. In his study of Rabelais, Bakhtin's reference to Ireland relates to its bogholes. He speaks of the legend of Saint Patrick's hole in a discussion of medieval depictions of the underworld.[2] According to Bakhtin, the hole led to purgatory. Various popular late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century treatments of the sublime Irish landscape rely in part on such old stories. Bram Stoker's melodramatic adaptation of the legend of St. Patrick's banishment of the snake into the land's subterreanean depths in The Snake's Pass (1890), or George Birmingham's later light-hearted treatment of mysterious bogholes in Spanish Gold (1908), recall this central Irish image. The adventure stories adapt the notion of a hidden Irish underworld to the treasure-hunt

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[1] Thomas James Arnold, Reynard the Fox, After the German Version of Goethe, illus. by Wilhelm von Kaulbach and Joseph Wolf (London: John C. Nimmo, 1887) 47.
[2] Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World 388.

motif of popular romance. In both works, the hunt in the Irish landscape is rewarded with significant treasure as the land surrenders its mysteries to the improving English entrepreneur or the intrepid Anglo-Irish curate.

Somerville and Ross's later fiction, "The Whiteboys," published the same year as Birmingham's novel, and their final collaborative work, In Mr. Knox's Country (1915), parody both the idea of hidden treasure in the Irish landscape and the process of finding it, by employing their favourite past-time, fox-hunting, as a vehicle for satire. The authors' approach to the Anglo-Irish hunt and their use of 'that lawless Reprobate,' Reynard, is far from frivolous. Instead, it provides the key to their conception of the Irish landscape and demonstrates the writers' artful use of the short story form. In this chapter, I will initially investigate the main attraction residing in the depths of the Irish landscape, the hidden treasure, before turning to Somerville and Ross's use of the fox in their short fiction. I will investigate the political nuances of these provocative stories by considering their context in Blackwood's Magazine and their use of political allegory.

* * *

Somerville and Ross published the politically provocative short story, "The Whiteboys" of Further Experiences of an Irish R.M. in the illustrated newspaper, The Graphic, but it is their final collection of short stories, In Mr. Knox's Country, which has been regarded as their most political work. They started writing the stories in 1912, during the Home Rule debate, and published five of the ten stories over the next few years in the conservative Scottish periodical, Blackwood's Magazine. Allusions to the decline of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in the stories encourage readers like John Cronin to dismiss the material as "mordantly nostalgic," as a lament for fading Irish feudalism.[3] One story in particular, "The Finger of Mrs. Knox," has been selected as a demonstration of the authors' autocratic attitude towards land ownership in Ireland, a longing for a time when peasant and patron knew their places and all was right with the world. The historian Patrick Maume has asserted that this story confirms the writers' unionist politics in the early 1900s.

Maume wrote the entry on Somerville and Ross in the Oxford Companion to Irish History. "Both unionist in politics," says Maume, "they

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[3] John Cronin, Somerville and Ross 73.

are sometimes accused of malevolent stage-Irishness."[4] He connects their politics with that of Martin Ross's elder brother, Robert Martin, who wrote numerous comic Irish songs with a sectarian bias. "Unionist propaganda," is how Maume describes Robert Martin's material, and the implication is that Somerville and Ross's comic stories come close to being similar in intent.

Somerville and Ross critics, however, do not consider Robert Martin's writing of pantomime for the Dublin theatres in the 1880s and his younger sister's continued interest in that tradition throughout her writing career. Nonetheless, it is true that after Robert Martin's death in 1905, his younger sister became increasingly interested in arguing the unionist position in Irish politics and suffragette affairs. By 1912, when Somerville and Ross commenced writing their final collection of stories, Martin Ross had become especially active. Both writers had become involved with the Munster Women's Franchise League, and in January of this year invited a Miss Gill from Norway to lecture on "How we won the vote in Norway." In February, Martin Ross expressed a conservative position in her suffragist tendencies when she wrote to Miss Pankhurst "declining her militant protest on March 4 because, chiefly, [Martin Ross] belonged to a non-militant suffrage society."[5]

For Somerville and Ross, the 1912 Home Rule Bill (the result of the "destruction of the veto power of the House of Lords [which] removed the last constitutional obstacle to Home Rule"[6]) took on greater political urgency because of their suffragist involvement. As Edith Somerville pointed out when writing to her brother Cameron in June of that year, the fortunes of the woman's franchise depended more on the larger game of politics than personal sympathies:

> You may have seen that Lord R. Cecil & Philip Snowden are bringing in a woman's Franchise Amendment to the Home Rule Bill. Redmond is terrified of the 50,000 solid & organised Ulster women, & personally is an Anti. therefore he commands his party, who are mainly Suffies, to vote against it. The Unionist M.P.'s for Ulster are

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[4] S.J. Connolly, ed., Oxford Companion to Irish History (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 520.

[5] Martin Ross's Diary, 1912, QUB.

[6] F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine 287.

mainly Antis, but they & most of the Unionist party are to vote for it, as it may split the Govt. & the Labour Party.[7]

However, while Edith Somerville--who would become President of the Munster Women's Franchise League the next year--concentrated on suffragette affairs, her cousin became increasingly involved in mainstream politics.

Martin Ross contributed strenuously to the debate on Home Rule throughout 1912. In January and February, she corresponded with the journalist Harold Begbie of the Daily Chronicle and the Irish M.P. Stephen Gwynn arguing against Home Rule and voicing her suspicions about "the sudden change in tone of the Irish leaders towards . . . the Landlord Class," the diffidence and occasional warmth which replaced previous attack.[8] In April, she attended a Unionist meeting in Cork to protest against the Home Rule Bill. In September, she travelled to Ulster and witnessed the signing of the Covenant, publishing her impressions the following month in The Spectator.[9]

At the same time, Martin Ross continued to follow developments of the Irish nationalist literary movement. In March, she had tea with Edward Martyn and much talk with Lady Gregory in the gardens at Coole. Augusta Gregory had just returned from touring in America with the Irish Players and, no doubt, spoke of the largely successful run of their folk drama despite mixed reactions to Synge's Playboy. By the summer, Martin Ross was discussing with Carrie Townshend the Gaelic League and the significance of the Irish language. Despite her conviction of the political intent of the League, she recommenced lessons in Irish by the end of the year.

The writing of Mr. Knox's Country during this period started with Martin Ross's reshuffling of her and Edith Somerville's Collected Irish Anecdotes. Sections of the stories rely heavily on this material. John Kane's

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[7] Edith Somerville, Letter to "Chimp," 4 June 1912, Drishane Archive, L.A. 771.

[8] Somerville and Ross, Wheel-Tracks (London: Longmans, 1923) 220. For Martin Ross's letters to Stephen Gwynn, see Irish Memories, 315-23.

[9] Martin Ross, "The Reaping of Ulster," The Spectator 5 Oct. 1912: 504-05. Impressed by the simple and "unadorned" action of the labourers and farmers of Protestant Ulster in their signing of the Covenant on Ulster Day, Martin Ross nonetheless predicts ominous results from the scenes she witnesses. The Union Jack is a "blood-red blur against the humility of thatch and whitewash." The train which meets Carson and Smith at the station is enveloped in "steam clouds that had the red-stain of the fire in them." She recognizes a determination in the orderly files of protestors which suggests that "'these men will die in their last ditch, if such there be in this business.'"

performance in "The Aussolas Martin Cat," for instance, comes from these records, while the string of comments on horses and their riders by the 'rustics' in "The Maroan Pony" might also be found in the Somerville and Ross collection of anecdotes. As in previous R.M. stories, this material is framed or staged within the narrative.

In "The Maroan Pony," for example, the "Real Primitives" or "the rustics of Poundlick" (486-487) act as both chorus and backdrop to the races on the banks of the Arrigadheel River. "'Off the stage I have never seen people clear out so fast'," (488) remarks one of Major Yeates's party when a race starts. The point is, of course, that no one really is 'off stage' in any of these stories. The commentary of the "faithful gallery" becomes the true entertainment of the story, as the race merely provides opportunity for testing the audience's wit. "'That horse is no good,'" says a priest, "'Look at his great flat feet! You'd bake a cake on each of them!'" A farmer argues that the same horse has the strength to "'plough the rocks!'" (490) while another horse is "'a hardy bit of stuff . . . and nothing in her but a fistful of bran!'" (493). The audience/actors are conveniently positioned below Major Yeates and his party of picnickers as they stand on a hillock watching the horses hurl themselves across the turf. The story thus provides a double act or, to be more precise, a play within a play: the race and, framing the race, the rustic revellers. Of course, as in all the R.M. stories, Major Yeates and Philippa and the rest of their group eventually take to the boards; they become a "stage mob" (500) when later on in the story they must find the Maroan pony. Appropriately, they discover the missing pony high up in a loft of a pub's outhouse.[10] Now, instead of looking <u>down</u> at the races and the rustic audience, the observers find themselves looking <u>up</u> at the pony framed in the doorway of as natural a stage set as one could ever hope to find. The Anglo-Irish audience become comical stage hands when they have to get the pony down from its awkward position.

<u>Mr. Knox's Country</u>, however, relies on more than Somerville and Ross's transcribed anecdotes. Various elements of the stories directly recall

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10 The pony's position on high in "The Maroan Pony" cleverly mirrors the pony's position down below in "Trinket's Colt" in the first collection of stories. Perhaps it is the repetition of this device which leads John Cronin to conclude that in <u>In Mr. Knox's Country</u>, "the writers fall back on situations often exploited before." Reading these final stories, he says, one suffers from "a strong sense of *déjà-vu*" (74). My analysis, however, demonstrates the authors' reworking of similar material to create different effects. Thus, these two stories together create a topsy-turvy effect which emphasizes the pantomime-like world of the R.M. stories.

Robert Martin's collection of poetry and stories published in 1899, Bits of Blarney, which suggest that the younger sister may have plundered her dead brother's material as well as that of the Irish folk. In "The Aussolas Martin Cat," for instance, the Englishman who hopes to purchase and improve the decrepit Anglo-Irish estate recalls the Saxon in Robert Martin's "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning" who discovers that his attempts to improve the debt-ridden castle fail miserably because "English ideas were only accepted by Hibernians as long as they could get any good out of them."[11] Then, in "Comte de Pralines," Somerville and Ross's Englishman disguised as a Frenchman may have originated in Robert Martin's pretend Frenchman in "Killaloe":

> If disguises you would try, or would prove an alibi,
> or alter your appearance just for fun,
> You've just one thing to do, go tache French at Killaloe,
> and your mother will not know you for her son. (Bits of Blarney 36)

In "Comte de Praline," Somerville and Ross employ the French disguise to cause mayhem in Flurry Knox's domain. Finally, Somerville and Ross's last story, "The Shooting of Shinroe," rewrites Robert Martin's sketch, "A Connemara Short Cut," from Bits of Blarney. Like the Irish material from Collected Irish Anecdotes, Robert Martin's Anglo-Irish stuff is re-framed or burlesqued in the Somerville and Ross narrative.

Somerville and Ross's later fiction utilizes multiple discourse to debunk various land myths while, at the same time, erecting upon the Irish literary landscape a structure of Anglo-Irish make. Their political intent, to continue establishing within the Irish literary landscape an Anglo-Irish tradition, is complicated by other preoccupying interests: the tension generated by colliding time zones or chronotopes in the Irish countryside, the means by which their subject matter reflects the form their narrative takes, and the political implications of beast allegory when transported onto Irish terrain. I will explore these issues as they reflect upon the possible political intentions of the authors during their final collaborative years.

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11 Robert J. Martin ("Ballyhooly") Bits of Blarney 28.

The Treasure in the Bog

Landscape works as a site of power; it gives "ruling ideas a natural form."[12] As already noted in considerations of the picturesque and nationalist romanticism, the wild countryside with its crumbling ruins records Ireland's hidden past. The bog, for instance, exists as a political marker of various kinds throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire, Katie Trumpener notes how Arthur Young's scientific study of the Irish countryside, Tour in Ireland, 1776, 1777, 1778, demonstrates the enlightenment belief in historical progress, that draining the bogs and employing members of agrarian secret societies like the Whiteboys, will improve the land and bring about an economic success which will overcome religious and political differences (a point of view repeated by modern reformers like George Russell and Horace Plunkett at the end of the nineteenth century). Young's overarching theory, his progressiveness, says Trumpener, ignored the specifics of Irish cultural life which the nineteenth-century novelists set about detailing. Cultural nationalists reclaimed the bog as a threatened source of inspiration. As part of the Irish landscape, the bog offered glimpses of an ancient tradition and preserved the artefacts of the national culture.[13]

Somerville and Ross's treatment of the half-hidden treasures of the Irish landscape might be considered in their deployment of the hunt in "The Whiteboys." Graphic published the story in two parts in August, 1908. This same year, as I have mentioned, George Birmingham published his comic novel, Spanish Gold. Both Birminghan's novel and Somerville and Ross's story exploit the concept of a hidden Ireland and use masks and disguise to question the notion of reality in the Irish countryside. They also recall in different ways Bram Stoker's earlier novel, The Snake's Pass. In Stoker's work, the treasure in the shifting bog is a chest of French gold coins and a golden crown with a single jewel. Such treasure indicates the wealth of threatening (or welcome) invaders (the French of 1798) or the secret resources of vanquished dominions (that of the snake). As Dracula points out to Jonathan Harker in Stoker's later terrifying tale, a conquered and re-conquered landscape conceals great reservoirs of unclaimed booty in its depths:

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12 Simon Schama 17.

13 Katie Trumpener, Bardic Nationalism 37-66.

> In old days there were stirring times, when the Austrian and the Hungarian came up in hordes, and the patriots went out to meet them--men and women, the aged and children too--and waited their coming on the rocks above the passes, that they might sweep destruction on them with their artificial avalanches. When the invader was triumphant he found but little, for whatever there was had been sheltered in the friendly soil.[14]

In 1890, with The Snake's Pass, Bram Stoker invested the imperial adventure novel with the notion of a hidden Irish underworld enriched by wondrous treasure.[15] It takes an improving English landlord, the novel's hero, to reveal the bog's wealth to the world. George Birmingham's later comic novel acknowledges its debt to Stoker in the naming of his hero, the curate, John Joseph Meldon or J.J. Meldon, who appears very briefly as Doctor Meldon in Stoker's work. Birmingham also includes a real treasure in his novel--two chests of Spanish gold doubloons from 1798 stashed in a boghole on an island off Ireland's western coast. It takes a wily Protestant cleric, J.J. Meldon, to discover the gold.

George Birmingham's hero in Spanish Gold, J.J. Meldon (whose side-kick Major Kent combines the attributes of Squire Trelawney in Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island and Major Yeates of the R.M. stories), expert trickster and mischief-maker, works what he describes as a *coup de théâtre* (127) to get his hands on the hidden treasure. His strong sense of play-acting, his artfulness, turns the action of the novel into farce, not unlike the comic situations Flurry Knox masterminds in Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.

My particular interest in Birmingham's novel is the commentary on Irish politics which J.J. Meldon's behaviour demonstrates. His manipulation of the truth becomes much more than a beguiling Irish trait in the course of the novel; it becomes a display of political strategy. Meldon adopts different personae and lies outright because the situation demands that he does. He points out that nothing is straightforward in Ireland, and that the Irish mind must adapt accordingly: "'The worst thing about you Englishmen,'" the curate says to a visiting English politician, "'is that you have such blunt minds. You don't appreciate the lights and shades, the finer nuances, what I may perhaps describe as the chiaroscuro of

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14 Bram Stoker, Dracula (1898; New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997) 27.
15 Nicholas Daly, "The imperial treasure hunt: The Snake's Pass and the limits of romance," Modernism, Romance and the *Fin De Siècle* 53-83.

things'."[16] Meldon thus acts in what must ultimately be described as a political manner: he lies as a pragmatist lies--to discover the truth. "'The test of truth is usefulness'" (185) he says to the visiting Chief Secretary, and how can the politician not understand such strategy when his "'own game of politics couldn't be played for a single hour without . . . deceiving innocent people'" (187).

Somerville and Ross also address the nature of politics in their short story. The provocative title of "The Whiteboys," a title promising commentary on agrarian outrage, initially appears to be misleading, but the story ultimately reveals a kind of political strategy which reference to the prominent Irish secret society suggests. The rebellious agents of the story turn out to be a pack of white hounds who seem to have nothing to do with the insurgent practices of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century secret society. Nonetheless, these wild dogs bought by Flurry, an "old Irish breed of white hounds, with their truly national qualities of talent, rebelliousness, and love of sport" (The Irish R.M. 404), deliberately recall the nationalist protestors of the past. Their romanticized mystery acts as a camouflage for the real wheeling and dealing of the story.

Flurry buys the dogs from old Mr. O'Reilly who lives hidden with his sister in the "mountain fastness" of Fahoura. He houses his dogs in a grey square tower, probably a towerhouse with its defensive arrow-slits whence the hounds strain their white muzzles. O'Reilly, an Irish-speaking patriarch of the old order, claims the hounds have been in his family since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The O'Reillys have hunted alongside the Anglo-Irish throughout that time. O'Reilly's brother Phil, huntsman to the Charlevilles, died gloriously in the chase, unlike the dispirited old patriarch who is "'dying as soft as any owld cow in a boghole'" (408). With sorrow and bitterness O'Reilly sells his nephew's inheritance to Flurry Knox; drink and a modern-day hankering after America has wasted the nephew, Lukey O'Reilly. The dogs themselves understand only Irish and follow no law other than their own. They are unmanageable, devour anything that enters their territory, and are the wiliest bunch Flurry has ever come across when he tries them out in the hunt:

> They ignored the horn, eluded Michael, and laughed at Hickey and me; they hunted with blood-thirsty intentness and entirely after

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16 George Birmingham, Spanish Gold (1908; London: The Bodley Head, 1973) 183.

> they own devices. Their first achievement was to run the earth-stopper's dog, and having killed him, to eat him. . . . The best that could be said for them was that, 'linking one virtue to a thousand crimes', whenever the hounds got fairly out of covert, the Whiteboys were together, and were in front. (413)

These clever beasts, as swift as "spilt quicksilver" and bold enough, says Mr. O'Reilly, to "'take a line over the hob of hell'" (409), serve a dual purpose in the text. Dr. Hickey describes them as "'the divil'" (415), and as white devils they embody the extreme dimensions of the Irish national character, and like Melmoth or Harlequin, their anachronistic presence collapses notions of progress or change. They also unite the Anglo-Irish hunt and Gaelic-Irish tradition. They introduce into the Irish landscape more than one continuous narrative.

The Whiteboys break away from the hunting party and head uphill across a "green, undefined, entirely treacherous" bog (411). (In upside-down Ireland, Major Yeates notes, "water runs uphill, and the subtlest bog holes lie in wait for their prey on the mountain tops" (414).) Eventually, Yeates and Flurry Knox discover the dogs to be heading west towards an old fort (probably a souterrain) which supposedly contains "'holes down in it that'd go from here to the sea'" (416). Like the bog, the hill fort is a conduit to the nethermost regions of Ireland, a hidden hell. A fox "as big as a donkey" is reported to the Anglo-Irish as having led the Whiteboys right into the bowels of the earth. It would seem that they have been swallowed up by a prehistoric fortress and have become, quite literally, part of the ancient landscape.

The topography of "The Whiteboys" provides us with a quick survey of the history of the Irish landscape. The unreclaimed bog has escaped eighteenth-century enlightenment reforms, just as the Whiteboys have remained resolutely wild and untamed. The secret powers of the Irish language (an old farmer tells Yeates that a fox stealing a goose will drop it if shouted at in Irish), the threat of emigration to America, and the markers of the ancient past, those *lieux de mémoire*, the tower and the fort, provide all the features of an unchanged Irish landscape. This summarizing survey--the bottomless, boundless bog, the hounds who only understand Irish and appear to be entombed in an Irish nationalist monument, the servile farmers who help Flurry by shouting in Irish down the holes and crevices of the fort--proves to be an elaborate hoax, a display which masks what is really going on: Lukey O'Reilly running a drag to capture his rightful inheritance. The dogs have been crammed into a baker's van

which passes the huntsmen in search of their prey. Does this action suggest the hidden Ireland? In this tale, the topography displays its features with self-conscious irony, the Anglo-Irish hunt, the fairy-filled fort in its swampy terrain, the romantic nationalist spirit of the secret societies: all these features, whether they belong to an Anglo-Irish tradition, Celtic mythology, or Gaelic Ireland, congregate as a performance concealing the shady dealings and meaningful vendettas which lie at the heart of the Irish farmland.

When we consider the agrarian outrages of Whiteboyism in the early part of the nineteenth century, we discover the appropriateness of Somerville and Ross's conclusion to "The Whiteboys." After 1815, Whiteboyism had as its primary cause of rural disturbance the occupation of the land. The consolidation of land for grazing purposes on the part of improving landlords did not acknowledge the practices and conditions of the small landholders who made up the ranks of the secret society. Thus, "the landlord most obnoxious to the Whiteboys was not the *rentier* who left them alone but the interested improver, anxious to run his estate on sound commercial principles."[17] The Whiteboys, then, did not resist the landlord system; they resisted a particular kind of landlord, the one who believed in progress (like the English hero/improver of Stoker's The Snake's Pass). Somerville and Ross's depiction of the Whiteboys' disappearance into the national monument and into the land itself is fitting; equally fitting, however, is their real fate. The capture of the dogs by their 'rightful' owner is appropriate because Lukey O'Reilly has a 'moral right,' if not a commercial one, to the animals--and to the land.

"The Whiteboys" reworks notions of antiquarian tourism as it feeds off romantic nationalist ideology. The stylized national landscape, what Trumpener notes to be "the long-term effect of antiquarian tourism,"[18] this half-hidden Irish past, becomes especially suited, I suggest, to Somerville and Ross's ironic romanticism in their comic short fiction. The linear passage of time, a sense of progress and development, has no bearing in a world which moves freely between past and present. We recall that O'Reilly's dogs have been in the family since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and there is a strong sense in this story that these

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17 Michael Beames, Peasants and Power: The Whiteboy Movements and their Control in Pre-Famine Ireland 131.

18 Katie Trumpener, Bardic Nationalism 52-53.

hounds possess supernatural abilities which defy death. The features of the story--language, bog, and monuments--move downwards into the landscape rather than forwards in time. Place and characters seem to be lost in time, as if the narrative thread itself has slipped through some crevice downwards and outside of historical continuity. Then, abruptly, such a sense is blasted by the reality of the case, the simple fact that turns everything into a show and makes suspect all that has gone before: Lukey O'Reilly in the baker's van stealing back his inheritance. This is the time of the moment. Suddenly, attention is drawn from the subject matter to the creative process: the stylization of the subject matter. The writers, in other words, show their hand and blatantly display the artifice of the material.[19]

The stylized material, that which becomes a performance masking reality, includes details of both the national landscape and the Anglo-Irish hunt in "The Whiteboys." Both traditions (both classes, both religions) are staged. Perhaps we might consider two paintings by Jack B. Yeats as an illustration of my point. Haute Ecole Act (1925) and This Grand Conversation was under the Rose (1943) each include a female figure from the Hunt and her accompanying clown.[20] Both figures in the first painting are the objects of the circus audience's gaze and all--the audience, the horse and rider, the clown--are surrounded by the sloping canvas of the circus tent. The second painting (Figure 6-1) situates the graceful rider and Pierrot inside the circus tent again. Their black and white dress recalls Beardsley's illustrations or, more significantly for this study, Charlotte Mullen and

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19 "The Romantic ironist . . . assumes a prominence in his narrative that is the antithesis of the half-hidden reticent position associated with the more traditional ironist. . . . The narrator holds center of the stage, disposing his characters and arranging his material before our very eyes so that we see not the finished product but the creative process." Lilian R. Furst, "Romantic Irony and Narrative Stance," Romantic Irony 300. See also the Russian formalists' discussion of this technique of "laying bare" the contrivance of fiction in Russian Formalist Criticism, eds. Lemon and Reis (Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 1965) and in Boris Eichenbaum, O. Henry and the Theory of the Short Story, trans. I.R. Titunik (1925; Michigan: University of Michigan, 1968).

20 "The Haute Ecole Act" first appeared as a drawing for the Broadside in January, 1913. The rider in the drawing is unaccompanied but appears as a circus act. "This Grand Conversation was under the Rose" first appeared as Yeats's illustration of the Irish political ballad, "The Grand Conversation Under the Rose" in A Broadsheet of August, 1903. The illustration, a drawing of Napoleon Bonaparte, differs entirely from the later oil painting. Nonetheless, Hilary Pyle's tracing of the refashioning of these images in Jack B. Yeats: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Oil Paintings, volumes I and II (London: Andre Deutsch, 1992) demonstrates the artist's early treatment of these themes--when Somerville and Ross were publishing the R.M. stories.

Christopher Dysart's black and white clothing in The Real Charlotte. What I wish to emphasize here, however, is the inclusion of the hunt figure *alongside the clown inside the circus tent.*

As I have already noted, Jack Yeats shared with Somerville and Ross, a conviction that Irish life manifested the spirit of performance usually found on stage. In his novel, The Careless Flower (1947), he makes his arching tent a metaphor for the Irish sky: "'Circus tent above the great round dish of grey-blue sea'."[21] In the painting described above, we do not have a case of colonial rider watching colonized clown as performer because the rider joins the clown on stage. The circus tent, like the sky in Yeats's novel, covers all Ireland. Both clown and rider are members of the Irish circus act. Both the hunt woman and the humble clown perform. All of Ireland is a stage.

In Somerville and Ross's stories as well, life in Ireland is an act, and hunting plays an essential role: the characters' antics become a performance. One might argue, of course, that in these stories, the 'stage' upon which the characters perform remains an Anglo-Irish construction (a point I stress below in my discussion of "The Comte de Pralines"). Nonetheless, the over-riding sense of the performative nature of all Irish life in short fiction like "The Whiteboys" remains a key issue in the Anglo-Irish writers' work.

The Irish landscape in "The Whiteboys" serves as a platform for the characters' actions. The topography is ironically stylized rather than realistically realized. Fundamental, however, to the different features of the Irish scene is their shifting or quivering aspect, like the bog itself. Nothing is ever definite or clear in this picture/performance. Everything is half realized or partially seen. A glimpse of ancient Ireland lurks in the ruins which house the Whiteboys, animals suggesting the furtive adventures of a secret society. The fortress may have consumed a fox, a calf, even a pack of dogs, but it reveals nothing of its contents. The Irish language, spoken about but never heard, like the fox himself in this story, can bewitch beasts and charm men. We are reminded of the power of a half-hidden history which Maturin describes in The Milesian Chief. The Irish hero, Connal O'Riordan, speaks of Irish music and the source of a melancholy air he hums. A blind bard, he says, composed this air upon his return to the ruined family seat in Ireland. Dying he wrote the music, as

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21 Qtd in Hilary Pyle, Catalogue Raisonné II, 787-88.

sweet in tone as the song of a dove but even more beautiful for its unknown words:

> 'Before he expired on the spot, he poured out his grief to his harp in a strain addressed to the solitary tenant of the ruins--the dove, whose notes the music seemed to imitate. The words are beautiful, but I will not be guilty of doing them in English: their untranslatable beauty is like what we are told of the paintings of Herculaneum, which preserve their rich colours in darkness and concealment, but when exposed to the light and modern eyes, fade and perish'[22]

To see or expose the treasured past, whether that past be conveyed in language or monument, is to lose it. To find the treasure is to know it does not exist.

Perhaps what is most important about the hidden Ireland lies in the fact of its concealment rather than the matter which is supposedly concealed. In the mysterious darkness of the Irish past, a darkness which silences the Gaelic tongue in The Milesian Chief, lies the utter attraction of beckoning treasure. In my earlier discussion of The Real Charlotte, I addressed the 'shifting face' of national character. Charlotte Mullen never becomes 'real' because she eternally adapts to changing conditions. Her chameleon nature demonstrates in terms of character this concept of the hidden Ireland. This chapter, then, moves from character as representative of the land to the landscape itself as the backdrop to the Anglo-Irish hunt. Like character, Somerville and Ross's landscape can not be read as one thing or another because it is ever-changing, a site of multiple narratives which continue to conceal in their depths some secret source . . . the 'real' Ireland. This propensity to be ever-changing, what Birmingham describes

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[22] Charles Maturin, The Milesian Chief I 184-85. Katie Trumpener points out this quote in her introduction to Bardic Nationalism as a reenactment of the "paradox of memory and obliteration" (9). In her first chapter, she refers to the early nineteenth-century travel writer John Carr who describes the Irish bogs as "'a sort of vegetable Herculaneum'" (The Stranger in Ireland (1806)). Trumpener draws no connection between the comparisons of Ireland's language and land to the paintings preserved by Herculaneum's darkness. It is my intent, however, to stress such a comparison and to dwell somewhat on Maturin's description. The darkness here does not refer to the chiaroscuro technique which the novelist applies in Melmoth; nonetheless, darkness preserves colour. Light (modernism) paradoxically douses colour, depth, and meaning. Light is progress, what Baudelaire would later describe with different intents as a "smoky beacon light," which in terms of Art cannot denote advancement: "This modern lantern . . . sends out beams of darkness over the whole domain of knowledge." "The Universal Exhibition of 1855." Baudelaire: Selected Writings, trans. P.E. Charvet (London: Penguin, 1972) 120-21.

as "the chiaroscuro of things" (Spanish Gold 183), the deployment of multiple masks or myths, is in itself political and artful, and it is with politics in mind that I consider Somerville and Ross's final collaborative fiction and their boldest work, In Mr. Knox's Country. To commence this discussion on politics and art, I will start with the messenger himself, Mr. Fox.

The Fox

The Fox never sent a better messenger than himself. [23]

Despite their reputation as writers of fox-hunting, Anglo-Irish aficionados waylaid by an obsession with that "Sport of Kings" and "King of Sports,"[24] Somerville and Ross did not concentrate on the hunt until well into their career. In 1898, when they were starting to write their R.M. stories, they published The Silver Fox. The "witch or fairy" fox of the novel[25] recalls the Celtic myth recorded by Frazer in his Golden Bough. The demon/witch transforms itself into a fox, an animal traditionally burnt in the midsummer festival fires.[26] Somerville and Ross's silver witch works as a device in the novel, a means of enticing the hunters onto the dangerous boggy terrain of Ireland's West. The fox enters the dreams of characters and manifests an unknown dimension of the Irish terrain which an Englishman's reckless improvements (the attempt to lay a railway line across the bog) has stirred up. The silver fox exists on the interface of reality (the land) and the unknown (underground), and its natural environment is a suitably mixed element, the "spongy gravel" of the bogland (117).

In the first two collections of R.M. stories, various invisible foxes create mayhem and elude capture, flying down crannies and crevices in the Irish countryside like ghosts or fairies. With their sporting novel of 1911, Somerville and Ross introduced a most potent kind of fox into their writing, a "soldier of fortune": "that good-looking gentleman of many

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23 Somerville and Ross, Collection of Irish Anecdotes, 1886-1945, no. 881, QUB.

24 E. Œ. Somerville, "Hunting in Ireland," Irish Travel. October 1927: 295.

25 The Silver Fox 14.

26 James Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York: Macmillan, 1947) 656-57.

aliases, Dan Russel the Fox."[27] Sir Russel Fox of Chaucer's "Nun's Priest Tale"[28] comes to Ireland armed with his own political pistolry, and his advent indicates the writers' possible interest in using political allegory in their short fiction.[29] Moreover, the fabulist qualities of Reynard may have especially attracted Edith Somerville who wrote and illustrated a number of children's stories at this time and evidently enjoyed the satirical potential of the beast material.[30] As a keen theatre-goer, Martin Ross may have noted the fox's connection to Harlequin (who sometimes wore the fox's brush) and probably enjoyed productions of Jonson's Volpone, illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley in 1897-1898. As a political critic and admirer of Goethe's work, she undoubtedly appreciated the possibilities of the Reynard fable during a period of Home Rule revival. Goethe published his satire on the French Revolution, Reineke Fuchs, in 1793. In 1887, in the midst of popular interest in Goethe generated in part by Willie Wills and Henry Irving, Thomas J. Arnold published a translation of Goethe's version of the beast fable. In his introduction to the translation, beautifully illustrated with the original designs and pictures of Wilhelm von Kaulbach and Joseph Wolf, Arnold suggests that the revived interest in the Reynard material in Great Britain originated with the Great Exhibition of 1851.[31] Whatever the case, by the time Somerville and Ross had started writing their final work, In Mr. Knox's Country, they had established a strong interest in the beast epic, Reynard the Fox. The final stories transport the allegory, with its

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[27] Somerville and Ross, Dan Russel The Fox (London: Methuen & Co., 1911) 233-34.

[28] Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest Tale," The Canterbury Tales, trans. Nevill Coghill (United States: Penguin, 1952) 244. Nevill Coghill was Somerville's nephew.

[29] The political potential of Dan Russel is indicated in Chaucer's naming of his fox as "daun Russel" (Sir Russel), which suggests to J. Leslie Hotson a possible dig at the sly evasions of Sir John Russel (a pretence of madness to avoid execution) upon the return of Henry IV to England. "Colfax vs. Chauntecleer," Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. E. Wagenknecht (London: Oxford UP,1978) 112.

[30] Edith Somerville wrote "The Story of the Discontented Elephant" (1912) in 1911 and in the same year hoped to interest publishers in an adaptation of Southey's "Crocodile King" as an illustrated children's book. See her letter to James Pinker, 18 November 1911, no. 3330-1, TCD. Edith Somerville may have been alert to the political significance of the fox figure. In a later essay called "Dan Russel The Fox," she points out that English hunters of the past called their prey "Charlie" after Charles James Fox. The Sweet Cry of Hounds (London: Methuen, 1936) 51. I am sure Somerville would enjoy the suggestive possibilities of such a pet name within the arena of Irish politics today.

[31] Thomas J. Arnold, "Introductory Letter," Reynard the Fox xxiii.

connection to the *commedia dell'arte* demonstrated by Volpone, onto Irish terrain, telling the old story in a new way so that the politics of the original fable are re-charged with a different tradition.

The first two collections of R.M. stories are sandwiched by two less successful novels, The Silver Fox and Dan Russel The Fox, which concentrate on the hunt. In the earlier novel, the fox is a magical and rather sinister creature not unlike the fearsome snakes of Stoker's work. In the later novel, however, Sir Russel Fox comes from folk tradition. Characters manifest the attributes of animals in the opening scenes of the novel, an indicator not only of the writers' love of caricature but also of their growing interest in the use of fable in their fiction. As a result, in the final collection of stories Flurry Knox and his wife Sally have settled into the background, the clown Slipper has disappeared,[32] and Flurry's role as the trickster Harlequin subsides. A battalion of animals enters the lists--varieties of dogs and horses, donkeys, a peacock, turkey-cock, and bull, wood-pigeons, rats, rabbits, cows, goats, plenty of bees and ducks, and an animal frequently masquerading as cat or dog--the fox. From the midst of the beasts, old Mrs. Knox of Aussolas Castle emerges as a challenge to the rising middle class and her side-kick, the fox, aids her subterfuge.

The fox of the novels works as contrivance or part of the picturesque background, but the fox enters the R.M. stories as if he is coming home. The fox of the R.M. series, especially the final collection, addresses both the content of the stories and the shape they take. There is no contrivance because the stories are suspended within an Irish chronotope--carnival time when animals and humans have equal significance, when dogs, horses, and donkeys can nearly talk and the fox is in his element. The fox lives underground and frequently leads his pursuers downwards, to the centre not only of his universe but also that of comic satire with its hell-bent thrusting force. Reynard runs through Mr. Knox's Country, disappearing and reappearing, like Harlequin effecting amazing transformations, in this case with a flick of the tail, and carrying within himself the essence of folk laughter. In the R.M. stories, he is part of the

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32 Somerville and Ross echoed Maria Edgeworth's claim that Thady in Castle Rackrent was her only character drawn from real life (see Emily Lawless, Maria Edgeworth. (London: Macmillan, 1904) 89-90) when they asserted that Slipper alone had his basis in fact (Irish Memories 258). Nonetheless, when they started drafting the stories which would make up their final collection, Slipper was sacrificed. Their most successful character, the one who came closest to stage-Irishness and the British heart, was dropped from the programme.

Irish countryside, a feature of the landscape, as well as being integral to the fable form and a natural conduit for satire. He also unites the different traditions Somerville and Ross introduce into their short fiction, combining within his presence the attributes of folklore, stage, and Anglo-Irish tradition.

The fox belongs as much to the royal hunt as he does to Celtic mythology, a hidden Gaelic Ireland, or European beast fable. The fox and his brush rouse the *furor venaticus* just as Harlequin and his wand introduce "*la frontière du merveilleux*."[33] The fox, however, is also part of the land. In pursuit of him, the hunt transgresses physical borders: stone walls, closed gates, turf banks. The hunt ignores boundaries and embraces the Irish landscape as its own.

By its very nature, fox-hunting calls upon the united efforts of the countryside to participate in the landlord's sport. Without willing farmers and an affable peasantry, the sport could not succeed. As a result, and as I have noted in an earlier chapter, the hunt emerged as an opportunity to exercise passive resistance on the part of Land League sympathisers. In 1881 and 1882, for instance, the Land League campaign against fox-hunting employed massed groups of people to tramp through the countryside and disturb any possible prey. The game was ruined but the people had not broken the law.[34]

The repeated summoning of the hunt in Somerville and Ross's later fiction has provoked the sharpest criticism of their work. These "hunting-stable novelists," as Susan Mitchell dismissed them in 1919, "'whipped-up all life into a froth, piling it lightly over the tragic and dark in Ireland, obscuring reality and, with the most amiable of intentions, inflicting a lasting hurt upon the character of their country.'"[35] The pageantry of the hunt smacked of triumphalism. Its ability to cover large tracts of land, the farmer's grazing fields and the tenant's smaller plots, in the pursuit of casual delights belittled the land's allotment to the hard-working folk. The proprietory tone of loud voices atop fine horses ranging across a

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33 Baudelaire, "De l'essence du rire" 541.

34 Philip Bull, Land, Politics and Nationalism: A Study of the Irish Land Question 123-25. Perry Curtis, "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882." Somerville and Ross, The Silver Fox 72-74; Dan Russel The Fox 238-42. See also my discussion in Chapter One.

35 From The Shamrock and the Irish Emerald, a weekly paper which included articles by Corkery and Boyd. Qtd. in Hilary Pyle, Red-Headed Rebel: Susan L. Mitchell, Poet and Mystic of the Irish Cultural Renaissance (Dublin: Woodfield P, 1998) 191.

struggling land seemed to assert prior ownership and to disdain the new land laws. More generally, constant reference to the Irish Hunt provoked a feeling that the Irish cousins remained at odds with the times, clinging to outdated representations of Ireland which belonged more rightly to the illustrated cartoons of Punch in the previous century than the altered political landscape of the period.

However, nationalists like Susan Mitchell understood that the struggle for Irish land in early twentieth-century Ireland took place as much on the page as it did in the fields or courtroom. The Ireland which was to advance forward into the twentieth century an independent nation could hardly countenance a landscape which included the quintessentially royal sport of riding to hounds. Daniel Corkery suggests something similar when he asserts in Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature that those who did not belong (or whom Corkery could not see as belonging) amongst the crowds attending an Irish hurling match could not possibly write about those who did.[36]

The additional affront of a comic treatment of the hunt, laughing landlords blissfully ignorant of the serious business of Irish political landscaping, gave fuel to smouldering nationalist hearts. The suspicion that the tomfoolery of the R.M. stories provides a deceptively charming picture concealing aristocratic greed may have contributed to the determination to erase the remnants of an Anglo-Irish tradition from the plundered land, to return to a Celtic Eden, or, at least, to present an Irish landscape emptied of Protestant Ascendancy myths. In 1903, the year Edith Somerville took up her five-year position as Master of the Westcarbery Foxhounds, the Wyndham Act promised to accelerate the transfer of ownership of the land from landlord to tenant through the encouragement of the sale of entire estates.[37] The land was changing hands, and the R.M. stories of this period might be considered a series of landscapes heavily inscribed by distinctly Anglo-Irish *Weltanschauung* which takes imaginative possession of Ireland's green fields.[38]

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36 Daniel Corkery, Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature 13.

37 F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine 219. Philip Bull 152 -53.

38 As Simon Schama points out in Landscape and Memory, "landscapes can be self-consciously designed to express the virtues of a particular political or social commentary" (15).

When Reynard was started he faced Tullamore,
Arklow and Wicklow along the seashore.
We kept his brush in view every yard of the way,
And he took his course thro' the streets of Roscrea.
.....
When Reynard was taken, his wishes to fulfil,
He called for ink and paper and pen to write his will;
And what he made mention of they found it no blank,
For he gave them a check on the National Bank![39]

In Mr. Knox's Country initially focuses upon Flurry Knox's decrepit and ancient grandmother, old Mrs. Knox of Aussolas Castle. The first two stories concentrate upon her reign as an Anglo-Irish autocrat of a feudalistic estate who still appears to hold sway in the Irish countryside. The middle stories elaborate upon the increasing significance of a middle-class Dublin family, the McRorys, who have bought into Knox country. One of these McRorys, young and pretty Larkie McRory, wins over Major Yeates and company with her cheeky vitality, her "street-boy quality of being in the movement" (567). Thus in the penultimate story of the series, "The Comte de Pralines," we are not too surprised to discover that the young Dubliner wins the ultimate hunt prize, the fox's brush. However, the parody of the rise of the metropolitan middle-class--which Larkie McRory represents--is not the final comment of this collection. The last story, "The Shooting of Shinroe," continues to satirize the hunting process and the idea of Irish treasure with a final, wonderfully bathetic conclusion to the collection.

In the earlier stories, Mrs. Knox controls house, servants, and family through personality and guile. In the second story, "The Finger of Mrs. Knox," she confronts her ex-tenants in a play for supremacy. Though no longer owning the land and close to her death-bed, she still exercises considerable influence. One of the most pathetic of her ex-tenants, whinging and nearly destitute Stephen Casey, petitions her aid to save him from the mercenary reckoning of Goggins, the gombeen man. Old Mrs.

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39 "Reynard The Fox," Qtd. in Somerville and Ross, The Sweet Cry of Hounds ix-x.

Knox drives out with Major Yeates in his new motor car to confront Goggins, a successful merchant who has built his property on the "blood-money" (442) of the local woods, trees planted by his own grandfather as tenant of the Knox family. Goggins is about to claim Stephen Casey's remaining livelihood, a few starving animals, in return for money owed.

In the midst of Mrs. Knox's high-handed demands that Goggins reduce his claim and Goggins' servile but evasive response, Flurry Knox's hunting party arrives on the scene. A sighting of the fox causes such a hullabaloo that everyone, including Stephen Casey's animals, joins the chase. Major Yeates and Mrs. Knox take the car but everyone else sprints off on foot, hoof, or paw after the fox. As always in the R.M. stories, except for "The Comte de Pralines" where the beast is slaughtered, the fox escapes. The hounds start chasing Casey's donkey, and Yeates mistakes a dog for a fox. By the end of the tale, Yeates finds himself gulled twice, once by Mrs. Knox, who leaves the British civil servant to pay Casey's debt, and once by the fox. Luckily for Yeates, he has no money. So, as a final and clever twist in the story, Mrs. Knox suggests that Goggins pays Yeates the money owed. Goggins ends up paying himself.

The fox and Mrs. Knox are equal in their stratagems and sleight of hand. Both slip away from the various traps set for them. Time ignores them. At age ninety-plus, Mrs. Knox's existence spans the nineteenth century and she has chased and plotted against many a fox in her time. They collaborate at this stage. Various biographers, following the lead of Lady Gregory who first noted the resemblance, draw comparison between Mrs. Knox and Martin Ross's mother.[40] Mrs. Martin's maiden name, Fox, could suggest a connection between the fictional representatives of the old-Irish world: Mrs. Knox and the fox.

Even more significant, however, is Somerville and Ross's treatment of the story of Reynard the Fox in "The Finger of Mrs. Knox." A brief consideration of a popular late nineteenth-century translation of Goethe's version of the Reynard material will highlight the Anglo-Irish writers appropriation of the political allegory in their short fiction.

The stories of the Reynard cycle satirize feudal society through the trickster-hero's ability to outwit established authority. The folk material is the stuff of carnival, when the individual and his anarchic stratagems

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[40] Maurice Collis, Somerville and Ross 148; Violet Powell, The Irish Cousins 166.

overcome order and introduce momentary mayhem into the normal state of affairs. The fox is the villain, the lion is the king, the wolf the dupe and the donkey the victim. Reynard is also devilishly clever and takes on the role of unmasker, a merciless exposer of greed and ambition within the kingdom. His name, as Goethe's translator, Thomas Arnold, points out, comes from the German, *Reinhart*, and the Flemish, *Reinært*, and means counsellor or advisor. His fortress, Malpertuis means "an evil hole."[41]

Various animals come whinging to King Noble about Reynard's tricks, pleading for his intercession and help. While some of their stories are true, others are half-fabrications; either they blame the fox for their own misdeeds or mask the fact of their contribution to his unlawful acts. Reynard is the source of envy and resentment amongst many of his fellow subjects because first, he is the shrewdest amongst a clever bunch, and second, he has set himself apart from their society. He is an outlaw. When the king sends a series of royal messengers to bring Reynard to justice at court, the fox tricks and humiliates each one of them. Each trick--Reynard fooling Bruin the Bear by appealing to his gluttony for honey; Reynard tricking Tybalt the cat into the trap which has been set for Reynard himself--tells its own story. Finally, Reynard's friend the badger brings him to court and Reynard arrives believing he can fool them all, even the king himself.

Reynard has few sympathizers and is quickly sentenced to death. But the wily fox manages once more to trick everyone by hinting at a wondrous hidden treasure, a secret stash concealed deep in the darkness of the earth. Seduced by his own covetousness, the king lets Reynard go, but instead of finding treasure for the king, the fox gobbles up one of the royal messengers and sends his skin back to court. There never was any secret treasure; nonetheless, the lure of diamonds and gold compels the king to heed Reynard's hints. The fox's ultimate trick, then, is to promise wondrous treasure; that promise proves to be the bait which no animal, not even a lion, can resist. However much the king might doubt the existence of the treasure, to ignore the lure is to lose the promise of untold riches.[42]

Various connections between the fable and In Mr. Knox's Country might be drawn. Bruin the Bear's gluttony, for instance, is repeated in the Englishman, Chichester, in "A Friend of Her Youth." This "well-fed and *passé* schoolboy" (453) dines on the Derryclare's heather honey like some

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41 Arnold xxv.

42 Thomas J. Arnold, Reynard the Fox. I have concentrated on the first half of Arnold's treatment of Goethe's version.

greedy bear, and he falls into foolishness because of his own stomach. In another story, "Harrington's," the hidden secrets and "the thrill of possible treasure-trove" (472) at the auction situated next to a disused gold mine remind us of Reynard's imaginary treasure. The riches of the Irish auction prove just as elusive when Yeates ends up bidding for and buying his own ladder. Of course, throughout the R.M. stories, as already indicated, Somerville and Ross capitalize on the notion of the hidden Ireland as a place of treasure, a source of ultimate truth and lost glory, which however distant or vague must be respected by the authorities that be. The treasure in the R.M. stories lurks behind the shifting face of the Irish terrain, safeguarded by an Irish fox.

It is not my intent to list the numerous links between the folk tale and Somerville and Ross's stories, however. Suffice to say that the fable--and especially the wily fox--resonates throughout their final collection. This politicized material with its connection to the carnivalesque, and its use of allegory--a kind of masking--addresses universal questions about society and power. It complicates the Irish material. "Reynard the Fox" deals with attempts to control the kingdom, and the various visiting English characters to Mrs. Knox's/Fox's Castle might be seen as royal envoys attempting to control the wily old trickster. Knox/Fox acts as an outsider in "The Finger of Mrs. Knox," resented for the cleverness and brutality, which has given her the upper hand amongst the king's subjects, and suspected of witholding reservoirs of treasure in her decrepit house. Her position repeats that of the hero of Robert Martin's earlier short story, "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning." The Anglo-Irish landlord, debt-ridden and forced by a changing social system to evacuate his Castle, sees himself as victim rather than master of the situation:

> 'This hunting season is over, and for the last run of the season the Master is the fox. The Hard Time Hounds will soon run him from scent to view, and there is nothing for him but to look for another country for some seasons to come.' (Bits of Blarney 18)

Like his hero in "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning," Robert Martin also left his "country," pursued by "the Hard Time Hounds." Unfortunately, he did not discover a pot of gold in Australia with which to recover his estate, as the hero of his fiction does. Somerville and Ross knew both the dream and the reality of his position.

One might argue that Somerville and Ross, like Robert Martin, reverse Reynard's role in their short story. In the French fable, the fox symbolizes the cleverness of the plebeians by demonstrating the

stratagems of the Royal Hunt's prey. By placing autocratic Mrs. Knox in Reynard's position, by making the hunter the hunted in the new Ireland, Somerville and Ross appear to subvert the fabulist material. Such a supposition would fall in with Terry Eagleton's observation on the paradoxical reversal of the Irish ascendancy's perception of itself as victim in Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer. Eagleton reads the alienated and doomed Melmoth as a symbol of the Irish Protestant governing class:

> Their sense of persecution, in part at least, is a dread of the vengeance of those they have persecuted. Estranged from the populace by culture and religion, the elite can easily mistake itself for the marginal, and so misperceive itself as a mirror image of the people themselves. The hunters become the hunted: and this is surely one reason why the figure of the self-lacerating Satanic hero can strike such a powerful resonance.[43]

The exploiter, says Eagleton, "has put himself beyond the pale of humanity, and so is curiously on terms with those he dispossesses" (192).

In a similar way, Bram Stoker's Dracula has been read as an expression of colonial anxiety. The "old fox," as Van Helsing describes the vampire, is put to the chase by his pursuers when they "sterilize his lairs, so that he cannot use them of old" (255). The hunter becomes in the course of the novel the prey of new-world "knights of the Cross" (278). Van Helsing tells his fellow Christian huntsmen that they will go and "'do what our friend Arthur [Godalming] call, in his phrases of hunt "stop the earths" and so we run down our old fox--so? is it not?'"(255). The reversal of the vampire's role makes him go to ground, like a fox, and assists in Eagleton's perception of the figure as Anglo-Irish ascendancy in Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: "The Ascendancy, too will evaporate once their earth is removed from them, though to wrench it from them will demand rather more than a sprig of garlic and rather less than a stake through the heart" (215).[44]

Somerville and Ross's treatment of the Reynard material does not demonstrate this neat reversal. The writers parody an Anglo-Irish trope as

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[43] Terry Eagleton, Heathcliff and the Great Hunger (London: Verso, 1995) 191.

[44] Bruce Stewart cautions against reading Dracula as "an allegory of the landlord-tenant relations" which sees the vampire as a "portrait of the Anglo-Irish landlord" in "Bram Stoker's Dracula: Possessed by the Spirit of the Nation?" Irish University Review 29.2 (autumn/winter 1999): 238-55. My own findings with regard to Somerville and Ross lead me to agree with Stewart's conclusions.

depicted in Robert Martin's story by turning their fox into a stage figure. Instead of a misplaced psychological projection that transforms the colonizer into an outlawed figure, the exploiter into the exploited, as Eagleton suggests, I would argue that the adoption of marginalized figures like the fox (or Harlequin or Mephisto or even Dracula) derives from a burlesque tradition. If we consider the role of the 'hunted' in Ben Jonson's Volpone, for instance, popularized at the end of the nineteenth century by Beardsley's illustrations, we discover that the fox has become the hunter in the burlesque form. Such a rehabilitation of the beast fable material does not demonstrate a suppressed anxiety regarding England's role in Europe so much as put into action a fundamental satirical device: everything is turned upside down.

Like Volpone in Jonson's play, Mrs. Knox with her suspected (and coveted) wealth/position is a manipulator in her own right. If there is any reversal at all in "The Finger of Mrs Knox," it is that the fox has become the hunter; she has turned the tables on her pursuers. In Volpone, we recall that the fox's treasure, his gold, is coveted by the various animal-like characters of the play: Voltore, the lawyer-vulture, Corvino, the merchant-crow, and Corbaccio, the old man-raven. The treasure as bait and the fox's stratagems, aided by the devilish Mosca, the *Hellequin* of medieval folklore, become artful manipulations whereby the middle-class is exposed in all its gullibility and greed. Somerville and Ross's treatment of the beast fable works in a similar manner. Mrs. Knox and the fox use themselves as bait to expose Goggins' greed.

As I have already noted, "The Finger of Mrs. Knox" pits the craft and authority of a weakened Anglo-Irish autocracy against the opportunistic usury of gombeenism, and thus it is frequently cited as the most political of the R.M. stories.[45] Blackwood's published the story in June, 1913; it followed a series of articles debating Asquith's Home Rule Bill introduced in April of the previous year. In 1912 and 1913, Blackwood's published four sustained attacks on the Bill. Three of these articles were written by Sir John Pentland Mahaffy of Trinity College, Dublin. "What is Nationality?" in Feb. 1912 argued that nationality, a sentiment of brotherhood supported by a supposed commonality of race, home, language and religion, cannot be

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[45] Patrick Maume has mentioned this story a number of times to me as an example of Somerville and Ross's politics, which might be better understood by considering Robert Martin's stories. I am grateful to him for emphasizing the significance of Robert Martin's work although I argue that Somerville and Ross exploit rather than merely repeat the older brother's point of view.

ascribed to by the Irish in all their differences. The resurgence of the Gaelic language, Mahaffy's pet hate, is a backward step towards isolationism and ultimately stifles progress. "Will Home Rule Be Rome Rule?" published the following August, stated the arguments of the minority Irish Protestants and the educated Roman Catholics against the power of the Catholic Church in Ireland as it would expand or be limited with Home Rule. Then, in Feb. 1913, Mahaffy's "Who Wants Home Rule?" outlined for the Blackwood's reader what he saw as dubious support for Home Rule in Ireland and argued against a too precipitous, almost reckless, voting in of the measure. Those who want Home Rule consist of "Jackeens, Buckeens, Horse-dealers, Gombeen men, idle sons of strong farmers or of respectable shopkeepers, insubordinate school-teachers, editors of local newspapers, leader writers in the same, patriot poets, bankrupt traders. To all such a new vista of success is opened."[46] Additional arguments against the Home Rule Bill appear in editorial commentary and in an article published Jan. 1913 by the Imperialist Arthur Page called "Ireland and the Empire." Particular attention in these pieces is given to the Ulster unionists who will be "under the heel" of Nationalists if Home Rule goes through. (Page points out that of the 130 Unionists who are members of the Irish County Councils, 115 are in Ulster. 806 members are Nationalist.)

The direct allusion to the usurpation of the landed gentry through the Irish land acts of the early twentieth century in "The Finger of Mrs. Knox," leads analysts to read the story as a critique of the emergence of adept profiteering in the new Ireland.[47] Direct juxtaposition of the old world (Mrs. Knox in Aussolas Castle) and the new (Major Yeates's car, reference to the cinematograph) appears to confirm the sense in this story that a golden, feudal age has passed. For example, in "Comedy and the Land: Somerville and Ross's Irish R.M.," Joseph Devlin reads "The Finger of Mrs Knox" as a romanticization of the "old feudal order" and Mrs. Knox as a manifestation of the writers' "desired status" as female autocrat: "Faced with the evaporation of landlord control and their own double marginality

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[46] Blackwood's Magazine CXCIII. MCLXVIII (Feb. 1913): 245-53. Although I do not think that "The Finger of Mrs. Knox" was written in response to Mahaffy's article, there is reason to suspect that Somerville and Ross read the piece. The epigram from "Major Apollo Riggs," "It has been said of Ireland that the inevitable never happens, and that the impossible invariably occurs" (518) restates a comment which Mahaffy attributes to himself at the end of his work when addressing a new Lord-Lieutenant: "'Remember, sir, that you have come to control a country where the impossible is always happening and the inevitable never comes off.'" (253).

[47] Julian Moynahan, Anglo-Irish (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995) 196.

as unattached women, Somerville and Ross created an all-powerful female character able to hold her own, and able to hold the land."[48] Yet the story's context in Blackwood's suggests a gentle dig at Mahaffy's entrenched position, while the deployment of the fox/harlequin material demands that we ask to what extent the feudal backdrop facilitates form. The longing for a Golden Age--as Volpone shows with its *commedia dell'arte* figures whose craving for the fox's treasure parodies the Renaissance ideal--is echoed in the romantic depiction of past Anglo-Irish glories.

"The Finger of Mrs. Knox" creates an Irish feudal landscape, not to mull over the passage of ascendancy rule, but to incorporate within the short fiction the beast fable material. The antique setting furthers the sense of timelessness we identify with carnival and, more recently, the short story form. The political commentary lies in the authors' reworking of the Reynard fable rather than their depiction of Ireland as a feudal landscape. All those elements perceived to be indicative of the authors' lament for the aristocratic past could also be seen as aesthetic devices used to generate the developing genre of Irish short fiction (which Blackwood's encouraged) as well as providing an implicit, if uneasy, commentary on the Anglo-Irish role. Aussolas Castle and Mrs. Knox, her sycophantic, whining ex-tenant, the hunt and the hounds, "like creatures in a tapestry hunting scene" (442), the variety of animal and human life, "from goat to gombeen man" (447), and above all the trickery of both Mrs. Knox and the fox directly recall the fable of Reynard. The material is carefully set in the new world so that Yeates and Mrs. Knox chase the hunt by car and Mrs. Knox's 'rule' possesses no real meaning in modern Ireland. Thus the story recreates the fabulist material and continues its aims by parodying exaggerated perceptions of Ascendancy rule (Mrs. Knox possesses no real power), British authority in Ireland (Yeates remains bewildered), and nationalist ideals of the rising middle-class (Goggins' swindling of the poor).

The Hunt

> *'What has hunting got to say to politics? Hunting is sport, pure and simple, which everyone has an equal right to enjoy, and*

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[48] Joseph Devlin, "Comedy and the Land: Somerville and Ross's Irish R.M." Studies in Anglo-Irish Fiction and Balladry, by Devlin, Kehler, and Curran, Working Papers in Irish Studies, 94-1 (Fort Lauderdale, Florida: Nova U, 1994) 21.

if they ride straight like sportsmen, they are admired, no matter what their political ideas may be.'

'The Fox' [49]

The final stories of In Mr. Knox's Country, "The Comte de Pralines" and "The Shooting of Shinroe," offer two different kinds of parodies of fox-hunting and treasure-seeking in the Irish landscape. The first of these stories is a send-up (and celebration) of the Irish Hunt as battlefield in the process of empire building, while the second story uses anticlimax as a final swooping descent into the Irish landscape of the R.M. series. The first story includes a range of pantomime-like props, elaborate disguise, acrobatics, a country wedding scene, swift alteration of scenery, and heady, nearly frantic action. The second story is monochromatic, set in shades of grey and with mundane, slow-moving characters. Though the action of both stories takes place in November, "The Comte de Pralines" presents the rich backdrop of Castle Knox where the Englishwoman, Lady Knox, presides, and the hunt for the fox takes place in fine, balmy weather, a "steamy day" (560). The ever-changing topography includes charming blue lakes, the woods of the demesne, and sleek pastures. This is West Cork. In "The Shooting of Shinroe," bleak weather and an unchanging landscape of stone, bog, and clumps of furze against a backdrop of "elephant-grey mountains" (580) suggest that this could be Connemara (though ostensibly it is set in Munster). Both stories, however, involve the hunt, and though the first includes a fox in its narrative–indeed, the climax of the plot tells of the killing of the fox–it is no longer Reynard of the beast fable material. His mask has changed. Significantly, old Mrs. Knox no longer figures in these final tales. This is important because the killing of the fox in "The Comte de Pralines," like the bloody destruction of the "old fox" Dracula, has been read as the destruction of the Anglo-Irish class,[50] and though a struggle for position does occur in this story, the Fox/Knox alignment of the earlier part of the collection fades. Instead, an imperial English authority in the shape of Lady Knox presides while Flurry becomes a more remote and intractable presence with traces of Ulster stubbornness in his lines. In "The Shooting of Shinroe," the Irish landscape, desolate and

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[49] Harry Sargent, hunting enthusiast, writing as "The Fox" in The Irish Times, 4 October, 1881. Qtd in Perry Curtis, "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," Nationalism and Popular Protest in Ireland, 377.

[50] Devlin 25-26.

vacant, has been cleared of the R.M. cast and their prey, the fox. This last story, like one of Jack Yeats' later paintings, "The Circus Tent Comes Down," where two figures stand alone in a desolate landscape, undercuts the colourful antics of the previous stories. It plummets the reader downwards into the depths of dark humour. The story ends in the blackness of a wet Irish November night; a suitable place to leave the R.M. series.

By 1914, when Somerville and Ross were writing "The Comte de Pralines,"[51] Edith Somerville had contributed various essays on the Irish Hunt to the sporting magazines. In an article called "The Irish Citizen" (1913), for instance, she argued that women equally with men, could contribute as much to Irish political life as they could to the Irish Horse Show. The women of Ireland, she argued, must "be given a share in ruling as well as in riding their country."[52] Thus, the victorious rise of the middle-class Dubliner, Larkie McRory, in "The Comte de Pralines," her capture of the fox's brush, could chart not just the success of metropolitan Dublin but also of Irish women. Larkie's victory on the early twentieth-century battlefield of Irish cultural politics, a victory that occurs only with the benign leadership and assistance of a visiting Englishman, Simpson-Hodges, is manoeuvred through trickery and dogged determination. In this particular story, the Irish Hunt turns into a battlefield. Flurry Knox becomes an Ulster blockade while Lady Knox represents the English imperial dictate. Both are outdone by middle-class Dublin, a new kind of Englishman who wears masks to achieve his end, and a Catholic priest who leads them to their prize. Both factions, the Protestant bloc and the Catholic confederation, seek as their treasure or prize, the capture and execution of Mr. Fox.

In "The Comte De Pralines," the English envoy to Knox's Country, the handsome Simpson-Hodges, deceives his Irish hosts by pretending to be a French Count. Simpson-Hodges is nicknamed 'Mossoo,' the same sobriquet as Robert Martin's visiting French 'Mossoo' in his earlier comic song, "Killaloe." Somerville and Ross's English-Frenchman's skill at caricature is so great that dining-party guests claim "he ought to be making a hundred a

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51 Draft of "The Comte de Pralines," 25 June 1914, no. 7674, TCD.

52 Draft of "Irish Citizen" published in Horse Show Number (Aug. 1913). See also draft of "To Open the Season," no. 7676, and draft of a review of John Lane's publications on hunting (probably 1914), no.7674. Finally, in a draft of a review of "Sport in Art" by W. Baillie Grohmann, dated July 12, 1913, no.7675, TCD, Somerville states that "sport" and "art" stand somewhat at a distance although she admires the treatment of the hunt in "The Lady of the Lake" "as the greatest example of art in sport."

week on the stage" (556). Certainly, with his bright pink hunting coat and glistening silk hat, his "mellifluous French" (558), and courteous bows, he seems too French to be true. Ever-alert Flurry suspects mischief and stubbornly resists the bait, throwing Major Yeates "a look . . . expressive of No Surrender" (559). Flurry backs off from this play for power in carnival world (by taking up the protestant Ulster position), and removes himself from the playing field. Larkie, however, has no fear. The Count's ability to disturb the meet at Castle Knox, to cause serious ripples of unease amongst the usual cast of characters is comparable to that of the fox himself who soon arrives to wreak havoc.

The transformation into organized chaos which the fox effects and the ensuing race disturb Mossoo's subterfuge somewhat. Larkie McRory, hot on his handsome heels, learns of his deception when very English expletives slip from his mustachioed mouth. But Larkie, like her forerunner Francie Fitzpatrick in The Real Charlotte, is always game for trickery and fun. She admires the Count's ability to swear just as well in French as in English, his oath falling as "theatrical as a drop-scene, on the close of the first act" (563). Mossoo, in fact, proves to be as good as anyone--if not better--at showmanship in Ireland.

Half way through the chase, the keenest riders, Larkie, Mossoo, Yeates, and Miss Bennett, lose their prey and are waylaid by a priest whose dress, "an immaculate black coat and top-hat," is as pretty (and as pantomime-like) as that of Mossoo. By the end of the hunt, his significance as a vehicle of change becomes apparent.

The usual suspects have lost the fox and the hounds in their chase across the countryside. Mossoo and the Dubliner, however, are initially stalled by the acrobatic toppling of the former, but recover well enough to slip away and bring about the grand finale of the chase. When the R.M. cast eventually arrive at the site of the fox's execution, a field with a small chapel wherein a country wedding group have gathered, they discover that the Englishman, the Dubliner, and the priest have beat them to their quarry:

> We were in the straggling field with furzy patches in it. At the farther end of it was a crowd of country people on horses and on foot, obviously more wedding-guests; back of all, on a road below, was a whitewashed chapel, and near it, still on the chestnut horse, was the priest who had headed the morning fox. Close to one of the clumps of furze the Comte De Pralines was standing, knee-deep in baying hounds, holding the body of the fox high above his head, and

uttering scream upon scream of the most orthodox quality. He flung the fox to the hounds, the onlookers cheered, Miss McRory, seated on the car-horse, waved the brush above her head, and squealed at the top of her voice something that sounded like 'Yoicks!' Her hair was floating freely down her back; a young countryman, in such sacrificial attire as suggested the bridegroom, was running across the field with her hat in his hand.

Flurry pulled up in silence; so did we. We were all quite outside the picture, and we knew it. (572)

It was the priest, significantly, who spotted the fox and revealed him to the Englishman and the Dubliner. Their imperial contenders of the battlefield, Flurry with his "iron face" and Lady Knox with a profile "as inflexible as a profile on a coin--a Roman coin" (573), find themselves outmanoeuvred and no longer part of the tableau (for the moment). The fox is caught and killed in a jubilant and Catholic rite, but this victory, we must remember, occurs within Flurry's domain, in Knox country.

One could read this story as an allegory of the Anglo-Irish demise, but to do so is to avoid the nuances of the piece. Like the pantomime, familiar figures, such as Flurry or the fox, take on different roles in each story. Flurry's original role as trickster has been taken over by the new character, Simpson-Hodges. The fox has also changed his aspect. He may indeed be Protestant, however, as his swift slaughter by a priest-led middle-class recalls the downfall of another 'Mr. Fox' of Irish politics, Charles Stewart Parnell, who adopted the alias when writing to his lover, Katharine O'Shea. Or, one could argue that the pursuit and slaughter of the fox might even recall the persecution of the founding leader of the Society of Friends, George Fox, he whom James Joyce described as "Christfox in leather trews, hiding, a runaway in blighted treeforks, from hue and cry."[53] The Irish Quakers' marginal status, their outlaw position in a society preoccupied by a Protestant/Catholic dynamic, is emphasized by the Society of Friends' refusal to swear allegiance to either a royal or national authority.

Any allegorical reading of the fox's demise in Somerville and Ross's fiction can only be tentative. Thus, I am not so much concerned with the particular significance of the fox's end in "The Comte de Pralines" as much

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53 James Joyce, Ulysses 159. It is just as likely that Somerville and Ross may have had Charles James Fox and the young William Pitt in mind when writing "The Comte de Pralines." Somerville points out later in her career that the fox's name in England was at one time 'Charlie' after Charles James Fox. See note 30 in this chapter.

as interested in the portrayal of the Hunt as battlefield. First, the portrayal gives evidence of the colonial heritage of a soldiering family like the Somervilles. Second, it suggests that the particular battle being waged in the story is a fair fight, and that the various camps are both after the same ends. The Irish Hunt, like the battlefield, possesses its own laws (however chaotic the sport may appear) just as the "country" of Mr. Knox is its own state, "a state within a state" as Simon Schama describes the royal hunt in Landscape and Memory:

> For a warrior state, the royal hunt was always more than a pastime, however compulsively pursued. Outside of war itself, it was the most important blood ritual through which the hierarchy of status and honor around the King was ordered. (144-45)

As Master of the Irish Hunt, Flurry Knox rules with despotic intent. His Anglo-Irish world, 'Mr. Knox's Country,' remains intact whether or not Larkie wins her spurs in this particular hunt. The struggle for ascendancy takes place within the Anglo-Irish framework where the rituals and laws are those of the hunt. It does not matter who loses or wins in "The Comte de Pralines." All remain in Mr. Knox's country and play by the rules of the Anglo-Irish state.

The last story of In Mr. Knox's Country and the Irish R.M. stories, "The Shooting of Shinroe," provides an anti-climactic conclusion to the treasure-hunt in the Irish countryside. The final story reduces the fine flourishes of the previous pieces to a single ludicrous event which brings the short fiction to a suitable comic conclusion. The story takes a final swipe at the preoccupying interest of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Irish cultural politics, the hidden Ireland or the treasure in the bog. Such an ending to a series of comic turns on Irish affairs seems especially apt as both the content and the form thrust the reader's focus downwards one last time. The use of anticlimax, the subject matter, and the positioning of this story in the collection stresses the nature of Somerville and Ross's work as a whole.

"The Shooting of Shinroe" builds on a familiar Irish site, using material already worked by writers like Bram Stoker in his adventure novel, The Snake's Pass, and Robert Martin in his "Connemara Short Cut." Ostensibly, the story is set in the same place as the rest of the collection, but the landscape bears the marks of the West. The eternal presence of water--streams, bogholes, puddles, and the glint of sea in the distance as the sportsmen poach Shinroe mountain--the isolation of the setting and the

lowness of the sky, "like the roof of a marquee" (581), reminiscent of the land around Recess or Maam Cross as much as Jack Yeats's low circus tent. Major Yeates is not so much a character in this story as a borrowed voice, that of 'Ballyhooly' (Robert Martin's sobriquet), who speaks about a wily Irish solicitor called M'Cabe. Major Yeates is brought shooting on Shinroe, but he and M'Cabe find nothing but a bottle of poitin concealed in a furze bush. Major Yeates thinks that they are on a proper shooting expedition and only discovers in the latter half of their search that they are actually poaching on land whose rights have been purchased by an English syndicate--like the Martin stronghold of Ballinahinch Castle.

The topography of Shinroe mountain contains no mysteries. The bogholes and stony terrain yield nothing except for a few cows and sheep. The atmosphere is close, and yet the men's journey seems endless as each turn reveals nothing more than further stone, water, and bogland. M'Cabe's pleasure in the hunt is diminished further by two mundane facts. First, his new set of dentures fits uneasily into his mouth and underscore his normal loquacity with a strange metallic click. Second, the dentist who charged him seven pounds ten for his new teeth, a young upstart with a motorbike, has taken to hunting M'Cabe's territory and catching bagfuls of game.

The pair spend their day chasing the dog which the same dentist lent M'Cabe, getting lost en route, until they are eventually picked up by an outside car bearing two RIC men and their prisoner, a poacher, back to civilization. By now, evening has set, and, in November, seems as black as night in the Irish countryside. Major Yeates and his companion have trudged the landscape a good eight hours, and M'Cabe suddenly remembers their findings in the bogland, the poitin. He attempts to pull off his glove with his teeth so that he can open the bottle and, ludicrously, out pop his dentures. They fly out the car window into the pitch-black countryside.

A second hunt ensues, and this time M'Cabe's "gosling-like lisp" and the object of their search--teeth--shrinks the search to ridiculous proportions. The characters creep along the roadside, "bent double, like gorillas" (588) and scour the stone and puddles for the missing dentures. Then the RIC join the hunt, and the parody becomes more pointed when the diligent sergeant thinks he has discovered the missing teeth shining in the darkness:

> 'I see something white beyond you, Mr. M'Cabe,' he said respectfully, 'might that be them?'
>
> McCabe swung his lamp as indicated.

'No, it might not. It's a pebble," he replied, with pardonable irascibility.

Silence followed and we worked our way up the hill.

'What's that, sir?' ventured the sergeant, with some excitement, stopping again and pointing. 'I think I see the gleam of gold!'

'Ah, nonthenth, man! They've vulcanite!' snapped M'Cabe, more irascible than ever. (589)

The possibility of gold in the black boglands of the Irish landscape turns the grand search for Irish treasure, a dominant trope of cultural nationalism and the imperial romance, into a deliberately anticlimactic pursuit. Of course, Yeates and M'Cabe don't find the teeth, and their distracted endeavour gives opportunity for the prisoner to escape with their only means of transport out of the destitute landscape. The R.M. series thus ends with these two isolated figures shuffling in the dark--minus teeth, light, and hope--in a blackness which is as intense and thorough as the deepest boghole of the West, St. Patrick's hole, perhaps, and as suitable as possible a position to leave Major Yeates in the conclusion to the parodic farces of Somerville and Ross's Irish R.M. stories.

* * * *

How political are the R.M. stories? Could one say whether they espouse an ascendancy or unionist stance? My study shows that the comic short fiction is not so much set upon expounding a party line or exploiting the Irish landscape to detail the workings of opposing political factions as it is intent on undercutting and displaying as false the notion that 'politics' is an all-encompassing notion, such as 'the Irish problem' or 'Home Rule.' Instead, these stories demonstrate the craftiness of local politics working within a heavily inscribed Anglo-Irish world, Mr. Knox's country. They show how umbrella terms provide a cover for actual deals amongst the people, and that those transactions inevitably revolve around plots of land, a clutch of livestock, a sum of money. The R.M. stories are a series of burlesques which subvert romantic ideology. At the same time, they demonstrate in their make-up a practical and particularly Irish politics at work, what George Birmingham described as the chiaroscuro of thought identifying the flexible Irish mind. In Mr. Knox's Country might thus be described as a text which demonstrates the manipulation of the system by shifting points of view as the situation warrants and by exploiting the

reader's expectations with regard to such concepts as 'Home Rule' or 'the Anglo-Irish demise.'

The ever-shifting angles of Somerville and Ross's final collaborative work, what Martin Ross believed to be the best of their three collections,[54] displays the art of the fox who lies at the heart of the fiction. The stories express a modern ambiguity in their elusive handling of character and situation. Ambivalence emerges as a necessary tension between tradition and progress, between the impulse to retain the past and the drive to admit change. The free-flying fox's passage through these stories, his flight into the earth and multiple aliases, demonstrates the inability of the fiction to capture or to enclose the various masks/traditions of the Irish landscape. The short story form finds its greatest proponent in the furtive fox– timeless, evasive, the very essence of political strategy in a tricky world.

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[54] Geraldine Cummins, Dr. E. Œ. Somerville 30.



6-1 Jack B. Yeats, This Grand Conversation Was Under the Rose (1943)

Conclusion

In early December, 1915, Martin Ross became very ill. Almost immediately, the doctors discovered a tumour at the base of her brain. A few weeks later, on December 21, she died, aged 53. Edith Somerville was devastated. Her last sketch of her writing partner, a study in black and white, was carefully worked at Martin Ross's bedside a few days before her death. Martin's profiled face rests on a pillow, as though she were asleep. Her features, exaggerated somewhat by illness, are accentuated further by shadows around her aquiline nose and heavy eyelids. Of her many drawings and caricatures of Martin Ross, this one Edith Somerville prized. Writing to her brother Cameron at the time, she quotes a character from her favourite work, The Real Charlotte. Charlotte Mullen's disreputable housekeeper, Norry the Boat, becomes a strange source of comfort during this period of grief:

> It is no use to cry & to weep--As Norry the Boat said, 'You might as well be dancing and singing.' Whether . . . I sit on the safety valve, or whether I cried my grief to the four winds it would make no difference. Half--the best half--of my life & soul is torn away & there are no words & no tears that can cure my trouble.[1]

Somerville's reliance on the art which inspired her and Martin's partnership, however, was rudely interrupted when requests from journalists for information about the collaboration arrived at Drishane House. What everyone wanted to know about this successful and immensely popular writing partnership was who really wrote the fiction. Distracted by her pain and impatient with such questions, Edith wrote to Cameron:

> How abhorrent is to me all the senseless curiosity as to 'which held the pen' . . . the books are the thing--not the wretched heart-broken survivor of the once 'brilliant literary collaboration.'[2]

Despite Somerville's claim that "the books are the thing," the reading public and literary critics have always paid particular attention to the biographies of these "two Victorian maiden ladies," as Norman Jeffares

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1 Edith Somerville, letter to Cameron Somerville, 10 Dec. 1915, Drishane Archive, L.A. 935 a-c.

2 Edith Somerville, letter to Cameron Somerville, 6 Jan. 1916, Drishane Archive, L.A. 938 a-c.

described the Irish cousins.[3] Perhaps such curiosity resulted from class awareness in Ireland. After all, the life concealed behind the demesne wall could beckon as evocatively as any other secret aspect of the Irish landscape. Whatever the case, the collaborators were often perceived as detached from the vital changes of Irish society. In an attempt to place them somewhere upon the Irish literary landscape, some readers and critics depicted them as rather eccentric types whose partnership recalled the romantic friendship of the Ladies of Llangollen.[4] For many, their works retained an old-fashioned quality, not unlike that ascribed to another female collaboration of the late-nineteenth century, Jane and Mary Findlater from Lochearnhead in Scotland. Despite powerful analysis of female poverty and the dualism of character in a novel like Crossriggs of 1908, the Findlater sisters came to be associated with outdated productions of the late Victorian popular novel.[5]

The main thrust of Somerville and Ross's work, as my study emphasizes, is a modern awareness which develops from the writers' Victorian backgrounds. Somerville and Ross realized in their fiction a complex Irish world which allowed them the possibility of refashioning traditional tropes in a highly self-conscious manner. Their collaboration does not so much recall a late-eighteenth century sensibility as it suggests late-nineteenth century possibilities. They decided to write fiction together because they knew it to be worthwhile. After all, their uncles, Loftus Fox (Martin Ross's uncle) and Joscelyn Coghill (Edith Somerville's uncle), who were first cousins, started up the Dublin periodical called Metropolitan Magazine in the 1830s. Yet another cousin already mentioned, William G. Wills, published his first fiction in the magazine,[6] and he too, throughout his life, worked with various partners to produce popular works. Following such a lead, Robert Martin collaborated with others on numerous pantomimes for Dublin's Gaiety Theatre. However, it was Somerville and Ross who most successfully managed the art of collaboration by coupling

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3 Norman Jeffares, Anglo-Irish Literature (London: MacMillan P, 1982) 211.

4 Though Somerville and Ross visited Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby's home during their Welsh tour, they did not identify with the couple. It would seem likely that their pilgrimage retraced the steps of their great-grandfather, Charles Kendal Bushe, who wrote to his wife of his visit in 1805 to the Ladies of Llangollen. See Beggars on Horseback (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1895) and An Incorruptible Irishman 169-71.

5 Jane and Mary Findlater, Crossriggs (1908; London: Virago, 1986).

6 Freeman Wills 30.

complementary skills, utilizing Edith Somerville's illustrations, and targeting the flourishing magazine business of the 1890s. Their enormous popularity in Great Britain gives testament to the writers' ability to tap into contemporary concerns while entertaining with a light and sure hand.

Various figures in the fiction represent the dynamic force of modern progress, that quality of 'being in the moment.' In its more positive manifestations, Francie Fitzpatrick and Larkie McRory tease readers with their charming and heedless ability to push ahead. Less attractive but equally compelling is the ugly thrusting forward of grotesque females like Harriet Donovan. The countering of this compulsion--what I have described as a diachronic model--with that of a static or synchronic state (as represented in particular characters like Christopher Dysart or certain manifestations such as the pack of white dogs in "The Whiteboys") creates in the fiction a constant friction, an uneasy and ever-shifting terrain. Then, as in Charlotte Mullen, a character reflects this ambiguity. Her progressiveness is complicated by her symbolic meaning in the text. She is a modern woman but she is also a cypher, what I have described as a harlequin figure. Her 'shifting face' recalls early nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish characters (Florence Macarthy, Melmoth, Silas Ruthyn) and might be situated within the larger discourse of the Irish national character. However, in Somerville and Ross's modern Irish world such a figure becomes a new phenomenon. Grotesques like Charlotte Mullen, I have argued, manifest the dynamic realities of late nineteenth-century Ireland as they are informed by a modern self-consciousness.

As inheritors of a colonial tradition, Somerville and Ross directly address the dreams and nightmares of the colonial vision. In their satirical novels, they concentrate on the shabby underside of Irish life--the half-concealed recesses and muddy crevices of the Irish landscape. The troubling ordinariness of evil and the uneasy effects of casual evasion or half-told truths direct these narratives downward. The colonial nightmare of Naboth's Vineyard, a landscape which in its banality disturbs even more than the fierce demons of Mephisto's Brocken in Faust, is not so unlike the colonial dream of The Real Charlotte. Christopher's secularized evangelical mission, after all, only takes shape when faced by the dark forces of the earth.

Because everything in Somerville and Ross's Irish world is turned upside down in the manner of a Gilbert and Sullivan farce, Christopher's Christian dreams become simple delusions. The evangelical mission becomes a belief that he can teach Francie about poetry. The apparently

harmless delusion blinds him to ordinary reality and indirectly leads to terrible consequences. We thus witness the destruction of the weak and the vulnerable--the outcast, Julia Duffy, the sickly Mrs. Lambert, and the uneducated Francie--because Christopher can only fight shadows rather than overcome the real force of middle-class greed in the person of Charlotte Mullen.

Somerville and Ross's upending of an Anglo-Irish Protestant ethos does not forestall what I argue throughout this work to be their primary intent--to stake a place in the Irish literary terrain. My conclusion regarding the writers' political intention, however, of restaging a multi-facted Irish Anglican perspective in The Real Charlotte, or of recreating 'Mr. Knox's Country' upon the Irish literary landscape, cautions against strictly allegorical interpretations of their long and short fiction. Their self-awareness, in fact, indicates artful manoeuvre of narrative tropes. Thus, the historical specificities of the period, frequently addressed in this work, must be considered within an imaginative framework. In other words, to consider Somerville and Ross's work as a mirror of the Protestant ascendancy position, a commentary on its demise, is to ignore the manner in which the writers play with reflection, to neglect the energetic and ongoing intention to inscribe a vital world view within Irish literature, and to overlook the writers' treatment of form.

Increased interest in nineteenth-century popular culture over the past decade provides an added dimension to studies of magazine writers and illustrators like Somerville and Ross. The easy familiarity of both highbrow material and more popular productions on the part of writers involved in the magazine industry throughout the 1890s and into the twentieth century asks that we address both areas of interest. For Irish writers, the political and social concerns of the period as well as the writers' position as regards their readership, Irish or British, complicates their treatment of the Irish landscape. For writers with a particular interest in the visual arts like Somerville and Ross, developments in the pictorial arts, especially in the magazine business with its fast-moving images, visual shorthand, and experiment with perspective, must have impact.

The intention of my work has been to widen the appreciation of Somerville and Ross's fiction and illustrations by addressing the writers' artful treatment of the picturesque as they publish in the British periodicals and by examining developments in caricature in France, where the writers spent much of their time when outside Ireland. By drawing attention to Somerville and Ross's treatment of the revived romance, I have

stressed the writers' use of burlesque and parody and their romantic irony. By concentrating on traces in the fiction of late-nineteenth century popularized treaments of German Romanticism, in particular Goethe's works, I have shown the Irish writers' playful incorporation of various sources, including Faustian material and the Reynard story cycle. My research shows for the first time the significance of the women writers' tangential involvement in popular revivals of such material and suggests the impact of various kinds of productions--farces, pantomimes, illustrated translations and painting--on their fictional and visual representations of the Irish landscape. Crucial questions on time and progress in the Irish countryside or depictions of Irish character are more comprehensively addressed in the writers' fiction by considering the significance of such questions in a widened arena. More often than not, Somerville and Ross upend in the Irish world popular representations of the period: versions of The Tempest, the story of Undine, Pre-Raphaelite material, and tales from the Reynard cycle.

By drawing attention to Somerville and Ross's appropriation of popular material in their short fiction, I have suggested that their fiction works in a much more symbolic manner than has hitherto been realized. In 1898, the year Somerville and Ross published their first collection of R.M. stories in Badminton Magazine, Arthur Symons stressed the symbolic potential of the pantomime in "Pantomime and Poetic Drama." He argued that "pantomime, in its limited way, is . . . no mere imitation of nature: it is a transposition, as an etching transposes a picture." The familiar figures of pantomime--harlequin, clown, and so on--are characters who address "universal human experience," and the form within which they appear "appeals, perhaps a little too democratically, to people of all nations."[7] These comic figures, we might conclude, are not so much characters as theatrical agents. The wandering figure of Harlequin, who enters Somerville and Ross's fiction in a variety of guises, manifests the comic form. My intent has been to demonstrate not only the Irish writers' use of this multi-faceted cypher in their fiction but also to argue that their development of form and eventual concentration on satirical short fiction might be traced in their use of the folk/stage figure.

I have noted in the earlier novels the half-submerged presence of Mephisto in Somerville and Ross's grotesque depiction of the Irish land

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7 Arthur Symons, "Pantomime and the Poetic Drama," Studies in Seven Arts (London: Constable, 1906) 381-84.

wars or the outline of a grimacing harlequin in their study of the Irish gombeen woman. Somerville and Ross's later concentration on comic short fiction, I have argued, demonstrates a heightened interest in form. The Irish R.M. stories embrace wholeheartedly the comic sense by introducing an Irish Harlequin and his entourage. The hectic antics of Flurry Knox and company in the chronotope of festival time manifests the shape the fiction takes. Then, in Somerville and Ross's final collection, In Mr. Knox's Country (overlooked as a story cycle by critics because it appears to repeat the comic situations of the earlier collections), we are introduced to a figure which symbolizes the compelling interests of the writers. The fox not only unites various layers of the Irish landscape but also symbolizes the nature of the form. "Unruly Reynard" is his own messenger--not so much a conveyor of a tradition as much as a manifestation of the form in which he appears.

This study of Somerville and Ross's treatment of the Irish landscape in the comic illustrations and the most ironic fiction, that written between 1890 and Martin Ross's death in 1915, profiles the authors' modern sensibility as it interacts with the specificities of Irish cultural life. It argues that despite general notions regarding the Irish cousins--a sense that they were somehow outside of the dynamic changes in late nineteenth-century Ireland--Somerville and Ross were far indeed from retiring behind demesne walls to nourish the broken-back pride of a conquered race. Instead, this study claims that the women writers positioned themselves as inheritors of a complex tradition which they restaged on a modern platform and in so doing addressed the resulting ambiguities created by conflicts between static and closed conveyors of tradition and the dynamic and open forms of modernism. This work pays particular attention to the writers' developing interest in form as they worked within the traditions of their own culture and the political tensions of their time to convey the ambiguities of modern life. It stresses their all-consuming interest in land politics, the Irish character, the workings of law in the countryside, and--above all--money and its lack in the small farms and cottages of Ireland. The work shows how Somerville and Ross explore central ambiguities of Irish life through parody and farce and use forms such as symbolic realism in The Real Charlotte, or grotesque comedy in their short fiction, to convey certain crises of modern thought. Ultimately, I argue that Somerville and Ross occupy a significant position in late nineteenth-century Irish writing. The Real Charlotte reigns as the

foremost document of an imaginative reconstruction of the Irish Anglican inheritance in fiction. No other Irish text tackles so directly the ambiguities of an Irish Protestant ethos as manifested in fiction. The Irish R.M. stories present a symbolic figure of this Protestant inheritance in the shape of Flurry Knox whose darkly comic outlines represent the harlequin of pantomime. Their final collection of stories, In Mr. Knox's Country, is a remakable use of traditional material made new, or restaged, to express political allegory in modern form.

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